

TOWN of THOMPSON
 Board of Selectmen/Board of Finance
 Joint Special Meeting – Budget Presentations
 Monday – February 19, 2024 -Minutes
 Merrill Seney Room, Town Hall
 And via Zoom from remote locations

1. The call to order by Board of Finance Chair Rob Werge was at 6:04 PM, immediately following the adjournment of the Special BOF meeting regarding repairs at the TEEG Building.

II. Roll Call:

<p>Selectmen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amy St Onge - Ken Beausoleil via Zoom - Susanne Witkowski via Zoom 	<p>Board of Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Robert Werge - Donald Johnson - Nicola Chrzanowski@7:05 	<p>BOF (Continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Laurent Guillot not present -Stephen Herbert via Zoom - Brian Lynch via Zoom
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Also in attendance, in person or virtually: Finance Director William Steglitz, Agency Representatives and Department Heads who will review their Budget Requests at this meeting. Other Department Heads, Members of Boards and Commissions, Members of the public, Recording Secretary Dotti Durst

III. Citizen Comments:

- Peter Beck, Fabyan Road: general/school budget concerns, suggests a lobbyist to advocate for us
- Jessica Bolte, Riverside Drive: invitation to BOF/ playground fundraiser. Dudley, 6-9 on Saturday

IV. Budget Presentations:

First Selectman Amy St Onge and Finance Director Bill Steglitz will collaboratively discuss the budget requests, provide the draft budget proposal visually via “screen-share” and answer questions from the Board members and from the public. The Board of Finance Chair and First Selectman will alternate conducting the 4 Joint Special Budget Workshops.

The Zoom recording of each Budget Workshop will be available to the public, providing direct access to what each Department Head has proposed and the questions asked/suggestions put forward by the BOF/BOS members.

The First Selectman and Finance Director noted that the salary increases in all departments are tentative, in that a Union contract is not in place and any salary increase to be agreed upon is not known. The 2.5% increase is a placeholder, based on history.

The Finance Director’s budget worksheet will transfer to the final Budget Book.

All present shared the consensus that if a Citizen wants to comment after a Department Head’s presentation, that could be permitted on a case-by-case basis.

The next Joint Special BOS/BOF Budget Workshop will take place on Thursday, February 22 at 6 PM, both virtually and live at the Merrill Seney Room, Town Hall. The BOE budget presentation will be on March 7 at 7 PM, TMHS auditorium.

These minutes have not yet been approved by the Board of Selectmen/Board of Finance. Please refer to a future meeting’s minutes for approval of and/or amendments to these minutes.

A. 4101- TEEG Anne Miller: (6:08PM). reviewed the scope of services, historical perspective and Thompson data. Covid funds are no longer coming in. After questions from K. Beausoleil: the economy has impacted housing accessibility and the need for mental health, School attendance is significantly down, which they address. She detailed the need for expansion of the structure on Thatcher Road, particularly for food storage, thus freeing up program space.

Citizens' Comments: Valerie Clark, Alm Road, requested data of Thompson households/population served, compared to other towns (a disproportionate number? And if so, the burden on the taxpayer is higher. As that plays out, more residents may be in a position to need TEEG's services—a slippery slope.). TEEG served 174 households /274 individuals in Pomfret, 183 households /383 individuals in Woodstock, 675 households /1,629 individuals Thompson. 17% of the population of 9,200 residents here can't afford food or basic services.

B. 2202- Quinebaug Fire Department Chief Steve Bodreau: (6:32 PM) detailed the full budget including Capital Assets/Needs (anticipated replacement costs). Noting that bank interest has dropped, B. Lynch asked for that detail. R. Werge asked about income from cell towers.

S. Witkowski asked for a copy of the audit report.

Citizens' Comments: Alex Le Blanc, Wilsonville Road, noted the interest on the loan - Jessica Bolte, Riverside Drive, any equipment ready to retire? The positive longevity of each piece of equipment was reviewed by the Chief.

C. 3301- Building Office Terry Bellman: (6:53 PM) D. Johnson asked about Emergency Funds (which do not transfer from year to year). S. Herbert asked about the Assistant: Many donated hours by the Assistant during training, allowing funds to be directed to staff support, given the huge surge post Covid. The Finance Director will detail the allocation of the hours between town hall departments. The training for a Building Inspector takes a year, two days a week to qualify for the exam. Succession planning is very important now. T. Belman's certification expires July 1, 2026. He is scheduled for 19.9 hours a week but does whatever it takes, he states.

