



TOWN of THOMPSON
Board of Finance
North Grosvenordale, CT 06255

THOMPSON Board of Finance Special Meeting/Budget Workshop
Monday, May 11, 2020 (via Zoom)

MINUTES

1.The call to order by Chair Aaron McGarry was at 7:01 PM.
 Present: Aaron McGarry, Robert Werge, Steve Herbert, Rhonda Rooney, Jim Bellavance, Robert Mann. The chair noted all members are present. Additionally: Orla McKiernan-Rafferty (Finance Director), Amy St Onge (First Selectman), Ken Beausoleil and Susanne Witkowski (Selectmen), Kathleen Herbert (Chair, Board of Education), Melinda Smith (Superintendent of Schools), Many school officials, many town department heads, many Board and Commission members, and many members of the public, Recording Secretary Dotti Durst

2. Correspondence: none

3. Citizens’ comments – A. McGarry reviewed the three ways to offer a comment this evening. An email address specifically for Public Comment during the budget process is available: budget@thompsonct.org The First Selectman forwards input directly to BOF members.

The entire comment from each person may be heard by utilizing the Zoom meeting link, below.

A.McGarry: the public comment email form does not ask for the resident’s address; he read each aloud, he assuming everyone to be a Thompson resident and entitled to speak.:

- Evan McHugh
- Lacey
- Geoffrey Bolte, 1081 Riverside Dr
- Tara Koziak
- Jessica Bolte, 1081 Riverside Dr
- Rob Mann, 15 Meadow Dr
- David Johnson, Lehtinen Rd
- Jacqueline Hefferman, 11 Quaddick Rd
- Brittany Charboneau, 56 Juliette Ave
- Natasha Marrie, 9 Walker Dr
- Patricia DeFilippo, 1139 Thompson Rd
- Jane Salce

**Zoom Host A. St Onge asked anyone who is not a Thompson resident to exit, as the maximum enrollment of 100 was reached.

Zoom’s “chat” feature- the following comments were submitted in real time and read aloud:

- Jessica Bolte, 1081 Riverside Dr
- April Levesque, 321 Brandy Hill Rd
- Jennifer Burlingame, 480 Quaddick Town Farm Rd
- Jody Houghton, 92 Wager Rd
- Matt Polsky, 92 Sunset Hill Rd

Utilizing the Zoom live audio:

- Justin Yong, 12 Fairway Rd
- Kathleen Herbert, 122 Wilsonville Rd
- James Clark, 113 Labby Rd
- Shawn Brissette, Whittemore Rd
- Rob Lemieux, 480 Quaddick Town Farm Rd
- Marie Costa, 125 New Rd.
- Cole Coderre, 368 Chase Rd
- Melinda Smith (Superintendent of Schools)



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Using the Zoom “chat” feature, the following comments were typed in real time and read aloud
- Danielle Carlson, 3 Rachel Rd - Katie Butler, 28 O’Leary Rd

4. Budget Workshop: Chair A. McGarry resumed the budget workshop, asking the BOF members to share their thoughts at this point in the budget process.

- S. Herbert: advocates for restoring the BOE cut; Proposed is \$2.95/week for an average home
- R. Rooney: the concern- people cannot go out to vote and let their opinions be known
- R. Mann: there is no way this year to not cause pain to everyone. Revaluation impacts will be felt. Virus impacts. Employment impacts. Even more factors to consider this year than ever.
- R. Werge: time since last meeting gave us time to reflect. We can truly afford only so much. Noted inflation. Noted the BOF has only one shot at balancing the needs of the town and all viewpoints. He asks the community to understand that the BOF is trying to do the right thing.
- J. Bellavance: the BOE budget proposal, March 4, reviews the history of budget funding. They go from an increase 4 years ago of \$79, 463; to an increase of \$271,978; to an increase of \$169,759 and now a requested increase for this year of \$1,125 Million. In the previous 4 years, those increases were what the voters decided. We must take that into account.
- R. Rooney: as we proceed, we must respect the previous decisions of the voters looking back. She did some averaging to determine those final budget reductions, as was previously reviewed
- A. McGarry: 1). Geoffrey Bolte raised a key point in a weekend email, discussing Executive Order 7-JJ. Following up, the Town Attorney was asked and has responded: in-person voting is prohibited unequivocally (7-HH). The budget making is entirely the authority of the BOF.
- 2). Headlines since the last BOF meeting on May 7 demonstrate jobs loss currently at 14.7 %, Steve. Mnuchin (Treasury) predicts it will get worse, maybe 25% with another source at 20+%
- 3). Some citizens referenced the action taken regarding Health Insurance coverage in the 2 parts of the budget, noting an underfunding for the BOE expense by 4.32%. To address this:

Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Rooney to reduce the Town budget line for health insurance (#7301, 511080) by \$32,171: Discussion: S. Herbert- asked for a different approach. R. Rooney- notes the increase is due to significant claims; asked if it has been shopped out. M. Smith- yes, the consortium of towns involved did ask for a review, but a high loss ratio left the increase as shown. R. Werge- there is a difference in how the BOF looks at the town proposed budget and the Schools. The town is line-by-line, whereas the Schools is only the total, aggregate proposal. The BOF cannot examine specifics of their proposal. J. Bellavance asked M. Smith about the impact of distancing on fall sports. She replied: organized team sports are important for students; the experts will state how to stay safe. Vote on the motion: J. Bellavance-yes R. Mann-yes R. Werge – no R. Rooney –yes S. Herbert-no A. McGarry-yes **Motion carried 4-1.**

A. McGarry asked the BOF to identify other budget matters they would like to bring to the table: R. Werge – from Transfers: the Library budget for repairs and the amount allocated for Road resurfacing. S. Herbert- the fee and permits schedule. R. Mann – the Library roof



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funding. R. Werge- clarify the way Tourtellotte Trust shows on the budget documents.
A. McGarry – Recreation and the EDC (#6205), both Branding and the Intern.

Extended discussion took place about each line item. Recreation- no action taken
Library roofing fund- no action taken; \$25K reduction already for FY 20-21.

Motion R. Mann seconded by R. Werge to reduce Transfers/Library repairs by \$25,000 carried unanimously, 6-0.

Motion J. Bellavance seconded by R. Werge to reduce Transfers/Road Resurfacing by \$25,000 carried unanimously, 6-0.

Motion A. McGarry seconded by S. Herbert to eliminate the EDC intern, 5100xx: motion withdrawn and second withdrawn. Motion a. McGarry seconded by R. Mann to reduce the EDC budget (522231, Branding) by \$5,000 carried 5-1. J. Bellavance-yes R. Mann-yes R. Werge – no R. Rooney –yes S. Herbert-yes A. McGarry-yes

Discussion: Tourtellotte Trust is a pass-through account; the Finance Director will consider options. Fees and permits can be re-examined and a recommendation sent to the BOS.

A. McGarry- reviewing the March 4 BOE History of Budgets presentation, he researched back 5 years to determine the average reduction the voters have put in place, finding that the reduction from the proposed was \$287,000, averaged. Currently, the proposed reduction is \$370,000. He is hearing so many diverging comments from residents: Cut. No cuts. Flat.

Motion A. McGarry seconded by R. Mann to reduce the BOE budget by \$83,000.

Discussion: S. Herbert-unwise. R. Rooney- taxpayers have decided this; they can't vote now, but we represent them. R. Werge- probably should not make another cut. **Motion carried 4-2.**

J. Bellavance-yes R. Mann-yes R. Werge-no R. Rooney-yes S. Herbert-no A. McGarry-yes

Motion A. McGarry seconded by J. Bellavance to recommend and forward the budget as presented, at \$26,773,231, out to the Public Hearing on May 14, 2020 carried 4-2.

R. Mann-yes. J. Bellavance-yes. R. Werge-no. R. Rooney-yes. S. Herbert-no. A. McGarry-yes.
A. McGarry: this budget puts forward a 0.26 mil increase, at 24.23 mils.

5. Motion J. Bellavance seconded by R. Mann to adjourn at 10:22 pm carried unanimously.

To view/listen to the meeting on Zoom, click on the link or copy/paste it to your Search bar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/6ctHLar023pIS5HBzRzjZul6F93Laaa80CUY-fQLzkaysUhJxkqyyL8Qh-cF65g3> Password: 2Q&*RZc2

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

These minutes have not yet been approved by the Board of Finance. Please refer to next month's meeting minutes for approval of and/or amendments to these minutes.