



TOWN of THOMPSON

Board of Selectmen

**Minutes: Regular Meeting
Tuesday, August 15, 2017
Merrill Seney Room, Town Hall**

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The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

First Selectman Ken Beausoleil called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Present: Ken Beausoleil
Steve Herbert
Shaina Smith

Staff Present: Tina Fox, Recording Secretary
Also Present: Members of the Public

- I. Approval of Minutes
 - A. **Shaina Smith moved and Steve Herbert seconded the motion to accept the minutes of the August 1, 2017 regular meeting with the following correction:**
 1. Page 2, Section IV(A): "In October 2015, Noel Lafayette presented..." rather than "In October 2013, Noel Lafayette presented..."
Ken Beausoleil- Yes Shaina Smith- Yes Steve Herbert- Yes**The motion carried unanimously.**
- II. Correspondence
 - A. Letter from the City of Waterbury regarding the opioid lawsuit. There will be a meeting August 31st at 10:30 AM at Waterbury City Hall.
 - B. Invitation to cocktail party on August 29th in Bristol, CT for a Bristol mayoral candidate.
 - C. Latest permit numbers from the Building Official.
 - D. Annual Tax Collector's report from Rene Morin.
 - E. Statistics from Troop D on various incidences in Town.
 - F. CCM holding Coffee with the Commissioner September 12th at Grill 37.
 - G. Correspondence from the Department of Transportation regarding paving either Route 12 to the MA line, or Route 131 to the MA line.
 - H. Diana Couture received penalty waiver for reports due to the Office of Policy and Management.
 - I. CT Water will be replacing water main on Beatty Ave. K. Beausoleil will reach out to them regarding this.
 - J. Memo from UCONN engineering department, asking for a \$3,000 contribution for the various engineering projects UCONN is completing for the Town. There was some discussion regarding the correspondence. The Board agreed to add this as an agenda item at the Special Meeting scheduled for August 17th to have time to review the letter.

III. Selectmen's Comments

A. S. Herbert presented the following Selectmen's Comment:

1. S. Herbert believed the Board decided that any contact from SHR Energy would be through the Town Attorney. It seemed improper to suggest that SHR Energy present their project to EDC after the Board decided that all future contact should be through the Town Attorney.
 - a. K. Beausoleil stated that at the Board meeting at the Old Town Hall, the Board agreed that a joint meeting would be appropriate to have a conversation about the solar project. He stated that if SHR Energy threatens to sue the Town then that can go through the Attorney because the Town does not want to be threatened. He added that SHR Energy has kept quiet on any and all threats at this point.
 - b. S. Smith stated that this was discussed in Executive Session and she was hesitant to continue the discussion.
 - c. S. Herbert stated that he does not believe the Board discussed changing the policy for contact with SHR Energy.

B. K. Beausoleil presented the following Selectmen's Comments:

1. The CT Water easement language should be ready for the next meeting.
2. Reached out to DOT regarding the grading of the Airline Trail up to Sunset Hill, and asked them to include that because it is on a State road. They are in the process of finishing up the crosswalks in Town.
3. Spoke to Town Attorney about a draft to deed the Ellen Larned Museum from the Town to the Thompson Historical Society.
4. The Constables, Emergency Management, and Fracking ordinances have been turned over to the Town Attorney for review.
5. The fire study is moving along. The fire departments have been submitting the needed information to VFIS. The only department that has been resisting is West Thompson, which stated that they are busy working on fundraising because of the lack of Town budget.

C. S. Smith presented the following Selectmen's Comments:

1. Wanted to make sure the Town has the possibility of installing a light at the railroad crossing at the entrance to the park as it is very dark there. K. Beausoleil stated that the estimated cost was approximately \$1,000.
2. Stated that there is no arm at the railroad crossing heading onto Wilsonville Rd. K. Beausoleil stated that he will reach out to the railroad company to discuss that.

IV. Citizens' Comments

- A. Valerie Clark, 105 Alm Rd., stated that she is representing herself but is also a member of the Thompson Agriculture Committee. The Board is taking up the topic of discontinuing property taxes on horses. The State allows each Town to exempt horses and ponies via the BOS. Administration of the tax is burdensome and expensive. The CT Horse Council's position is that the tax is arbitrary and discriminatory. No other livestock is taxed on the value of the individual. Most horses end up exempt because most are valued under \$1,000. The horses with higher value are usually boarded out of Town and are exempt. Certain breeds are also exempt. Fewer and fewer horses are being registered. The request to eliminate the tax is a request to save the Town money and is in the best interests of the Town's finances.

