



TOWN OF THOMPSON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES OF MEETING

Tuesday, June 3rd, 2014, 7:00 PM

Held in the Merrill Seney Conference Room

PRESENT: P. Lenky, First Selectmen; K. Forrester, Selectmen

PUBLIC PRESENT: Kathleen Herbert, Sally White, Roger Tremblay, Kevin Walsh, Donald Pimental, Joseph Faucher, Ted Smith, Alvan R. Hill and others.

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Lenky called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by everyone present.

1.) APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- Motion made by Mrs. Forrester to approve minutes from May 20th, 2014 Board of Selectmen's meeting. This motion was seconded by Mr. Lenky. Corrections in Minutes were made regarding the removal of the word "very" from Selectmen's Comments section, a clarification regarding salary allocated for IT expenses, a correction under Ordinances section regarding the phrasing of members dropping their membership to 9 instead of 10, and a correction to change the phrasing of "heavy editing" to just "editing" under the Ordinances section.
Mrs. Forrester – Yes, Mr. Lenky – Yes
- Mrs. Forrester also asked two questions regarding the minutes. The first, was in regards to comments Ted Smith made that were included in last meeting's minutes. The second question was regarding whether or not anyone had yet written a thank you letter for Mr. Babbitt.

2.) CORRESPONDANCE:

- Mr. Lenky began by announcing that he had given the other Selectmen the minutes and other information from the NECOGG meeting which was held on Friday, May 30th, 2014. He continued by adding that if anyone was interested that there was more information in the Selectmen's Office.
- Mr. Lenky announced that the Trail's Committee was working on the railroad tracks in the surrounding towns and showed a corresponding photograph of one which was being done in Pomfret currently so people in attendance could see what the state has been working on.
- Mr. Lenky also announced that a lot of information from the Last Green Rally was given to the Selectmen on projects they have going on working with the parks and that the Recreation Director did use part of the Last Green Rally to do some work with the kids at the softball field in town near the gazebo.
- Mr. Lenky also received some information from Mike Lajeunesse about a hike they are having this Saturday, June 7th, 2014 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM at the tri-state marker where Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island meet.
- Mr. Lenky also mentioned that if any of the Selectmen were interested that they had been invited by the YMCA of Greater Hartford to a meeting on Friday, June 13th, 2014 at 10:30 AM at the Golden Eagle in Dayville, CT in regards to the new construction of the new YMCA that will be coming soon to Putnam, CT.
- Mr. Lenky also stated that he did get the letter that was requested by the Department of Agriculture to confirm that Attorney St. Onge would be the town attorney for the Marianapolis Trinity Foundation Sewer Project.
- Mr. Lenky also mentioned that he did have the engineer at NECOGG do some research regarding Quaddick Bridge and that he recommended a company that the town of Sterling uses. Mr. Lenky added that it would be economically cheaper than what the state would want to do but that it would definitely be something to look forward to and see which way they will go.

3.) SELECTMEN'S COMMENTS:

- Mrs. Forrester commented that this year's Memorial Day Parade was very nice and that she had a good time walking with the Selectmen and all of the Veterans that came out for the parade. She continued by saying that she has the upmost respect for Mr. Babbitt and all that he has done over the years.



