



**SELECTMEN'S MEETING**  
**June 17, 2008**

The Board of Selectmen held a Selectmen's Meeting on Tuesday, June 17, 2008, at 7:30 p.m. at the West Thompson Independent Fire Station.

**PRESENT:** Lawrence K. Groh, Jr., First Selectman; Sarah F. White, Selectman; Kathleen A. Hiatt, Selectman; Celeste Fifield; Randy Fifield; Dale Fifield; John Salkiewicz; George Therrien; Joseph Gibbons; Charles Seney; Annette Mauke; Lisa Coderre; Don Brown; Mike Bogdanski; James Esslinger – Worcester Telegram & Gazette; other concerned citizens

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*Motion made by Ms. Hiatt, seconded by Mr. Groh, to approve the minutes of the Selectmen's meeting of June 3, 2008 with one corrections.*

*Amended motion made by Ms. Hiatt, seconded by Mr. Groh, to approve the minutes of the Selectmen's meeting of June 3, 2008 with two corrections, the "from" I stated to on page two and the addition that Miss White made on page two as well.*

<i>Ms. Hiatt</i>	-Yes
<i>Mr. Groh</i>	-Yes
<i>Miss White</i>	-Yes

Miss White stated that there is a correction on page four. Mr. Groh stated that the Board already voted on the minutes of June 3, 2008. Miss White stated that she was voting on that correction and that she has other things to go over. Mr. Groh stated that the Board can go over them but the Board already voted on the approval of those minutes. Ms. Hiatt suggested that the minutes of tonight's meeting reflect that there was further discussion and that the following corrections were proposed. Miss White commented that she was not clear on the first sentence under the agenda item Reappraisal and Revaultation RFP, "Mr. Groh presented the proposed RFP for revaluation by the Assessor's Office." Miss White asked if it is the Assessor's Office that is doing the revaluation or if it is the firm that is going to be bidding on the revaluation. Ms. Hiatt explained that the Assessor's Office is ultimately responsible for the revaluation. Miss White stated that that it is rather unclear. Miss White commented that on the second sentence down under the same agenda item, there is a "the" missing before the Assessor's name is mentioned. Miss White questioned on page eight under Job Description whether or not the motion was Ms. Hiatt's motion. Ms. Hiatt stated that it was. Miss White commented that in the last paragraph on page nine that there is a typo in regard to "note".

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*Motion made by Ms. Hiatt, seconded by Mr. Groh, to approve the minutes of the Special Selectmen's meeting of June 10, 2008 as presented.*

*Ms. Hiatt                    -Yes*  
*Mr. Groh                    -Yes*  
*Miss White                -Abstain*

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

- Mr. Groh presented correspondence from the Thompson Public Library in regard to budget cuts at the Library.
- Mr. Groh reminded the audience that there is a Hazardous Waste Collection Day on June 21, 2008 at the Highway Garage from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

## **SELECTMEN'S COMMENTS**

- Mr. Groh thanked the members of the West Thompson Independent Fire Department for allowing the Board to hold the Selectmen's meeting at the fire station.
- Mr. Groh thanked everyone who helped to get the Selectmen's Update completed. Mr. Groh stated that it was in this past Thompson Villager.
- Mr. Groh commented that the Tourtellotte Memorial High School graduation will be held on June 19, 2008.
- Mr. Groh commented that the Director of Public Works is still working on getting the Board figures on the Buckley Hill Road project.
- Mr. Groh commented that the Thompson Public Library will be closed on Saturdays and also closed after 5:00 p.m. on Mondays due to the \$34,000 in budget cuts. Mr. Groh also stated that when the Library is closed, the Community Center will also be closed which will affect some of the Recreation programs. Mr. Groh stated that the Recreation Department is trying to work around these changes.
- Miss White stated that at the Board's last meeting on June 3, 2008 there was a motion made by Mr. Groh, seconded by Ms. Hiatt, to table an agenda item until the June 17, 2008 Selectmen's meeting and that all voted yes. Miss White stated that on June 10, 2008 there was a Special Selectmen's meeting where the Buckley Hill Road project was discussed, even though the Board had voted to table the agenda item until June 17<sup>th</sup>. Miss White stated that she is concerned that the Board is not following its motions. Mr. Groh explained that he has been updating the Selectmen as he gets information in regard to the Buckley Hill Road project. Mr. Groh stated that he was getting information the day of the meeting on June 10<sup>th</sup> and that he felt it was worthy enough to update the Selectmen on the project at that meeting. A brief discussion followed. Miss White stated that she thinks it was wrong to have a special meeting and to have only two people present at the meeting and to discuss it. Mr. Groh

