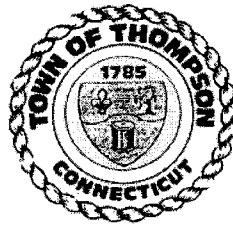


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Cheryl L. Darling
TOWN CLERK

SELECTMEN'S MEETING

January 2, 2013

The Board of Selectmen held a Selectmen's Meeting on Wednesday, January 2, 2013, at 7:00 p.m. in the Merrill Seney Community Room.

PRESENT: Lawrence K. Groh, Jr., First Selectman; Kenneth L. Beausoleil, Selectman; Kerstin E. Forrester, Selectman; Alvan Hill; Paul Baer; Joseph Gaucher; Kevin Walsh; Christine Campbell; Steven Bodreau; Kathleen Herbert; Craig Hanford, Jr.; Marina Cinami - WINY Radio; and other concerned citizens.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Mr. Beausoleil, seconded by Mrs. Forrester, to accept the minutes of the Selectmen's meeting of December 18, 2012 as presented.

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| <i>Mr. Beausoleil</i> | <i>-Yes</i> |
| <i>Mrs. Forrester</i> | <i>-Yes</i> |
| <i>Mr. Groh</i> | <i>-Yes</i> |

CORRESPONDENCE

- Mr. Groh presented correspondence from Mr. Paul Baer in regard to two suggested ordinances. The first suggested ordinance was in regard to residence requirements for Town employees. The second suggested ordinance was in regard to requiring permits to display temporary advertising signs in town. The Board agreed to address this correspondence at the next Selectmen's meeting on January 15, 2013. Mr. Beausoleil requested that Mr. Baer provide the Board with a copy of the relevant State Statute regarding residence requirements.

SELECTMEN'S COMMENTS

- Mr. Groh wished everyone a Happy New Year and hopes they had a safe holiday.
- Mr. Groh announced that the Selectmen's meetings are now scheduled to begin at 7:00 p.m. instead of 7:30 p.m. to bring the meetings more in line with other Boards and Commissions.
- Mr. Beausoleil said that the Town was very fortunate to get through the last storm in the condition it did and that the budget is still in line.
- Mrs. Forrester wished everyone a Happy New Year as well.

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- Mr. Groh announced that budget season will begin at the end of the month and asked the Board to start thinking about setting dates for budget workshops in January and February. The Board is scheduled to present its budget to the Board of Finance on March 11, 2013.

ASSISTANT TOWN CLERK POSITION

Mr. Groh stated that there is a retirement coming up in the near future and informed the citizens in attendance that he had suggested the possibility of combining two existing union positions including the position that will soon be vacant. Mr. Groh commented that one position is an Assistant Town Clerk budgeted at 20 hours per week and the second position is a Secretary/Clerk position in the Selectmen's Office that is budgeted at 25 hours per week. The members of the Board stated that the Town Clerk informed them that the office could operate with 15 hours per week slated for the position.

Mr. Beausoleil stated that in conversations with the Town Clerk it was estimated that it would take a replacement approximately six months to come up to full speed. Mr. Beausoleil stated that he wanted to ensure that adequate customer service is provided.

Mrs. Forrester expressed a concern that there are a wide variety of skills required to perform all the duties of both positions.

Mr. Groh stated that both positions in question are part of the collective bargaining unit. Mr. Groh stated that there are union implications and impacts that would have to be taken in to consideration when moving forward. Mr. Groh stated that he reviewed all of the associated tasks and thinks that the work can be accomplished by one consolidated position.

Mr. Groh informed the Board of the procedure that is followed in filling a vacant position and asked the Board to make a decision by the next Selectmen's meeting. A lengthy discussion followed including the following:

Mrs. Forrester questioned if the position would no longer be benefits eligible at 15 hours per week and that combining the position would in effect eliminate the cost of benefits by one employee. Mr. Groh confirmed that any position less than 20 hours per week is non-union and not eligible for benefits.

Mr. Beausoleil referred to a past situation in which two positions were combined. Mr. Beausoleil suggested that a similar situation be followed with a working test period and reversion stipulations.

Mr. Groh requested direction from the members of the Board so that he could move forward and begin negotiations.

Mrs. Forrester suggested negotiating for a reversion stipulation that would create a non-union 15 hour-per-week position should the combined position not work out. Mrs. Forrester requested that the Finance Director provide a report on projected cost savings for the consolidated position.

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Motion made by Mr. Beausoleil to combine the two positions at the 40 hours and authorize the negotiations with the Union.

Motion withdrawn.

Motion made by Mr. Beausoleil, seconded by Mrs. Forrester, to authorize the First Selectman to negotiate with the Union on different variations of accommodating the vacant position.

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| <i>Mr. Beausoleil</i> | <i>-Yes</i> |
| <i>Mrs. Forrester</i> | <i>-Yes</i> |
| <i>Mr. Groh</i> | <i>-Yes</i> |

Discussion on Motion: Mr. Baer clarified that the Town Clerk's Office did reduce its hours of service to the community by five hours and that there should be other things that the position should be covering since it is not open to the public for those five hours. Mr. Baer also questioned if there is a work load report available from the Town Clerk's Office.

RESOLUTION – HISTORIC DOCUMENTS PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Mr. Groh presented a Resolution for the Connecticut State Library's Historic Documents Preservation Program.

