



SELECTMEN'S MEETING

July 24, 2007

The Board of Selectmen held a Selectmen's Meeting on Tuesday, July 24, 2007, at 7:30 p.m. at the West Thompson Independent Fire Station.

PRESENT: A. David Babbitt, First Selectman; Kathleen A. Hiatt, Selectman; Lawrence K. Groh, Jr., Selectman; Michael Martin – Finance Director; Alison Boutaugh – Library Director; Steve Benoit; John Rice; Frances Becker; Nancy Ebbs; Joseph Gibbons; G.H. Elmes; Robert Werge; Carolyn Werge; Michael Rivers, Jr.; Al Landry; Lynn Landry; Paul Joyal; Joseph Gaucher; Paul J. Breault; Joseph Donovan; Donald Brown; Celeste Fifield; Sally White; Ida Ransom; Charles W. Seney; Norma O'Leary; Catherine Thomas; James Kenney; Attorney William H. St. Onge; Kathleen Murphy; Bruce Coulter – Thompson Villager; Dustin Racciopi – Norwich Bulletin; other concerned citizens

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Ms. Hiatt, seconded by Mr. Babbitt, to approve the minutes of the July 10, 2007 Selectmen's meeting as presented.

<i>Ms. Hiatt</i>	<i>-Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Babbitt</i>	<i>-Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Groh</i>	<i>-Abstain</i>

Mr. Groh abstained as he was on vacation at the time of this meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Mr. Babbitt presented correspondence in regard to a resident who is not happy about ending the Resident State Trooper program.
- Mr. Babbitt presented correspondence from the Emanuel Lutheran Church in regard to the church's 125th anniversary.
- Mr. Babbitt presented correspondence from Pace University's Land Use Law Center in regard to the Land Use Leadership Alliance Training Program.
- Mr. Babbitt presented correspondence from the Connecticut State Police in regard to arrest warrants.

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- Mr. Babbitt presented correspondence from Troop D in regard to activity in the month of June.
 - Mr. Babbitt presented correspondence in regard to Verizon wireless wanting to be placed on the Quinebaug Fire Station cell tower.
 - Mr. Babbitt presented correspondence from NECASA in regard to budget requests.
 - Mr. Babbitt presented correspondence from Connecticut Water in regard to raising rates.
 - Mr. Babbitt presented correspondence in regard to a highway use permit for Tri-State Trek, a group of cyclist that came through Thompson on Friday, July 20, 2007.
 - Mr. Babbitt presented correspondence from the Office of Policy & Management in regard to a penalty waiver for the Town of Thompson because the Town does not yet have a budget.
 - Mr. Babbitt presented correspondence from the Thompson Public Library in regard to grant funding.
 - Mr. Babbitt presented a report on storm water monitoring. Mr. Babbitt stated that he has forwarded the letter to Winston Averill who is working on it.
 - Ms. Hiatt presented a letter from Judge Kathleen Murphy in regard to Probate Court facilities. Ms. Hiatt requested to add Probate Court facilities to the agenda under Other Business.

Motion made by Ms. Hiatt, seconded by Mr. Groh, to add Probate Court Facilities to the agenda under Other Business.

<i>Ms. Hiatt</i>	<i>-Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Groh</i>	<i>-Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Babbitt</i>	<i>-Yes</i>

SELECTMEN'S COMMENTS

- Mr. Babbitt commented on a report of open space in the Town of Thompson.
- Mr. Babbitt commented that Premiere Labs is working on getting street flow data in order to get the Town into compliance.
- Mr. Babbitt commented that someone reported that the Quaddick Lake Association found a number of batteries in Quaddick Lake and that the Association has permission to dispose of the batteries at the Transfer Station.