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stated that he is trying to give the Selectmen as much information as possible as he gets it. Ms. Hiatt stated that even if there is a motion to table an item, that it can still be added to the agenda for a meeting that is held in between. Discussion continued. Miss White stated that this item was not something that was expected to be on that agenda. Mr. Groh stated that both Selectmen were e-mailed with the agenda 24 hours in advance.

*Motion made by Ms. Hiatt, seconded by Mr. Groh, that we add the Buckley Hill Road project as item 11A under Other Business.*

<i>Ms. Hiatt</i>	<i>-Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Groh</i>	<i>-Yes</i>
<i>Miss White</i>	<i>-Abstain</i>

Mr. Groh commented that there was another agenda item that was tabled from the June 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting that is not on tonight's agenda as he did not have updated information.

*Motion made by Mr. Groh, seconded by Ms. Hiatt, to add Request for Compensation for Training Registrars to the agenda as item 11B.*

<i>Mr. Groh</i>	<i>-Yes</i>
<i>Ms. Hiatt</i>	<i>-Yes</i>
<i>Miss White</i>	<i>-No</i>

Discussion on Motion: Miss White stated that she did not think that the Board was allowed to put things on the agenda if it wasn't publicized. Mr. Groh explained that the Board can with a two-thirds vote. Ms. Hiatt stated that the Board has in the past, when things come in under correspondence and the Board wants to take action, voted to add items to the agenda. Mr. Groh stated that this is only the case with regular Selectmen's meetings, not Special Selectmen's meetings.

## **CITIZENS COMMENTS**

- Mr. Seney requested that when Selectmen's meetings are moved to another location, to please post the new location on the door. Mr. Groh apologized. Miss White stated that she wondered if this was advertised anywhere. Mr. Groh explained that we don't typically advertise but that the meetings are posted in the Town Clerk's office. Ms. Hiatt asked if Miss White read anything in the Villager. Ms. Levesque stated that the Villager listed an alternate location for tonight's meeting and that there was an instruction to call the Town Hall for the location.
- Ms. Annette Mauke asked if the Board had acted on the request from Project Graduation to use the Town Hall parking lot for their can and bottle drives. Ms. Mauke presented the letter to Mr. Groh requesting the use of the Town Hall parking lot one Saturday each month. Mr. Groh stated that he had not yet seen this letter. Ms. Markey explained that she gave the letter to Ms. Vriga in the Selectmen's Office. A brief discussion followed.

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*Motion made by Ms. Hiatt, seconded by Mr. Groh, that we add Project Graduation 2009 as agenda item #4A for discussion.*

*Ms. Hiatt -Yes*  
*Mr. Groh -Yes*  
*Miss White -Yes*

**PROJECT GRADUATION 2009**

*Motion made by Ms. Hiatt, seconded by Mr. Groh, that we allow Project Graduation to go forward and to continue to use the parking lot for the next year on the dates that they have provided in their letter providing there are no conflicts with another scheduled event in the Town Hall parking lot.*

*Ms. Hiatt -Yes*  
*Mr. Groh -Yes*  
*Miss White -Yes*

**APPOINTMENT SPECIAL FIRE POLICE – BETHANY ROBIDAS – ACTION REQUIRED**

*Motion made by Mr. Groh, seconded by Ms. Hiatt, to appoint Bethany Robidas to Special Fire Police for the term ending November 17, 2009.*

*Mr. Groh -Yes*  
*Ms. Hiatt -Yes*  
*Miss White -Yes*

Discussion on Motion: Miss White asked why there is no address listed for Ms. Robidas. Miss White asked if Mr. Groh knew where Ms. Robidas lives. Miss White stated that she would think that it would be good format and protocol to always have an address for anyone that is appointed.

**APPROVAL OF TAX WARRANT/RATE BILL – ACTION REQUIRED**

Mr. Groh presented the minutes of the Board of Finance meeting of May 29, 2008. Mr. Groh explained that the Board of Finance set the mill rate at 17.97 mills. Mr. Groh presented the Tax Warrant/ Rate Bill to the Board.

