

## TOWN of THOMPSON

Board of Finance - Minutes  
Thursday, May 18, 2023  
6 PM - SPECIAL MEETING  
Merrill Seney Room, Town Hall  
And via Zoom from remote locations

1. The call to order by Chair Aaron McGarry was at 6:01 PM

Roll call: Aaron McGarry, Steve Herbert, Rob Mann, Dave Johnson, Robert Werge, Laurent Guillot  
First Selectman Amy St Onge, Melinda Smith (Superintendent of Schools), Bill Steglitz (Finance Director),  
Kaylee Beck (Schools Liaison), Kathleen Herbert (Chair, BOE), Board/Commission members, Town Department  
Heads and members of the public both in person and via Zoom. Recording Secretary Dotti Durst

2. Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Audit Report:

**Motion R. Werge seconded by S. Herbert to take up the report at the June meeting carried unanimously.**

3. Approval of minutes:

a. **Motion R. Mann seconded by D. Johnson to approve the April 17, 2023 Special Meeting minutes carried unanimously, with the modification of the heading on the second page.**

b. **Motion R. Werge seconded by S. Herbert to approve the April 18, 2023 Special Meeting minutes carried unanimously.**

c. **Motion S. Herbert seconded by R. Mann to approve the May 15, 2023 Special Meeting minutes carried unanimously.**

4. Correspondence after the agenda was posted:

- 05-16-2023 Contact/BOF email: Kassie. Subject: Interested in Involvement
- 05-18-2023 Contact/BOF email: Danielle Armstrong-Carlson. Subject "Reductions to Budget Concerns"
- Contact/BOF email: sales pitch
- email: First Selectman Amy St Onge detailing budget suggestions
- email: Director of Planning/ Development noted a possible budget reduction due to fewer staff

5. Citizens' comments:

- Christine Campbell, 861 Thompson Road, noted specific line items in the proposed budget, asked about ARPA funds, cited economic conditions, advocated for a zero-increase budget
- Brian Loffredo, representing the EDC, supported funding for the town's marketing plan
- Valerie Clark, 105 Alm Road, asked the results of exit Referendum polling; A. St Onge-- inconclusive
- Bill Warner, Lowell Davis Road, proposes that any increase be held down because of taxable growth
- Kathleen Herbert, Wilsonville Road, agrees that there will be an increase but it will not cover inflation
- A. St Onge, Riverside Drive and as First Selectman, identified a possible \$655K in reductions to the proposed budget. She notes the town to be getting further and further behind, that upkeep and maintenance should keep the town appealing and growing and gave an example of essential lights which the town does not have funding for.
- Tyra Penn, Director of Planning/Development, supported the EDC budget funds for marketing

**\*\* Motion S. Herbert seconded by L. Guillot that Agenda Items #6, #7, #8, #9, #10 and #11 will be deferred in the interests of beginning the budget workshop as soon as possible carried unanimously, 6-0.**

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

7. School District Update-Superintendent of Schools Melinda Smith: deferred

8. Financial Report- Finance Director William Steglitz: Report submitted in writing; discussion deferred

9. Tourtellotte Fund update – Board of Trustees:

10. New Business: none

11. Old Business: none

## **12. Budget Workshop (Time stamp - 6:28 PM )**

Preliminary discussion to begin the Budget Workshop: Each BOF member reflected on the Referendum results, with 27% voter turnout defeating the proposed 23-24 budget by about 2-1. Members noted the voices of the voters who advocated for presenting the budget “as proposed” to the public. Each member expressed concerns and has identified possible ways to move forward.

Resident State Trooper: was defeated at referendum, although by a closer margin than the budget.

**Motion D. Johnson seconded by R. Werge to remove \$200K from Line 243, Resident State Trooper (under Public Safety, Line 240) carried unanimously, 6-0.**

R. Werge- yes D. Johnson-yes L. Guillot- yes S. Herbert- yes R. Mann- yes A. McGarry- yes

MS-4 Stormwater retrofit: all paperwork is complete regarding restricting water flow to wetlands

**Motion D. Johnson seconded by S. Herbert to remove \$50K from MS-4, Capital Expenses and \$10K from Line 349, Public Works, for a total of \$60K, carried unanimously, 6-0.**

R. Werge- yes D. Johnson-yes L. Guillot- yes S. Herbert- yes R. Mann- yes A. McGarry-yes

Town Roofs Repair Fund: The plan is to set aside funds in order to qualify for matching/other grants

**Motion S. Herbert seconded by D. Johnson to reduce the Roof Repair Fund, Capital Expenses, by \$50K, carried 5-1. R. Werge- no D. Johnson-yes L. Guillot- yes S. Herbert- yes**

R. Mann- yes A. McGarry-yes

Roads/Paving: BOF previously took \$200K from request; need to be able to hire emergency contractors

**Motion D. Johnson seconded by R. Mann to reduce Roads/Paving, Capital Expenses, by \$150K carried 4-2. R. Werge- no D. Johnson-yes L. Guillot- yes S. Herbert- no R. Mann- yes**

A. McGarry- yes

Schools- Re-painting Hallway/ Lockers:

**Motion D. Johnson seconded by A. McGarry to reduce Schools- Hallway/Lockers, Capital Expenses, by \$48K carried 4-2. R. Werge- yes D. Johnson-yes L. Guillot- no S. Herbert- no**

R. Mann- yes A. McGarry-yes

Fire Departments: The BOS agreed they intend that all five departments be treated equally

**Motion D. Johnson seconded by R. Mann to reduce Line 271, Fire and Ambulance Grants, by a total of \$25K or \$5K per Department. After discussion, motion/second withdrawn D. Johnson and R. Mann**

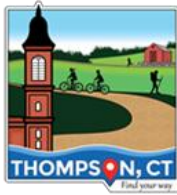
**Motion S. Herbert seconded by D. Johnson to reduce Fire and Ambulance Grants by a total of \$50,800, equalized at \$10,160 each for Lines 272, 272a, 272b, 272c, and 2782d, carried 5-1.**

R. Werge- yes D. Johnson-yes L. Guillot- yes S. Herbert- yes R. Mann- no A. McGarry-yes

Building Repair/Maintenance: painting the Town Hall was planned but pressure washing is underway

**Motion S. Herbert seconded by D. Johnson to reduce Line 230, Building Repair/Maintenance, by \$9K carried 6-0. R. Werge- yes D. Johnson-yes L. Guillot- yes S. Herbert- yes**

R. Mann- yes A. McGarry- yes



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Uniform Services/Safety Shoes: a new uniform provider is at a reduced cost. Safety shoes are a mandate.

**Motion R. Werge seconded by D. Johnson to reduce Uniform Services/Safety Shoes, Line 353 by \$1k and Line 393 by \$500, for a total of \$1,500 carried unanimously.** R. Werge- yes  
D. Johnson-yes L. Guillot- yes S. Herbert- yes R. Mann- yes A. McGarry- yes

Little League: there is a multi-year upgrade plan in place which is actively being implemented.

**Motion D. Johnson seconded by A. McGarry to reduce Little League (Capital Budget/transfer) by \$5K to \$6,190.** After discussion: **Motion R. Mann seconded by R. Werge to table this item until later in the budget process.** Then **R. Werge's second of the Motion to table was withdrawn.** Upon confirmation by the BOF Chair: **S. Herbert seconded the Motion to table; the vote failed 4 no - 2 yes.** R. Werge- no D. Johnson- no L. Guillot- no S. Herbert- yes R. Mann- yes A. McGarry- no

Main motion is repeated: **Motion D. Johnson seconded by A. McGarry to reduce Little League (Capital Budget/transfer) by \$5K to \$6,190 failed 3-3.** R. Werge- no D. Johnson-yes  
L. Guillot- no S. Herbert- no R. Mann- yes A. McGarry- yes

**Motion S. Herbert seconded by R. Mann to reduce Summer Temp Line 334: Grounds/Parks Line 375, Supplies by \$10K to zero.** #375 includes cemeteries/summer staff; town upkeep encourages families. After discussion, motion/second withdrawn: S. Herbert and R. Mann.

**Motion R. Mann seconded by S. Herbert to reduce Line 375, Grounds/Parks Supplies by \$5K carried 4-2.** R. Werge- no D. Johnson- no L. Guillot- yes S. Herbert- yes R. Mann- yes  
A. McGarry. yes

A 5-minute break was declared by the Chair: 7:30-7:35 PM

**Budget Workshop resumed at 7:35 PM.** The Finance Director, working with the budget in real time: the 2023-24 budget under revision currently shows a 2.06 mil increase; the proposed was 2.81 mils.

**Motion S. Herbert to forward to Town Meeting and Referendum a combined Thompson proposed budget of \$30,177,818.** Motion failed for lack of a second.

Communication Co-Ordinator: as per the Town Planner, the position can be eliminated

**Motion D. Johnson seconded by S. Herbert to remove \$5,562, reducing Line 576 (formerly located on Line 675) to zero carried unanimously, 6-0.** R. Werge- yes D. Johnson-yes  
L. Guillot- yes S. Herbert- yes R. Mann- yes A. McGarry-yes

Public Works: Lines 330 and 372 - the total proposed increase was discussed.

