



Town of Thompson  
Board of Finance  
815 Riverside Drive  
North Grosvenordale, CT 06255

RECEIVED  
TOWN OF THOMPSON, CT.  
2019 JUL 22 A 8:52  
*Linda Paradise*  
TOWN CLERK ASST

**Minutes – Special Meeting**  
**Monday July 8, 2019**  
**Time: 6:00 PM**  
**Room 2, Thompson Library**

1. Call to Order & Roll Call:

**Chairman Aaron McGarry called the meeting to order at 6:06pm.**

**Present:** Chair Aaron McGarry, Vice-Chair Larry Groh Jr., Susanne Witkowski, Rhonda Rooney, Jim Bellavance and Rob Mann.

**Absent:** None

2. Citizen's Comments:

- Joe Ptaszynski, Sunset Hill Rd - less services now then 30 years ago; why isn't BOE budget passing, lack of communication from school, need advocate; mentioned Alliance and Security Grants.
- Mary Eames, 20 Labonte Rd – need to explain Alliance Grant to people, misconception on grant lowering school budget.
- Theodore Smith, 90 Hagstrom Rd – wants \$400K taken out of School Budget, \$200K from grant and \$200K back to tax payers.
- Bill Witkowski, 12 Clarence Dr, BOE Chairman - agrees school needs advocate, they try to keep everyone informed, school financial books are public and always audited, nothing to hide; the Alliance Grant is in addition to budget and only spent on spending plan approved by state; Security Grant is one time offer and the state will reimburse the town 70%, it's not for hiring personnel it's for security upgrades, national and state experts told them what the school needs, town has been awarded the \$500K grant but will lose it if the town doesn't vote for it.
- Wayne O'Brien, 108 Fabyan Rd – BOE needs to be honest with people; Melinda should speak monthly on radio;
- Craig Godzik, Meadow Dr – Thompson has more than a HS, we have Pre-k to 8th grade also and all the kids need an education.
- Jim Bellavance, Riverside Dr – BOE and Superintendent are doing a great job; listed several towns that don't have a HS; need feasibility study on HS, it's budget is highest due to specialties offered, after looking at numbers thinks no HS in town will be the best thing for Thompson in future, it served us well in the past.
- Shawn Brissette, Whitmore Ave – where would our HS students go? Thompson will still have to pay and we will lose control of the costs, need to take that conversation all the way to the end; doesn't think HS is the most expensive.
- Marie Costa, 125 New Rd – went through BOE budget and thinks some costs can be cut.
- Tom Angelo, Fabyan Rd, BOE & TMHS Alumni Assoc. – did talk with another town on doing regional HS but they backed out; AP classes offered in HS saves on college tuition.

3. School Security Grant: Town has until 7/28/19 to accept the \$536,835 Grant from Homeland Security for gates at every entrance for safer evacuation of students and arrival of First Responders, protective film on all first floor windows and doors to slow down intruder entrance into building, more cameras for blind spots and devices for instant back-ground checks. The town needs to put up the funds and will be reimbursed \$368,107.76, total cost to town is \$168,727.40. Grant cannot be adjusted now, must go as is. Discussion on when Town Meeting and Referendum will be held.
- Steve Benoit, Thompson's Emergency Management Office, stated since we don't have state police coverage in town we need the help protecting our students.
- A lengthy discussion ensued on the reasons for the safety items in the grant; no on-going costs after grant upgrades are complete; it would be a Capital Expense and will not increase the BOE budget; no-one wants to spend \$500K until something happens, we are talking about protection for our kids.

**Susanne Witkowski moved and Aaron McGarry seconded the motion to appropriate up to \$550,000.00 from fund balance for school security grant project.**

Discussion: J. Bellavance doesn't think the gates are a good idea, will cause more problems and concerned with sending the Grant out to vote with the Budget again, feels they will get the same results; Grant doesn't add to school budget; Grant cannot be modified at this time, needs to be approved as is. R. Rooney & R. Mann are concerned with getting same results; L. Groh thinks not enough time to get word out about changing voting process to Town Meeting and totally believes the Security Grant is needed. S. Witkowski believes the most precious items in town is our children and we need to do right by them; this is a no brainer; also doesn't want to be sitting there again in a month trying to cut the budgets again. A. McGarry spoke about calmness that comes from have questions answered face to face referencing voting at Town Meeting vs Referendum.