*Motion made by Mr. Groh to set the mill rate at 17.97 mills as the budget was passed on May 29, 2008 by Thompson's voters.*

*Mr. Groh -Yes*  
*Ms. Hiatt -Yes*  
*Miss White -No*

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Miss White stated for the record that this is the first time in her life she has signed something that has increased taxes. Miss White stated that she is not entirely comfortable with it, that she knows that it is a matter of protocol and that she will do it, but that she thinks it is most unfortunate.

#### **CHANGE IN LOCATION FOR DISTRICT III POLLING PLACE - DISCUSSION**

Mr. Groh presented a letter from the Registrars of Voters in regard to changing the location for the District III polling place from St. Stephen's Recreation Center to the Quinebaug Volunteer Fire Department and installing a phone line for the IVS system. Mr. Groh explained that due to the unavailability of the St. Stephen's Recreation Center, the polling location for District III had to be moved to the Quinebaug Volunteer Fire Station for the annual budget referendum. Mr. Groh stated that the new location went well and that the change was highly publicized. Ms. Hiatt stated that she did not read the ordinance in regard to polling places and that the Board could take action at the next meeting. Miss White stated that it would be courteous to send a copy of the letter to St. Stephen's. Ms. Hiatt asked that someone check with Chief Donovan to make sure that he is okay with moving the polling place to the Quinebaug Fire Department. The Board will address this agenda item when there is more information available.

No action taken.

#### **PROPOSED ORDINANCE – EASEMENTS FOR PRIVATE UTILITIES - DISCUSSION**

Mr. Groh presented correspondence from Town Counsel in regard to his opinion on the changes suggested by the Ordinance Review Committee concerning the proposed ordinance for easements for private utilities on Town property. Mr. Groh read the language for the proposed ordinance. Mr. Groh stated that he thinks that the word "bond" should be replaced by the word "permit". Mr. Groh will check with Charles Paquette on the wording.

No action taken.

#### **REGIONAL Y.M.C.A. - DISCUSSION**

Mr. Groh stated that Miss White requested that this item be added to the agenda. Miss White commented that she was given a copy of the Town of Putnam's application to the State for a Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant. Miss White informed the audience that page two of the application reads that sources of funding will come from towns in the amount of \$3,000,000.00. Miss White stated that it is her understanding that this application was rejected by the State. Miss White requested that a letter be sent stating that Thompson's name should not be used in any way, shape or form with this project.

Mr. Bogdanski, co-owner of Midtown Fitness, provided some statistics and viewpoints from citizens in regard to the impact of this center being built in Putnam. Mr. Bogdanski stated that local governments should not support tax exempt businesses. Mr. Bogdanski also expressed concerns in regard to what happens when there is a shortfall in funds for operating the Y.M.C.A. Mr. Bogdanski pointed out that there is no Thompson representative on the Steering Committee.

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Mr. Bogdanski stated that the Y.M.C.A. presence will create conflict and that local businesses will suffer. Mr. Bogdanski stated that statistics show that Y.M.C.A. centers receive over \$500,000,000.00 in taxpayer-funded government support.

Mr. Brown stated that the people promoting this project have been absent without leave and have refused to give a public forum to anyone in the area to come and discuss the project. Mr. Brown stated that this will be a disaster for the 12 to 15 clubs in the area.

Miss White asked if there is any information on the feasibility study that was done. Mr. Bogdanski said that he has the survey information but that the information can be manipulated to show what they want to show. A lengthy discussion followed. Miss White stated that the Planning & Zoning Commission and the Economic Development Commission in Thompson have approved a business park on Reardon Road to generate tax dollars to help moderate the burden on your average home owner. Miss White stated that if Thompson were to support this, it would negate all of those efforts. A lengthy discussion followed.

