



TOWN OF
THOMPSON
Board of Selectmen

SELECTMEN'S MEETING

Tuesday, December 15, 2020

Via ZOOM Online Meeting Portal

MINUTES

First Selectman Amy St Onge called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM with all three Selectmen present via Zoom. A. St Onge noted that the meeting is being recorded.

Roll call: First Selectman Amy St Onge, Selectmen Susanne Witkowski and Ken Beausoleil. Finance Director Orla McKiernan-Rafty, John Rice (PnZ, Building Committee), Registrars of Voters Frank McGarry and Aileen Witkowski, Members of Boards/ Commissions, and of the public, Recording Secretary Dotti Durst

I. Approval of Minutes

- A. **Motion A. St Onge seconded by S. Witkowski to approve the 12-01-2020 BOS Regular Meeting Minutes carried unanimously.**
- B. **Motion A. St Onge seconded by S. Witkowski to approve the 12-09-2020 BOS Special Meeting Minutes carried unanimously.**

II. Correspondence

- A. DESPP Police Services Report
- B. TEEG - Thank You
- C. CT Water
- D. Building Department Report
- E. Tax Office Report

III. Selectmen Comments:

- K. Beausoleil: praised the DPW who are well-prepared for the blizzard tomorrow
- S. Witkowski * Grand Opening of the new in-town dog kennel? Probably in the spring.
- K. Beausoleil suggests a video walk-through now, use of WINY and facebook * There have been serious accidents near the MA border where the re-paving was done. The DOT will be contacted.
- A. St Onge: A parking ban will be in effect all night in anticipation of the projected storm.

IV. Citizen Comments: none

- V. Bridge Replacement Funding: Nov 2021 - Discussion and Possible Action. A. St Onge reviewed the status of Buckley Hill Road. The BOS consensus was that there is a need for an RFP for an engineering study in order to apply for an 80% Federal grant (20% falls to the town), and the need for it to be in the 2021 budget.

- VI. Bridge Inspections under 20': Late Summer/Early Fall 2021 - Discussion and Possible Action: The state discontinued inspections of bridges of less than 20 feet, holding the towns responsible. Thompson's 12 bridges/culverts Report was due in 2019, so is tardy. The BOS consensus was that there is a need for an RFP for engineering for the inspections and required repairs which will prepare us for budget planning.

- VII. Ordinances: Budget 10-05 and Fire Fighter Tax Abatement 10-019 – Discussion/Possible Action:
 - 1). Budget Ordinance:
 - a. State regulations for Bonding (CGS 7-9b) require that the legal notice be posted 30 days before

the referendum; the Roofs project did not comply and will need to be rescheduled. The Town Attorney concurs that the Ordinance could be reviewed to permit less than 30 days in these cases, and he will provide suggested language. K. Beausoleil: the referendum will need to be rescheduled.

b. A. St Onge is considering combining the proposed General Government Budget and the proposed Education Budget into a single vote at the annual budget referendum, especially considering the polling places challenges during this Covid period. The Ordinance Review Committee opened the subject, and the Board of Education and the Board of Finance in recent months seemed to favor considering this change. K. Beausoleil reviewed the history of the bifurcated vote, which began in 1997. He supports the concept of a single vote on the budget but advises that great effort must be made to be certain that all voters are well-informed. S. Witkowski supports the concept of “one town/one budget.” A. St Onge will ask the Ordinance Review Committee to look at this and ask the Attorney to propose adjustments to the legal aspects of the language and bring it to the BOS.

2). Fire Ordinance: per CGS 12-81w, a town may offer either a tax abatement or an exemption against current real estate or property taxes. S. Witkowski- a tax abatement is actually taxed as income, thus reducing the impact on the volunteers who serve at the Fire Stations. K. Beausoleil- our town attorney, at Halloran and Sage, serving about 50 towns in Connecticut, may have seen options that would be applicable to Thompson. Yes, let’s look into how to best support our EMS and Fire Services; they have done so much during the current Covid situation, even over and above their usual duties. Once we have broader information, we will look at an Ordinance change.

- VIII. Thompson Fire Engine Company – Polling Station– Discussion and Possible Action: The Thompson Hill Fire Station has voted to discontinue as a polling place for District 1. Now a “convenient and Suitable polling place” within the District boundaries will need to be determined. Frank McGarry and Aileen Witkowski, Thompson’s Registrars of Voters, state that if the BOS discussion does not yield a suitable space with District 1 boundaries, they recommend the authorization of District 1 voting at the Louis P. Faucher Community Center/Library, a town building under the jurisdiction of the BOS. Voters for each District must be kept separate; Registrars determine where the vote shall take place by District. By statute, Voting District boundaries are set at a town meeting and could enable a combined polling place. An Ordinance revision can be considered for that purpose. **Motion K. Beausoleil seconded by S. Witkowski to endorse the suggestion of the Registrars that the polling place for District 1 be in the Louis P. Faucher Community Center at the Library.** Extended discussion and procedural clarification followed; no action was taken.
- IX. Budgets Workshop Dates FY2021-2020: the proposed February dates seem workable; they include some Saturdays and evenings for public participation via Zoom, which will be offered to organizations that in the past came to the town hall for their budget discussion
- X. Resignation:
Motion A. St Onge seconded by S. Witkowski to accept Ronald Tillen’s resignation from the Thompson Conservation Commission with regret carried unanimously. K. Beausoleil praised Ron’s many years on Thompson Boards/Commissions and the Fire Department
- XI. Other Business: S. Witkowski asked about access to the Town Hall. The Town Hall is open for business on an appointment basis. Temperatures are taken and visitors log in and out. These steps help ensure the health of the community as well as staff, and will facilitate contact tracing if it is needed.

XII. Citizens Comments:

*Dick Trudeau, 192 Wagher Road- received confirmation that the state turned over <20' bridge inspections in 2017; that work on Buckley Hill includes the bridge over the old canal and the French River bridge, that the situation has closed the entire road only to through-truck traffic.

*Francis McGarry, 225 Chase Road-wonders if legally combining voting Districts 1 and 2 at this time is wise. If that decision waits, it will avoid lines of voters waiting during this pandemic; the Districts could be kept separate this next year, with voting in separate rooms at the Community Center and combined in the future.

*John Rice, 39 E. Thompson Road- problems with lines have not previously arisen in District 2

*Aileen Witkowski, 334 W. Thompson Road- lines only in the heavy presidential 2016 election

*Francis McGarry, 225 Chase Road- neither abatement of \$1,000 nor exemption from taxes of up to \$41,000 worth of real property treats all firefighters equally (those who do not own real estate, for example)

*John Rice, 39 E. Thompson Road- keep in mind that the bridge over the canal is the only way to access Buckley Hill without a major detour. A. St Onge- it will be closed only during the actual bridge reconstruction.

*John Rice, 39 E. Thompson Road- best wished to our First Selectman, whose first year in office...what an experience. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Hope it gets better next year.

XIII. Tax Refunds:

Motion A. St Onge seconded K. Beausoleil to approve the tax refund to Tammy E. Carlson for \$7.99 carried unanimously.

XIV. Adjourn:

Motion S. Witkowski seconded by K. Beausoleil to adjourn at 8:21 PM carried unanimously.

To see the recording of the meeting, click or copy/paste the link to your search bar:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/ug4mTfAFM5wJhgtkX0ZGLN_A6qvjeLuQfopWLsPWdIQKH2uzMn3VydZiSJoow6C3.HRYc6KdFOWQPhP5
Passcode: !#o05%b9

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.