



TOWN of THOMPSON
Board of Selectmen/Board of Finance
Joint Special Meeting – Budget Presentations
Thursday – February 22, 2024 Minutes
Merrill Seney Room, Town Hall
And via Zoom from remote locations

I. The call to order by First Selectman Amy St Onge was at 6:00 PM.

II. Roll Call: a quorum of both Boards is present

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| Board of Selectmen <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Amy St Onge- Ken Beausoleil via Zoom- Susanne Witkowski via Zoom | Board of Finance <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Robert Werge- Dave Johnson- Nicola Chrzanowski | BOF (Continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Laurent Guillot not present- Stephen Herbert via Zoom- Brian Lynch |
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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: none

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 BOE budget presentation will be on March 7 at 7 PM, TMHS auditorium.

IV. Budget Presentations

A. 6203 Inland Wetlands and B. 6204 Conservation Commission Dan Malo (6:02 PM): an administrative support staff person is requested, shared between 2 aspects of Land Use services to reduce inefficiencies in each department and serve the public better; the PZC portion of the work would be greater than for Wetlands. Chair of Inland Wetlands Commission, George O'Neil, detailed 4 key points.

C. 1401 Elections & Registrations Frank McGarry/Aileen Witkowski (6:22 PM) no change

D. 2202 Thompson Hill Fire Matt Grauer (6:30 PM) -income was down from last year, as the BBQ could not be held. After receiving budget allocations two consecutive years lower than requested, the current request is for \$83K. In the Ambulance area, the cost of electricity doubled from 2021-2023; new Certifications are \$5K each Firefighter. Capital Assets were reviewed as were Capital Plans looking forward. R. Werge thanked the Chief for housing the Ambulance Service at Thompson Hill, noting that all of the associated costs should be covered by the town. S. Witkowski asked for the annual audit. K. Beausoleil observed the line item for Medical items. some of which are cyclical. R. Werge asked about the CDs. A Reimbursement will be received and will also go into a CD.

E. 2202 East Thompson Fire Ron Fournier (6:48 PM) -Requests \$83K in funding to address acquiring updated radios (\$1,2000 each) and air packs replacements, which had to be skipped for a few years. They need 2 sets of Fire Fighter 3 Gear plus 2 more sets to remain current. The Fire Station roof has a leak which must be addressed before another winter (materials \$9K plus labor). Training expenses: expect 4 Fire Fighters, 4 EMT re-certifications, and 1 new EMT. Capital Assets are the same. They rotate/upgrade Turn-out gear (expense) so as to not let any sets in use be obsolete. S. Witkowski asked for the annual audit report.

F. 2202 Community Fire John Sharpe (6:55 PM)- a letter fundraising drive brought in just under \$25K, allowing the re-stocking of savings after the floor repair costs. Radios need upgrading, as they do at the other stations, at \$1,200 each. 3 Sets of Turn-out gear are planned in order to remain safe. Since Community Fire is a 1930s building, constant vigilance and maintenance is needed; right now, 2 rotting doors provide a break in the security of the structure. Education expenses: 1 person Fire Fighter 1, and 1 EMT. K. Beausoleil asked if fundraisers are planned. Yes, but can't predict income because they are often impacted by weather and other factors. Request: \$83K. R. Werge asked about possible revenue: possibly \$10K for one. There is a need for air pack pressurized bottles and 3-4 sets of gear replacements per year. Capital: possible replacement of the 20-year-pld Engine. An addition to the Station is being considered, with a \$60K annual mortgage. Other Capital/Maintenance needs were reviewed. S. Witkowski asked for a copy of the annual audit report. The Chief noted that the station does not have a formal audit but will provide the detailed Financial Statement.

G. 2202 West Thompson Fire Chief Whipple could not be present. A St Onge (7:13 PM) - she met with the Chief this week; West Thompson Fire is asking \$83K this year. Gear needs were reviewed as well as the need for a thermal imaging tool and a Meter. Capital expense: still needs a rescue boat and cold-water rescue suits/gear. Debt service: Tanker loan.
Citizens' Comments: Valerie Clark, Alm Road, praised carry in/carry out trash efforts and negotiating for the Truck.



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– John Sharpe, Laurel Avenue, the Chief speaking as a citizen: Turn-out gear is not supposed to be used after 10 years (NFPA governing body): need OSHA.

H. 4101 TVCCA (7:20 PM) Jocelyne Honvo provided details of the two ways they provide food and gave Thompson counts; 4,700 meals at the hot food Café AND 4,600 Meals On Wheels, as well as Wellness mindfulness. Clients are asked for voluntary donations.

