



## TOWN of THOMPSON Board of Finance

### THOMPSON Board of Finance Special Meeting/Public Hearing

Monday, May 4, 2020 (via Zoom)

#### MINUTES

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1. The call to order by Chair Aaron McGarry was at 7:02 PM.

Present: Aaron McGarry, Robert Werge, Steve Herbert, Rhonda Rooney, Jim Bellavance, Robert Mann. The chair noted all members are present. Additionally: Orla McKiernan-Rafferty (Finance Director), Amy St Onge (First Selectman), Ken Beausoleil and Susanne Witkowski (Selectmen), Kathleen Herbert (Chair, Board of Education), Melinda Smith (Superintendent of Schools), Shawn Brissette (BOE Vice Chair), Rich Benoit (DPW Director), Tyra Penn-Gesek (Town Planner), Lesley Munshower (Recreation Director), Alison Boutaugh (Director, Library/Community Center). Many school officials, Board and Commission members, and members of the public, Recording Secretary Dotti Durst

2. Correspondence: none

3. Citizens' comments: A. McGarry reviewed the three ways to offer a comment this evening.

An email address specifically for Public Comment during the budget process is available:

[budget@thompsonct.org](mailto:budget@thompsonct.org) The First Selectman forwards input directly to BOF members.

– K. Herbert: reviewed the Schools budget, enumerating the three primary drivers of the budget increase (Healthcare/Worker's Comp, Special Ed and Capital Projects). She noted Revaluation brought properties back to where they were ten years ago, after the 2008 crash, adjust for inflation. Quality schools attract families and protect home values

- Jessica Bolte, 1081 Riverside Dr: she asks the BOF to not let the town fall behind, but rather to invest in the town; she advocates for Citizens' Comments later in BOF Agenda

- Marie Jezierski, 1 Jezierski Lane (by email): proposes budget voting by U S mail; advocates for a flat budget, given the circumstances, if there is no in-person vote by the public

- Danielle Carlson, 3 Rachel Dr: wants investment in our schools & town through a flat budget

– K. Herbert, 122 Wilsonville Rd: acknowledges everyone would like a flat budget in this environment; asks for a responsible budget which may not be the lowest. She praises the Superintendent for excellence; more funding equals better results.

– Dick Trudeau, 192 Wagher Rd: asks to find out if the State's planned funding will materialize

4. Budget Workshop: Chair A. McGarry referenced the budget approach being used, of reviewing the greatest proposed increases, both monetary and percentages. R. Rooney- thanks to the Department Heads who have this week put forward budget reductions. S. Herbert- noted that the Departments decreased their own pay in many cases, in recognition of these times.

Last meeting review: voted to reduce Animal Control to same as fy 19-20 (\$27,698) saving \$10,780. The Assessor proposal, due to new staff coming in, should remain as proposed. Public Health remains constant, based on a per capita charge and population increase.



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**Veterans: Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Rooney to return \$1,200 to the Veterans transportation line carried unanimously, 6-0. (Reimbursement to Volunteers for rides)**

Discussion with DPW Director R. Benoit: \* The proposed \$50K for the Salt Shed came from a proposal by the BOS, not the DPW, which had requested the funds for Roads. It is intended to research the options; DEEP will actually determine what Thompson has to do to rectify the salt seepage into the water supply. CT Water is now requesting our quarterly test results and is testing private wells. Woodstock may provide a model. \* Previous questions: when Chip Sealing was a separate line item, the paving amount totaled about \$400-\$425K each year, until last year's significant cuts. \*The proposed \$50K for Bridge assessment is for an engineer to conduct load testing, resulting in some heavy traffic being re-routed from our under-20 foot bridges. This will need to be done but can be delayed. \* The Roll-off landfill truck incurred repairs last year of approximately half of its trade-in value, and will need to be replaced. He demonstrated a possible way to pay for it outright, saving the interest costs. If the budget amount is cut, the line will remain in the budget for future use. The BOF asked several clarifying questions, expressing regret that the pandemic has put the town in a very tight budget situation.

