

TOWN of THOMPSON
 Board of Selectmen/Board of Finance
 Joint Special Meeting – Budget Presentations
 Tuesday – February 13, 2024
 Minutes
 Merrill Seney Room, Town Hall
 And via Zoom from remote locations

1. The call to order by Board of Finance Chair Rob Werge was at 6:04 PM.

II. Roll Call:

Selectmen - Ken Beausoleil via Zoom - Susanne Witkowski - Amy St Onge	Board of Finance - Robert Werge - Stephen Herbert via Zoom - Nicola Chrzanowski via Zoom	BOF (Continued) - Laurent Guillot not present - David Johnson - Brian Lynch via Zoom
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Also in attendance, in person or virtually: Finance Director William Steglitz, Department Heads who will review their Budget Requests at this meeting and other Department Heads, Members of Boards and Commissions, Members of the public, Recording Secretary Dotti Durst

III. Citizen Comments: Valerie Clark, Alm Road, asked *about a BOF name in 02-07-2024 Minutes *the meeting scheduled for President’s Day (Confirmed that the town hall will be open only for the meeting)

IV. Budget Presentations: First Selectman Amy St Onge and Finance Director Bill Steglitz will collaboratively discuss the budget requests, provide the draft budget proposal visually via “screen-share” and answer questions from the Board members and from the public. The Board of Finance Chair and First Selectman will alternate conducting the 4 Joint Special Budget Workshops.

The Zoom recording of each Budget Workshop will be available to the public, providing direct access to what each Department Head has proposed and the questions asked/suggestions put forward by the BOF/BOS members.

The First Selectman and Finance Director noted that the salary increases in all departments are tentative, in that a Union contract is not in place and any salary increase to be agreed upon is not known. The 2.5% increase is a placeholder, based on history.

The Finance Director created a budget worksheet that will transfer to the final Budget Book.

All present shared the consensus that if a Citizen wants to comment after a Department Head’s presentation, that could be permitted on a case-by-case basis.

The Regular BOF Meeting scheduled for February 15 has been cancelled, in order to focus on the Budget Workshops process. A Special BOF meeting (6 PM, February 19) has been scheduled to address the TEEG Building electrical panel failure. The Joint Special BOF/BOS Budget meeting will begin at 6:15 on that date.

Budget Presentations:

A. 1501-Town Clerk/Renee Waldron (6:09 PM) reviewed the proposed decrease in fees paid to Putnam, and of completing the plan for digitizing land records from 1785-1938 (those after 1938 are completed) as well as Minute and old frail Vital Statistics Books. B. Lynch: asked for Line 15, Advertising (legal notices) expense in the current year, given the large Projection.

B. 1102- Board of Selectmen Amy St. Onge, Marie Mongeau (6:13 PM) reviewed the line items, noting that CCM membership was dropped but will be re-considered.

C. 1201- First Selectmen Marie Mongeau & Bill Steglitz (6:17 PM): Line 6- the Schools/Town HR split is more accurately depicted; costs have accordingly been shifted

*Michelle Giammarinaro (6:25 PM) provided Vector Training details with a slide presentation; all of the mandatory or advisable training needs for Town staff will be addressed, including Harassment Prevention., ADA compliance, OSHA, conflict resolution and many others.

K. Beausoleil: Mostly Town staff? Yes, because the Schools created their own process but the Vector system is more ideal. One Ex: Custodial staff need Blood Born Pathogens, Slips/Trips/Falls, and other segments. Perhaps the Schools can budget Vector for next year.

B. Lynch observed the pricing and time management advantages of on-line professional training. The registration numbers will be reviewed and any price impacts. S. Herbert: amount planned for Legal Notices? M. Mongeau: ads for new staff, referenda, primaries/elections- no solid count can be made in advance. S. Herbert suggested and B. Lynch concurred with adding in projected salaries for all Selectmen, as the proposed budget should be as accurate as possible. That will be done next week.

D. 1202- Data Processing Marie Mongeau and Heather Burns (6:49 PM): paper costs are up but Training costs are reduced. Professional Services (Zoom, Server Maintenance and upgrades) were reviewed. The Assessor's IT line may increase; thus IT here shows a decrease. BOD: requested clarification of other as costs shift from one department to another

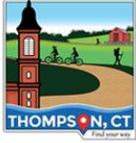
E. 1701- Town Counsel Marie Mongeau (6:59 PM): Union wages negotiations may result in an increase.

F. 1801- Town Hall Building (7:00 PM) Marie Mongeau reviewed maintenance planning

G. 4101- Human Services (Community Kitchens, Access Agency, SACCEC, QVSCC, The Last Green Valley, several others): Marie Mongeau (7:08 PM) Several of the Agencies in this Department will individually make presentations. Overall, the proposed increase requested is expected to be primarily by two of the Service providers.

