



## SELECTMEN'S MEETING

September 2, 2008

The Board of Selectmen held a Selectmen's Meeting on Tuesday, September 2, 2008, at 7:30 p.m. at the East Thompson Volunteer Fire Department.

**PRESENT:** Lawrence K. Groh, Jr., First Selectman; Sarah F. White, Selectman; Kathleen A. Hiatt, Selectman; Renee Waldron, Recreation Director; Al Landry; James Esslinger – Worcester Telegram & Gazette; other concerned citizens

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

*Motion made by Ms. Hiatt, seconded by Mr. Groh, to approve the minutes of the August 19, 2008 Selectmen's meeting with corrections.*

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

### CORRESPONDENCE

- Mr. Groh presented correspondence from Governor Rell in regard to the award of \$75,000.00 in the form of a STEAP grant toward the social services building project. Mr. Groh explained that this is in addition to the \$150,000.00 STEAP grant that the Town has already received. Mr. Groh said that there is a committee that is looking at the proposed social services building and TEEG. Mr. Groh stated that this is good news from the Governor's meeting. Miss White questioned why all of this action is going on and that it seems like it would be fitting for there to be debate of pros and cons among the Selectmen and the community before we start pulling in all of this money. Mr. Groh explained that when grants are awarded, a committee is put together to study the viability of the project. Mr. Groh explained that as the process goes along, things will happen such as discussion among the Selectmen and possibly a referendum. A lengthy discussion followed. Ms. Hiatt stated that discussion on this project was discussed at a Special Selectmen's meeting in February. Miss White stated that she was not present at this meeting. Miss White stated that her concern is that principle-wise, this is a lot of money that is coming in from taxpayers all across the state for a special interest in Northeast Connecticut and there hasn't been a public debate or decision made about it. A lengthy discussion continued. Mr. Groh stated that Governor has seen that this would be a good project to have a social services building in Thompson. Miss White stated that the Governor doesn't really know anything about it. Mr. Groh stated that he is sure that the Governor has been kept informed of this project and that she signed the award letter. Miss White questioned who wants the new building. Ms. Hiatt explained that

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the existing TEEG building, which is a Town building, is insufficient to hold all of its functions. Miss White stated that this is a matter of opinion. Ms. Hiatt stated that they are housing people in areas that have minimally adequate fire protection, that they don't have sufficient handicap access to the building and that they don't have the room to provide privacy when they perform mental health consults. Mr. Groh added that there is an issue with parking accessibility as well. A lengthy discussion followed. Miss White stated that she had a meeting with the Executive Director of TEEG and that she suggested looking at space in the Rivermill. Mr. Groh stated that there have been two meetings on this particular issue, including one Special Selectmen's meeting. Miss White stated that the Special Selectmen's meeting was not for the purpose of discussing a new building and requested that Mr. Groh just be reasonable and that for the record, he did not have a meeting to pursue a new building, he went there to have a tour of the building and to see programs. Ms. Hiatt stated that this included evaluating the space that the programs are located in. Mr. Groh offered to hold another meeting to discuss this project. Ms. Hiatt stated that this project has also been reported on in the grant spreadsheet provided by the Director of Planning of Development. Mr. Landry also commented on the conditions of the current TEEG building and stated that the mill would not necessarily be a much better place in regard to handicap accessibility, parking, condition and pricing. Mr. Landry also commented that he would hate to see the Town stop accepting grants because the grants are just going to go somewhere else.

- Mr. Groh presented correspondence from the State of Connecticut Department of Public Safety in regard to Rick Hayes, the Town's fire marshal, and his earned continuing education credits. Miss White stated that the letter says "certified fire officials in your jurisdiction" so that says that we don't have any certified fire officials in our jurisdiction. Miss White stated that Mr. Hayes lives in Putnam, not Thompson. Miss White questioned that the Town of Thompson does not have any certified fire officials. Mr. Groh explained that Mr. Hayes is Thompson's fire marshal. Miss White stated that Mr. Groh was evading the question. Ms. Hiatt stated that the only person that we have jurisdiction over is Mr. Hayes because he is the only one working for us as the Town's fire marshal. Miss White asked if there is a report on the fires under investigation. Mr. Groh stated that he did not have any of that information but asked Miss White if she wanted to contact Mr. Hayes for that report. A brief discussion followed.
- Mr. Groh presented correspondence from the Connecticut State Police in regard to re-arrest warrants and monthly calls for service. Miss White stated that she noticed that this report is just calls for service and that the report is not comprehensive in terms of all of their responses and activities in town.
- Mr. Groh presented correspondence from the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station in regard to the Asiatic Longhorn Beetle infestation. Ms. Hiatt requested that the Conservation Officer or the Wetlands Enforcement Officer call the Extension Office in Brooklyn for identification cards. Miss White suggested printing out something from the internet and post it on the bulletin board. Miss White also suggested putting something in the next Selectmen's Update.

