



SELECTMEN'S MEETING
October 7, 2008

The Board of Selectmen held a Selectmen's Meeting on Tuesday, October 7, 2008, at 7:30 p.m. at the Thompson Public Library/Community Center.

PRESENT: Lawrence K. Groh, Jr., First Selectman; Sarah F. White, Selectman; Kathleen A. Hiatt, Selectman; Kevin Kennedy, Director of Planning & Development; Joseph Gaucher; Charles Seney; Brian Lynch; Norman Rudzinski; Norma O'Leary; John Rice; David Ostrowski; Karen Durlach; Erica Ellison-Groh; Ida Ransom; Lynn Landry; Al Landry; Kevin Walsh; Don Brown; Joseph Donovan; Stephen Benoit; Donna Grant, Executive Director of TEEG; Michelle Bourgois – Mystic County Tourism District; Mercedes Robbins; David DaVia; Andrew Scott; Alison Boutaugh; Bill Anderson; Chenoa Pierce – Thompson Villager; Dustin Racioppi – Norwich Bulletin; James Esslinger – Worcester Telegram & Gazette; other concerned citizens

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Ms. Hiatt, seconded by Mr. Groh, to accept the minutes of the September 16, 2008 Selectmen's meeting.

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

Motion made by Ms. Hiatt, seconded by Mr. Groh, to table the minutes of the September 19, 2008 Special Selectmen's meeting to the next meeting.

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

Motion made by Ms. Hiatt, seconded by Mr. Groh, to accept the minutes of the Special Selectmen's meeting of October 7, 2008.

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

CORRESPONDENCE

- Mr. Groh presented correspondence from the Connecticut State Police in regard to the monthly calls for service and re-arrest warrants.

SELECTMEN'S COMMENTS

- Mr. Groh thanked the audience for attending the meeting and also thanked the Thompson Public Library for setting up for the meeting. Mr. Groh explained that the Board decided to have meetings in alternate locations in order to reach out to the public.
- Mr. Groh commented that Mark Riel contacted the Selectmen's Office in regard to energy cost savings and asked the Board if it would be feasible for him to make another presentation to the Board.
- Mr. Groh commented that there was a Special Town Meeting held on September 30, 2008 in which the Town accepted the two donated parcels of land. Mr. Groh also commented that an ordinance was passed to allow the Board of Selectmen to grant easements for utilities across Town-owned roads.
- Ms. Hiatt commented that there is still a vacancy on the Water Pollution Control Authority and notified the audience to contact the current Chair, Samuel Stillwell if they are interested in filling said vacancy.
- Ms. Hiatt commented that the Economic Development Commission is hosting its first ever business expo on Saturday, October 25, 2008 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Rivermill.
- Ms. Hiatt commented that the Board had spoken in regard to a proclamation for Dr. Joseph G. Adiletta at the last meeting.

Motion made by Ms. Hiatt, seconded by Mr. Groh, that we add Proclamation for Dr. Adiletta as item 8a to our agenda for this evening..

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

- Mr. Groh asked the Board to hold a Special Selectmen's meeting on either November 10th or November 17th in order to discuss the Thompson Hill Sewer project. A brief discussion followed. The Board agreed to hold said meeting on November 10, 2008 at 7:30 p.m.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

- Mr. Gaucher commented that the flags on the poles in town are ripped and should be taken down.

- Mr. Landry commented that the water bubbler at the Town Hall on the second floor is still not functioning properly. Mr. Landry requested that the bubbler be removed and replaced with the bottled water that is used in the second floor break room.
- A concerned citizen stated that it was nice to see the flags up through town.
- Mr. Brown commented that the Recreation Department reported a surplus in its programs. Mr. Brown suggested using that surplus to pay for things that the Recreation Department does not currently pay for such as facilities and energy costs.

BUCKLEY HILL ROAD STATE PROJECT – ACTION REQUIRED

Mr. Groh explained that this is an ongoing issue trying to get updated numbers and negotiating with the contractor. Mr. Groh proposed cancelling the contract with SAS Construction and going out to re-bid on the project. Mr. Groh stated that he has been unable to get updated figures for the Selectmen and that it is time to move forward. Mr. Groh stated that he spoke with the State and that the Town would not automatically lose the funding if the contract is cancelled. Mr. Groh also stated that if the bids come in higher than what the State allowed, the Town would have to go to referendum because Town tax dollars would have to be used. Ms. Hiatt asked if the Town would still owe fees if the Town cancelled. A brief discussion followed. Ms. Hiatt stated that she would like to know specifically what the charge would be to cancel the contract.

Motion made by Ms. Hiatt, seconded by Miss White, to table this agenda item until the next Selectmen’s meeting.

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

CHANGE SELECTMEN’S MEETING DATE FROM NOVEMBER 4TH TO NOVEMBER 5TH – ACTION REQUIRED

Mr. Groh explained that there was an error on the calendar for the scheduling of the November 5th meeting. Mr. Groh stated that the calendar should state the meeting is on Wednesday, November 5, 2008, not Tuesday.

Motion made by Miss White, seconded by Ms. Hiatt, that we change the Selectmen’s meeting for November from the 4th to November 5.th

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

**REPORT ON MYSTIC COUNTY TOURISM BOARD – MICHELLE BOURGOIS -
DISCUSSION**

Ms. Bourgois gave a presentation on what the Mystic County Tourism Board has been working on. Ms. Bourgois stated that the Board is working on advertising the area businesses to other areas of the region. Ms. Bourgois also stated that a \$100,000.00 grant to promote the northeastern part of the region was received. Ms. Bourgois provided brochures to the audience.

Mr. Landry stated that it was a great disservice to Thompson to be rolled into the Mystic County Tourism District and would like to go back to the Quiet Corner. Ms. Bourgois explained that many of the tourism boards have been consolidated.

Mr. Groh explained that there is a request to switch the order of the next two agenda items.

Motion made by Ms. Hiatt, seconded by Mr. Groh, to make item 6b now 6c which would make 6b the Proposed Social Services Building.

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

PROPOSED SOCIAL SERVICES BUILDING - DISCUSSION

Mr. Groh explained that this discussion is regarding a proposed social services building. Mr. Groh stated that we received \$225,000.00 from the State of Connecticut in the form of a STEAP grant. Mr. Groh stated that the Director of Planning & Development is going to make a presentation on the proposed project. Mr. Groh also asked that the Board approve a Building Committee at tonight's meeting. Mr. Groh presented a letter to the Board from Barbara Pickett in regard to the proposed project.

Mr. Kennedy gave a powerpoint presentation to the Board and the audience in attendance which included four different building options and the recommendations from the study committee. A question and answer session occurred throughout the presentation. Ms. Grant also provided information on the Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group.

Mr. Groh explained that when he first supported the application for the STEAP grant that he stated that he did not want any tax dollars used towards the project. Mr. Groh explained that he suggested starting an informal committee to see where this project would go. Mr. Groh stated that he wanted members from TEEG and members of the public. Mr. Groh stated that the committee members are Kevin Kennedy – Director of Planning & Development, Renee Waldron – Recreation Director, Ida Ransom, Donna Grant – Executive Director of TEEG, Barbara Pickett – TEEG Board of Directors, Charles Whedon, Dick Trudeau and John Rice – Planning & Zoning Commission. Mr. Groh asked the Board to make this committee an official Town committee and to give the committee some direction.

Miss White stated that this is the first time she has seen the committee composition. Miss White said, "I think with a number of the committees in town I think in order to invite and open up town participation and increase voting I think when we have committees we need to open it up truly to the community to all areas of town and my next statement has nothing to do with personalities or integrity or anything else but I think that we need to not have people that are current staff of the Town on committees. I think they can rightfully serve as advisors but I think that we would have a more vibrant community and more participation and more people get out to vote if we had people from a cross section of the town." Miss White stated that she does not think it is proper for someone to be a member of a town committee that is not a resident of the town. A lengthy discussion followed.

Ms. Hiatt stated that she would like to see the existing committee to do is to give the Board a word picture on what the social services building provides. Ms. Hiatt suggested broadening the committee membership and advertising in the next Selectmen's Update, but to also keep in mind any deadlines coming in the future for the project. A lengthy discussion continued.

Miss White expressed more concerns about the committee composition and the vested interest that the members have. Mr. Rice stated that the people involved have a sincere interest in TEEG. Mr. Lynch stated that the policy that the Town has had for a number of years is to have people who do not live in the Town be on committees because of their expertise. Mr. Lynch stated that it would be a mistake for the Executive Director of TEEG to not be on the committee because she does not live in town. A lengthy discussion continued.

Miss White stated that the impression is clearly of one of packing the committee to achieve a desired outcome as opposed to having it be objective. Mr. Lynch stated that the current committee has come up with four different options and disagrees with the phrase "packing the committee". A lengthy discussion continued.