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- Mrs. Forrester also commented that she has started on personnel policies and procedures and had asked the other Selectmen for comments so that they could get those done.
- Mrs. Forrester also mentioned that she had printed, and had some copies available, Charge for the Ethics Advisory Committee which they had approved the membership of the four people who had so far signed up. She also mentioned that if anyone who had signed up was present that they should take a copy and for them to also call together the members.
- Mrs. Forrester explained the entries for the gravel removal and clarified the recent confusion surrounding the process and how it is being done. She explained that there is a fee set at the beginning of the year based on an estimate of cubic yards to be removed. The minimum of this fee is \$500.00. Mrs. Forrester further explained that during the year there should be somebody who tracks what goes out of the gravel operations and then follows through if there is an excess. She spoke to Mary Ann Chinatti who told her that it is the Selling Enforcement Officer's responsibility to be tracking that and it is not being done. Mrs. Forrester continued by stating that this will be addressed but that she does not think that it amounts to much money and that, essentially, they had not gotten anything because it is their responsibility to notify them of, and track, what they are removing. Mrs. Forrester finished on this subject by mentioning that there had been questions regarding \$0.02 or \$0.03 per cubic yard of gravel removed but that they, essentially, only get the fee of \$500.00 in the beginning of the year and that is it.
- Mrs. Forrester read a letter from Selectmen Shaina Smith who was not able to be present at this meeting as she was away on business but wanted her comments and concerns to be heard under the Selectmen's Comments section. Mrs. Smith's concerns were in regards to the Solar RFP Bid Opening and a lack of communication. In her letter, Mrs. Smith noted that it was decided at the May 6th, 2014 meeting of the Board of Selectmen to open the bids on May 29th, 2014 at 7:00 PM. However, on May 29th, 2014 Mrs. Smith was very disappointed to see that the agenda for this meeting was not posted and that her message box was empty with no notification of this meeting that they all had agreed upon. Mrs. Smith then noted that there seems to be a lack of communication between Board Members when it comes to scheduling meetings. Mrs. Smith continued, in her letter, by stating that she had brought up three instances since this administration began in which the office had not notified her when a special meeting had been posted. She also commented that she would greatly appreciate a phone call when meetings are being considered or when an agenda is being generated to ensure that she is available to attend the meeting to ensure that the Board has a quorum to make significant decisions on behalf of the town. She finished up the letter by stating that she also believes it would be courteous to notify her when they are no longer holding a meeting that they had all previously scheduled, that her concerns are whether or not they may be held liable for not carrying out the opening process for the bids on the date that they gave to prospective solar companies, and that she would appreciate insight and follow up so that they do not face legal action.
- Mr. Lenky commented that he does agree with Mrs. Smith's letter and that there are times that do come up when they notify people and certain members may not be able to make the meeting. Mr. Lenky also commented that they like to always have all three members present but that with special meetings it can sometimes be difficult for them to all be able to make it. Mr. Lenky also stated that he did forget about the meeting in question and that he apologizes for that occurring.
- Mrs. Forrester commented that she has had the same issues for almost three years now and that being fed everything very orderly would be great but that it just doesn't always happen. Mrs. Forrester stated that although things are not always as orderly as they should be that the three Selectmen do have the responsibility to come in and ask questions but that they can, indeed, do a better job in scheduling.
- Mr. Lenky commented that he was at the TEEG building last week for their presentation with High School students involving vegetable carts. Mr. Lenky continued by praising the project that the High School



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students had taken part in with these flower and vegetable boxes and mentioned that the Northeast District Department of Health had purchased 16 of them to be sent out throughout Windham County.

- Mr. Lenky also commented that the Memorial Day Parade was very good and that there was a lot of participation. He continued on this subject by commenting that he believed it to be in the best interest of the citizens and town organizations to try and continue to make the parade even bigger and better in the next coming year.

4.) CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

- Kathleen Herbert commented regarding the retirement of Mr. Babbitt and suggested that the town honor him in the best possible way either through a Citizen of the Year Award, Lifetime Achievement Award, or some kind of Honorary Plaque. She stressed that something extra-special needs to be done to honor Mr. Babbitt and all that he has done for the town of Thompson.
- Sally White commented regarding multiple current issues. Firstly, Mrs. White asked if during the Marianapolis Sewer Project Update if taxpayers would be allowed to ask questions. Mr. Lenky responded that they could not. Mrs. White continued by commenting on the Solar Bid and stating that she believed that because May 29th, 2014 was the advertised deadline for the bids to open that they would have to be voided and done over since they were not opened on May 29th, 2014. Mrs. Forrester responded that Mr. Lenky had checked with Attorney St. Onge and that there would be no issue with opening the bids at this meeting. Mr. Lenky also stated that Attorney St. Onge said that as long as no bids were opened and no additional bids were received that opening them at this meeting would not be problematic. A brief discussion between Mr. Lenky, Mrs. Forrester, and Mr. Alvan Hill took place where Mr. Lenky clarified that he had forgotten about posting the meeting, Mr. Hill mentioned that he had mistakenly thought that the date agreed upon was May 27th, 2014, and Mrs. Forrester stated that a special meeting of the Solar Advisory Committee would be taking place on Wednesday, June 4th, 2014. Mrs. White continued by commenting that she thought it was troubling and that the decent thing to do would be to re-notify. Mrs. White also stressed that she believed that Attorney St. Onge only gives advice to the Board of Selectmen. Mrs. White continued her comments by touching on the situation regarding Starr Road. Mrs. White began by asking how many acres have already been taken for gravel operations. She stated that the reason she asks that question is because she does not see gravel removal in such magnitude in any of the surrounding towns except for Thompson. She also elaborated on the issue by mentioning that East Thompson seems to already be vulnerable in regards to its geology; Mrs. White noted flat, open land with big gravel banks. She continued by stating that this is a permanent distortion of the natural topography, that there is too much historical value present in the land for this to be happening, and that the town of Thompson must have a compelling reason to allow it to go on. Further, she noted the archaeology of this part of town which includes rocks for wagon paths from decades ago, as well as the beautiful flowing rivers present on this land. Therefore, Mrs. Smith stressed that she would really like to see some sort of preservation put into action. Mr. Lenky responded by stressing that there are currently no plans for anyone on Starr Road to be removing gravel and that there is currently nothing going on up there. Mrs. White next asked the Board if they could share their paving plans with the citizens and mentioned how in Plainfield they do no chip sealing.

