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DRAFT

**THOMASTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2010**

Roll Call:

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

First Selectman Mone, Selectman Scheppard and Selectman Barrett, Sr. were present. Deborah Bournival, Administrative Assistant, was in attendance to take the minutes.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by Selectman Scheppard to approve the minutes of the February 2, 2010 regular meeting as presented. Motion was seconded by Selectman Barrett, Sr. With all in favor, motion carries.

Tax Refunds:

A motion was made by Selectman Barrett, Sr. to rescind a tax refund submitted by the Tax Collector in the amount of \$4,272.62 to Darryl and Lucille Maslak which was approved at the February 2, 2010 Board of Selectmen meeting as it was incorrectly written out. Motion was seconded by Selectman Scheppard. With all in favor, motion carries.

A motion was made by Selectman Barrett, Sr. to approve the tax refund submitted by the Tax Collector in the amount of \$4,272.62 to Thomaston Savings Bank, as homeowner and bank paid taxes, TSB will redeposit to Maslak escrow account. Motion was seconded by Selectman Scheppard. With all in favor, motion carries.

A motion was made by Selectman Barrett, Sr. to approve the tax refund submitted by the Tax Collector in the amount of \$1,260.65 to Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, overpayment by mortgage company – tax was paid at closing. Motion was seconded by Selectman Scheppard. With all in favor, motion carries.

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A motion was made by Selectman Barrett, Sr. to approve the tax refund submitted by the Tax Collector in the amount of \$461.74 to Lawrence and Jane Seeley, Assessor prorated. Motion was seconded by Selectman Scheppard. With all in favor, motion carries.

A motion was made by Selectman Barrett, Sr. to approve the tax refund submitted by the Tax Collector in the amount of \$114.29 to Toyota Motor Credit Corp., Assessor prorated. Motion was seconded by Selectman Scheppard. With all in favor, motion carries.

A motion was made by Selectman Barrett, Sr. to approve the tax refund submitted by the Tax Collector in the amount of \$46.40 to Ella Morris, taxpayer overpaid 2nd r/e installment via credit card. Motion was seconded by Selectman Scheppard. With all in favor, motion carries.

A motion was made by Selectman Barrett, Sr. to approve the tax refund submitted by the Tax Collector in the amount of \$381.70 to Jose Medina, Assessor moved to Waterbury. Motion was seconded by Selectman Scheppard. With all in favor, motion carries.

A motion was made by Selectman Barrett, Sr. to approve the tax refund submitted by the Tax Collector in the amount of \$635.96 to Jose Medina, Assessor moved to Waterbury. Motion was seconded by Selectman Scheppard. With all in favor, motion carries.

A motion was made by Selectman Barrett, Sr. to approve the tax refund submitted by the Tax Collector in the amount of \$330.12 to Jose Medina, Assessor moved to Waterbury. Motion was seconded by Selectman Scheppard. With all in favor, motion carries.

A motion was made by Selectman Barrett, Sr. to approve the tax refund submitted by the Tax Collector in the amount of \$570.13 to Jose Medina, Assessor moved to Waterbury. Motion was seconded by Selectman Scheppard. With all in favor, motion carries.

A motion was made by Selectman Barrett, Sr. to approve the tax refund submitted by the Tax Collector in the amount of \$157.68 to Marlene Martin & Albert Johnson, overpayment of taxes due to recent adjustment by Assessor. Motion was seconded by Selectman Scheppard. With all in favor, motion carries.

A motion was made by Selectman Scheppard to move to Item #5 on the agenda – EDC's Proposed Tax Abatement for 254 Commons. Motion was seconded by Selectman Barrett, Sr. With all in favor, motion carries.

A motion was made by Selectman Scheppard to accept the recommendation of the Economic Development Commission (EDC) and waive 75% of the increased assessment value of the property for two years. Motion was seconded by Selectman Barrett, Sr. With all in favor, motion carries.

The dates of abatement will be July 1, 2010-2011 and July 1, 2011-2012 (2 yrs.). After third year, goes back to full value.

A motion was made by Selectman Barrett, Sr. to return back to Item #4 on the agenda – Small Cities/161 Center Street Foreclosure. Motion was seconded by Selectman Scheppard. With all in favor, motion carries.