Motion made by Ms. Hiatt, seconded by Mr. Groh, that we formalize the Social Services Exploration Committee membership with the eight members that have been presented here tonight plus three members left to be filled for a total of 11 and that we advertise in the Shopper's Guide or the Thompson Villager for the other three members to contact the First Selectman if they're interested.

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

Discussion on Motion: Miss White stated that she agrees with increasing the number of members but that she cannot in good conscience vote for it to have people who are not residents of the town serve on a formal committee that is appointed by the Board.

Mr. Groh thanked the Committee for all of their hard work and for the presentation to the Town of Thompson.

Ms. Hiatt stated that she would like the Board to agree on formalized guidelines for this committee at the next Selectmen's meeting.

Mr. Anderson suggested asking Town Counsel about his legal opinion in regard to having non-residents serve on Town committees.

WILSONVILLE HYDRO PLANT - DISCUSSION

Mr. Groh explained that the Town owns the water rights as well as the use of the basement of the building on the property in Wilsonville to possibly be used for hydro power. Mr. Groh asked the Board how they would like to proceed with the property in Wilsonville in regard to options for hydropower. Mr. Groh explained that there are different options including a town-owned hydro plant, a privately run hydro plant, and doing nothing at all. The Board also discussed the options of retaining, leasing and selling the water rights and use of the basement. A lengthy discussion followed.

Motion made by Mr. Groh, seconded by Ms. Hiatt, to charge the Renewable Energy Development Committee with the task of researching having someone lease the water rights and basement from the Town of Thompson and to come back with some suggestions moving in that route.

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

Discussion on Motion: Miss White stated that she would like to add sale of water rights to that motion. Miss White suggested selling the water rights and retaining a percentage of the power generated. A brief discussion followed.

Motion made by Miss White, seconded by Ms. Hiatt, that we ask the Committee to investigate selling the water rights.

<i>Miss White</i>	<i>-Yes</i>
<i>Ms. Hiatt</i>	<i>-Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Groh</i>	<i>-No – Mr. Groh stated that he doesn't think that the Town should sell a gift given to the Town of Thompson shortly after the gift was given to the Town of Thompson.</i>

Discussion on Motion: Ms. Hiatt stated that she is against selling any Town assets that can provide current income, but if someone will buy the rights for a large amount of money, it would be interesting to have that information. Mr. Rudzinski stated that the Town could sell the rights and retain a percentage of the power generated. A brief discussion followed.

Motion made by Miss White, that we discuss at the next meet the potential for approaching the owner to find out what would be mutually beneficial in terms of perhaps a swap of land for

building. Motion was not seconded as the item will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting and a motion is not required to do so.

COMMUNICATION TOWER LEASE AGREEMENT – NOTIFICATION & DISCUSSION

Mr. Groh commented that the Town has received its first check for \$2,000.00 for the lease agreement of the cell tower on Rich Road.

Ms. Landry suggested that the funds received from the agreement go to open space and that this was discussed at a previous Town Meeting where the cell tower was discussed. Mr. Groh stated that the funds will go into the general fund, but that he would look into this. Mr. Groh stated that this item may be on the agenda for the October 21st meeting and that he has given the lease agreement to Town Counsel for review.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – LAND ACQUISITION

Motion made by Mr. Groh, seconded by Ms. Hiatt, to go into Executive Session to discuss a land acquisition at approximately 10:19 p.m.

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

The Board came out of Executive Session at approximately 10:30 p.m.

No action taken.

TAX REFUNDS

Motion made by Mr. Groh, seconded by Ms. Hiatt, to refund the following overpayments as recommended by the Tax Collector, Rene Morin.

-Joshua A Normandin	-\$63.09
-James S McWilliam	-\$58.54
-Paul D or Frances Ansaldo	-\$1.57
-Nissan Infiniti LT	-\$170.95
-Honda Lease Trust	-\$25.47

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

OTHER BUSINESS

Proclamation for Dr. Joseph G. Adiletta

Mr. Groh presented a draft of the proclamation to be presented to Dr. Joseph G. Adiletta at the October 21, 2008 Selectmen's meeting. The Board reviewed the proclamation and made one correction.

Motion made by Ms. Hiatt, seconded by Miss White, to accept the proclamation with the one correction and sign it as it is dated on the 21st of October signed by the Board of Selectmen before that date..

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

ADJOURN

Motion made by Miss White, seconded by Ms. Hiatt, to adjourn the meeting at approximately 10:38 p.m.

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

Recorded and transcribed by:
Tonya Levesque