Ms. Hiatt expressed concerns that the application states that \$3,000,000.00 will come from towns but does not say which towns. Ms. Hiatt also said that the application reads that "the center will serve a seven-town area including Putnam as the host community, Thompson, Woodstock, Pomfret, Eastford, Killingly and Brooklyn." Ms. Hiatt said that the Board had set aside three dates for a public information session and asked if there was any luck moving forward on this. Mr. Groh said that he has contacted Lawrence Hale to try to set up this information session but has not yet received a response. Ms. Hiatt said that she is concerned that someone is alluding to the fact that they will take money from Thompson. Mr. Groh stated that there has not been any monetary support from NECCOG or any NECCOG town. Miss White reiterated what she has said in the past in regard to sending a letter stating that Thompson's name should not be used. Mr. Groh stated that he would like to do this at the public information session. Ms. Hiatt stated that she is willing to wait until the next Selectmen's meeting to see if there will be an information session, but that a letter should be sent if they are not willing to come out for that meeting.

No action taken.

#### **TAX REFUND (1)**

*Motion made by Mr. Groh, seconded by Miss White, to refund the following overpayment as recommended by the Tax Collector, Rene Morin.*

-Pamela Pudsey	-\$38.29
<i>Mr. Groh</i>	<i>-Yes</i>
<i>Miss White</i>	<i>-Yes</i>
<i>Ms. Hiatt</i>	<i>-Yes</i>



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## OTHER BUSINESS

### Buckley Hill Road Project

Mr. Groh read the following excerpt from the minutes of the June 10, 2008 Special Selectmen's meeting that referenced the Buckley Hill Project. "Mr. Groh provided an update on the Buckley Hill Road project. Mr. Groh said that he spoke with SAS Construction and that he was expecting to receive more information today. Mr. Groh said that SAS Construction would not be able to start until after Labor Day and that since the project would start after July 1<sup>st</sup>, there would be an estimated 10% increase in the project cost due to an increase in the cost of materials. Ms. Hiatt requested that the Finance Director and Director of Public Works provide a comparison of cost and manpower. The Director of Public Works will provide an estimate on labor for the project. A brief discussion followed. The Board agreed to review this again at the next Selectmen's meeting." Mr. Groh stated that he does not have anymore information and that is why it was not listed on the original agenda. Mr. Groh stated that he will forward any information that he receives, including any information from SAS Construction, to the Board when he receives it.

Miss White asked what would be different about the Director of Public Work's figures this time from the ones he has given the Board in the past. Mr. Groh explained that Ms. Hiatt suggested there be a comparison on the manpower if Public Works was to do the work in house. Ms. Hiatt explained that the original figures did not include the entire cost to the Town. Miss White asked if SAS Construction was given a deadline to provide the information requested. Mr. Groh stated that he would contact SAS Construction to give them a deadline. A brief discussion followed.

No action taken.

### Compensation for Training for Registrars

*Motion made by Ms. Hiatt, seconded by Mr. Groh, that we table this topic until the Registrars of Voters come back and give us the information we requested.*

Discussion on Motion: Mr. Groh stated that he has not received any additional information. Ms. Hiatt stated that they were supposed to clarify the original legislation they had submitted to the Board. Miss White asked if it is not possible that the \$35.00 is required if there isn't already a stipend. Ms. Hiatt stated that the legislation she downloaded did not give any kind of an explanation. Mr. Groh asked if the Board would be willing to have a special meeting to address this issue. Miss White said no. Mr. Groh stated that the Board may not be able to wait until the next meeting to address this as the next Board meeting is on July 1<sup>st</sup> which is in the new fiscal year. Ms. Hiatt asked when the Town goes before the Board of Finance to ask for the end-of-year adjustments. Ms. Levesque stated that last year's budget transfers were requested in August of 2007. Ms. Levesque suggested checking with the Finance Director to see if the funds can be paid out after June 30<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Hiatt stated that either the funds are encumbered or the Board holds a special meeting to address this. Miss White stated that she does not see a compelling need to have a Special Selectmen's meeting as this has been a matter that has been going on for a while. Mr. Groh stated that he feels that one way or another, a decision needs to be made. Mr. Groh stated that he will check with the Finance Director about paying the funds and that he will be

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contacting the Board members in regard to holding a special meeting if it is necessary before June 30<sup>th</sup>.

*Motion and second withdrawn.*

**ADJOURN**

*Motion made by Ms. Hiatt, seconded by Miss White, to adjourn the meeting at approximately 9:07 p.m.*

<i>Ms. Hiatt</i>	<i>-Yes</i>
<i>Miss White</i>	<i>-Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Groh</i>	<i>-Yes</i>

Recorded and transcribed by:  
Tonya Levesque