

TOWN OF THOMPSON

Board of Selectmen- Minutes Tuesday- June 6, 2023 Merrill Seney Room - Town Hall and via ZOOM Online Meeting

- I. The call to order by Selectman Amy St Onge was at 7:00 pm, with all 3 Selectmen present Roll Call: First Selectman Amy St Onge, Selectmen Susanne Witkowski and Ken Beausoleil. Bill Steglitz (Finance Director). Fire Department Chiefs and leadership. Many members of the public in person and via Zoom, Members of Boards & Commissions. Recording Secretary Dotti Durst.
- II. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited
- III. Approval of Minutes
 - A. BOS Special Meeting 5-15-2023 Cancelled
 - B. Motion A. St Onge seconded by S. Witkowski to approve the minutes of the 05-16-2023 BOS Special Regular Meeting carried unanimously.
 - C. Motion A. St Onge seconded by K. Beausoleil to approve the minutes of the 05-18-2023 BOS Special Meeting carried unanimously.
 - D. BOS Special Meeting 5-19-2023 Cancelled
 - E. BOS Special Meeting Motion A. St Onge seconded by S. Witkowski to approve the minutes of the 05-30-2023 BOS Special Meeting carried, with K. Beausoleil, who was away, abstaining.

IV. Correspondence

- A. CCM Discount Prescription card Usage Feb 2023
- B. Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours June 2023

V. Selectmen Comments:

- K. Beausoleil: there has been a disruption in town; an unsigned letter was circulated which was appallingit was so bad that townspeople stated that they could not let their kids even see it. On a positive note, at the Referendum next week the voters will speak about the budget so the town can move ahead.
- S. Witkowski: none of the townspeople should tolerate this sort of unsigned document which was distributed; this is unacceptable. But more upbeat: 9 teachers have completed a certification program involving phonics-based reading skills, which has proven very effective in classrooms.
- A. St Onge: unfortunately, the unsigned letter that was circulated indicates mental instability. The State Police are looking into the matter as a possible Hate Crime. Thompson is strong, however, and will rise above this. Good news: the DPW Roads Maintenance work is ready to begin; the process will involve several steps including chip-sealing, and drainage/culvert work with the goal of long-term solutions.

VI. Citizens' Comments:

- -Tom Angelo, Fabyan Road, asked about possible action to address the tilting billboard opposite the Town Hall/ Post Office, which is a possible hazard. A St Onge has identified and will contact the corporate owner.
- Valerie Clark, Alm Road, noted Agenda item XI, and asked if information about has been made available.
- VII. Resolution regarding Connecticut Water Company easement: Schools to RT 12 water lines were replaced in 2017-2018; the final steps reconstruction, being mindful of the town hall fiberoptic cables, is wrapping up in July. A site walk was conducted. The Town Attorney has reviewed the language of the easement.

Motion S. Witkowski seconded by K. Beausoleil to approve the Easement and to grant authorization for the First Selectman to move ahead carried unanimously.

VIII. Resolution regarding Connecticut Department of Economic Development Grant Application: the grant application total is \$3.8M with the largest portion for Main Street and sidewalk reconstruction, a smaller amount for 65 Main Street, and another amount for reconfiguring Swanson Park, including moving memorials and making the park a tranquil location to reflect on the sacrifices of military personnel and their families. The re-design was donated by J&D Civil Engineering. This is not a matching grant; Federal and State awards have come in and the grant application should receive extra points because of what the town already has in place, including design work.

Motion A. St Onge seconded by K. Beausoleil to adopt the Resolution as presented and to allow the Director of Planning and Development to move forward with the specified Grant application carried unanimously.

IX. New Hires:

- A. Motion A. St Onge seconded by S. Witkowski to approve the hiring of Lynn Looby as the Recording Secretary for Recreation Commission and Economic Development Commission carried unanimously. Her exemplary credentials were noted.
- B. Motion A. St Onge seconded by S. Witkowski to authorize the First Selectman to hire the proposed Recreation Department Summer Camp Staff as read aloud carried unanimously. Several nominees have worked for the Recreation Department in previous years or are current staff.
- C. Motion A. St Onge seconded by S. Witkowski to authorize the First Selectman to make the offer and to hire the recommended Animal Control Officer carried unanimously. K. Beausoleil was unavailable for the interview; BOF member Dave Johnson was asked to sit in on the selection committee, providing a different perspective. The applicant is well qualified and is an ACO in another town.

X. Appointment:

Motion A. St Onge seconded by S. Witkowski to approve the appointment of Dean Kwasniewski to the Building Committee carried unanimously. He is a resident and very familiar with many aspects of construction.

- XI. Town-wide Fire Services Tax: Discussion was initiated of the concept of creating a separate Fire Services tax and removal of those line items from the General Government Budget. In this scenario, voters would be directly and fully informed of the Fire Departments' funding needs, could pose questions and see the long-term situation.
- *The Fire Chiefs and leaders from the departments spoke, stating reasons for considering this alternative.
- *The Finance Director has worked to split out what costs would remain with the town, such as Workman's' Compensation and Insurance. Additionally, State mandates such as Ambulance Service, 911 Service and QV Dispatch would remain in the General Government budget.
- *A Board of Directors would establish a process to oversee Thompson Fire Services.
- *The Selectmen are looking to move forward with investigating this possible structure for the Fire Departments. They will examine the Fire Tax structure in other towns similar in size and Fire Services needs. How the process will be conducted, as well as how the voters will access the question on the actual ballot, will be determined.

XII. Other Business: None

XIII. Citizen Comments:

- Valerie Clark, Alm Road: the BOS is supporting the Fire Departments' needs, as does she
- Chief Sharpe, Community Fire Company: all fire department staff are volunteers, and answer the calls well-aware of the risks they take
- Chief Bodreau, Quinebaug Voluntary Fire Department: noted the public turnout at the Memorial Day event to see 10 pieces of apparatus and the Department "families" who were on hand as a demonstration of their pride. He thanked Valerie Clark for her support.
- Chief Grauer, Thompson Hill Fire Station/Fire Engine Company, reminded the BOS and those present for a need for a water rescue vessel.
- S. Witkowski, BOS, stated her support for the Fire Departments
- K. Beausoleil offered to collate the data the Finance Director has been able to collect and make it available as the process moves forward

XIV. Tax Refunds: None

XV. Adjourn:

Motion A. St Onge seconded by K. Beausoleil to adjourn at 8:14 pm carried unanimously.

To view the meeting, click or copy/paste to your search bar: https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/OX950mlpnyN2dEQMqtSvG6G5p670a8mevseo8IJ-9s8oMJ69-a7X_z3dOuHH5LQI.uBOwk5Z7QGcN472x_Passcode: fCX&m2e

Respectfully submitted by Dorothy Durst, Recording Secretary Dorothy Durst

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