

***Board of Selectmen Special Meeting  
Merrill Seney Community Room, Town Hall  
Meeting Minutes***

**I. Call to order**

called to order the Special Selectmen's meeting of the Budget Reviews at on at the Merrill Seney Community Room.

**I. Roll call**

The following persons were present: Paul Lenky, First Selectman, Kerstin Forrester, Selectman, Shaina Smith, Selectman, Donna Grant-Executive Director of the Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group (TEEG), Emma King—Director of Community Services for TEEG, Orla McKiernan-Raftery, Finance Director.

**I. TEEG Budget Review**

- a. Donna Grant requested level funding of \$30,000 for the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> year in a row which covers the cost of general services as well as administrative and operation costs. It was noted that the town's private fund and dollars goes right into the fuel tanks for Thompson residents. Ms. Grant provided the board with a breakdown of services from TEEG which includes the retail cash value of each service and the amount of services provided in 2013/14. Seniors and working families, Ms. Grant stated, makes up the majority of those who utilize the food program.
- b. School Readiness: Ms. Grant stated that the town has a legislative obligation to generate revenue that goes back towards supporting this program. Ms. Grant stated that TEEG is working with some of the most vulnerable families with the likelihood of children needing additional services significant. Ms. Grant said that if we can get those children early and secure slots, the less likely we are to spend additional dollars for supportive services in the future.
- c. Total retail cost of services from TEEG is valued at \$742,767.48 with Thompson paying \$30,000 towards all programs and administration which is about 4% of the total cost of services.
- d. Youth Services Bureau: United Services covers 14-16 towns in the region. It was Ms. Grant's opinion that the model cannot provide the kind of services that can and needs to be provided under the youth services grant. United

services is the largest geographical YSB in the state. According to Ms. Grant, all youth services receive about a \$15,000 grant with an obligation to match the grant dollars. United Services asks for a few thousand dollars per town which equates to about \$60,000. Ms. Grant provided details of the Juvenile Review Board which was revived a few years ago. TEEG said if it splits the region with United Services, it can also serve as a JRB. Ms. Grant stated that United Services solicits Thompson to fund its JRB program but TEEG is the town's JRB. Ms. Grant said there is a youth supper program underway and there are six towns which TEEG covers under the JRB model. A \$12,000 grant through the Connecticut Youth Services Association was given to TEEG to fund this work for kids. Ms. Grant wants to make a bigger impact on truancy to be able to provide additional services and programs to children such as mentoring, counseling, a membership to a gym, karate class, for example. Ms. Grant further explained that this is not an "us vs. them" with youth work, but that TEEG does it a little more authentically. United Services is hesitant after speaking with them about officially having TEEG as the JRB for the six towns, with Ms. Grant stating she doesn't think United Services would like this to happen but they aren't providing the youth services (noting demographic and population obstacles). Ms. Grant is optimistic in getting the designation from the state but not the funding. TEEG is receiving \$40,000 in the form of a private donation for youth services and if the town of Thompson designated additional monies outside of the requested \$30,000 for youth services, that would be a separate line item.

- e. Generator: If the town can provide the cost perhaps through the emergency management budget for the installation, hook-up and a poured concrete pad, a generator can be installed and the TEEG building could serve as an additional emergency center, keeping goods from spoiling when residents lose power through the use of the walk-in coolers.
- f. The presentation by Ms. Grant ended at 11:22 A.M.

## **I. Probate Court**

- a. Lea Schad presented the budget request from the Probate Court at 11:30, stating as per the agreement with the 7 towns, not much has changed. The budget request and actual budget was \$10,095 last year. This year the request is for Thompson to designate \$10,610 toward the probate court. The total budget has gone up about \$2,000 with snow plowing kicking up the budget this year, according to Mrs. Schad. The total request amount is based on per capita which amounts to \$1.132 per resident for the probate court; last year's

amount was \$1.077.

- b. Mrs. Schad was finished with her presentation at 11:32 AM

## **I. Highway Department**

- Leo Adams presented the budget request at 2:35 PM, where the board reviewed the Town garage, Public works, ground supplies, parks, transfer station, cemeteries and snow removal proposed budgets for 2015/16. A brief discussion on the building repairs line item under the town garage was had between Selectmen Forrester and Mr. Adams, with Forrester stating what improvements have been made this year shouldn't be a recurring item and amount for the upcoming fiscal year. Mr. Adams said it shouldn't be, with the town garage needing the installation of lights as the existing ones are motion sensor lights and when a mechanic was under a vehicle, he would have to come out from repairing the vehicle to turn back on the lights. The selectman recommended proposing \$5,500 under the building repairs line item instead of Mr. Adams' recommended amount of \$6,500. The street lights and their cost to the town was discussed with the Board of Selectmen noting that the street lights in town should be evaluated once again to see which ones can be turned off to save on electricity costs.
- Summer Temporary position: Mr. Adams proposed an increase from \$12,500 to \$15,000 with the intent to hire someone earlier in the spring, and staying later in the fall. There are three volunteers through EastConn, this position would be an older individual who would start on April 1<sup>st</sup> versus the middle of May. Parks and Recreation Director Renee Waldron was asked to speak as she and First Selectman Lenky held discussions prior to the meeting as to whether the Recreation Commission could pay for a position like this, but the recreation commission does not have the equipment needed to maintain the town's parks. She stated she would support a person to do the maintenance if it were a position to fulfill other duties other than just mowing. It was noted that this temporary position would be paid \$12/hour which equates to 1,250 total hours.
- Transfer Station: Water monitoring line item was \$26,500 for 2014/15 budget, with the same dollar amount requested for 2015/16. Selectman Smith questioned if other companies have been hired in the past or if it has been the same one. Mr. Lenky responded that it's been the same one. Selectman Smith suggested perhaps going out to bid in the future to see if we can get the cost

lowered for testing the wells at the transfer station. Selectman Forrester agreed that the town should be looking at going out to bid on such a costly line item. It was discussed that there are 25 locations to test.

#### **I. Finance & Treasurer**

- II. Orla McKiernan-Raftery presented a hand out of the department's proposed budget for 2015/16. It was discussed by Mrs. McKiernan-Raftery that former Finance Director Mike Martin is currently classified as a per diem employee (status) which was set up by Mr. Martin as opposed to being a 1099 contracted employee on an as needed basis. Discussion was had among Board members concerning the contract and agreement that was signed by Mr. Martin and the town and additional research will be conducted to resolve the possible issue of monies spent to date on his professional services.

III.

#### **IV. Recreation Commission**

Renee Waldron, Recreation Director presented the budget on behalf of the commission and explained the 950 account. She noted that there was a \$16,232.89 donation which is designated for a specific use. Various line items were looked at as well as services and programs offered through the town's recreation department.

Mrs. Forrester made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Mrs. Smith

Lenky-Yes

Forrester-Yes

Smith-Yes

Meeting adjourned at 6:15 PM.

Minutes submitted by: Shaina Smith

Minutes approved by: