TOWN of THOMPSON
Board of Finance
815 Riverside Drive
North Grosvenordale, CT 06255

THOMPSON Board of Finance Special Meeting/Public Hearing
Thursday, March 5, 2020 Thompson Public Schools Auditorium

MINUTES

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1. The call to order by Chair Aaron McGarry was at 7:01 PM.
   Present: Aaron McGarry, Robert Werge, Steve Herbert, Rhonda Rooney, Robert Mann.
   Absent: Jim Bellavance. The chair noted a quorum is present. Additionally: Orla
   McKiernan-Raftery (Finance Director), Amy St Onge (First Selectman), Kathleen Herbert
   (Chair, Board of Education), Melinda Smith (Superintendent of Schools).
   Others: Many school officials, many Board and Commission members, members of the Fire
   Departments, and members of the public, WINY, Recording Secretary Dotti Durst

2. Budget Presentation/Public Hearing:
   A. Board of Education Chair Kathleen Herbert narrated a very detailed PowerPoint
      presentation of the fiscal year 2020-2021 budget being presented to the Board of
      Finance by the Board of Education. She cited the process used to build the budget and
      gave an overview of the District’s achievement goals for the students. No contingency
      funds are included, nor are any staff or program additions. There are several
      maintenance projects as well as security features which are a pressing need. The
      proposed budget is for $19,818,582, a 6.02% increase.

      Melinda Smith, Superintendent of Schools/Thompson Public Schools detailed the budget
      by Department, using graphics to make the points clear. She identified points of savings
      and budget reductions as well as points of increases, stating that fixed costs represent 95%
      of the budget. Attention was directed to Special Education costs and the advantage to
      Thompson of having the Bradley (Hospital) Special Education Program on-site, allowing
      students to be among their peers and avoiding the extensive time that bussing entails.
      Funding sources were reviewed, with taxpayers handling 60% of the District costs, 38%
      coming from State Education Cost Sharing and 9% from the State Special Education
      reimbursements. The handout include a vast amount of detailed data, as well as definitions,
      for those inclined to look more deeply at the proposed budget.

   B. First Selectman Amy St Onge detailed, with a PowerPoint presentation, the fiscal year
      2020-2021 budget being presented to the Board of Finance by the Board of Selectmen.

      i. General Budget: a $97 million increase in the Grand List brought in an additional
         $2,694,637 in revenue at the current mill rate of 27.75. Re-evaluation next year should
result in an increase in the Grand Kist as well. The proposed General Government budget of $8,282,005 results in an increase of 8.81% with the Capital Plan showing an increase of 126% (to be presented next). The proposed changes in Operating Expenses include reductions in several categories (Debt Service and others), with some increases (particularly to bring Animal Control back into town).

ii. Local Capital Improvement Projects: Re-evaluation, the Little League Complex improvements and Community Center improvements are detailed, as well as activities at the DPW. The Tourtellotte Trust is a pass-through account for window replacements, with reimbursement upon completion.

iii. Capital Improvement Plans: DPW needs include a Roll-off track, Bridge repairs and a Salt Shed; they are proposed for the long-term Capital Improvements Plan.

Audience questions:
*Francis McGarry, 225 Chase Rd- in the Board of Education budget, reference is made to “disengaged youth” but the term is unclear. M. Smith: these are students who are not motivated to learn; the District hopes the career Pathways including Manufacturing Technology will engage them.
*Larry Groh, 183 Wagher Rd- asks the current mill rate as well as what the mill rate would be if the budgets being proposed had come in with a zero increase. O. McKiernan-Raftery: the current mill rate is 27.75. The budget being proposed offers a mill rate of 26.5 (note that there was an increase in the Grand List this year and one is anticipated as a result of the upcoming re-evaluation). It is unknown what the mill rate would be with a zero increase in the budget, but she will calculate the rate and have the information available.
*Jessica Bolte, 1081 Riverside Dr: asks if a Tri-Board meeting has been scheduled. A. McGarry: he is not aware of a date at this time
*BOF member S. Herbert thanked the audience for attending

3. Motion R. Werge seconded by S. Herbert to adjourn carried unanimously.

Chair A. McGarry adjourned the Public Hearing/Budget workshop at 8:12 PM.

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.