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- Mr. Babbitt commented that he is proud that all of the town's commissions are filled with the exception of the new alternate positions on the Economic Development Commission. Mr. Babbitt commented that the town is looking for volunteers for these positions.
 - Mr. Babbitt commented that he received two resignations, one from the Eastern Regional Tourism District and the second from the Charter Advisory Council. Mr. Babbitt asked for volunteers to fill these positions.
 - Mr. Babbitt commented that he and the Finance Director appeared on WINY Radio.
 - Mr. Babbitt commented on the recreation programs that have been available including concerts at Riverside Park.
 - Mr. Babbitt commented that the blood drive that was scheduled last Saturday was cancelled.
 - Mr. Babbitt commented that the Thompson Hill Fire Station had a celebration on July 14th.
 - Mr. Babbitt commented that the third referendum for the budget failed. Mr. Babbitt announced that there is a Board of Finance meeting next Thursday.
 - Mr. Babbitt commented that there have been energy audits at the Town Hall in order to save money. Mr. Babbitt commented that the Town has already done an audit on the lights, but that this audit has more to do with motors.
 - Mr. Babbitt commented that the Resident State Trooper helped to run "Law Enforcement Day" at Quaddick on Friday.
 - Mr. Babbitt commented that the Quaddick Lake Association is working on the weed eradication program at the Lake.
 - Mr. Babbitt commented that Planning & Zoning Commission approved the gravel permit for the Thompson Rail Industrial Park on Reardon Road.
 - Mr. Babbitt commented that he attended an early childhood meeting. Mr. Babbitt stated that they are working on the Graustein Foundation grant.
 - Ms. Hiatt commented that she attended the Board of Finance meeting on Thursday.
 - Ms. Hiatt commented that the Selectmen's Update was distributed on Friday and asked the citizens in attendance to complete the survey that was included in the center of the Update. Ms. Hiatt stated that once the results are tabulated, the results will be shared with Town boards and commissions.

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- Ms. Hiatt commented that she contacted an attorney at the Elections Enforcement Commission in regard to the Selectmen's Update.
 - Ms. Hiatt commented in regard to the cost of EMT training. Ms. Hiatt stated that Donna Grant said that there is grant money that can be applied for to offset the cost of training.
 - Mr. Groh commented that it was a pleasure to be out in West Thompson and that it is good to see everyone attending the meeting.
 - Mr. Babbitt commented that he has received a date from the State in regard to the repair of the bridge on Route 12 near the Library and the date is April of 2008.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

- Mr. Elmes questioned whether Verizon was paying the Town for use of the cell tower. Mr. Babbitt explained that the cell tower is owned by the Quinebaug Volunteer Fire Department.
- Ms. White stated she would like to speak in regard to the Preserve America resolution.
- Ms. White commented that she hopes that the Selectmen's Office will work with the Economic Development Commission once the results from the survey come through.
- A concerned citizen questioned the need of the EMT training. Ms. Fifield stated that the more EMTs are trained, the better fire departments can respond to incidents in town. Chief Donovan also stated that he could use more EMTs.

BUDGET / TOWN MEETING NOTICE

Mr. Babbitt explained that he has been working with Town Counsel to prepare two different options for the Town Meeting. Mr. Babbitt stated that because the budgeted increase is 1.92%, less than the 2% necessary to go to referendum, that the budget could be approved only at a Town Meeting. Attorney St. Onge explained that at a Town Meeting, the budget could be approved or amended.

Ms. Hiatt asked what the process is to talk about a line item at the Town Meeting. Attorney St. Onge explained that first you would have a motion to approve the budget. Second, someone could motion to amend the budget, the citizens would discuss the amendment, and then the citizens would vote on the amendment. The Board of Education budget could only be amended on the bottom line as opposed to the General Government budget, which would be amended by line item. Attorney St. Onge also stated that the budget can only be decreased, not increased.

Ms. Hiatt commented that there has been good discussions and feedback at Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance meetings and therefore she would prefer to send the budget to a Town Meeting rather than to guess the intentions of a yes or no vote.

Mr. Groh commented that the budget can only be cut at a Town Meeting and as he has heard feedback on the deletion of the Resident State Trooper, a Town Meeting would not allow that line item to be restored. Mr. Groh also stated that more people would be able to vote on the budget between the hours of 12:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. rather than just a few people at a Town Meeting.

Mr. Babbitt stated that his tendency is to agree with Mr. Groh and that the fairest way to address the budget is to go to referendum. Mr. Babbitt also stated that there may be issues finding a suitable location to hold a Town Meeting with the expectation that the turnout would be more than the Thompson Public Library would allow.

A lengthy discussion followed.

Ms. Hiatt asked for a show of hands from the audience as to who was in favor of just going to a Town Meeting and who was in favor of going to a referendum. The majority of the citizens in attendance were in favor of going to a referendum.

Motion made by Mr. Groh, seconded by Mr. Babbitt, to go with the Notice of Town Meeting with all three agenda items for Thursday, August 2, 2007 at 8:00 p.m. at the Thompson Public Library/ Community Center and to adjourn to referendum on Thursday, August 9, 2007 from 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

<i>Mr. Groh</i>	<i>-Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Babbitt</i>	<i>-Yes</i>
<i>Ms. Hiatt</i>	<i>-Yes</i>

Discussion on Motion – The Notice of Town Meeting includes the budget being adjourned to referendum as well as the approval of tax anticipation notes.

