



TOWN OF THOMPSON
Board of Selectmen - Minutes
Tuesday, February 1, 2022
Town Hall- Merrill Seney Room
and via ZOOM Online Meeting Portal

I. The call to order by Selectman Amy St Onge was at 7:00 PM.

Roll call: First Selectman Amy St Onge, Selectmen Susanne Witkowski and Ken Beausoleil. Others: Tyra Penn-Gesek (Planning and Development Director), Michelle Giammarinaro (HR Director). 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

Motion A. St Onge seconded by K. Beausoleil to approve the minutes of the 01-18-2022 BOS Regular Meeting carried unanimously.

IV. Correspondence

A. DESPP Summary of Services December 2021

B. Thompson Public Library thank you letter for a key piece of library materials sanitizing equipment

**Additional: Memo Jessica Bolte- request for annual Girl Scout Cookie Sale

Motion S. Witkowski seconded by K. Beausoleil to add an agenda item to #XIII (Other) to consider the Girl Scout request for the annual cookie sale carried unanimously.

V. Selectmen Comments:

- K. Beausoleil praised Town Staff: the DPW for their handling of the challenging weather situation, Steve Benoit who came to the town hall to handle operations, and the fire departments which handled two fires.

-S. Witkowski * noting the regular DESPP incident reports, asked for a similar report from EMS, listing the total calls, by type and other details. K. Beausoleil suggested the Fire Marshal provide this, but Quinebaug Dispatch may have more complete data. The report would be helpful to the BOF as well. * She expressed concern about the opportunity for the public to interact with the BOS, as voiced at the previous meeting. Since dialogue is not conducted during a BOS meeting, previous interaction with the First Selectman, at the office or via email, allows for the BOS members to anticipate a subject and prepare for it.

-A. St Onge supported K. Beausoleil's praise for the DPW and others. * Budget workshops: all on Zoom, thus facilitating public access. Feb 7 (2:30-6 PM), 02/09 (2:3- 6), 02/14 (10-3), 02/16 ((3-6+), 02/22 (all fire departments). * Thompson had no good fortune in finding an interim Finance Director. * The new software in that department is cloud-based, therefore interactive; department heads will begin to enter budget requests previous to the February 7 budget workshops.

VI. Citizens' Comments:

-John Lenkey, 304 Brickyard Rd, regarding appointments to the P&Z Commission, noted that the RTC and DTC have sent written recommendations to the BOS, as is customary, and asks that the BOS be open-minded.

-Raymond Williams, 194 Porter Plain Rd asks the BOS, regarding the P&Z appointments, to keep in mind those people who ran for office for the P&Z Commission and were voted for.

VII. Economic Development Update from Director of Planning & Development: T. Penn-Gesek updated the BOS on pending Community Challenge Grant applications and others including a possible DEEP grant for the Airline Trail. The BOS has requested being kept informed regarding applications and the status of grants.

VIII. Voting Districts -Proposed Ordinance Discussion: the current Ordinance does not comply with the State's new Senate District delineations. Discussion ensued: voter concerns, distance to polling places for some residents, and other issues. Options for addressing re-districting as well as locations of the voting places were discussed. The town Attorney can create a draft Ordinance which will not require revision every time re-districting takes place. The deadline for changing the Senate district boundary is imminent, by March 21. A Town Meeting (Hybrid, targeting Feb 23) is being planned, with residents provided, in advance, two options for their consideration, with draft text available on the website and to be picked up at the town hall.

IX. Ambulance Update: Rob Werge, 452 Lowell Davis Rd, a citizen member of the Ambulance study panel, noted the 3 possible frameworks available to Thompson, and the Consultants' preliminary comments about the positive/negative aspects of each, along with cost structures. Joining the Putnam EMS has been shown to be the most favorable; scheduling EMS staff will be facilitated with personnel posted in each town but additional staff available for historically peak call hours, and with an equal representation by Thompson on the governing Board. S. Witkowski asked that a representative from the current provider, K-B Ambulance, come in to the BOS. They may be even more affordable; they already employ 13 Thompson resident EMTs.

X. Thompson Middle School PTO Request for Fundraiser at Transfer Station:

Motion S. Witkowski seconded by K. Beausoleil to approve the request by the Thompson Middle School PTO for a fundraiser at the Transfer Station on April 2 (rain date April 9) carried unanimously.

XI. Resignation:

Motion K. Beausoleil seconded by S. Witkowski to accept the resignation of Heather O'Rourke from the Economic Development Commission with regret, thanking her for her service to Thompson and noting that she will instead be serving Thompson through her position at TEEG, carried unanimously.

