



TOWN of
THOMPSON
BOARD OF FINANCE

Minutes: Budget Meeting
Thursday, May 28, 2015
Thompson Library/Community Center
7:00 PM

p. 1 of 3

Chairman Ray Faucher, Jr. called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM.

- I. Roll call
 - A. Members Present: Paul Dery, Ray Faucher, Jr., Larry Groh, Jr., Laurent Guillot, Aaron McGarry, and Susanne Witkowski.
 - B. Members Absent: None
 - C. Staff Present:
Tina Fox, Recording Secretary
Orla McKiernan-Raftery, Finance Director
 - D. Also Present: Kerstin Forrester, Dr. Michael Jolin, Paul Lenky, Bill Witkowski, Members of the Public
- III. Correspondence: None
- IV. Citizen's Comments
 - A. Ken Beausoleil, Quinebaug, stated that it was very clear from the Referendum vote that the Town side of the budget passed very well, with the school side failing by 33 votes. He added that in the past, it had been said that cuts should be equally shared, but that the public spoke and the issue is with the school side of the budget.
 - B. Joe Lindley, 24 Hill Rd., stated that the overall budget for the school since 2006-07 has only increased 2.8% if health insurance and special education is not considered. He stated that the average teacher's salary is well below average in this area, and administrator's salary is well below average in Connecticut. He added that the mill rate is lower than many surrounding Towns, and yet despite all of that information, the Town has done more with education than most Towns. He stated that the student cost per year is well below state average. He stated that we [meaning the Board] have to take a hard road, even if it takes two or three referendums for the budget to pass.
- V. Budget Workshop
 - A. R. Faucher, Jr. stated that the Town's auditor reminded him that there would be an increase in fee of \$1,200, which is split evenly between the Town and school. **There was a consensus amongst Board members to add \$600 for audit fees on the Board of Finance page, under Financial and Accounting.**

- B. K. Forrester updated the Board on the proposed contract for the Town Hall telephone system. **There was a consensus amongst Board members to remove \$10,000 from the capital line for the telephone system at Town Hall from both fiscal years 2016 and 2017, and to increase the Town Hall telephone line by \$2,250.** Orla McKiernan-Rafferty stated that these changes bring the total current mill rate to 25.19.
- C. R. Faucher, Jr. asked for an update on surplus. Orla McKiernan-Rafferty answered that the projected surplus is \$2,168,527, totaling 8.54%.
- D. Dr. Jolin explained that reimbursement for the emergency replacement of the oil tank of \$110,000 is still waiting for approval, but he has not received any negative feedback on the request. He added that there are other possible additional revenue sources that have been discussed, including Medicaid reimbursement and preschool tuition. Orla McKiernan-Rafferty stated that the Medicaid reimbursement will likely be at \$44,000, but that she could not yet comment on the other two income sources.
- E. R. Faucher, Jr. asked about the school's health insurance, to which Dr. Jolin replied that it is still at the same number, but that he is still being told that it is not the final number.
- F. L. Groh, Jr. stated that the education side of the budget failed by 33 votes, which is a big margin in Thompson, and that it seemed the Board would need to reduce the education budget in order for the budget to pass. He suggested discussing the possibility of removing \$100,000 from the education budget.
1. S. Witkowski was hesitant to cut \$100,000 from the education budget. She stated that her concern was that if the Board cuts \$100,000 now and the referendum doesn't pass again, then the Board may have to cut more.
 2. P. Dery mentioned that he looked up salary schedules for teachers in Putnam and Woodstock Academy. He stated that Thompson is behind (in terms of compensation to teachers) both schools, but that at the end of two years, Thompson will be ahead of one of them and ahead of both of them after three years. He asked what the fiscal year 2016 tax warrant for the education budget would be if \$100,000 was removed from the education budget, to which Orla McKiernan-Rafferty answered 6.19%.
 3. A. McGarry stated that he would go along with removing \$100,000 from the education budget, but would like to see more than that removed. P. Dery agreed.
 4. L. Groh, Jr. asked Dr. Jolin how the loss of \$100,000 would affect the education budget. Dr. Jolin mentioned that textbooks and computers will have to be cut, and that there would be no easy way to handle the budget without losing teachers, administrators, sports, and/or extra curricular. Dr. Jolin also discussed the fact that the school cannot legally use its resources to encourage people to vote, such as posting a notice on the website, or sending information home with the students, but that they can hand-write postcards to encourage parents to vote, which they will try to do for the second referendum.
- G. L. Groh, Jr. and S. Witkowski mentioned that they would like to revisit looking at the surplus. **There was a consensus amongst Board members to take \$50,000 from surplus to use toward the budget.**
- H. **There was a consensus amongst Board members to remove \$75,000 from the education budget, with A. McGarry and P. Dery disagreeing.**
- I. **Larry Groh, Jr. moved and Susanne Witkowski seconded the motion to send the total proposed budget of \$24,110,368, and the notes, to Town Meeting.**
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| Ray Faucher, Jr. – Yes | Paul Dery – No | Larry Groh, Jr. - Yes |
| Laurent Guillot – Yes | Aaron McGarry – No | Susanne Witkowski- Yes |
- The motion carried.**

VI. Adjourn

A. **Larry Groh, Jr. moved and Aaron McGarry seconded the motion to adjourn.**

Ray Faucher, Jr. – Yes

Paul Dery – Yes

Larry Groh, Jr. - Yes

Laurent Guillot – Yes

Aaron McGarry – Yes

Susanne Witkowski- Yes

The motion carried unanimously.

B. Chairman Ray Faucher, Jr. adjourned the meeting at 8:25 PM.

Tina Fox

Recording Secretary