A motion was made by Mrs. Forrester to add to Other Business an update from Mr. Lenky regarding the paving of Thompson's roads. This motion was seconded by Mr. Lenky.

Mrs. Forrester – Yes, Mr. Lenky – Yes

Sally White continued her comments by asking some questions regarding the proposed boat launch. Mrs. White asked about the community firefighters taking fill and using it in the project to off-set cost and wanted to know if a value should be given if costs are being off-set. Mrs. White also wanted to know how many boat launches and parks are currently owned by the town and what the costs are. Mrs. White finished



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her comments by stating that she had received an official e-mail from the Library Director saying that Mr. Lenky had stopped by and said that he was moving ahead with the contracting with the original sprinkler company. She continued by commenting that it was her understanding that they do not have a long-term contract with that company and that this should be going out to bid. She finished up her comments by stating that she would like to see the other Selectmen step up and abide by policy and that if the First Selectmen operated outside of policy that it could potentially be an impeachable offense.

- Roger Tremblay asked how many miles of paved road Thompson has and also inquired about what the town's procedure for patching roads is. Mr. Lenky responded that he did not know the amount of paved road the town has but did explain that during the winter the town uses a cold patch procedure and that during the summer they use hot mix with sand over it. Mr. Tremblay stated that he experienced that they do not put sand on it and that the mix is not compacted. He continued by asking Mr. Lenky to clarify a procedure because some people that do the roads might say they don't know the procedure. Mr. Lenky responded that they do know the procedure.
- Kevin Walsh began his comments by thanking Mrs. Forrester for clarification regarding the details on the gravel hauling and continued by asking if she knew who set the initial flat fee in the beginning of the year. Mrs. Forrester responded that she believed that the Planning and Zoning Commission set the fee. Mr. Walsh continued his comments by asking if there would be a comprehensive audit taking place before the town's current finance director leaves and they hire somebody new. Mr. Walsh then expressed that he would like to see such an audit take place. Mrs. Forrester responded that it is the Board of Finance's responsibility to ensure that that happens. Lastly, Mr. Walsh commented regarding the issue of communication within the town. Mr. Walsh expressed that he believes people in town are not always well-informed and that the need for effective communication starts with the Board of Selectmen. He expressed that since there are only three members of the Board of Selectmen it should not be overly difficult for them to find mutual available times to meet for special meetings and that they are not setting a good example for the rest of the town. Mr. Walsh continued by stating that as far as communication goes, the Board may want to let the town know what is appropriate communication and at what time. Mr. Walsh finished up his comments by stressing that the more conversation that is had, the better, and that from what he sees the Selectmen don't always seem to want to encourage communication based on how the agenda is set up and their stance to not let people communicate during agenda items.
- Donald Pimental spoke about how he went to the Trails Committee with the old plans regarding Starr Road and that they are not on board with those plans. The problem, however, according to Mr. Pimental, is that the town talks but does not take action. He continued by stating that he has read a packet that shows all of the rules and regulations. Mr. Pimental also expressed concerns that the town may want to change the laws and that if they did he would take action. Mr. Pimental continued by disagreeing with the town regarding whether or not the trail on Starr Road is a safety hazard. Mr. Pimental also mentioned that he would be willing to put it in the paper and show everyone the regulations. He further expressed that he wanted the town to bring in the man in question and express to him that there is to be no building according to the regulations. Mr. Pimental continually expressed that he wants no further development on Starr Road and wishes to see it stay exactly how it is.
- Joe Faucher commented regarding the gravel hauling that trucks have been hauling 2 days this week and that 3 or 4 trucks have been involved. He further stated that this is a lot of gravel and expressed concern that the town should be making more money. Mr. Lenky responded that this was not defined and was not in a town ordinance.
- Sally White commented that, regarding the gravel operation, she had asked the assessor and tax collector about how they assess the value of the gravel. Further, Mrs. White expressed a lack of oversight and of a protocol regarding the gravel hauling situation. A discussion then took place between Mrs. White and Mrs.