Motion made by Mr. Beausoleil, seconded by Mrs. Forrester, to approve the resolution as presented.

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| <i>Mr. Beausoleil</i> | <i>-Yes</i> |
| <i>Mrs. Forrester</i> | <i>-Yes</i> |
| <i>Mr. Groh</i> | <i>-Yes</i> |

TAX REFUNDS

None

OTHER BUSINESS

None

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

- Mr. Baer stated that he disagreed when the Board moved "Citizens' Comments" to the end of the agenda. Mr. Baer stated that having "Citizens' Comments" at the beginning would encourage more citizens to participate. Mrs. Forrester commented that one of the reasons it was moved to the end was due to a citizen request. A brief discussion followed including the following: Mr. Walsh agreed with Mr. Baer's statement and that "Citizens' Comments" allow for a learning process to occur. Ms. Hebert stated that the Board of Education has two places for citizens' comments; one limited and one more open at the end of the meeting. Ms.

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Campbell stated that she feels it doesn't matter where there is an opportunity to speak, as long as there is one.

- Mr. Hanford informed the Board that the new business street signs, implemented by the Economic Development Commission, were installed around town. Mr. Hanford also stated that if residents didn't stay for the entire meeting, they would not have learned about the street signs. Mr. Hanford also stated that he liked the idea of having two "Citizens Comments" sections similar to the Board of Education. The Board agreed to try two "Citizens' Comments" sections for the next meeting.
- Mr. Baer commented on the Town's website. Mr. Baer stated that there have been issues with the vendor for many months. Mr. Baer also commented that the website is currently down due to issues with the resources on the server and the webhosting company. Mr. Baer commented that there are still issues with domain ownership as well. Mr. Baer suggested contacting Town Counsel in order to force the vendor to fulfill its contractual obligations. A brief discussion followed.
- Mr. Walsh asked about non-residents serving on Town committees. Mr. Walsh said that he checked his notes and that Town Counsel felt it would be okay to have non-residents serve on the Social Services Building Committee because TEEG would be servicing other towns outside of Thompson. Mr. Walsh referred to a state statute regarding residency requirements for Town Boards and Commissions.
- Mr. Baer asked if there was any update on Community Fire & Ambulance and the issue with Webster EMS. Mr. Groh stated that he has not been informed of anything new.
- Mr. Baer asked if there was any follow-up on the possible theft listed in a fire department newsletter. Mr. Groh stated that he spoke with the Chief of said department and that it was explained that theft had not been occurring and the security system was preventative in nature.
- Mr. Baer questioned if the mutual aid agreements were completed under the Fire Advisory Committee. Chief Steven Bodreau of Quinebaug Volunteer Fire Department stated that to the best of his knowledge, the mutual aid agreements are complete and signed by the five Thompson departments. Chief Bodreau stated that there are some external departments that are having issues with signing the agreements, such as Southbridge, MA.
- Mr. Baer questioned if the Town's EMS plan has been completed yet. Mr. Groh stated that he believed that it is currently being worked on and is near completion.
- Mr. Walsh questioned if there was a NECCOG meeting last Friday and Mr. Groh responded that there was not.
- Mr. Baer stated that he did not see the Library Paving/Curbing Bid document. Mr. Baer questioned why the two bids received were so far apart in pricing. Mr. Groh stated that the bid specifications were vague and neither bid was accepted. Ms. Herbert stated that there are government state specifications for products that can be used in bids. Mr. Baer also stated

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that when he was vetting the bids, one submission was not even signed by the bidder and should have been thrown out.

- Mr. Gaucher stated that there are still logs on the hill on Route 12 by the School property that are in a dangerous position and could slide down. Mr. Groh stated that he is also very concerned and that the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation has been notified.
- Mr. Gaucher asked if the Town is paying for the street lights on River Street. Mr. Groh stated that he would check the street lighting list.
- Mr. Baer asked if the West Thompson Fire Department Roof Project has been closed. Mr. Groh stated that it has been closed.
- Mr. Baer asked if the solar panel project bids would be vetted. Mr. Groh stated that there is just a Request for Qualifications out now and that the Committee is reviewing it.
- Mr. Baer stated that since the Town Clerk's Office is open less hours per week, that they might want to cover the recording of the Selectmen's meetings.
- Ms. Campbell asked what the regulations were in regard to shooting firearms within the proximity of people's homes. Ms. Campbell also said that the State Police said that the Town of Thompson repealed the ordinance limiting shooting firearms within 100 feet. Ms. Campbell asked that if it was repealed that it could be reinstated. Mr. Groh stated that the Town would revert to state statute. Mr. Hill believes that the limit is within 500 feet of the property line. Mr. Groh informed Ms. Campbell to submit her information to the Selectmen's Office and that he would place a call to the State Police to inquire about the issue. Mr. Baer requested that Mr. Groh provide him with a copy of the state statute once it is received.

ADJOURN

Motion made by Mr. Groh, seconded by Mr. Beausoleil, to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:46 p.m.

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| <i>Mr. Groh</i> | <i>-Yes</i> |
| <i>Mr. Beausoleil</i> | <i>-Yes</i> |
| <i>Mrs. Forrester</i> | <i>-Yes</i> |

Recorded and transcribed by:
Tonya C.L. Park