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- Mr. Groh presented correspondence from the Finance Director in regard to the Open Space fund that was sent to the Planning & Zoning Commission. Mr. Groh stated that the Planning & Zoning Commission would like to track who has paid the open space fees and who has not.
  - Mr. Groh presented correspondence from Almetek in regard to marking storm drains.
  - Mr. Groh presented information in regard to the reimbursement in the amount of \$96,341.55 presented by CL&P in regard to the School Building project on August 26, 2008. Mr. Groh stated that this was for cost saving measures for electricity including space, cooling, heating and lighting. Mr. Groh explained that the funds go into the building project until it is complete and that anything left over would go to the general fund. Mr. Groh and Ms. Hiatt commended the hard work of the School Building Committee. Mr. Groh stated that the Town will save over the life of the improvements approximately 3,118,773 kilowatts. A brief discussion followed. Miss White stated that there is no reference to the school. Mr. Groh referenced page two which states "Fisher Elementary School, North Grosvenordale, CT, Efficiency Service Project #EA-06-P-139." Miss White stated that there is no mention of what the project is on the cover sheet. Mr. Groh stated that this is great news and that he is very happy with the Building Committee in making these cost saving measures. Miss White stated that there aren't any signatures on the document either.
  - Mr. Groh presented correspondence from concerned citizens sent to the Thompson Public Library Board of Trustees which included a petition to provide Saturday operating hours at the Library. Mr. Groh stated that the Town Clerk has verified the names. Miss White stated that had she known it was circulating that she would have signed it.
  - Ms. Hiatt questioned if the letter to Recycling Associates, Inc. in regard to the recycling clothing bin at the VFW had been sent. Mr. Groh stated that it has been sent. Ms. Hiatt requested a copy of the letter.

#### **SELECTMEN'S COMMENTS**

- Mr. Groh commented that the Ordinance Review Committee did not meet today, but will be meeting on September 9, 2008 instead. Mr. Groh stated he will have an update from that committee at the next Selectmen's meeting.
- Mr. Groh commented that he attended a Local Arts Agency meeting. Mr. Groh stated that someone from the LAA may come before the Board to present information about the LAA. Ms. Hiatt suggested that if the LAA is going to request funding from the Town, they should meet with the Board before the next budget cycle. A brief discussion followed.
- Mr. Groh informed the Board that four defibrillators were installed in the Thompson Public Schools and one defibrillator was installed at St. Joseph School. Mr. Groh stated that the Community of Heart Committee informed him that they believe they have enough training and defibrillators in town to be considered a heart-safe community. Mr. Groh commended the Committee for their efforts. A brief discussion followed.

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- Mr. Groh commented that he requested that the Conservation Officer investigate if the ATVs referenced in a complaint discussed at a previous meeting were operating on Town property. Mr. Groh stated that the Conservation Officer reported that the property is not town-owned.
  - Miss White commented in regard to the American Legion building and the VFW building. Miss White stated that there was a grant in regard to repairing the VFW roof approximately two years ago and that one of the constraints is that the Town no longer has full decision making and that if the Town wants to sell the property, the Town would have to get approval from the State. Miss White stated that it would be useful to have something akin to a decision tree in regard to deciding what grants to go after. A lengthy discussion followed.
  - Miss White requested copies of the corrected minutes at the Selectmen's meetings. Ms. Levesque stated that the corrected minutes are posted on the Town's website.
  - Miss White stated that she met with Donna Grant from TEEG and that Miss White asked Ms. Grant if she was willing to explore other options. Miss White stated that she has a meeting scheduled with Ms. Grant and Mr. Scott from the Rivermill. Miss White asked what the plans were for the TEEG building if and when it's vacated. Mr. Groh stated that there aren't any plans at this point. A brief discussion followed. Ms. Waldron stated that the committee for the social services building has been very open-minded in assessing alternatives for the project.
  - Miss White requested that a member of the Ordinance Review Committee to present to the Board. Miss White suggested that the Chair of the Committee do so.
  - Ms. Hiatt stated that she will come in to the Town Hall and look at the monthly calls for service from the Connecticut State Police. Ms. Hiatt stated that she will compile a spreadsheet with information on vandalism as it seems that vandalism has increased. A lengthy discussion followed. Ms. Hiatt stated that the Board had committed to re-evaluate the Resident State Trooper Program if a trend began in regard to crime.
  - Mr. Groh stated that he asked the Recreation Director to attend a Selectmen's meeting to discuss the revolving account for Recreation. Mr. Groh stated that he did not know if Ms. Waldron was going to be able to attend tonight's meeting. Mr. Groh asked the Recreation Director to give a brief overview of the programs contained in the revolving account. Miss White stated that if there is going to be a report on this account, that it should be at a meeting. A brief discussion followed. Mr. Groh stated that he was going to make a motion to put this item on the agenda so that the Board can discuss it.

