



**TOWN of THOMPSON
Board of Finance
Regular Meeting-Minutes
Thursday, February 18, 2021
via Zoom from remote locations**

1. The call to order by Chair Aaron McGarry was at 7:02 PM.
Roll call: Members-Aaron McGarry (Chair), Rob Mann, Rhonda Rooney, Robert Werge, Steve Herbert, Jim Bellavance at 7:10. Chair A. McGarry noted that a quorum was present.
Others- Orla McKiernan-Rahtery (Finance Director), First Selectman Amy St Onge, Melinda Smith (Superintendent of Schools), Board and Commission members, Schools and Town Officials and Department heads, Members of the public, Recording Secretary Dotti Durst
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2. Approve minutes: **Motion S. Herbert seconded by R. Mann to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2021 Regular meeting carried with R. Rooney abstaining.**
3. Correspondence: Finance Director's report, Tipping Expenses FY 19-21
4. Citizens' comments: none
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5. Selectman's Update-First Selectman Amy St Onge: The BOS Budget Workshops are underway; final review begins next week on Tuesday (2-5), Thursday (5-8) and possibly Saturday (11-3); these days and times were selected to facilitate public participation.
* The BOF is invited to tour the Department of Public Works highway garage, to see their challenges as well as the goals/vision for the future; proposed scheduling will be sent out. * The next hybrid-model Town Meeting will be Wednesday February 24 at 7 PM; it is hoped that many citizens will "attend" in either method available, in the expectation that many voices will be heard. The agenda is widely posted/on the website.
Board questions: S. Herbert- regarding the structure of the Garage walk-through- do four members of the BOF constitute a quorum? A. McGarry- FOI training confirmed that an informational walk-through, such as was conducted previously at the schools, is permitted and is not a Meeting. An agenda would be created, attendance noted and minutes posted. It is an informational tour only, with no discussion among BOF members or the public. R. Rooney- status of Covid expenses/reimbursement? A St Onge- the matter is in good standing as of this time.
6. School District update-Superintendent of Schools Melinda Smith: Enrollment is 947, down 1 from last month; 199 students are Distance Learning from home, and 52 are Home Schooling (thus not part of the Thompson enrollment count). *Summer learning will need to be seriously considered, to close learning gaps created by the Covid situation.
*Competitive sports (basketball) will resume. Jeff Bolte has arranged for live-streaming as in-person attendance is not permitted. * Professional Development, required annually for teachers, was conducted in-house, with peer interaction. * The schools are in a five-year curriculum review, which will align with A Portrait of a Graduate developed last year.
Board questions: R. Rooney asked if the Covid deficit is at or near zero? The flow is holding steady. Will most students see an academic delay? What will the state do to address this matter? Those students who are considered "engaged" are doing well. About 200 who are learning at home experience struggles and learning gaps.; however, most students have had in-school full-time learning. The in-school/at-home back and forth has had an impact.

J. Bellavance asked about the situation with busses? All are being used. Even when not all students can attend, they are used to deliver 100 meals a day, mostly to drop-off/pick-up places. Soon some will be used to transport residents of Senior Housing to Covid vaccination locations.

7. Financial Report- Finance Director Orla McKiernan-Rafferty: 7 months into the fiscal year, property taxes collected: \$15.45 M. The ECS Grant (\$1.89M) and the first 1/3 of the Pequot Indian Grant (\$13K) have come in. Local revenue is up slightly, particularly through fees collected. Budget Workshops are underway, with review then public comment opportunities later in the month. The auditors will be ready to file 19-20 soon.
Board questions: R. Werge asked about the flow of Covid funds and if they can be assigned to the Schools needs? Two of the fund amounts have been used; the third is designated for the impacts on the town, including fire stations, the schools and other town entities. He asked for updates on the line items in the current budget which seem to be running short as the year draws to a close, so the BOF has no surprises. He thanks the Director for the email regarding the Transfer Station; he will research a little deeper into that situation.
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8. Tourtellotte Fund update – Board of Trustees: O. McKiernan-Rafferty noted that three other Board members are in attendance in addition to herself. Phase Three of the windows replacement project will require \$270,000 from the 2022 budget, and the Board has created a list of up-coming projects, such as a wheelchair lift. As of 12/31/2020 the Trust had a balance of \$2.86 million. R. Werge, a Trust Board member, noted that Phase Two work begins in the early spring, with 65 Main Street also under discussion
9. New Business: none
10. Old Business: none
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11. Board of Finance Member Comments:
S. Herbert asked to have the Recording Secretary verify that the Zoom link is posted with the BOF agenda, thus facilitating public access to meetings.
R. Werge will research then electronically distribute detailed Transfer Station data from last year to determine if the fee schedule is perfectly appropriate.
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12. **Motion R. Werge seconded by R. Mann to adjourn carried unanimously.**
Chair A. McGarry adjourned the Meeting at 7:56 PM

To hear the meeting on Zoom, click on the link, or copy/paste to your Search bar.

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/ldTHNz1oKgd9fbHApHS87zNCoaiQYXLVojgl1IMmyU1Zi6Jhof9lGhw9_zVRN.BsFPqmWjeNRVpW53
Passcode: 4qVMrW^y

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.