

TOWN of THOMPSON 815 Riverside Drive North Grosvenordale, CT 06255

1. The call to order by Chair Aaron McGarry was at 7:01 PM

Roll call: Members- Aaron McGarry (Chair), Jim Bellavance, Rob Mann, Robert Werge, Steve Herbert. Chair A. McGarry noted that Rhonda Rooney is out of state; 5 Members (a quorum) are present. Others: Orla McKiernan-Raftery (Finance Director), Melinda Smith (Superintendent of Schools), Kathleen Herbert (Chair, BOE), Bob Gentes (Schools Finance Director), First Selectman Amy St Onge and Selectman Susanne Witkowski, Tyra Penn-Gesek (Town Planner), Board and Commission members, Members of the public, Recording Secretary Dotti Durst

2. Review/approve minutes:

Motion J. Bellavance seconded by R. Werge to approve the 12-17-2020 Regular Meeting minutes carried unanimously. S. Herbert noted with a smile that the Army/Navy game score was incorrectly stated at 12-0 but rather was 15-0.

4. Correspondence: an email inviting the BOS to attend the BOE meeting was received

5. Citizens' comments: John Rice, 39 E. Thompson Rd- with a smile, asked about the score of the Army/Navy game the previous year.

6. Selectman's Update-First Selectman Amy St Onge: *The state's "Commitment To Fund" the sidewalk improvement project came through at \$2.1M; this will address broken surfaces, including an upgrade near the schools and public services. * The BOS, praising the work of the volunteers who comprise the Fire Department and EMS Services, has voted to increase the Firefighter's tax abatement to the statutory amount of \$1,500 per year, sending it to a town meeting. *The BOS legal notice for the next hybrid Town Meeting and Referendum: 1). Since the legal notice for the Roofs Referendum was not in compliance, a re-vote will be needed. 2). The question will be posed about making the Firefighter's tax abatement the amount of \$1,500. 3). The question will be posed to drop the bifurcated Schools and Town Budgets at referendum, instead combining them into a single budget number, based on the "one town, one vote "concept. 4). The question will be posed to shorten the time period between the appearance of a legal notice warning of a Town Meeting/Referendum to 21 days rather than 30, as is permitted by Statute. * The First Selectman praised the collaboration between the various departments of the Schools as well as with the Superintendent of Schools, citing numerous examples, but in particular the recent successful hybrid-model town meeting, at which residents could "attend" in various ways. *The BOS budget workshops will begin in February. * J&D Engineering is ready to send out RFPs for Bridges work (Buckley Hill Road,

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then Inspections for all less-than 20- feet-wide bridges. * Rich Benoit, Director/DPW, was praised for the large volume of work that was achieved in the past 2 years, with 10% of all road area re-surfaced.

Comments/questions by BOF:

R. Werge confirmed the statutory provision for posting Town Meeting notices

S. Herbert * asked all BOF and BOS members to consider attending the BOE budget planning meetings, in order to understand the reasoning behind each line item decision. * He noted that in the corporate world, each entity of the enterprise states the ways that cost reductions have been found or are planned in preparation for budget creation.

7. School District Update-Superintendent of Schools Melinda Smith: offered reciprocal thanks to the First Selectman for collaborative efforts, seeking efficiencies, thus creating a win-win. *Student count is 948, down by 9 as of January 01; on the 11th, full school was to resume but the elementary school staff size did not permit this, so those student are using remote learning. Some students who were previously Home Schooled have returned to enrollment, causing an up-tick. * The work on *A Portrait of a Graduate* continues. * The Middle and High School schedules have been modified so 8thh grade students are able to take a high school-level class (Financial Literacy, Music/Art or Tech Ed.) * Budget workshops begin soon * Discussion of requirements for providing Transition Services to age 18-21 Special Education students will be an agenda item at the BOE meeting; BOF members are invited, as the Special Ed budget is a major part of the total Schools budget. * The BOE is examining the subject of Winter Sports and possibly inter-district events. * Spending is on-track with last year. * The sidewalk upgrade project could result in fun exercise in an adult-supervised "Walking School Bus" activity.

8. Financial Report- Finance Director: O. McKiernan-Raftery reviewed the 6-months budget as of December 2020. Property taxes brought in \$11.7M. Due to the increased mil rate, this is up by \$561K. December Grants came in from Veterans Affairs, Disability allowances and Covid relief (\$82K), with extended time allowed for allocation. Local revenue is higher than last year by \$307K but of that \$250K is a pass-through amount for the Tourtellotte Trust project. Data Processing expenses are higher but will be off-set by Covid relief funds. At this time, the Surplus is estimated at possibly \$2.315M at the end of June, but there are other factors which may play in. The auditors have completed the second round and expected to finish by February. Comments/Questions by the BOF:

R. Werge- asks that future reports designate the non-recurring Covid expenses and income separately. Finance Director: Yes, she will set up separate columns.

S. Herbert- asks if the uses for Covid relief funds are designated or open-0ended. Yes, designated, with FEMA quite specific looking at incurred expenses while the state will allow future expenses such as cleaning the air ducts in the town hall, an anticipated project.

Thompson BOF

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9. Tourtellotte Fund update: Orla McKiernan-Raftery reported that Phase 2 begins soon on the Windows replacement program. A Public Hearing will be held February 1, 6 PM. The Board met with the Financial Advisors for the Trust; Phase 3 will probably begin in 2021. New officers are Thomas Angelo (President) and Kathleen Herbert (Secretary).

10. New Business: Presentation of Thompson's new Brand Package- Planner Tyra Penn-Gesek. The Branding work was chaired by Renee Waldron, but T. Penn-Gesek will summarize the Plan for the BOF. The Marketing Plan was developed by the Committee with a firm with which they contracted. The question was: How do you impress Thompson in someone's mind? The group needed to seek out the town's true identity. Starting with the slogan *Thompson, A Green and Growing Community*, a new logo has been designed and detailed for maximum impact of the message, to be used for all media relations and community outreach. "Thompson is committed to achieving growth in ways that are Green, Sustainable, and innovative" can be used by Boards/Commissions and all town entities to convey a common goal in town.

Comments: J. Bellavance asked about the parcel at the intersection of Rt 200 and Rt 12, a key entry point which currently creates a negative image of the town. T. Penn-Gesek: the Sidewalk project will begin at that point and upgrade the streetscape along Rt 12. That parcel is on the market, and the realtor is working to create exposure to potential developers.

A. McGarry: thanked the town planner, noting the presentation to be informative and helpful.

11. Old Business: none

12. Board of Finance Member Comments:

R. Werge- praised the Ordinance review which is underway

S. Herbert- thanked the Town and Schools for their co-operation as being beneficial to both.

13. Adjourn:

Motion J. Bellavance seconded by S. Herbert to adjourn carried unanimously. Chair A. McGarry adjourned the meeting at 8:03 PM.

Link to Zoom to see and hear this meeting: click or copy/paste to your search bar:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/jlcfJaGHUc72znoY8u3T8P8C0eMiloETkG0CNWCxVP-8DvftB4mLdkQPWG2-D8rX.raWOidGng0Z-A3lz Access Passcode: 9+#A^XKU

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.

> "Thompson is committed to achieving growth in ways that are Green, Sustainable, and Innovative"

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