- B. Al Landry, 33 Randall Rd., read an article from the Norwich Bulletin related to fracking. He stated that he hopes the BOS will approve the horse exemption without sending the proposal to the Ordinance Committee. He asked is it worth it to tax horses if the Town has to pay someone to check the horses. He added that only a few hundred dollars is collected on horses right now.
 - C. Rhonda Rooney, 13 Main St., asked about the Branding project. K. Beausoleil stated that the project has not come to an end. S. Herbert stated that some UCONN seniors did a study on branding in Thompson and wrote some reports. K. Beausoleil stated that the NECCOG Branding project is still in the works, and the next meeting is August 21st.
- V. Recreation Department Request to Approve School Year Staff
- A. K. Beausoleil read a letter aloud from Angela Newell.
 - B. **Ken Beausoleil moved and Steve Herbert seconded the motion to approve the Recreation Department School Year Staff as read.**
Ken Beausoleil- Yes Shaina Smith- Yes Steve Herbert- Yes
The motion carried unanimously.
- VI. Ordinances: Fracking, Constables, Emergency Management
- A. K. Beausoleil stated that the Town Attorney is reviewing the Constables, Fracking, and Emergency Management ordinances.
- VII. Discussion/Possible Action on Exemption for Horses and Ponies
- A. K. Beausoleil stated that a variety of information was received from the Assessor regarding what other Towns have done. Most wrote a resolution. Most money received from the tax is for failing to declare a horse, and \$289 is generated when someone does not declare the horse.
 - B. There was a brief discussion, with the Board in agreement that an ordinance or policy was not needed, and that the Board could pass a resolution to exempt horses and ponies.
 - C. K. Beausoleil stated that he will try to get a resolution ready for the next meeting.
- VIII. DOT I-395 Road Work (FY2018-19)
- A. K. Beausoleil stated that the DOT will be replacing culverts that run under 395 in two places. It will disrupt some traffic. There will be a public meeting December 28th at 7:00 PM in the Merrill Seney Room to discuss the project.
- IX. Secretary/Clerk Replacement Hire
- A. K. Beausoleil stated that the position is currently 19 hours per week, but if the budget passes, it may be increased to 30 hours per week. That would change the conditions of the hiring. He suggested waiting until the budget passes to hire the position, and continue working with the temp agency for now.
 - B. The Board agreed to wait to fill the position.

- X. Executive Session: Performance of an Employee
- A. **Ken Beausoleil moved and Shaina Smith seconded the motion to go into Executive Session.**
Ken Beausoleil- Yes Shaina Smith- Yes Steve Herbert- Yes
The motion carried unanimously.
- B. The Board entered Executive Session at 8:00 PM.
- C. The Board came out of Executive Session at 8:27 PM. No action was taken.
- XI. Other Business: None
- XII. Citizens' Comments: None
- XIII. Tax Refunds
- A. **Ken Beausoleil moved and Shaina Smith seconded the motion to approve the following tax refunds:**
1. Derek Koziak \$285.70
Ken Beausoleil- Yes Shaina Smith- Yes Steve Herbert- Yes
The motion carried unanimously.
- XIV. BOS Resignation and Appointment
- A. S. Smith read her letter of resignation from the BOS aloud.
- B. **Steve Herbert moved and Ken Beausoleil seconded the motion to accept Shaina Smith's resignation with regrets and wish her all the best in the future.**
1. K. Beausoleil stated that it was a pleasure working with S. Smith, and she will be sorely missed. He thanked S. Smith for everything she has done for the Town.
Ken Beausoleil- Yes Shaina Smith- Yes Steve Herbert- Yes
The motion carried unanimously.
- C. K. Beausoleil stated the Democratic Town Committee (DTC) held a meeting that evening, and read a letter from the DTC aloud recommending Douglas J. Williams to fill the BOS vacancy. He stated that D. Williams previously served on the BOS, and is not on the ballot in November for any Board.
- D. S. Herbert asked if a volunteer application had been filled out, to which K. Beausoleil responded that it had not.
- E. K. Beausoleil made a motion to add Douglas J. Williams to the Board of Selectmen to fill the unexpired term of Shaina N. Smith, term to end November 2017. The motion was not seconded.
- F. S. Herbert stated that the usual paperwork for a vacancy was not provide. As of 11:00 AM when he learned of the potential vacancy, he had no idea who might be suggested to fill the term. He would like time to give consideration for the important decision. He did not like the discussion coming up at the last minute. He added that he would like the normal application or an equivalent to be completed and submitted.
- G. Kathy Thomas, 12 School St., Chairman of the DTC, stated that the people of Thompson saw fit to elect D. Williams as a Selectman in the past. State statute provides that the BOS has 30 days to appoint a candidate, at which point the elected democratic officials have the opportunity to appoint someone.

- H. D. Williams stated that he was approached and asked if he would be willing to serve on the Board for a brief period of time. He is not running for political office. Having another person on the Board brings more perspective and ideas. The more people you have to bounce ideas off of, the better it is for the Town and the Board. He does not see his potential appointment as anything but a service for the Town, and reiterated that he is not a candidate for any position in November. He stated that Town Attorney is a partner of his and some people may consider that a conflict of interest. The Town Attorney was appointed when there was a majority Republican BOS, and it was always up to Republicans to appoint him. He added that legal opinions are not political.
- I. S. Smith stated that the paperwork S. Herbert referred to is for volunteers. In the past, when an elected position became vacant, the Town committees would forward their recommendation with no paperwork. She added that she does not think D. Williams' appointment would be for political gain.
- J. S. Herbert stated that in the past, applicants being appointed to elected positions provided applications, and the Board found it useful to look at the paperwork. He reiterated that he does not appreciate a question being dropped on him regarding something this important.
- K. There was some more brief discussion, with no action taken.

XV. Adjourn

- A. **Steve Herbert moved and Ken Beausoleil seconded the motion to adjourn.**
Ken Beausoleil- Yes Shaina Smith- Yes Steve Herbert- Yes
The motion carried unanimously.
- B. First Selectman Ken Beausoleil adjourned the meeting at 8:57 PM.

Tina Fox
Recording Secretary