



TOWN of THOMPSON
815 Riverside Drive
North Grosvenordale, CT 06255

THOMPSON Board of Finance Regular Meeting

Thursday, December 17, 2020 via Zoom from remote locations

MINUTES

1. The call to order by Chair Aaron McGarry was at 7:00 PM

Roll call: Members- Aaron McGarry (Chair), Jim Bellavance, Rhonda Rooney, Robert Werge, Steve Herbert. Chair A. McGarry noted that Rob Mann is not present. Also: Orla McKiernan-Rafferty (Finance Director), Melinda Smith (Superintendent of Schools), First Selectman Amy St Onge and Selectman Ken Beausoleil, Bob Gentes (Schools Finance Director), Board/Commission members, Members of the public, Recording Secretary Dotti Durst

2. Review/approve minutes:

Motion S. Herbert seconded by J. Bellavance to approve the 11-19-2020 Regular Meeting minutes carried unanimously, 5-0..

3. Correspondence:

- Tax Collector's FY 19-20 Report

- the Tax Collector emailed a document stating that additional taxes were collected from the new business in the former KofC hall in the amount of \$61,515.79

4. Citizens' comments: none

6. Selectman's Update-First Selectman Amy St Onge:

* Delivered several Thank You messages – The DPW...what a night with last night's storm!

They prepared well and worked tirelessly with an incredible magnitude of work to handle.

–Gratitude is expressed to the dedicated Town Hall employees, who came in to work today, on the trailing edge of this major storm. – The Schools have been strong collaborators, first with the organization and conducting of the hybrid-model town meeting, then with sharing equipment and staff expertise. * The BOS has discussed a revision of the way the budget vote is conducted, with the General Government proposal and the Education proposal fully detailed, but a single vote cast on the combined budgets. An Ordinance revision will be considered.

* The Bond Council found a problem with the date on which the warning for the referendum for the Schools Roof project was posted, citing Statute which calls for a 30-day advance notice. The January vote did not follow that rule; another referendum will be scheduled on the matter.

In addition, the Ordinance will be reviewed to add in a provision for shorter notification period for a similar kind of vote. * The Dog Pound work is nearly complete, using so far \$8,575 of the \$10,000 requested from the accumulated Dog Facility funds. * Less-than 20' wide Bridge assessments are overdue (should have been done in 2019). A RFP for an engineering study for all <20' bridges is needed. * One Bridge project did not need an engineering study, and the DPW was able to complete the Quaddick Town Farm Road project very well. Buckley Hill Road will be monitored by Troop D, as heavy trucks may not use the road until repairs are done. An engineering study is needed soon, to be able to have all the documentation in place to



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apply for a Federal 80%/20% grant in the next fiscal year.

Questions for the First Selectman:

J. Bellavance- will you ask for a revised Ordinance for combining the budget vote into one item? Yes, then take it to a town meeting.

A. McGarry- asked for a review the time period needed between the legal notice and a vote on a Bond. Yes, the Statute calls for a 30 days lead time; this can be modified by Ordinance.

A. McGarry- then the Ordinances will be revised and approved at a Town Meeting, and the Referendum vote will be rescheduled? Yes, we will target near the end of January.

7. School District Update-Superintendent of Schools Melinda Smith: Thanks to A. St Onge for the positive "shout-out" as the schools staff have also enjoyed the collaboration with the Town.

* Student count- net change is down by 1. The District shifted to remote learning on December 7 continuing until January 11 due to a Covid exposure. 200 families continue with their choice of home-based distance learning. * Meals are being prepared by the schools staff, including not only hard-working cafeteria staff, but also custodial staff who are contributing by boxing the meals and the transportation staff by handling delivery to pick-up locations all over town; this includes more direct deliveries to about 100 families who do not have a daytime vehicle for access to the pick-up locations. * Covid expense reimbursement of \$776,000 was requested from the state. To date, \$132,000, \$248,000 and now another \$90,000 have come in, leaving a shortfall of about \$300,000. * Former local school principal David Sizemore has donned his Santa persona and is doing fun visits to students via Zoom, brightening the unusual learning environment we find ourselves in.

Questions for the Superintendent:

R. Rooney- any insight as to the stimulus proposal? Not at this time.

J. Bellavance- thanks for the extraordinary food distribution efforts. R. Rooney- there is no way to know how many people near us need this assistance, and praises the process.

8. Financial Report- Finance Director Orla McKiernan-Rafty: Through November, the first 5 months of the year: property taxes total \$9.835M, with current taxes collected \$382K higher than the prior year. The Covid reimbursement request of \$17K has resulted so far in income of \$9,805. Local revenue (fees and licenses) continues to be higher than the prior year by \$44K. The audit has taken place; they will be back to us in early January; completion is targeted for the end of the month. An extension request has been filed.

Board questions to the Finance Director:

S. Herbert-clarified 2 details: the \$9,805 will be shown under miscellaneous income, such as income from speeding tickets; some Covid expenses at the Library will be covered by these funds as well as the other town facilities' expenses. The "Revised" column monitors funds moved within Contingency. S. Herbert- asked for a follow-up to last month: Since the purchase order itself for Town Hall building expenses was not issued, the materials were not actually ordered, \$3,449 was cancelled as a 2020 expense at the advice of the auditors.



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R. Werge- asked if there is concern that \$5.1 Million is committed, which amounts to 65%, but at only 5 months into the year. No, several funds are front-loaded such as the Fire Departments. Benefits have been high due to Covid and other factors. There are no major red flags. R. Werge- asked about the follow-up to the Transfer Station Bulky Waste fees discussion last month. The Finance Director prepared a spread sheet which she will email out. An analysis was done of tipping fees, showing not a huge increase in 2020 over 2019. But in both of those years, were under-budgeted and both needed Transfers. There has been no increase in Bulky Waste fees in a while. The DPW and the BOS will discuss the fees issue before the budget preparation season begins.

9. Tourtellotte Fund update: O. McKiernan-Raferly noted that window replacement is moving ahead with a purchase order; the actual work is planned for the spring/summer good weather.

10. Old Business: Safety Grant Project Update- O. McKiernan-Raferly: of the \$550,000 about \$190,000 was utilized by the end of June, including for ballistic window films; reimbursement has been requested. M. Smith- The security gates are next. The First Selectman and the Director of the DPW came to the property to look at a proposed relocation of the gate on Thatcher Road (TEEG was also informed). Installation is planned when good weather arrives. Remaining: cameras will still need to be installed. A. McGarry- so the project seems to be moving forward as planned? Yes.

11. Board of Finance Member Comments: S. Herbert noted the score of the Army/Navy game was 12-0! He thanked Recording Secretary Dotti Durst for her work and A. McGarry supported the positive words. J. Bellavance- Marry Christmas to all. A. McGarry- here's to seeing 2020 in our rear-view mirrors!

12. Adjourn:

Motion R. Rooney seconded by R. Werge to adjourn carried unanimously.

Chair A. McGarry adjourned the meeting at 7:47 PM.

To link to Zoom for this meeting: click or copy/paste to your search bar:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/TuyyybEMYqALzhC0hJMYjRTFc7agJ7PomyQwA_Ky5_VlzedO2zzJsUM-1Q1TW3d.pO4eZfrkYAF1H37b

Passcode: ?2J*fZN3

Respectfully submitted by Dorothy Durst, Recording Secretary

Dorothy Durst

These minutes have not yet been approved by the Board of Finance. Please refer to next month's meeting minutes for approval of and/or amendments to these minutes.