



**TOWN of THOMPSON**  
**Board of Selectmen**  
**Town Hall**  
**855 Riverside Drive 06255**

SELECTMEN'S MEETING  
Tuesday, January 19, 2021  
Via ZOOM Online Meeting Portal  
Minutes

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First Selectman Amy St Onge called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM with all three Selectmen together 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. John Rice (PnZ, Building Committee), Karen Durlach (Trails Committee Chair), Robert Werge and Steven Herbert (BOF), Community Fire Department Chief John Sharpe, Quinebaug Fire Department Chief Matthew Grauer, East Thompson Fire Department Assistant Chief and EMS Administrator of Community Ambulance Josh Koch, Matthew Whipple (West Thompson), Jessica Bolte (Girl Scouts of America), Members of Boards/ Commissions, and the public, WINY, Recording Secretary Dotti Durst

**I. Approval of Minutes**

**A. Motion A. St Onge seconded by K. Beausoleil to approve the 9-15-2020 BOS Regular Meeting Minutes unanimously.**

**B. Motion A. St Onge seconded by S. Witkowski to approve the 9-15-2020 BOS Special Meeting Minutes carried unanimously.**

**II. Correspondence: none before the agenda was posted**

After the agenda was posted:

\*Richard Stacy-memo about young people on motor bikes/ATVs unlawfully using Red Bridge Road and on Church property; police have been notified but are not present when they return. He asks the BOS to issue a statement reminding citizens about public safety.

\* Janet Blanchette, J&D Engineering re a RFP for work on the Wheaton Brook culvert.

**Motion A. St Onge seconded by K. Beausoleil to add this matter as an agenda item under #10, Other, carried unanimously.**

\* Matt and Laura Gineo, 30 Indian Inn Rd: the abutting 4.2 acres parcel, 0 Lillian Ave, owned by the town and in an Open Space restriction, is of interest if ever it can be conveyed. As owners, they would agree that the parcel never be built upon, and would maintain it as part of their own property. A. St Onge will speak with the town attorney.

**III. Selectmen Comments:**

K. Beausoleil – has 1395 Riverside Dr passed the perc test? A St Onge- it is in process

S. Witkowski- no formal Thank You has gone to the Hill fire Station for allowing the use of the facility for all these years as a voting place, but is deserved. A Certificate of Appreciation will be drafted and brought to the next BOS meeting.

A. St Onge- noted how challenging the process is for people to use the VAMS technology needed to log in and schedule a Covid vaccination. DKH has now asked for 75,000 vaccines. The Covid spike of new cases is extreme. Please, everyone, stay safe.

**IV. Citizen Comments:** John Rice noted that the Planning and Zoning Commission has asked their attorney to look at the Regulations regarding Open Space requirements.

**V. Firefighter Tax Abatement Ordinance 10-019 – A. St Onge:** the purpose of this discussion is to find the best way to thank the volunteers who staff the Fire Stations and respond to all calls including

EMS/Ambulance. She read aloud the statutory provision. Town Assessor Paul Hopkins did research and found that Killingly recently updated their fire fighter provisions; K. Beausoleil requested a copy of his findings and comments. Lengthy and detailed discussion of the possibility of modifying the Ordinance which provides for a Firefighter and EMT Tax Abatement followed, to either increase the allotted Abatement amount to meet current statutory provision for \$1,500 or to change to a tax Exemption for these volunteers. Several officers and members of the five Thompson Fire Departments as well as the Fire Marshal were present. The advantage and disadvantages of both approaches were weighed, with some Chiefs having held discussions with volunteers at the respective stations. Note was made by the Chiefs that not all volunteers are Thompson residents and not all own adequate property/real estate in order to be able to receive a benefit from the provisions. One purpose of the tax relief was to encourage young volunteers and encourage additional volunteer training (thus qualifying for a greater tax advantage). Note was made that the current Abatement is "taxable income" and thus is reduced, as well as requiring tax filings. K. Beausoleil- discussions have taken place about offering a retirement incentive, encouraging longevity; many volunteers step up during middle-age years when time becomes available in their lives. The language in the Ordinance currently is cumbersome and could be streamlined. If the abatement amount becomes \$1,500, the town attorney can be asked if it might be retroactive to the current fiscal year. Chief J. Sharpe thanked the BOS for opening this discussion: no matter which way the matter is resolved, it will be appreciated. S. Witkowski- if a change is sought, the matter will go to a town meeting, ideally in May; it will be advantageous for Fire/EMS personnel to be present to assist the public to understand the nuances.