### The Departments-proposed reductions:

**First Selectman-** leading the way for Departments savings, by reducing staff pay increases  
**Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Rooney to reduce the First Selectman budget by \$4,245 carried unanimously, 6-0.**

**Data Processing:** additional reductions beyond those first proposed

**Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Werge to reduce the Data Processing budget by \$200 carried unanimously, 6-0.**

**Treasurer/Finance:** **Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Rooney to reduce the Treasurer/Finance Department budget by \$4,654 carried unanimously, 6-0.**

**Board of Assessment Appeals:** **Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Mann to reduce the Board of Assessment Appeals budget by \$681 carried unanimously, 6-0.**

**Town Clerk:** **Motion A. McGarry seconded by J. Bellavance to reduce the Town Clerk budget by \$2,500 carried unanimously, 6-0.**

**Town Hall/Building:** **Motion A. McGarry seconded by J. Bellavance to reduce the Town Hall/Building budget by \$13,146 carried unanimously, 6-0.**

**Fire Marshal:** S. Herbert- this department is a source of revenue; the rates should be reviewed.  
**Motion A. McGarry seconded by J. Bellavance to reduce the Fire Marshal budget line to \$1,000 from \$2,000 and the Deputy Fire Marshal line to \$1,000 from \$2,000 carried unanimously, 6-0.**



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**Fire Departments:** Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Rooney to increase the five Departments from the current year's \$55,000 by \$7,000 to \$62,000 each, with the Ambulance line remaining as presented, carried unanimously, 6-0. The budget reduction is \$47,000.

**DPW:** Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Mann to reduce the DPW Fuel line item by \$20,000 carried unanimously, 6-0.

**Parks:** L. Munshower reviewed the four planned projects, which will be delayed.

**Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Rooney to reduce the Parks budget maintenance line by \$1,800 carried unanimously, 6-0.**

**Building Official-** no conversation with this department took place; the BOF left \$4,500 of the proposed increase in place, based on the increased work in this department. This department is a source of revenue; the fees could be re-examined. **Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Rooney to reduce the Building Official budget by \$5,084 carried unanimously, 6-0.**

**Library Administration:** Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Werge to reduce the Library Administration budget by \$8,204 carried unanimously, 6-0.

**Library Building:** Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Rooney to reduce the Library Building budget by \$5,499 carried unanimously, 6-0.

**Recreation Commission:** Motion A. McGarry seconded by J. Bellavance to reduce the Recreation Commission budget by \$5,678 carried unanimously, 6-0.

**Planning and Zoning:** Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Werge to reduce the Planning and Zoning Commission budget by \$83,898 carried unanimously, 6-0. The BOF kept the increase in hours while reducing the pay rate.

**Economic Development Commission:** T. Penn-Gesek: this is a 20% reduction in each of three major projects **Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Mann to reduce the EDC budget by \$5,000 carried unanimously, 6-0.**

### End of Department-Proposed budget reductions

**Fringe benefits &Municipal Insurance (pages96-98):** no further information is available

**Transfers (page 101):**

**1).Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Rooney to remove the Library Roof project funding (\$25,000) carried unanimously, 6-0.**

**2). Motion A. McGarry seconded by J. Bellavance to remove Little League Complex improvements (\$3,100) carried unanimously, 6-0.**



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3). Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Mann to reduce the Revaluation funding line by \$10,747 to \$40,000 carried unanimously, 6-0.

4). Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Werge to remove \$43,478 from the 20-21 funding toward the Roll-off Truck for the Transfer Station carried, 5-1.

S. Herbert-yes R. Werge-yes J. Bellavance-no R. Mann-yes R. Rooney-yes A. McGarry-yes

5). Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Werge to reduce the Salt Shed budget (for Planning, Analysis and Design) by \$30,000 (from \$50,000) carried unanimously, 6-0.

The Finance Director will research sources of the design work and approximate costs. A.

McGarry- the BOF can modify this line when estimates arrive.

**Debt Service (page 103): Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Rooney to reduce Debt Service by \$623 carried unanimously, 6-0.**

**Contingency (page 106): Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Mann to reduce the payroll Contingency budget by \$100,000 carried unanimously, 6-0.**

The Finance Director: results of the modifications made this evening resulted in a budget reduction of \$422K.

BOF: One goal was to remain flat at 23.97 mils; so far, the increase would be to 25.96 mils or + 1.99 mils. An additional \$1,053,736 reduction would be needed to attain a flat budget.

Chair A. McGarry called upon the Finance Director to follow-up on the request to determine how dependable the planned State funding appears to be. The Budget Workshop resumes on Thursday, May 7, with discussion of the Schools budget proposal.

**5. Motion S. Herbert seconded by R. Mann to adjourn carried unanimously.**

Chair A. McGarry adjourned the meeting at 9:37 PM.

To view/listen to the meeting on Zoom, click on the link or copy/paste it to your Search bar

[https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/45V3aOnv1ltOetbNz0XCC7cwI4L7eaa8hCUZ\\_vcFn07KkARbLyfTsgzansqjGGV-?startTime=1588633370000](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/45V3aOnv1ltOetbNz0XCC7cwI4L7eaa8hCUZ_vcFn07KkARbLyfTsgzansqjGGV-?startTime=1588633370000)

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.*