



**TOWN of THOMPSON
Board of Finance
North Grosvenordale, CT 06255**

Thompson Board of Finance Special Meeting/Budget Workshop

Thursday, April 9, 2020 From remote locations via Zoom

MINUTES

1. Chairman Aaron McGarry called the Special BOF Meeting and Budget Workshop to order at 7:02 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 via Zoom.

First Selectman Amy St Onge and Selectmen Susanne Witkowski and Ken Beausoleil.

Orla McKiernan-Raftery (Finance Director). Kathleen Herbert (Chair, BOE). Alison Bontaugh (Library Director). John Rice (Chair, Building Committee). Richard Benoit (DPW Director). Many Board and Commission members, Town Officials and Department heads. Many members of the public. Recording Secretary Dotti Durst

2. Correspondence- the Finance Director emailed follow-up documents to the BOF members

3. Citizens' comments – Shawn Brisette, Whittimore Av: some citizens have called for a zero-increase budget. The BOE has kept to the status quo, advocating “just stay whole” given high health insurance increases. Unknown factors may necessitate additional support for students whose education has been disrupted by the closing of the school system.

4. Budget Workshop: BOF member R. Rooney asked to offer comments. She reviewed impacts of the virus outbreak on the small business community, citing data, as well as on the employees of those and of all businesses. Some sources note that 78% of all residents live from paycheck to paycheck. She advocates that the BOF and the BOS/BOE keep the current stresses to citizens in mind when finalizing the budget, advocating for a flat budget for fy 20-21. R. Mann concurs.

Finance Director- clarification of a previous question: The page 92 EDC proposed budget request total is +\$5,265, with the Intern's pay \$5,000 of the amount. The BOS has reduced Branding Initiatives to \$25,000, with the EDC to determine priorities among their projects.

Resume Budget review: Building Committee, page 93. R. Werge asks their responsibilities.

J. Rice named Oil Spill Cleanup, School Roof and tank replacements; they will again look at the possibility of reducing costs for electricity through the use of solar. He advocates for a small pay increase for their Recording Secretary as it includes the work for capital projects.

Fringe Benefits: O. McKiernan-Raftery. Pension and FICA are tied to payroll (Pension will have an actuarial review this year for +\$2,650). Health and Life Insurances- a confirmed 19.5% increase (higher than expected); the contract includes the Town and the Schools. Severance (+\$5,000) is based on the number of staff eligible to retire. R. Werge suggests Severance (covers sick and accrued time owned to an employee) be set up in a reserve account for long-term balancing. He offered to collaborate on Worker's Comp (projected at + \$11,479).

Municipal Insurance- Liability/Worker's Comp, possible 8% increase (Town and School). Since an Insurance provider was paid a flat consulting fee 2 years ago, Professional Services is at zero



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Transfers, Page 101, # 8102. R. Werge- the BOF will best be able to make decisions if we all have a clear understanding about the details of each of these requests (right-hand column); the line items should be prioritized for the BOF and the public. The Board concurs. S. Herbert asks about Capital Improvement plans for other town-owned buildings besides the Library, in order to plan and avoid financing costs. K. Herbert- yes, the BOE has capital improvements within their proposed budget; \$155,000 is actually for aspects of the building itself (HVAC System, floor replacements). These expenses impact the MBR, causing long-term increases to the BOE budget. Ideally, some would be re-positioned to the budget for the town, which owns the structures.

Library Repairs and Library Roof- A. Boutaugh reviewed planned repairs, some following up HVAC replacement. She outlined the proposed roof work/subsequent follow-up for completion.

Little League- need safety equipment (helmets and batters' gear) and fence repairs.

Re-valuation- O. McKiernan-Rafferty: State mandated every 5 years; Thompson's was done in 2019. Now the budget sets aside funds toward the expense next time; each of five towns is in a collaborative, with one of each of the five having the re-valuation in any one year, fully funded.

Road resurfacing- R. Benoit: the request for \$500,000 was reduced by the BOS and funds re-allocated for engineering work for the salt shed and for bridge work. Last year, 6.83 miles of paved roads were re-surfaced(of 96 miles), using a long-term high-quality approach, and West Thompson was widened and drainage improved. Last August's state Road Aid funds did not arrive. By being able to purchase road materials in quantity, better pricing is available. R. Mann praised the road work recently completed, even given stresses during the year.

Tourtellotte Trust- A. McGarry: this is a pass-through account, with a similar revenue amount

Bridge Work- R. Benoit: Load Weights are not calculated and posted as required; when done, heavier vehicles could to be re-routed, reducing traffic on some roads and extending their lives. BOF members made positive comments about recent projects, including the impact on visitors.

Roll-off (Landfill) Truck- R. Benoit reviewed the necessity, the heavy use and explained a strategy that could result in the opportunity to obtain the Truck without needing to add the expense of financing. The BOF praised R. Benoit for his diligence and creativity.

5.Motion R. Werge seconded by J. Bellavance to adjourn at 9:23 PM. carried unanimously.

See/hear the meeting on Zoom. Copy and paste to your Search bar:

https://zoom.us/rec/share/_epJDerM6ERIRKfztUTkRKA4BYu-aaa82yAZqPEFxEkHsWLCG-oU-rJsZzbDim3b

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.