



TOWN OF THOMPSON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES OF MEETING

Tuesday, June 17th, 2014, 7:00 PM

Held in the Merrill Seney Conference Room

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

PUBLIC PRESENT: Linda Jarmolowicz, Kathleen Herbert, Joseph H. Gaucher, Kevin Walsh, Frances Becker, Ted Smith, Ken Beausoleil, Donald Pimental, and others.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by everyone present.

Prior to the meeting, the Board of Selectmen recognized Thomas W. Ralph Jr. from Webster, Massachusetts for his achievement of earning the title of Eagle Scout while doing all of his scouting in the town of Thompson.

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Lenky called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

1.) APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- Motion made by Mrs. Forrester to approve minutes from June 9th, 2014 Board of Selectmen's meeting. This motion was seconded by Mr. Lenky.
Mrs. Forrester – Yes, Mr. Lenky – Yes, Mrs. Smith – Abstained
- Motion made by Mrs. Forrester to approve minutes from the June 3rd, 2014 Board of Selectmen's meeting. This motion was seconded by Mrs. Smith. . Corrections in Minutes were made regarding the spelling of "NECCOG", the spelling of the "Last Green Valley", the spelling of utmost, a correction to the title of Ms. White instead of Mrs. White, a clarification to Mr. Babbitt as Mr. Norman Babbitt, the spelling of Mr. Joseph Gaucher's last name, and a wrong account of a comment which should have been read as being made by Ms. White instead of by Mrs. Smith who was not present.
Mrs. Forrester – Yes, Mr. Lenky – Yes, Mrs. Smith – Abstained.

2.) CORRESPONDANCE:

- Mr. Lenky began by stating that this weekend Emergency Management will be holding a state-wide Hurricane Drill and that there will be a meeting Friday, June 20th, 2014 at the town hall at 1:00 PM for fire chiefs and town personnel in regards to that and the drill will be the following day on Saturday, June 21st, 2014 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM.
- Mr. Lenky also stated that he had received a letter from the Chamber of Commerce thanking the Board of Selectmen for the membership fee that they paid them.
- Mr. Lenky received information from JD Civil Engineering for the proposed bridge at Quaddick. Without the engineering figured into the equation their estimate was that it could be done for around \$100,000 as opposed to the state's estimate of \$1.2 million.
- Mr. Lenky also received a letter from Senator Donald E. Williams in regards to a \$150,000 which he had secured in the new state budget effective July 1st, 2014 to reimburse the town of Thompson for the cost of the West Thompson Fire Department Roof.
- Mr. Lenky received a memorandum from the Planning & Zoning Commission in regards to the proposed boat launch which the town wanted to build adjacent from the Old Stove Shop. The memorandum stated that a subject referral was being respectively withdrawn from consideration while other options are being considered to accomplish the goal. This was because the property that the town had wished to purchase had been purchased for more than the town wished to spend.
- Mr. Lenky mentioned that information had recently been received from the Wetlands Commission.
- Mr. Lenky also mentioned that information had recently been received from the State Police, as well, and this was in regards to the services they provided to the town of Thompson during the month of May. There were 13 accidents and 27 criminal complaints during the month of May.
- Information from the Northeast District of Health was given to all of the Selectmen by Mr. Lenky.
- The Board of Selectmen also received the Fiscal Report from Mr. Mike Martin.

- Mrs. Forrester received correspondence from the State of Connecticut Election Enforcement Commission regarding the advertisement of referendums. The clarification was that they cannot spend municipal funds on advertising which way to vote but they can post voting. Also, the school cannot use the all-call system but can, however, send notices home with children reminding parents of when, where, and what time to vote.

3.) SELECTMEN'S COMMENTS:

- Mrs. Smith commented that she appreciated her e-mail being read by Mrs. Forrester at the previous meeting, that she believed better communication was important going forward, and that people should not focus on what has happened with previous administrations. She also noted that she would appreciate a simple phone call if special meetings come up to see if they can find a way where they all can attend. Mrs. Smith also brought up that the Bulletin Boards in other towns are bolder, brighter, and easier to read and that something more noticeable could improve communication in town. The idea of a town newsletter to improve communication was also brought up by Mrs. Smith. Mr. Lenky mentioned that, in terms of communication with the schools, Charter Communications had a program where they had given the schools equipment for town cable in the past so that meetings could be televised. Mrs. Forrester agreed that updates or newsletters would be a very good idea to look into so that town people could be better informed. The issue of the town website and what to do with it was also brought up by Mrs. Smith. She discussed how Putnam and Pomfret had recently both gone out to bid for a service but that they were in no way the type of services that would provide a webmaster though. Formats were also discussed and Mrs. Smith asked Mr. Baer if he could teach them how to post on the front page of the website. Mrs. Forrester agreed that she also did not know how to post to the front page.
- Mrs. Forrester reminded everyone present about the referendum on Tuesday, June 24th, 2014 between 8:00 Am and 12:00 PM.
- Mrs. Forrester also asked Mr. Lenky and Mrs. Smith if either of them had any input regarding the personnel policies which she had drafted because she wanted to get them out soon.
- Mrs. Forrester questioned why the library is setting policies for reservations and expressed that her belief is that the Board of Selectmen should have that particular power.
- Mrs. Forrester gave both Mr. Lenky and Mrs. Smith a draft of a letter which she had written to recognize Mr. Norman Babbitt for all he has done for the town over the years. The idea of a plaque was also once again brought up as Mr. Norman Babbitt has done so much for the Veterans on both Veteran's Day and Memorial Day over the years. Mr. Lenky and Mrs. Smith agreed that something should definitely be done.

4.) CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

- Kevin Walsh asked the Board of Selectmen if anyone had been hired for the town website as a webmaster. Mr. Lenky responded that no one had been hired yet but that they were looking at doing so in the next fiscal year. Mr. Walsh suggested that the Board consider hiring Mr. Paul Baer, who has been doing the job on a volunteer basis, as he has been doing a good job at it for the past 16 months.
- Ted Smith asked the Board of Selectmen, in regards to the issue of road maintenance, if they could simply borrow the \$6,000,000 to fix the roads. Mr. Lenky responded that no one is saying that they can't necessarily.
- Ken Beausoleil asked if the resurfacing of the lots would be covered under the roads update and Mr. Lenky responded that it would. Mr. Beausoleil further commented that the lights for the parks and the parking lots should be looked at to save money because the time change has made it so they come on before it even gets dark.
- Frances Becker asked the Board of Selectmen how she could get on a mailing list to receive correspondence from the town. She further explained that she has a P.O box that may complicate her ability to receive such correspondence but that somehow her tax bill always finds its way to the right address so correspondence from the town should as well.
- Joe Gaucher asked about the machines near the Shirt Shop and what they were doing. Mr. Lenky responded that they were with the water company and that it was construction taking place on private property, not for the town.
- Donald Pimental asked about a change in citizen's comments which has been discussed last meeting. Mr. Lenky responded that citizens could now have three minutes to comment on agenda items.
- Paul Baer commented that Wilsonville Road has just been paved 8 months ago and is already peeling up and deteriorating despite being told that it should last 12 years. Mr. Baer further commented regarding the Board of Assessment Appeals and stated that in the budget they are getting raises despite being in violation

of the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act as they have not filed minutes despite requests being made. Mrs. Forrester and Mr. Lenky agreed with much of what Mr. Baer said regarding this issue and Mrs. Forrester commented that the Board of Selectmen must have a recourse to be able to remove some of these people from the Board of Assessment Appeals. Mr. Baer also commented that, in regards to the town website, someone was able to edit the front page but did so with wrong information. Mr. Baer continued by commenting, regarding the Ethics Committee, that someone in town has actually hired a relative who lives outside of town. Mr. Baer stated that in other towns this is clearly not allowed in accordance with their Ethics Committees. Mrs. Herbert commented that the Ethics Committee is meeting on Wednesday, June 25th, 2014. Mr. Baer also commented that elected officials should not be on the Ethics Committee. It was brought up to Mr. Baer that the Ethics Committee was made up of volunteers. Mr. Baer responded that volunteers in Thompson do not get treated well. Mr. Baer also commented regarding how money in the town of Thompson is spent and finished up his comments by suggesting that the town pay down their debt using money that is allocated for specific line items in the budget and then not used.

