



TOWN of THOMPSON
Board of Finance
North Grosvenordale, CT 06255

THOMPSON Board of Finance Special Meeting/Budget Workshop

Thursday, April 2, 2020 From remote locations via Zoom

MINUTES

1. Chairman Aaron McGarry called the Special BOF Meeting and Budget Workshop to order at 7:01 PM. The meeting was conducted utilizing the on-line Zoom technology.

Roll call: Members-Aaron McGarry (Chair), Jim Bellavance, Rob Mann, Rhonda Rooney, Robert Werge, Steve Herbert. The full Board is present.

First Selectman Amy St Onge and Selectmen Susanne Witkowski and Ken Beausoleil. Orla McKiernan-Raferly (Finance Director). Fire Chiefs of the five Thompson Fire Departments: (Matthew Grauer (Thompson Hill), John Sharpe (Community, Jeff Sheldon (East), Kyle Cimochoowski (West), Steve Bodreau (Quinebaug), and Josh Kusek (EMS Administrator. Many Board and Commission members, Town Officials and Department heads. Members of the public. Recording Secretary Dotti Durst

2. Correspondence: Tax Collector Rene Morin - the impact of re-valuation on taxes

3. Citizens' comments –

* Jessica Bolte, 1081 Riverside Dr- calls for a second session of Citizens' Comments on the BOF agendas. She also suggests the BOF to look at ethics; the BOE has guidelines

*Christine Campbell, 861 Thompson Road- given the pandemic and associated stresses on the community, asks that Thompson's BOF not follow the Governor's Executive order, permitting implementation of a budget and setting the mill rate without a town meeting/referendum.

*Dick Trudeau, 192 Wagher Rd- the goal should be a zero-increase budget, given the situation

* Dennis Tackson, 225 Fabyan Rd –saw that a town is looking into drive-through voting

* Jessica Bolte- asks that no cuts be made to the Education budget. There were significant cuts last year; the budget needs to allow for increases due to inflation.

4. Budget Workshop: Chair A. McGarry- at the March 12 BOF Budget Review, much of the proposal from the Fire Departments was set aside; thus tonight's review will begin on page 39l. All Fire Chiefs are in attendance. Chief John Sharpe stated that much of the information needed by the BOF is included in the official worksheets prepared by each Department, but he will review anything, for the purpose of clarity. All five chiefs weighed in to confirm that this page is entirely fixed costs, and that the Capital expenses are on another page of the budget, which lists turn-out equipment, air packs, replacement for fire hoses, and other items such as new equipment needs/code compliance. Chief Steve Bodreau: the line for "gear" was included on the budget worksheets the Departments received, so these items were placed accordingly. R. Rooney there may be extra EMS Service expenses coming up for sanitizing equipment. Steve Benoit, Emergency Management, was praised by the chiefs for tremendous support and effort in finding sources of supplies. R. Mann- Thompson's fire personnel need to be correctly supplied and outfitted, in order to be always ready.

R. Mann-for the Quinebaug proposal: \$55,000 is entered incorrectly instead of the correct amount of \$75,000.

Motion R. Mann seconded by J. Bellavance to modify the line on the FY 21 Selectmen's Proposed Budget for the Quinebaug Fire Department to read \$75,000; motion carried unanimously, 6-0.

Comment: A. St Onge, First Selectman- the Selectmen did not actually change what shows on the Quinebaug



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budget line, although the typo was brought to the attention of the Selectmen, so it may not be appropriate to modify that line here at the BOF meeting. Chair A. McGarry followed up on the First Selectman's inquiry.

Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Werge, to re-enter the \$55,000 to the two respective BOS columns of the proposed FY 21 Quinebaug Fire Department budget carried unanimously, 6-0.

Quinebaug Fire Chief confirmed this to be a typographical error, not spotted until just before the BOS meeting at which the first review of the proposed budget took place. The consensus of the BOF is that the error should be corrected at this point. S. Herbert- proposed increasing the number on page 40 of the Fire Departments Budget Proposal, which accordingly would make the budget totals accurate; without impacting the numbers put forward by the BOS as they had received them. **Motion A. McGarry seconded by J. Bellavance to formalize the modification of the Fire Departments budget proposal by changing line #522500 on page 40 to \$452,000 (+\$25,000) carried unanimously.** J. Sharpe- the Finance Director created Fire Department Budget Request Worksheets 3 or 4 years ago, but it seems this is the first year the budget break-out details are being seen by the BOF, nor were the Capital Plan Worksheets available, which look out long-term. In each of the past years, the numbers have been roughly the same as presented this year. R. Rooney- Thompson is grateful that there have been no major issues which called out disaster control, but the town has to be always prepared for major events. The Capital Plan is important to that end.

Action items: **R. Werge requests the Finance Director create a single table with all five Fire Department budget line items listed separately, so the BOF can see the big picture. S. Herbert agreed that the BOF needs consistency in what each of the line items mean. **S. Herbert noticed that each department seems to have a different month in which their fiscal year begins, requesting the Departments identify that timeline on each Worksheet. Chief J. Sharpe- yes, each is an independent organization; it is possible to bring up the subject to begin to move toward a unified fiscal year. Something to work on for the future.

Selectman S. Witkowski- status of EMS funding? J. Kusek – seems adequate at the status quo. A. McGarry – they propose flat funding compared to fy 2020.

Canine Control- p. 45: the town is examining the possibility of bringing services back under town control. Selectman S. Witkowski- there is a local fund available to upgrade the current town kennel area and handle some other specific needs. This change would keep more taxpayer money in town. Currently NECCOG handles matters without a contract; for next year they ask \$29,594.

Action item: * A. McGarry asks for a comparison of the two possibilities for Canine Control for the BOF budget review; the determination of which model to select would fall to the BOS.

5. Motion R. Rooney seconded by R. Mann to adjourn at 8:59 PM carried unanimously.

See/Hear the meeting on Zoom: Click or copy/paste to your Search bar
<https://zoom.us/rec/share/7u1YArKg3VtIE9Ln2BnHXoghOLzhX6a8hyEf-vpYyUi6WeXkTw8Tws4Ml3hINfNM>

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.