H. 5201- Celebrations (Memorial and Veteran's Day) Marie Mongeau level funding request

I. 7301- Fringe Benefits (Sundry) Bill Steglitz and Marie Mongeau (7:12 PM). There may be contractual expenses related to longevity, as staff leave their positions; new-hires insurance coverage must be planned for. M. Mongeau: Line 12- EAP is an employee benefit program, available 24/7 for staff to be able to get solid guidance when personal or family situations develop. They also offer 4-6 seminars of general interest during the year. A person in attendance spoke, adding that in the specific situations that had been experienced,



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EAP was very effective in providing solid guidance. R. Werge asked for usage information.

J. 5101- Civic & Cultural-Library Administration Alison Boutaugh - Librarian for 23 years (7:49 PM) provided a slideshow of all aspects of services provided by the facility, many not directly related to what people used to think of. 316 new library cards have been issued, a resurgence since Covid, and an indicator of interest in broad spectrum of services including computer/internet access and many others. The social aspect of the facility was demonstrated in several ways. Paper costs are up, and books and periodicals reflect that. Needed upgrades were reviewed. The budget priorities: Maintain the facility and the collections/activities within.

K. 5102- Library/Louis P. Faucher Community Center: Alison Boutaugh reviewed usage. The fire alarm test and vendor costs are increased. Salaries for the 2 part-time custodial positions at 19 hours each: there is no actual increase—since the positions were until recently vacant the costs for the current year are skewed.

L. Capital/Library- Alison Boutaugh Library Line 34 (on-going, customary Maintenance), Line 20 (\$4,500 to upgrade computers), Line 21 - Security gate (\$10,725) Donna Lynch question: the gate is at the entrance to the library space itself keeping the Community Center wing and public bathrooms accessible. A. St Onge asked for the current Maintenance expenditures. The Library Board of Trustees provided a 5-Year long-range Capital expenses plan (01-12-2024) which includes several projects which are completed or underway. It being the 30th year of the building, several priority items will need an upgrade or replacement. **Bill Steglitz (7:57 PM) noted the re-formatting of the Capital and Transfers page as well as the 5-Year Plan. R. Werge confirmed that Line 33 Municipal Property Repair Funds is re-named from Library Roof Fund to allow attention to other town buildings. This also allows funds to be directed to any matching-grant application that develops. S. Herbert: the Community Center is not suitable for Zoom meetings? A. Boutaugh: yes, Zoom meetings have been held, but the electronics back then were less than ideal. The lack of consistent connectivity has now been addressed.

M. 1302- Tax Collector Scott Antonson (8:14) reviewed the extensive two-year training requirements for new staff in the Tax office as well as his own upcoming Certification renewal; additionally, there is annual professional development requirements.

* DUE TO THE WINTER STORM TODAY, THE DPW PRESENTATION (items N- S) by Director Joe Tkacik WILL BE RESCHEDULED.

T. Capital – not reviewed extensively, awaiting DPW and other departments

U. Other Budgets as Needed: Since there was additional time

1. Line 1301: Finance Department Bill Steglitz (8:30 PM) Training Requirements for license renewals and the participation in professional organizations such as GFOA were reviewed. S.

Herbert asked Schols/Town split in the workload. A little more time is spent at the Schools during which the Assistant is at Town Hall. No expense increases are proposed.

2. Line 5202: Thompson Historical Society Bill Steglitz (8:32 PM) Flat request.

3. Line 1101: Board of Finance Bill Steglitz (8:38 PM) the audit fee is expected to increase as a new contract is sought; the cost of printing the annual report is \$1,200.

V. Adjourn:

Motion to adjourn D. Johnson seconded by N. Chrzanowski to adjourn at 8:41 PM carried unanimously.

The next Joint Special BOS/BOF Budget Workshop will take place on Monday (President's Day) - February 19 at 6:15 PM in both formats-- virtually and live at the Merrill Seney Room, Town Hall. The BOF will hold a Special Meeting at 6 PM.

Use this link to see/hear the full BOF meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/zY7JrYJ5n3DxROHKa5KnShBCIMBywp-ZeV9Z-oBJYSK-TfDPJKbjs96IMVyhaJig.oaBXd72OugzDRtkH> Passcode: wWE=WQU5

Respectfully submitted by Dorothy Durst, Recording Secretary *Dorothy Durst*

These minutes have not yet been approved by the Board of Selectmen/Board of Finance. Please refer to a future meeting's minutes for approval of and/or amendments to these minutes.