- Donald Pimental asked Mr. Lenky about a petition he had signed. Mr. Lenky responded that Attorney St. Onge currently had the petition and that he would be giving him his legal advice on it.
- Ted Smith asked about the old homeless shelter on Main Street which has not been in use in some time. Mr. Lenky responded that it had been suggested in the past as a potential Veteran's Home but was in pretty bad shape and that an overnight solution was not possible as it would likely cost over \$1,000,000 to renovate the property. It was also brought up that this building was tied to the Tourtellotte Trust Fund and that that could also potentially complicate the issue as a letter from the Attorney General could be needed to take it off a list prior to taking the building down. Mrs. Forrester also mentioned that the process to get the Attorney General's okay to take the building down was put in place around 2 years ago. Mr. Smith also asked if the Tourtellotte Trust Fund was still a trust fund anyway because of a property in Ohio being sold potentially affecting it. Mr. Lenky responded that it is still a trust fund for the high school.
- Frances Becker asked if they could use some of the trust fund money to re-do the building as a historical site. Mr. Lenky responded that if they were going to do that that it would have to come from a grant through the state.
- Kevin Walsh commented, in regards to money appropriated in the budget and not spent, by asking if there could be a transfer of funds and stated that it is a process that has been done in the past. Mr. Walsh also commented, when it comes to budget workshops, questions would be asked regarding money appropriated that is not used. Mr. Walsh suggested that a conversation should take place at future Board meetings regarding why some of this money keeps getting appropriated year after year when it keeps on not getting used. Mr. Lenky responded that sometimes people need to take classes that don't take place every single year so that this cannot always be done to fix the problem. Mr. Walsh also mentioned that he was not sure that the town's budget was actually balanced as the budget process takes place and there is a transfer of funds. Mr. Walsh asked where this transfer of funds comes from to off-set the bottom line and why it happens. Mrs. Forrester clarified that over-spending is looked at and that generally snow-removal plays a factor. Mrs. Forrester also mentioned that there is a contingency fund as well. This means that there are transfer of funds to even out over-spending and under-spending. Mr. Walsh commented that the left and right sides should equal. Mrs. Kathleen Herbert added that this process was how the town helps to keep the mil rate down. Mr. Walsh countered that even though that might be the case, assessment values go up.
- Donald Pimental asked if the town had hired a new attorney named Steve Burns and Mr. Lenky responded that Steve Burns handles legal business for the Planning & Zoning Commission.
- Wayne O'Brian asked Mr. Lenky if he had heard anything about Mr. O'Brian's ongoing situation with the tax assessor. Mr. Lenky responded that he had not yet heard from Attorney St. Onge.
- Frances Becker commented regarding Charter Communications helping Tourtellotte Memorial High School with supplies for a cable channel that some people do not have Charter so it is not necessarily fair that people without it would not be able to have access to the channel.
- Paul Baer commented that there were raises for the whole entire Assessment Board of Appeals. Mr. Baer also commented that, regarding the house on 65 Main Street, the deed restrictions were supposed to be so that the building was maintained. The deed restrictions were not followed and now the town wants to take the building down. Mr. Baer also brought up that the Fire Marshall has not been inspecting buildings and filing reports that he was supposed to in accordance with his job description.
- Carolyn Werge commented that she had recalled speaking to Attorney St. Onge regarding the Main Street building deed and that she was not sure if the restrictions on the deed were still, in fact, valid.

5.) UPDATE ON GRAVEL REMOVAL AND FEES:

- Mrs. Forrester updated the town on the issue of fees for gravel removal by clarifying to the town that an ordinance regarding gravel permits is covered under article 9, special section 5. Mrs. Forrester gave a quick synopsis of what was covered by explaining that it covers establishment, permits are valid for one year and must be renewed annually, the ZEO may make inspections to ensure permit compliance, the base fee is \$0.02 cents per cubic yard but not less than a \$500.00 minimum base fee in addition to \$75.00 for a legal notice fee. Mrs. Forrester also explained that she asked the ZEO a few questions. This included inquiring about how many gravel operations are in town and how many have been paying their fees over the last year and over the last five years. Mrs. Forrester was told that no one checks how much is collected and mentioned that there also was only one application to renew a permit this year. Mr. Lenky explained that only one permit was given out this year and that that was for French River Materials. Mr. Lenky also explained that the procedure recently has been that they will take an area, survey it, and estimate the amount of material that will be taken out. They then pay the minimum fee and anything on top of that according to how much they take out. Mr. Lenky further explained that that fee is paid to the Building Office who then turn it over to the Finance Director where it goes to the general budget and that money is supposed to be used for road improvements. Mrs. Forrester then said that that is not what should be done in accordance to the ordinance and Mrs. Smith agreed that the ordinance should be being adhered to as well. A lengthy discussion between various citizens and the Selectmen took place regarding what would ultimately be done. Mrs. Forrester explained that she is trying to unravel this issue, that she would have a draft policy to follow through on all aspects, and that she notified the ZEO of the gravel operation that she knew was not following the policy.