XII. Appointments- Planning & Zoning Commission Alternate Seats: following 2 resignations from the P&Z Commission, the Ordinance was consulted, and the procedure specified was followed: the P&Z Commission appointed, from the alternates already seated, 2 individuals to fill the full-member vacancies (one Republican to a Republican seat and an Unaffiliated voter to a Democrat to seat), with 1 alternate (Democrat) still in place. Subsequently, each political Town Committee recommended individuals to the BOS for appointment to fill the vacant alternate seats until the next election; the political dynamic of the vacant alternate seats is customarily followed. The Democratic Town Committee recommended 1 individual, Geoffrey Bolte. The Republican Town Committee recommended 2 individuals to fill the 2 vacancies (Kies-Orr LaVack and Robert Werge, Sr). A. St Onge stated that moving the 2 Republican nominees to the Commission will match the structure that was in place, maintaining the balance. It has been confirmed that under the law regarding the matter, two Republican appointments are in compliance.

Motion S. Witkowski seconded by A. St Onge to appoint Kies-Orr LaVack as an Alternate on the Planning and Zoning Commission for a six-year term (the seat vacated by Republican Alvan Hill) carried unanimously.

Motion S. Witkowski seconded by A. St Onge to appoint Robert Werge, Sr as an Alternate on the Planning and Zoning Commission to fill the unexpired 2-year term (vacated by Unaffiliated Voter Dave Poplawski) carried 2-1, with K. Beausoleil voting "nay."

XIII. Other Business:

Motion K. Beausoleil seconded by S. Witkowski to approve sale of Girl Scout cookies at the Transfer Station from 8:30 - 2 on Saturdays from February 26 through March 26 carried unanimously.

XIV. Citizens' Comments:

-Jessica Bolte, Girl Scout Leader, thanked the BOS for support of the fundraiser, noting that profits from cookie sales come back to the community.

- William (Bill) Warner, Lowell Davis Dr: commented about the statute regarding the appointments to Planning and Zoning Commission. A. St Onge noted that these are staggered terms, necessitating a different procedure; the question had been submitted for legal review.

- Sally White, 308 E. Thompson Rd: commented about referrals to Town Attorney Ken Slater, noting that he is not elected nor a staff member, only an advisor or paid staff

- Nadine Williams-Edwards, 131 Spicer Rd: wonders about consistency of applying the Ordinances. The November voter turnout was unprecedented, but appointments tonight do not seem to reflect that.

-Robert Werge Jr, 452 Lowell Davis Rd: speaking as both a resident and a BOF member, notes that the Ordinances were followed in the appointments process; reaching out to clarify that legal procedures are being followed protects the town. He suggests that residents re-channel energy toward positive and co-operative efforts

- William (Bill) Warner, Lowell Davis Dr: noted the November election results.

-Danielle Carlson, 3 Rachel Dr: thanked the BOS on their achievements; the town needs to come together.

- Jason St Onge, 139 Riverside Dr: reviewed the process of vetting each nominee sent by the RTC to the BOS for the alternate seats on the P&Z Commission, citing specific qualifications

- Sally White, 308 E Thompson Rd: * Thompson has 10 villages, each with its own character. Centralized government should respect each's uniqueness. * It appears that the appointments of the P&Z Alternates has over-ridden the legislative body's decisions (the voters of the town) * The Town Attorney is for advice; the BOS is charged with running the town
- Nadine Williams-Edwards, 131 Spicer Rd: asks how the town can now work together
- Robert Werge Jr, 452 Lowell Davis Rd: now it is time to work toward collaboratively to find good people to serve on Thompson's Boards/Commissions.
- Danielle Carlson, 3 Rachel Dr: the P&Z Commission now will get to the job at hand: to create land use regulations designed to move Thompson to where we need to be.

XV. Tax Refunds:

Motion A. St Onge seconded by K. Beausoleil to accept the Tax Refunds as proposed for a total of \$522.54 carried unanimously.

ACAR Leasing LTD	\$128.70	Fortin, Alyssa E.	\$36.37
Baker, Norman M. and Donna J.	\$81.68	Kettle, Gary L.	\$46.65
Day, David C.	\$214.27	Riel, Jonathan T.	\$14.87

XVI. Executive Session:

Motion A. St Onge seconded by K. Beausoleil that the 3 members of the BOS enter into Executive Session at 8:33 PM in order to discuss Windham North Properties' Request for Lien Release as well as possible Land Acquisition (North Grosvenordale) carried unanimously.

Executive Session ended at 8:59 PM with no action taken.

XVII. Adjourn

Motion A. St Onge seconded by S. Witkowski to adjourn at 8:59 PM carried unanimously.

To see the meeting, click on this link or copy/paste into your search bar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/QfRgBYxio6J0oZGY-cwntJCrsO9c76apEh51OZ2ji5TYxd4ZMgtx6Pnj6HGNIBqH.tLSePhJfft2hv6Nc> **Passcode: nV5Vt15+**

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.