*Motion made by Mr. Groh, seconded by Ms. Hiatt, to put the Recreation program summary on the agenda as item #3a.*

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

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Discussion on Motion: Miss White stated that she is not prepared. Ms. Hiatt stated that she seconded the motion to put it on the agenda so that the Board can legitimately discuss this item. Miss White stated that it looks like the intent is to discuss this tonight and not put this on the agenda for another meeting.

## **RECREATION PROGRAM SUMMARY**

Mr. Groh explained that the Board wanted the Recreation Director to come in to give the Board an overview on the programs and that this was discussed at a previous Selectmen's meeting. Ms. Hiatt stated that she would like Ms. Waldron to give a bit of an overview and that she would like to send Ms. Waldron questions from the Board so that she can come back to another meeting to answer the questions. Mr. Groh questioned why we are asking Ms. Waldron to attend this meeting; does the Board want to attack Ms. Waldron as a department head or does the Board want to ask her for an overview. Miss White asked where this is coming from and stated that Mr. Groh is casting aspersions. Miss White stated that this looks like it was planned. Mr. Groh stated that he appreciates that Ms. Waldron attended tonight and that he wanted to know what the accounts mean. Mr. Groh stated that what that concern was that he got out of the Selectmen at prior meetings was that they were concerned that there is over \$400,000.00 worth of business done in this account. Miss White stated that Mr. Groh was speaking inappropriately and that he should not be speaking for her. Mr. Groh also asked Ms. Waldron why there is a surplus at the end of the year and what are the plans for that surplus. Ms. Waldron stated that programs are suggested by people including the Recreation Commission members. Ms. Waldron stated that the Recreation does not try to charge fees in order to make a profit. Ms. Waldron explains that there are times where revenue and expenses are budgeted for a program but due to the success of that program, a surplus may be generated. Ms. Waldron also explained that the Recreation Commission is reviewing a policy that deals with the use of the surplus which may include program scholarships and seed money for proposed programs. A lengthy discussion followed. Mr. Groh stated that if the Board has anymore questions, to send them to him and that he would forward them to Ms. Waldron. Mr. Groh stated that he would prefer to have a Recreation Commission member attend a future meeting to answer questions. A lengthy discussion continued.

## **CITIZENS COMMENTS**

- Mr. Landry stated that he has seen a lot more signs vandalized in Town.
- Mr. Landry commented that the Bull Hill Road sign is knocked down.
- Mr. Landry commented that the Brickyard Road sign needs to be fixed.
- Mr. Landry commented that the Selectmen's meetings should be held at the Town Hall as more people attend the meetings when held at the Town Hall.
- Mr. Landry commented that trying to put Town functions at the Rivermill would not be a good idea. Mr. Landry stated that it has been tried before and has not worked out well.



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- Miss White stated that there is a speed limit sign on Sand Dam Road that is hanging by one rivet and turned backwards.
  - Ms. Hiatt stated that maybe in the next Selectmen's Update to inform residents to report street sign problems.
  - Miss White commented that the Board should hold all of their meetings at the Town Hall and to cease holding them around town. Mr. Groh stated that although the attendance has been lower at the East Thompson Volunteer Fire Department, attendance is higher at other locations.

#### **REARDON ROAD/MAIN STREET TRAFFIC ENTERING SIGN DISCUSSION/ACTION**

*Motion made by Mr. Groh, seconded by Ms. Hiatt, to put a traffic entering from Reardon Road into Main Street sign back far enough away from Reardon Road notifying people that there is entering traffic, wordage to be defined by our highway foreman.*

*Amended motion made by Mr. Groh, seconded by Miss White, to include something that is universally understood.*

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

Discussion on Motion: Mr. Landry suggested using the sign that has a picture on it. The Board discussed the location of the sign. Miss White stated that it is a good idea to use a sign that is universally understood.