6.) SMOKING POLICY:

- Mrs. Smith explained that there is a policy and that she went to the town of Putnam's town administrator who explained that, for them, they had created a campaign, instead of an ordinance, that states that the town is committed to the health of residents and that no cigarettes should be smoked in town-owned trails or parks. She further explained that Killingly's Owen Bell Park is also smoke-free. Additionally, she had asked about e-cigarettes and they wanted to look into that. Mrs. Forrester added that more and more communities are being designated smoke-free. Frances Becker asked if a vote would be needed and Mrs. Smith responded that if it were an ordinance it would but otherwise it would not need to go to a vote. Mrs. Forrester added that if an ordinance was to be drafted then the town's people would have a chance to vote on the issue.

7.) UPDATE ON ROAD ISSUES AND PLANNING:

- Mr. Lenky explained that he had recently spoke to the Highway Superintendent regarding the road issues and was told that nine catch basins had collapsed but were being fixed soon. This included a blocked drainage off of Sand Dam Road that needed to be repaired. Mr. Lenky continued by mentioning that sweeping in the Laporte Road area was finishing up also. Mr. Lenky also explained that Porter Plane Road would be worked on shortly after the fiscal year begins on July 1st, 2014. Mr. Lenky also explained that the paving budget for the past year was \$450,000, \$100,000 was for chip sealing, and only \$6,000 was left in the budget. Ken Beausoleil asked about Buck Hill being done and lots. Mr. Lenky explained that when it came to the lots that they needed to be re-ground again and that it had never been compacted correctly. Mr. Lenky explained that, when it comes to Buck Hill, that the drainage would make it very difficult.

8.) STARR ROAD UPDATE:

- Mr. Lenky explained that the Planning & Zoning Commission had received a letter from Congressman Joe Courtney which voiced concerns that development of a subdivision on Starr Road was underway and that a public parking lot for use by the town of Thompson was also being created without permission. Mr. Lenky explained that this was not the case and that he had reached out to Congressman Joe Courtney's office to explain the situation. Mr. Lenky explained to a woman at Congressman Courtney's office the ongoing situation on Starr Road. Mr. Lenky further explained that old plans from 2006 are no longer valid because after three years plans have to be re-done. Additionally, Mr. Lenky stated that this parking lot in question would not be created because it has not been approved. Mr. Lenky and Mr. Donald Pimental also had a brief conversation regarding the matter.

9.) CONSERVATION REPORT ON POTENTIAL LAND DONATION:

- Carolyn Werge presented a proposal for three parcels of land to be potentially donated to the town of Thompson. Three large scale copies of Surveyor's maps were brought for the presentation as 8 ½ x 11 versions may have been difficult to read. Mrs. Werge shared with the Selectmen the details of each of the three parcels of land that were being offered to the town, including the ecological value of each piece of

land. There was, however, mention of a request to reconstruct Starr Road in order to build a parking lot. Mrs. Forrester made it very clear that the Board of Selectmen would not be interested in a trade-off or in accepting the land if there was a contingency that they give permission for the donator to create the parking lot. Many discussions took place throughout the presentation regarding potential construction on Starr Road and how the town could use donated wetlands. It was mentioned that certain species gave the land in question ecological value and additionally Mr. Lenky explained that the state of Connecticut is requiring 11% of town-owned property to be open space land.

10.) TAX REFUNDS:

- There was a motion made by Mrs. Forrester to approve four tax refunds; \$17.98 for David Thibodeau, \$85.87 for David W. Tremblay, \$86.14 for Edward B. McClellan, and \$101.50 for Ally Financial. This motion was seconded by Mrs. Smith.
Mrs. Forrester – Yes, Mrs. Smith – Yes, Mr. Lenky – Yes

11.) OTHER BUSINESS:

- Wayne O'Brian commented on his ongoing issue with the tax assessor and a discussion between he and Mr. Lenky took place regarding how tax refunds come up as well as regarding the 2011 and 2012 tax refunds that were previously given out.

12.) ADJOURNMENT:

- There was a motion to adjourn at 9:18 PM made by Mrs. Forrester. This motion was seconded by Mrs. Smith.
Mrs. Smith – Yes, Mrs. Forrester – Yes, Mr. Lenky - Yes

Documented and transcribed by Andrew Richardson, Recording Secretary