THOMPSON PUBLIC LIBRARY – ALISON BOUTAUGH

Ms. Boutaugh provided the Board with annual statistics for usage of the Thompson Public Library. Ms. Boutaugh also announced that the Library is celebrating its 1,000,000th item loaned and informed the Board on the various events associated with this celebration.

Ms. Boutaugh stated that in the past fiscal year the Library had 54,503 visitors, loaned 93,654 items, answered 14,585 reference questions and provided 1,852 hours of computer use to 2,012 patrons. Ms. Boutaugh also stated that the Library hosted 1,412 meetings and shared stories and programs with 5,641 children and their families.

Ms. Boutaugh said that the FY 06-07 circulation is up 44% from the year the Library opened as is up 6% from the previous year's numbers.

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE TAX ANTICIPATION NOTES

Mr. Babbitt presented the resolution to authorize a tax anticipation note.

Motion made by Ms. Hiatt, seconded by Mr. Babbitt, to sign the resolution presented that resolves that the Board of Selectmen recommends that the Town of Thompson authorize issue of notes of the Town in anticipation of the receipt of taxes for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2007, in an amount not to exceed \$6,000,000, to pay current expenses and obligations of the Town and that a special town meeting will be held August 2, 2007.

<i>Ms. Hiatt</i>	<i>-Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Babbitt</i>	<i>-Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Groh</i>	<i>-Yes</i>

RESOLUTION FOR PRESERVE AMERICA

Mr. Babbitt presented the Preserve America resolution.

Ms. White asked if the Board had read the actual Executive Order. The members of the Board stated that they did not. Ms. White suggested that the Board examine the Executive Order before they made the final decision.

Ms. White also asked what the interest was to be eligible for the designation. Mr. Babbitt commented that there is \$5,000,000.00 available to towns with said designation. Ms. White asked what the sizes of the grants were for this year.

Ms. White recommended that the Town do a lot more research or not get involved with this designation.

A lengthy discussion followed.

Motion made by Ms. Hiatt, seconded by Mr. Groh, that the Board sign the resolution as presented by Kevin Kennedy at the very next Board of Selectmen meeting after we each review what we feel we need to review and talk to Kevin Kennedy to get the information we need to sign, or not sign the resolution with a clear conscience.

<i>Ms. Hiatt</i>	<i>-Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Groh</i>	<i>-Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Babbitt</i>	<i>-No</i>

TAX REFUND (2)

Motion made by Mr. Babbitt, seconded by Ms. Hiatt, to refund the following overpayments as recommended by the Tax Collector, Rene Morin.

<i>-Christopher Lamothe</i>	<i>-\$54.61</i>
<i>-Alyssa M. Chapdelaine</i>	<i>-\$11.79</i>
<i>Mr. Babbitt</i>	<i>-Yes</i>

<i>Ms. Hiatt</i>	<i>-Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Groh</i>	<i>-Yes</i>

OTHER BUSINESS

Probate Court Facilities

Ms. Hiatt explained that she has received a letter from the Judge of Probate, Kathleen Murphy in regard to the July 1, 2007 requirements to have separate office space for the Probate Court staff. Ms. Hiatt suggested that the Selectmen forward any questions to Judge Murphy so that the Board could discuss this at their next Selectmen's meeting.

Mr. Babbitt commented that he has worked on this issue for quite a bit. Mr. Babbitt explained that there is a new emphasis on this law which has been in effect for a while. Mr. Babbitt reviewed the timeline outlined in the statute. Mr. Babbitt also stated that he has drafted a letter to the Probate Administrator, Judge Lawlor, informing him that the Town is working to comply. Mr. Babbitt said that the Probate Court office is the nicest office in the building and that changing the office would ruin it so he is hoping to get a waiver from this requirement.

Mr. Groh stated that the Town should be a little proactive and agreed with Ms. Hiatt that the Board should forward questions to Judge Murphy.

A brief discussion followed.

This item will be added to the agenda of the 2nd meeting in August.

ADJOURN

Motion made by Ms. Hiatt, seconded by Mr. Groh, to adjourn the meeting at approximately 9:02p.m.

<i>Ms. Hiatt</i>	<i>-Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Groh</i>	<i>-Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Babbitt</i>	<i>-Yes</i>

Recorded and transcribed by:
Tonya Levesque