**Motion K. Beausoleil seconded by A. St Onge to increase the Firefighters/EMT tax abatement by \$500 to the amount currently allowed by statute, with the town attorney to be consulted to determine if it can be retro-dated, carried unanimously.**

- VI. Land Donation to Windham Trust – A. St Onge: the Town Attorney confirmed that the deed to Parcel 1 does have a woodlot restriction but it does not prohibit transfer of ownership of the parcel. Wood from that lot, if subsequently sold, would become a donation to a local cause, thus meeting the stipulations.

**Motion A. St Onge seconded by S. Witkowski to refer Parcel 1 of the Bull Hill land under discussion to the Planning and Zoning Commission for review and to request permission to dispose of it carried unanimously.**

- VII. Request from Girl Scout Troop 65117, 65136 and 65500 to Sell Cookies at the Transfer Station on the 4 Saturdays in March from 8-2. After confirming the dates and times:

**Motion K. Beausoleil seconded by S. Witkowski to approve the Girl Scout Cookie Sale request as presented carried unanimously.**

- VIII. Legal Notice of Town Meeting/Referendum - Discussion and Possible Action Town Meeting February 24, and Referendum on March 9. The language is being drafted. If the Firefighters/EMT Ordinance tax abatement language is being altered, it can be added.

- IX. Trails Committee: Purchase of Trailer – An enclosed trailer was discussed, to be used to store and transport tools for Volunteers to use in maintaining trails, and to be moved as needed by the Volunteers. A. St Onge attended the Trails meeting, spoke with the town Attorney about liability matters and has yet to receive an insurance quote. It was agreed by the BOS that if this is put into effect, guidelines will be needed about checking the trailer out for the day, who will be authorized to use it and attached to what tow vehicle. K. Beausoleil- the title will be in the town's name and thus covered by the town's insurance. Karen Durlach, Trails Chair: the Committee has outside sources of income and can reimburse the town for costs.

**Motion A. St Onge seconded by K. Beausoleil carried unanimously: the BOS gives a stamp of approval to the Trails Committee to utilize its own funds to purchase the appropriate trailer for its needs, with town funds to be used to register and insure it.**

X. Other Business:

**\*Motion A. St Onge seconded by K. Beausoleil to move forward with the RFP for the culvert work at the Wheaton Brook project carried unanimously.**

**\*S. Witkowski asked the procedure for the review of the Plan of Conservation and Development.**

A. St Onge: The BOS reviews the document and submits comments, if there are any. Then it is published and the Public Hearing is scheduled, after which the Planning and Zoning Commission reviews the document, possibly making modifications, and then voting to approve it. S. Witkowski will submit to Planning and Zoning a few comments/questions that arose when she read through it.

XI. Citizens Comments: none

XII. Tax Refunds:

**Motion A. St Onge seconded by K. Beausoleil to approve the Tax Refunds as presented totaling \$1,162.59 carried unanimously.**

Milley, Richard E.	\$49.31	ACAR Leasing LTD	\$361.99
Ballard-Ross, Pamela R.	\$229.33	Larsen, Marni C.	\$14.66
Durand, Scott P.	\$501.97	Timothy I Myers,	\$5.33

XIII. Adjourn: **Motion A. St Onge seconded by S. Witkowski to adjourn at 8:19 PM carried unanimously.**

See and hear the entire meeting by clicking on this link:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/TPy1uib\\_Ec99t-fbeASdqvDSE1keohODdUlnsL3Te1Oy6H9loKlqU0fl75ZZeQUq.YxDX5VSc1mMpch0](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/TPy1uib_Ec99t-fbeASdqvDSE1keohODdUlnsL3Te1Oy6H9loKlqU0fl75ZZeQUq.YxDX5VSc1mMpch0)  
**Passcode: %4=qF9Gy**

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.*

**Thompson is committed to achieving growth in ways that are  
Green, Sustainable, and Innovative.**