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Forrester regarding procedures being addressed currently versus what has taken place during previous administrations. Mr. Lenky added that there needs to be a compromise taking place at some point because the policy has not been defined so raising gravel rates in the future could be an option and that defining policy needs to be done.

- Kathleen Herbert commented that one of the benefits of owning a gravel operation is that it is subject to or allowable for percentage depletion on income tax. She further explained that this meant that for every cubic yard they pull out, it gets recorded and they are allowed to take a percentage depletion allowance on that. She suggested simply asking them to report their schedule at the end of the year from their income tax that they report.
- Sally White commented regarding the comprehensive audit, which was brought up earlier in the meeting, that such an audit should be only for the specific area of the person who would be leaving to make sure that there are no errors anywhere and she also added that this would be different from what is required by law. .

5.) SOLAR RFP – OPEN BIDS:

- The first bid opened was from “Greenskies Renewable Energy LLC” from Middletown, CT.
- The second bid opened was from “C-TEC Solar located at 28 Pinnacle Mountain Road in Simsbury, CT.”
- Motion made by Mrs. Forrester to send Solar RFP bids to the Solar Advisory Committee.
Mrs. Forrester – Yes, Mr. Lenky – Yes

6.) MARIANAPOLIS SEWER PROJECT UPDATE:

- Mr. Lenky began by announcing that the date of the bid opening has been changed from Thursday, June 5th, 2014 to Thursday, June 19th, 2014 in the Merrill Seney Room at 9:00 AM. Mr. Lenky further elaborated that this scheduling change was made because of a change in line-boring as originally the line-boring was going to be from the top of 395 down to Route 12 and after the discussion that they had with the engineer it was decided that there was not enough coverage but by going the opposite way it will be a lot better for them. Mr. Lenky also announced that there would be a public hearing on Wednesday, June 4th, 2014 for the project because the Norwich Bulletin forgot to publish a letter announcing the original public hearing which they had at Tourtellotte Memorial High School. Mr. Lenky also commented that other than these things, nothing else regarding the project has changed.

7.) DISCUSSION ON BOARD, COMMISSION, AND COMMITTEE VACANCIES:

- Mrs. Forrester commented that for the Ethics Committee that they are still looking for at least one more person to have a minimum of five members, but that they would like to have hopefully seven at some point. She also mentioned that they are currently looking for volunteers for the Fire Protection Advisory Committee as two seats needs to be filled there as well. Mr. Lenky added that the Recreation Commission also needs a seat filled. Mrs. Forrester continued by also mentioning that a few more people could be added to the Solar Advisory Committee. Mr. Lenky also added to the discussion by commenting that they may have to consider altering the term lengths for some of these positions since most are currently set at terms of 6 years and some people do not like to always necessarily give up such lengthy amounts of time.

8.) TAX REFUNDS:

- None.

9.) OTHER BUSINESS:

- Mr. Lenky spoke about why Thompson uses the procedure that they use versus an earlier suggestion that they consider using the procedure that Plainfield uses. Mr. Lenky commented that using the system that Plainfield uses doesn't work in Thompson because of the age of Thompson's roads, sand, and oil being pulled to the top. Mrs. Forrester suggested that if they just keep patching them that they are simply throwing money away because they continue to face the same problems over and over again, she continued by suggesting a 10 year plan where they could include looking back to see what roads have been done, what has been done to the roads in the past, and from that develop what roads need to be done and



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prioritize them. Mr. Lenky spoke about how years ago they had a system where they would divide the roads up and it basically amounted to a 4-year plan. Mrs. Forrester added that the last two years when they put together the budget they come up with a list of roads that should have been done and somehow it doesn't get accomplished. She continued by adding that they always bring up that Thompson is the only town in Connecticut that has their own paving equipment yet they don't have the expertise and that it should go out to bid. Mr. Lenky brought up the cost factor and Mrs. Forrester added that they don't factor in the cost of labor, equipment, or any of that. Mr. Lenky continued by adding that cost is important because they are working on a budget of only just about \$600,000 a year which doesn't amount to much as far as their road maintenance is concerned.

10.) ADJOURN:

- Motion made by Mrs. Forrester to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Mr. Lenky.
Mrs. Forrester – Yes, Mr. Lenky – Yes

Documented and transcribed by Andrew Richardson, Recording Secretary