I. 1702 Probate Court Gabrielle Labonte (7:23 PM) – the location of the Court will move soon. The previous year, the budget request was \$11,022 at \$1.20 per capita. This year it is \$11,027. All Courts are mandated to go to fiber service (higher costs) but microfiche is being dropped (reduction in costs). S. Witkowski- it is a positive that Probate examines every cost.

J. 4201 Public Health - NDDH (7:30 PM) – Melissa Nichols provided full services detail in a 9-page document, created with the town leaders and others. This year's request is higher by \$7,381, at \$85,802. The NDDH Board voted for an increase of \$.80 to \$9.30 per capita.

K. 4101 Misc. Eastern CT Land Bank Wayne Budgen (7:40 PM) - the firm helps communities address Brownfields such as 620 Riverside Drive is the Thompson project and they serve as a Land Bank. They ask \$5K from each of 30 communities; they have no labor costs, relying on professionals and volunteers in many capacities; CCOG is a partner in planning for the enablement of their mission. "Capacity-building" is part of Statute PA 23-57 allowing Land Bank funding. They aspire to larger projects that the enabling documents provide.

L. 3201 Town and M. 3202 Public Works Garage Joe Tkacik (7:50 PM) – all of the aspects of the Department of Public Works were touched upon. One higher expense is for delivery costs, such as from UPS and others, with the cost of fuel so much higher. Town capabilities for some catch basins work is exceeded as the equipment does not have the needed reach; an outside provider will be needed.

. N. 3203 Grounds, Supplies, Parks

. O. 3204 Transfer Station: R. Werge asked the Finance Director for Permits information

. P. 3205 Cemeteries

. Q. 3206 Snow Removal- supplies/salt look positive as the current year has not exceeded budget. K. Beausoleil asked for data showing salt usage as well as costs increase by percentage over several years, including the cost per ton. Usage may be down but the costs are up impacting the budget.

. R. Capital: the rapidly increasing cost of replacing a piece of equipment was pointed out. A \$110K cost last month is up by \$10k in only one month. Cost of a piece of equipment is noticed to go up between the order date and the shipment date in some cases. The budget lists needed equipment in priority sequence. Paving materials costs are up, targeting 3 roads next year.

Citizen's Comments: Valerie Clark, Alm Road * asked about specific road work * was pleased that reimbursements were brought up * is concerned about impacts to waterways.

S. 1305 Board of Assessment Appeals: Bill Steglitz (8:34 PM) - no change

. T. 2302 School Security Project – no change

- . U. 4102 Veterans Services - no change
- . V. 6206 Building Committee – small increase/meetings

W. 8101 Capital Expenditures - covered already, by department. Note the school hallway lockers painting is not the same as last year, which was in the locker rooms. D. Johnson: why is this not in the Maintenance line?

X. 8102 Transfers -renamed Roof Fund to Property Repair Fund to broaden the qualifying town buildings. May need MS4 retro-fit project to prevent stormwater runoff into streams. Little League asked \$12K each year for sequential field upgrades.

Y. 8150 Debt Retirement- HVAC, Track and Security projects were reviewed (appears 2025) with details about costs to the town each year; Grants and reimbursements will take place. Lease vehicles were reviewed, and other details of options for handling financing/ refinancing.

Z. 8155 Contingency Fund: possibly the town hall elevator repair. The ideal cushion is \$90K.

A. St Onge: the projected salary increases in every department are calculated on a union-negotiated 2.25% increase; if it differs, the total for salaries will change. The number may be known in April, before the May budget referendum.

R. Werge asked the Finance Director to relay the impact in dollars on the total budget for each .25% increase over the 2.25% which is already worked in.

S. Witkowski: the Emergency Management vehicle is planned to be a zero cost to the town, as their current equipment is sold; the revenue and expense should offset each other.

AA. Other budgets as needed: n/a

BOF Chair Rob Werge ** found the Special Joint Budget Workshop process to be informative and provided the BOF with a different starting point than previously.

** noted that many town departments have relatively controlled increases but some Lines are in the 10%- 30% increase range, particularly by outside Agencies/service providers, observing NDDH is at a 25% increase over a period of two years.

V. Adjourn:

Motion to adjourn D. Johnson seconded by B. Lynch to adjourn at 8:57 PM carried unanimously.

Use this link to see/hear the full BOF meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/wsl-lwCLPVyZ8eh5od99-x71PF9srCuxzCtT1Xlq6JiDoSk8aRqeGXXzv82iqMB6.BrBPCOyBlu1tmVx6> Passcode: Yj*k84sm

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

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.