



TOWN of THOMPSON
Board of Finance
North Grosvenordale, CT 06255

THOMPSON Board of Finance Special Meeting/Budget Workshop

Thursday, April 30, 2020 - via Zoom

MINUTES

1. The call to order by Chair Aaron McGarry was at 7:04 PM.

Present: Aaron McGarry, Robert Werge, Steve Herbert, Rhonda Rooney, Robert Mann, Jim Bellavance (signaled a thumbs-up, for lack of audio). The chair noted all members are present via Zoom. Orla McKiernan-Raftery (Finance Director), Amy St Onge (First Selectman), Ken Beausoleil and Susanne Witkowski (Selectmen), Kathleen Herbert (Board of Education Chair), Melinda Smith (Superintendent of Schools), Shawn Brissette (BOE Vice Chair) Rene Morin (Tax collector). Many Board and Commission members/town staff, Students and Parents, and Members of the public. Recording Secretary Dotti Durst

2. Correspondence: Rene Morin- an email today addresses the dollar amount set aside in the reserve to off-set uncollected taxes, anticipating that collections might be on the low side

3. Citizens' comments: A. McGarry- reviewed 3 ways members of the public can participate in this meeting.

- A. St Onge: regarding chatter about possible drive-through voting: the Town Attorney confirmed that the Governor's Executive Order does not authorize this, and the budget process must be carried out exactly as our Resolution stipulated; towns may learn soon of the Governor plans to enforce the Executive Order.

O. McKiernan-Raftery asked town department heads for possible budget reductions, to be provided tonight

-M. Smith: the Schools budget presented maintains programs now in place. The three reasons for the budget increase have previously been carefully reviewed with the BOF and the public.

-Shawn Brissette, Whittemore Ave: asks the possibility for extensions, permitting a public vote; supports Citizens' Comments on the BOF agenda nearer the end, advocating for discussion at the next Regular meeting

- A. St Onge: a new email address, linked directly to the First Selectman, has been opened to allow Public Comment regarding the budget. Use **budget@thompsonct.org** during the remainder of the budget process. Emails can be sent in at any time and will be forwarded to the BOF.

4. Budget Workshop:

Chair A. McGarry- the Finance Director created documents based on R. Werge's concept of ranking the proposed budget items by both dollar and percentage increases. Technical difficulty delayed the presentation.

Other discussion:

-R. Werge asked R. Morin for more detail about revenue set aside for uncollected taxes; R. Morin advocates for not lowering revenue expectations, as Thompson taxpayers will primarily probably pay on time, usually at a 99% collection rate. The allowance for uncollected taxes is low; he advocates increasing the set-aside by 50% or \$105,000, which would still be a lower rate than most towns. If by June 2021, taxes have come in low, the reserve will need to be tapped. S. Herbert: what happens with any unused funds in this account? Do the funds roll forward, added to next year, or go to the General Fund? When will the amount of unpaid taxes be known? R. Morin: in June, the Suspense Account is tabulated.

- regarding BOF discussion of Citizens' Comments on the agenda: was a topic at the February meeting (Item 9. B) but with four of the six members present, it was determined to wait until the full Board could participate at a Regular meeting.



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–R. Rooney: by what date must the budget be ready? A. McGarry: The Budget Resolution calls for meeting on May 4, and another meeting was added on May 7. After that, the public, the public can see/comment on it.

Resumption of Budget review: R. Werge and the Finance Director co-hosted the computer pages for the workshop. She has asked each department head to do a close review of the budget proposals, looking for any possible reductions; several ideas came back, especially based on impacts of the current situation. She conducted a review of line items which could be reduced and of those which are fixed.

–S. Herbert: regarding Fringe benefits, how is the expense calculated? New-hires are estimated to need the average cost, those not on the plan this year are not calculate din next year's or are at a minimum amount.

– R. Mann: during review of Animal Control, asked how much of the \$69,000 in accumulated funds the town would lose if the town did not re-open the dog pound and instead went with a contract with NECCOG. Extended discussion followed. A. McGarry confirmed that if a contract with NECCOG is signed, most of the funds would revert to them; if the town re-opens the dog pound, the funds remain in town. He asked if last year's budget, along with these funds is workable. A. St Onge and S. Witkowski: it is the BOS that would determine if to go with a NECOG contract or with in-house services; they agreed this amount to be workable.

Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Mann to flat-fund #2401, Animal Control (at \$24,292) carried 6-0.
J. Bellavance- yes. R. Mann- yes. R. Rooney – yes. S. Herbert – yes R. Werge – yes. A. McGarry- yes.

R. Rooney-asked the Selectmen about Roads/Bridges. A. St Onge: The Salt shed is environmentally very important, but if it had to, the bridge engineering could wait. Everything else in that budget section is essential. A. McGarry: if the Director of the DPW decides to utilize what is named Roads funds for bridgework, bridges being part of roads, he could do so. **Motion A. McGarry seconded by J. Bellavance to eliminate \$50,000 from the Bridgework/Assessment budget line carried 6-0.**

J. Bellavance- yes. R. Mann- yes. R. Rooney – yes. S. Herbert – yes. R. Werge – yes. A. McGarry- yes.

Grant funding possibility for Quaddick Road (\$700,000): The DPW is exploring this possibility; BOF members reviewed several scenarios for implementation, resulting in a possible substantial savings.

Transfer page: S. Herbert- asks the possibility of handling the Roll-Off Transfer Station truck this fiscal year, a 20-21 budget savings of \$43,478 J. Bellavance supports this. Discussion: how most appropriately to utilize remaining salt funds this year. After several scenarios were reviewed, it was agreed to ask the DPW Director to attend the next meeting to clarify the various scenarios. Finance Director: the FY 20 budget may be tight.

5. Motion R. Werge seconded by R. Rooney to adjourn at 9:04 PM carried unanimously.

To hear the meeting via Zoom- Click or Copy/paste the link into your Search bar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/5vZ2E4vbq0VJXJX04WbbQa8ZQ6P9eaa8hygW8vIOzEp02yZzOwLcxAdJNL0OPrJ>
If asked for a Password: 6F#nH5A1

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.