A roll call vote was taken:

**Aaron McGarry - Yes**  
**Susanne Witkowski - Yes**

**Larry Groh Jr. - Yes**  
**Jim Bellavance – No**

**Rhonda Rooney – Yes**  
**Rob Mann – No**

**The motion carried 4-2**

4. Budget Workshop: Superintendent M. Smith explained the Alliance Grant they were awarded. Discussion ensued regarding past vote results; if BOE budget was cut again where would it come from; mill rates; all 1 budget, can cut Town side also;

**Susanne Witkowski moved to reduce the paving line item by \$75,000.** There was no second on the motion – motion died.

Discussion ensued - need to cut enough money to get budgets passed, need to let the people know they were heard, also need to educate our students; town budget passed all 3 times, don't need to cut it; overview of past budget changes; People can voice

- Theodore Smith, 90 Hagstrom Rd – Towns people see school has 1000 students and a budget of \$18 M so it costs \$180,000 K per student and 80 administrators for 1000 students.
- Mrs. Godzik – some votes against school is because of the cuts made to the school, listen closely to what the tax payers are saying.
- Kathleen Herbert, Wilsonville Rd –\$18M school budget isn't all in Mill Rate only \$11M of it is because the state funds \$5M - 6M of budget.

Susanne Witkowski moved and Aaron McGarry seconded the motion to reduce Transfer Fund line item 544820 Road Resurfacing by \$30,000.00 and reduce Dept. - 9000 School Board Budget line item 400/4880 School Board Expenditures by \$30,000.00.

Transfer Fund – Dept. 8102				
Project Name	BOF Proposed	Action Voted	BOF Proposed	Reason
544820 - Road Resurfacing	\$300,000	Reduce by \$30,000	\$270,000	Removal for budgeting purpose
School Board Budget – Dept. 9000				
400/4880 - School Board Expenditures	\$18,717,572	Reduce by \$30,000	\$18,687,572	Removal for budgeting purpose

Discussion ensued on looking at the Library to cut money; kids use library; library budget was increased this year because in past years it's been reduced; Library is a focal point for seniors and infant/toddlers. A. McGarry asked the Board to consider who made the motion on the table – a member who for 6 years has fought over and over again for the school; he isn't happy with the cut to paving but considering who made the motion; L. Groh agrees completely and he's one who wouldn't touch the town budget if it passes; A roll call vote was taken:

**Aaron McGarry - Yes**

**Larry Groh Jr. - Yes**

**Rhonda Rooney – Yes**

**Susanne Witkowski - Yes**

**Jim Bellavance – Yes**

**Rob Mann – Yes**

**The motion carried unanimously 6-0**

**Aaron McGarry moved and Rob Mann seconded the motion to send to the Board of Selectmen the:**

Board of Education Budget of	\$ 18,687,572.00	
General Town Budget of	\$ 5,969,132.00	
Debt Service of	\$ 1,235,113.00	
Capital Expenditures of	<u>\$ 407,597.00</u>	for a
Total budget of	\$ 26,299,414.00	

**Mill Rate of 28.04 which is a proposed Mill increase of 0.29.**

**Rob Mann – Yes**

**Aaron McGarry – Yes**

**Susanne Witkowski – Yes**

**Jim Bellavance - Yes**

**Rhonda Rooney – Yes**

**Larry Groh Jr. - Yes**

**The motion carried unanimously 6-0**

6. Board of Finance Member's Comments: This was a compromise for some who didn't want to lower town budget and hopes it passes.

7. Adjourn

**Susanne Witkowski moved and Larry Groh Jr. seconded the motion to adjourn.**

**The motion carried unanimously 6-0**

**Chairman Aaron McGarry adjourned the meeting at 7:55 PM.**

Respectfully Submitted,

*Diane Minarik*

Diane Minarik

Recording Secretary

07-08-19 Minutes BOF Special Meeting