



TOWN of
THOMPSON

BOARD OF FINANCE

Minutes: Special Budget Meeting

Thursday, June 9, 2016

Merrill Seney Room, Town Hall

8:30 PM (or immediately following referendum results)

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Chairman Aaron McGarry called the meeting to order at 9:07 PM.

I. Roll call

- A. Members Present: Jim Bellavance, Ray Faucher, Jr., Larry Groh, Jr., Aaron McGarry, Rhonda Rooney, Susanne Witkowski.
- B. Members Absent: None
- C. Staff Present:
Tina Fox, Recording Secretary
Orla McKiernan-Raftery, Finance Director
- D. Also Present: Members of the Public.

II. Citizen's Comments

- A. Ida Ransom, 75 Messier Rd., asked if there would be a recount as the BOE budget lost by only 13 votes. A. McGarry stated that he is not authorized to speak on policies of recounts. She stated that she was upset the BOF cut the Town budget so much and that what the BOF did to the library is thoroughly disgusting. The Town budget was cut when it was approved and the school budget was increased when it lost. She suggested cutting the \$52,000 Economic Development Commission by \$25,000, and asked that the BOF please not cut the Town budget again.
- B. Shawn Brissette, Fairway Dr., stated that if any cut is made, it should be minimal. He stated that every few years, some Town runs into August to get a budget to pass, and maybe that is how long it takes to get a responsible budget that meets the needs of the Town. He stated that we need to grow the Town, and if you have a business that is not generating enough business, you don't cut advertising. He asked that the BOF put forth a budget that meets the needs of the Town.
- C. Joe Lindley, Hill Rd., mentioned various programs that have been cut at the school, and stated that Thompson still has the highest graduation rate and a below average per pupil expense. He stated that no one wants higher taxes, but we have to do what is best. The school has not met their contractual obligations in almost ten years. He stated that \$125,000 has been cut from the BOE budget since the last referendum, despite people believing that \$2,000 was added.
- D. Steve Herbert, Wilsonville Rd., stated that the Town budget passed last time, but the BOF decided to cut the Town budget. He stated that Town citizens voted yes but the Library and Economic Development was cut. Economic Development is needed to improve the future of the Town, and the Library is essential to the Town. He stated that it is frustrating to say the least.
- E. Tom Angelo, 640 Fabyan Rd., stated that the Town budget passed at the last Referendum, but the questions that made up the Town budget did not pass.
- F. Ken Beausoleil, Walker Dr., stated that it is frustrating when things are cut and people are in favor of it. Our infrastructure is extremely important as well as education. There was official notification that Norampac is closing. Economic Development is important, and he asked the BOF to consider that.

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- G. Steve Herbert, Wilsonville Rd., urged the BOF to restore the cuts that were made last time.
- H. Ida Ransom, 75 Messier Rd., stated that money for the other questions that were on the last Referendum were already in the budget, and there was a lot of confusion and miscommunication about it.

III. Set Mill Rate for Fiscal Year 2016/2017 if Applicable

- A. No action taken, as the Referendum did not pass.

IV. Budget Workshop if Applicable

- A. L. Groh, Jr. stated that it is his opinion that because the questions at the last Referendum failed, the Town budget failed. He suggested not cutting anything from the Town budget during this meeting because both the Town budget and question 3 passed by a tremendous amount. He suggested decreasing the BOE budget by \$20,000. **There was a consensus amongst the Board to decrease the BOE budget by \$20,000.**
- B. A. McGarry stated that he was opposed to reducing the Library budget at the last meeting, and suggested taking \$10,000 from Contingency to include in the Library budget. S. Witkowski stated that she would have a problem with that because of the negative campaign the Library posted on Facebook and their webpage. **There was NOT a consensus amongst the Board to make this change.**
- C. A. McGarry suggested removing \$10,000 from Economic Development Commission to be included in the Library budget. He reminded the Board that the new position was scaled back in favor of a study to cost between \$40,000 and \$50,000, and taking out \$10,000 would be going with a \$40,000 study instead of \$50,000. **There was NOT a consensus amongst the Board to make this change.**
- D. **Larry Groh, Jr. moved and Ray Faucher, Jr. seconded the motion to send the total proposed budget of \$25,322,486 to Town Meeting.**
 1. A. McGarry stated that he believed a 1.26 mill increase is still too high. He asked what the ramifications of another Referendum failing would be.
 2. Rene Morin, Tax Collector, stated that the BOF could, if they so chose, set a mill rate before a budget passes. If the BOF does not set the mill rate until after June 20th, tax bills will not be out by July 1st. He stated that if the third Referendum passes, there is a possibility of getting the tax bills out by July 6th, but it is not a guarantee. If the third Referendum does not pass, cash flow will be significantly impacted as \$7million to \$8million is usually collected in the first few weeks of July, which won't be there to pay bills. He speculated that the auditors would be here to speak with Town officials if that happened.
 3. A. McGarry stated that \$20,000 is a marginal reduction, and does not indicate to the citizen's who voted 'no' that they were heard.
 4. L. Groh, Jr. stated that the opposite argument holds true for the citizen's who voted 'yes.'
 5. R. Morin stated that the Board should seek official legal opinion, but he believed that if the BOF set a mill rate without the budget passing, the difference between the mill rate that was collected for and the mill rate that passes would come into or out of the general fund.

Jim Bellavance- Yes

Ray Faucher, Jr.- Yes

Larry Groh, Jr.- Yes

Aaron McGarry- No

Rhonda Rooney- Yes

Susanne Witkowski- Yes

The motion carried.

- E. L. Groh, Jr. asked about the Referendum being held from 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM. K. Beausoleil stated that he will bring it up to the BOS to present it at Town Meeting.

II. Adjourn

- A. **Larry Groh, Jr. moved and Susanne Witkowski seconded the motion to adjourn.**

Jim Bellavance- Yes

Ray Faucher, Jr.- Yes

Larry Groh, Jr.- Yes

Aaron McGarry- Yes

Rhonda Rooney- Yes

Susanne Witkowski- Yes

The motion carried unanimously.

- B. A. McGarry adjourned the meeting at 9:54PM.

Tina Fox
Recording Secretary