#### **BALLARD ROAD – LAND DEEDED TO TOWN OF THOMPSON – TOWN MEETING REQUIRED ACTION REQUIRED**

Mr. Groh explained that the Board reviewed this matter a couple of meetings ago and that a Town Meeting is needed if the Board wants to move forward. Mr. Groh stated that he spoke with Town Counsel who said that the Board does not have to forward this to Town Meeting but that the Board should not stop it but rather bring it to the legislative body of the Town of Thompson. Mr. Groh stated that Town Counsel also said that if the Board does not agree with this, then the Board could inform the residents of that standpoint at the Town Meeting. Mr. Groh added that Town Counsel said that many towns are taking right-of-ways for any new developments on existing roads which will help the town and that if there are any improvements needed in the future the town will already have the right-of-ways. A brief discussion followed. Mr. Groh explained that he is looking for a motion to send this item to Town Meeting.

*Motion made by Ms. Hiatt, seconded by Mr. Groh, that we send this to Town Meeting for the September 30, 2008 Town Meeting as recommended by the Planning & Zoning Commission.*

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Ms. Hiatt	-Yes
Mr. Groh	-Yes
Miss White	-Yes

### **PROCLAMATION RICHARD E. ZAYAS JR. EAGLE COURT OF HONOR – ACTION REQUIRED**

Mr. Groh presented a letter informing the Board of Richard E. Zayas, Jr.'s Eagle Scout Court of Honor. Mr. Groh explained that the Board usually does a proclamation for the Eagle Scout which is presented at the Court of Honor. Miss White asked what the Board knows about Mr. Zayas. Mr. Groh stated that he the only thing he knows about Mr. Zayas is what is in the letter. Miss White stated that she thought there might be a paragraph included about Mr. Zayas.

*Motion made by Ms. Hiatt, seconded by Mr. Groh, that we provide the following proclamation for the Honor Court of Richard Zayas, WHEREAS, we have great pride in acknowledging that Richard E. Zayas, Jr., a resident of our town, has achieved the rank of Eagle Scout; and WHEREAS, we recognize that Richard E. Zayas, Jr. through perseverance, ability, and good character has accomplished his goal and deserves our admiration and respect; and WHEREAS, we recognize that the Boy Scouts of America provide excellent guidance and direction in preparing today's youth as tomorrow leaders; and WHEREAS, we extend our sincere wishes that all his future endeavors will be as exciting and rewarding as his success in achieving the Eagle Scout Award. NOW THEREFORE, the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Thompson, Connecticut, on behalf of all its residents, extends to RICHARD E. ZAYAS, JR. congratulations on this extraordinary achievement. IN WITNESS THEREOF, we hereunto set our hand and cause the seal of the Town of Thompson to be affixed this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of September 2008.*

Ms. Hiatt	-Yes
Mr. Groh	-Yes
Miss White	-Yes

### **SET DATE FOR TOWN MEETING – POSSIBLE SEPTEMBER 30, 2008 AT 8PM ACTION REQUIRED**

Mr. Groh presented a Notice of Special Town Meeting to the Board which included two property donations and a new ordinance. Mr. Groh stated that he will ask Town Counsel to revise the Notice to include the Ballard Road parcel. Mr. Groh suggested holding the Special Town Meeting on Tuesday, September 30, 2008.

*Motion made by Mr. Groh, seconded by Ms. Hiatt, to approve the Town Meeting notice adding Ballard Road to the Town Meeting of what's here in front of us, the ordinance for the easement for utilities, the donation of the two properties suggested by the Selectmen, so that would be four items, send it to Town Attorney with the corrections and reviewed by the other Selectmen before being signed for the date of Sept 30, 2008 at 8 p.m., location at the Library/ Community Center.*

Mr. Groh	-Yes
Ms. Hiatt	-Yes

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*Miss White*                      *-Yes*

**TAX REFUNDS (8)**

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

-River Run Farm	-\$4.00
-John O'Connell	-\$19.62
-Michael Moscoffian	-\$23.18
-Rose Beauregard	-\$61.20
-Edward H Penniman	-\$8.49
-Gary J Silvestri	-\$64.85
-Ruth E Cosmopoulos	-\$18.41
-Lori A Hubmeier Cook	-\$19.28

*Mr. Groh*                      *-Yes*  
*Ms. Hiatt*                      *-Yes*  
*Miss White*                      *-Yes*

**OTHER BUSINESS**

None

**ADJOURN**

*Motion made by Miss White, seconded by Ms. Hiatt, to adjourn the meeting at approximately 9:52 p.m.*

*Miss White*                      *-Yes*  
*Ms. Hiatt*                      *-Yes*  
*Mr. Groh*                      *-Yes*

Recorded and transcribed by:  
Tonya Levesque