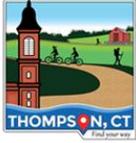
D. 4101 (Misc)- Eastern CT Land Bank Wayne Bugden: did not arrive (see note, Item K)

E. 1102/522540: NECCOG John Filchak (7:11 PM) Services are calculated per capita.

F. 2202- Paramedic Ambulance Services projects a significant increase as it comes up to market rates; full costs are not covered. Ambulance services bid request last year brought in only for proposal. DKH's reliance on this service for basic life support was explained.

G. 4101- NE CT Transit District: usage fell off during Covid and has not rebounded fully. Among the elderly, only 20% of usage is taking place; people found other alternatives during Covid, such as home deliveries and mailed medical needs as well as telemedicine. K. Beausoleil asked the status of the Transit fleet; Yes, there is a backorder but 6 slightly used vehicles have now arrived and NECCOG's went out to auction. B. Lynch praised the work NECCOG does. Citizens' Comments: Valerie Clark, Alm Road, confirmed DKH met the per capita obligation

H. 4101 (Misc)- Day Kimball Healthcare at Home Jennifer Leduc/Renee Smith: (7:27 PM) The organization assists all residents but particularly the elderly to navigate the healthcare systems, networking them into appropriate services. 4,532 residents were visited, 93 were free at a value of about \$9,717. A "Silver Tsunami" is expected as more people age and are hard-pressed for income yet need support services. The request: a budget of about ½ of the Thompson costs, at \$2,000, to continue the partnership. K. Beausoleil: any Covid impacts? Yes. Every day. Including because staff cannot have contact with clients if infected, under already limited staff



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resources. K. Beausoleil
 noted the CNA Career Pathway at the high school will have a positive impact on the community, as young people tend to begin their careers locally.

I. 4101- United Services Emily Morrison (7:39 PM). A PowerPoint presentation covered the very wide breadth of services. Thompson residents served: up by 19% since pre-Covid. Many residents have no primary care physician; a new department has evolved for this need. The per capita basis budget request: population of 9,189 results in a request for \$,616.08 (\$0.72)
Citizens' Comments: - Valerie Clark, Alm Road: how many unique individuals were served? 213, with each needing multiple services. Each program's cost is specific to the service provided and the level of credentialing required for that service.

J. 1102/522540- CCM Joe Delong (7:54 PM). CCM continued to fill requests from Thompson, as a responsible approach, even though funding was withdrawn last fiscal year. Thompson is one of only 2 towns (169 total) not a current member. A summary sheet of member benefits was reviewed in detail, including lobbying efforts against the federal parameter that only County governments could receive various grant funds; their work resulted in Connecticut municipalities including Thompson receiving ARPA funding 2/3 higher (\$2.7M -up by \$1.8M). CCM has sustained Thompson's membership for 11 years, at \$5,990 and now requests Thompson's re-instatement. K. Beausoleil: Thompson has utilized several times CCM over the years. He stated that the more united the towns are, the more influential, collectively, they will be. S. Herbert: Thompson IS one of the 169 towns and should do our share.

K. Other Budgets as Needed- (8:09 PM) First Selectman Amy St Onge
 * 2202 Fire Departments (other than specific to the Stations, which will be present on Thursday). QV Dispatch, the only communications provider, is asking for an increase of 17.9% as they work to upgrade their system. CT Water (up 4.8%). Putnam Ambulance (up \$35k). Insurance (up 12%, but new bids will be sought). Paramedic Ambulance is up 64% as they move toward the going market prices. The town sold ambulances to Putnam Ambulance Service, with a schedule of payments coming back to the town.
 * Eastern CT Land Bank: A letter came in, requesting \$5,000, up from \$3,950.

L. Adjourn:
Motion to adjourn S. Herbert seconded by B. Lynch to adjourn at 8:18 PM carried unanimously.

Use this link to see/hear the full BOF meeting:
https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/_X46TvcY3Pg4tOWhOiVIRxaOxF9-wsdeWCTzU3Lv9hixweZo1Gi9pTLifJkXdnfX.2X7ILrrP5Qwpvt_2 Passcode: +Kl*\$SZ6

Respectfully submitted by Dorothy Durst, Recording Secretary *Dorothy Durst*

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