**Motion D. Johnson seconded by R. Werge to reduce Line 329, Building Maintenance/Overhead Doors, by \$5K carried unanimously, 6-0.** R. Werge- yes D. Johnson-yes L. Guillot- yes  
S. Herbert- yes R. Mann- yes A. McGarry-yes

There was discussion of how the 7 DPW employees are distributed on two lines (338 and 341). The BOF requests that after the budget is in place, the Finance Director modify how the staff positions are listed, for clarity.

Salary Increases: discussion of the union contract agreement (+2.25%) as compared to the proposed increase (3%). D. Johnson stated that he will not participate in discussion of this matter.

**Motion R. Mann seconded by S. Herbert to provide that all municipal town staff receive the contracted 2.25% pay increase.** Discussion: A. St Onge: during the pervious years, some staff received no increases. The town must be competitive in order to acquire qualified new staff, in particular the town's assessor. The Finance Director: the impact on the budget will be a reduction of about \$17,000 not including reductions in FICA.

After discussion, R. Mann modified his Motion and S. Herbert agreed.

**Motion R. Mann seconded by S. Herbert to provide that all municipal town staff receive the contracted 2.25% pay increase, exempting the Town Assessor, carried 4-1 with 1 abstention.**  
R. Werge- no D. Johnson-abstained L. Guillot- yes S. Herbert- yes R. Mann- yes A. McGarry-yes

Recreation Assistant Director: **Motion D. Johnson seconded by R. Mann to reduce Line 538, Recreation Assistant Director by \$14,356.** Discussion: a reduction is already in place due to the change to 2.25% from the proposed 3% increase. Motion/second withdrawn: D. Johnson and R. Mann  
**Motion D. Johnson seconded by R. Werge to remove \$15K from Recreation Fund and add \$15K to Revenue (no adjustment to the current budget proposal) carried unanimously, 6-0.**

R. Werge- yes D. Johnson-yes L. Guillot- yes S. Herbert- yes R. Mann- yes A. McGarry-yes

ZEO: The increase was requested by the Planning and Zoning Commission, in recognition of the significant workload of the position. A. St Onge detailed some examples of the duties of the office.

**Motion D. Johnson seconded by L. Guillot to remove \$7,288 from Zoning Enforcement Officer, Line 603, carried, 4-2** R. Werge- no D. Johnson-yes L. Guillot- yes S. Herbert-no  
R. Mann- yes A. McGarry - yes

Library Administration: Discussion: inflation alone accounts for the small, requested increase.

**Motion D. Johnson seconded by R. Mann to reduce Line 509, Library Administration, by \$2K failed, 4 no-2 yes.** R. Werge- no D. Johnson-yes L. Guillot- no S. Herbert- no  
R. Mann- yes A. McGarry-no

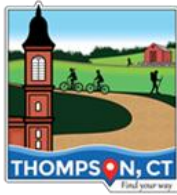
**Motion A. McGarry to reduce Line 509, Library Administration, by \$1K failed/lack of a second.**

Public Works, Outside Contractors: the DPW is fully staffed

**Motion D. Johnson seconded by S. Herbert to reduce Line 347, DPW/ Outside Contractors, by \$5K.** During discussion: R. Werge, seconded by S. Herbert, made the motion to amend the main motion on the table, to instead reduce Line 347by \$13k. The motion to amend the Main Motion carried 5-1 R. Werge- yes D. Johnson-no L. Guillot- yes S. Herbert- yes R. Mann- yes  
A. McGarry- yes

Returning to the Modified Main Motion:

**Motion to reduce Line 347, DPW/ Outside Contractors, by \$13K, carried 6-0.** R. Werge- yes  
D. Johnson-yes L. Guillot- yes S. Herbert- yes R. Mann- yes A. McGarry-yes



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Contractor for MS-4: In discussion, the future reporting tasks and administrative work associated with compliance with the MS4 mandate were detailed. No action was taken.

Street Lighting: there is fluctuation in usage, seasonal outages and other factors

**Motion R. Werge seconded by R. Mann to reduce Line 350, Street Lighting, by \$10K, from \$96K to \$86K for the actual cost of electricity usage (not electricity distribution costs) carried 5-1.**

R. Werge- yes D. Johnson-yes L. Guillot- yes S. Herbert- no R. Mann- yes A. McGarry-yes

Snow Removal Overtime: there is annual fluctuation in storm frequency and severity

**Motion S. Herbert seconded by A. McGarry to reduce Line 414, Snow Removal Overtime by \$10K carried, 5 yes, with 1 abstention R. Werge- yes D. Johnson-abstained L. Guillot- yes S. Herbert- yes R. Mann- yes A. McGarry-yes**

\*\* Reductions to the General Government 2023-24 proposed budget at this time are \$642K, which would result in a 1.95 mil increase over the current year. The proposed 23-24 increase was \$704K over the previous years' budget. At this time, the 23-24 increase over the current year is about \$60K.

**Motion S. Herbert seconded by L. Guillot to forward to Town Meeting and Referendum a combined 2023-2024 proposed budget of \$30,109,324.** Discussion of the motion: R. Werge-the voters spoke; we have made major cuts to the town budget and none for Education; this will not carry with the voters. D. Johnson: the voters have told us that this will not pass. After further discussion:

**D. Johnson seconded by R. Mann Moved the Question, which carried 4-2. R. Werge- yes D. Johnson-yes L. Guillot- no S. Herbert- no R. Mann- yes A. McGarry yes**

The Main Motion was repeated:

**Motion S. Herbert seconded by L. Guillot to move to Town Meeting and Referendum a combined 2023-2024 proposed budget of \$30,109,324, failed, 4 no, 2 yes. R. Werge- no D. Johnson- no L. Guillot- yes S. Herbert- yes R. Mann- no A. McGarry-no**

After reviewing a document prepared by the Finance Director for the BOF to use to calculate mil rates:

**Motion A. McGarry seconded by D. Johnson to reduce the Education Budget by \$750,110, bringing the mil rate increase to 1 mil, carried 4-2 R. Werge- yes D. Johnson-yes L. Guillot- no S. Herbert- no R. Mann- yes A. McGarry-yes**

Contingency Fund: Discussion- \* a larger Contingency Fund may be needed considering the major cuts by the BOF tonight. \*tonight's work done should send a strong message to voters that they were heard.

**Motion D. Johnson seconded by R. Mann to reduce Contingency by \$19,140, back to \$50K failed, 3-3. R. Werge- no D. Johnson-yes L. Guillot- no S. Herbert- no R. Mann - yes A McGarry-yes**

DPW 9-Ton Truck; **Motion D. Johnson seconded by R. Mann to authorize the BOS to order a 9-ton DPW Truck in a lease-purchase agreement, with lease payments to commence in 2025:**

discussion of the timing of the order for the truck took place as the vehicle's arrival and the commencement of payments it will not impact the budget being proposed. The payments will fall into a time period when two other purchases are completed and coming off Debt Service. The previous motion on this subject, on April 14, page 2, was reviewed. **Motion/Second were withdrawn, D. Johnson and R. Mann.**

**Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Werge to forward to Town Meeting and to Referendum a combined 2023-24 budget of \$29,359,214 carried 4-2. R. Werge- yes D. Johnson-yes L. Guillot- no S. Herbert- no R. Mann- yes A. McGarry-yes**

13. Board of Finance Member Comments:

- R. Mann: this process was difficult for all parties
- R. Werge: the BOF collectively is an effective group, with the various points of view beneficial to the process. The common goal is to bring a budget to the voters which we believe they will approve
- A. McGarry: because of the voice of the voters at the previous budget referendum, did not himself support some of the modifications which he had to support, such as Emergency Services, in order to move the process forward. It was not an enjoyable process-- comparable to having "to just rip the band aid off" to avoid letting the voters down.
- S. Herbert hopes the town will be better off after this challenging process
- D. Johnson noted the necessity for this difficult work, hearing the voices of the first referendum voters

13. Adjourn:

**Motion D. Johnson seconded by R. Werge to adjourn carried unanimously, 6-0.**

Chair A. McGarry adjourned the meeting at 9:39 PM.

**NOTE:** The Board of Selectmen met in the Merrill Seney Room, utilizing the continuing Zoom link, following the adjournment by the BOF. There is a brief pause between the two meetings, which are both on this same recording. The BOS meeting begins at 3 hours/38 minutes into the Zoom recording

To access ZOOM to see and hear this meeting, click on this link or copy/paste it to your Search bar:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/URdIYMiX4od\\_-hyCVk5qXU7RUNrH\\_ZH93zQedXwMTh3YsUv\\_7SzsIkA9UBXTYDn8.Un2UsYbW-DeyszQu](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/URdIYMiX4od_-hyCVk5qXU7RUNrH_ZH93zQedXwMTh3YsUv_7SzsIkA9UBXTYDn8.Un2UsYbW-DeyszQu)  
Passcode: \*5Ysu=d8

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.*