Small Cities – 161 Center Street Foreclosure:

In attendance was Micheal Lynch of Guion, Stevens & Rybak to bring the Board up to date on a foreclosure action taking place on 161 Center Street. Per a letter Mr. Lynch presented to the Board, there is so much owed in terms of debt to equity, there is no way the Town will recoup anything at the foreclosure sale because of its second mortgage (the property was appraised at \$95,000 and the value of the first mortgage to USDA was \$238,754.40 as of November, 2009). If the USDA ends up taking title to the property in the foreclosure sale, the Town would not receive any property taxes for that property during the time that it is owned by the government. In addition, the Town would not receive conveyance taxes on the property when the government sells it. Currently, there are no local or municipal property tax or sewer liens against the property. Therefore, Mr. Lynch suggests that the Town agree to release its Small Cities second mortgage for no consideration, provided the property is sold in a short sale, which means the lender is accepting less than the total amount due. There is a possible buyer for this property.

A motion was made by Selectman Scheppard that the Board agrees to release the Small Cities mortgage on 161 Center Street for no consideration, provided the property is sold in a short sale. Motion was seconded by Selectman Barrett, Sr. With all in favor, motion carries.

Energy Audit:

We recently received the new, revised audit report from EL&M (some items were missing from the first report). The previous audit report showed an annual KWH savings of \$71,166 and the new report shows an annual KWH savings of \$74,452. The upfront total investment to do the energy efficiency upgrades in the building would be \$53,033.62 minus a 40% approved utility incentive (from CL&P) of \$21,272.03, leaving a net investment of \$31,761.59 to the Town. With the projected monthly energy savings of \$1,176.97 (or \$14,123.62 annually) minus the projected monthly payments for this upgrade of \$1,134.34, there is a realized savings to the Town of \$42.63 per month. It will only take 28 months (2.2 years) to pay back the net investment of \$31,761.59.

A motion was made by Selectman Scheppard to move this proposal forward to the Board of Finance for approval, to be returned to the Board of Selectmen to call for a town meeting. Motion was seconded by Selectman Barrett, Sr. With all in favor, motion carries.

Budget 2010-2011 Discussion & Review:

Town Garage Remediation – no changes.

Revised Pension #132/All other pension – no changes.

Revised Pension #133/Volunteer Fire & EMS – no changes.

Solid Waste/Recycling – no changes.

Arbitration Award Information:

The Town, on February 4, 2010, won the arbitration case against the Town's previous Assessor, Pat Delbuono. There should be no challenge to this award going forward, however, there is still a 30-day window for appeal.

Discussion of Assessor Position:

There are many arguments why the Town should fund a full-time Assessor again. The Assessor is primary in bringing in needed revenues for the Town. When we had a full-time Assessor in the past, we were shown numerous ways this position could bring in revenue. It is also important to have a full-time person to conduct a viable reval. We would have to pay a great deal more for a consultant-type Assessor to perform the reval. Selectman Scheppard feels it is important to put the \$38,000 in the budget now, otherwise we will have no opportunity to get one.

A motion was made by Selectman Scheppard that we move this forward to the Board of Finance to fund a full-time Assessor. Motion was seconded by Selectman Barrett, Sr. With all in favor, motion carries.

First Selectman Mone said we will most likely begin a reval sometime in May or June and it would be a good idea to have a person in place at the beginning to have oversight with the reval company.

ARRA Energy Grant Award Information:

The Town was awarded a Municipal Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant in accordance with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 from the OPM (Office of Policy and Management) in the amount of \$47,638 for the repair and replacement of bricks and mortar on the exterior of the Town Hall building. We are awaiting the hiring of a Maintenance Coordinator to begin the work.

Greener Corners Discussion:

Greener Corners is a cost-free, full-service public space recycling program provider. They offer state-of-the-art public recycling stations and community-wide educational campaigns to generate public awareness about making the community greener. They will install and maintain free recycling stations at predetermined locations and work with the Town to integrate the public recycling program into its existing collection methods. This program also generates a new revenue stream to fund current and future environmental endeavors. Selectman Scheppard expressed one concern - that these bins may not be what residents and business owners want to see in public. However, First Selectman Mone asked the Board for permission to present to the other departments for their suggestions and approval. Verbal approval given.

Public Comment:

Mr. Yoos expressed a concern he had with a map Mary Barton had showing Valley Welding's classification changed to industrial only. Discussion ensued.

Also, Mr. Yoos presented a petition signed by taxpayers of Thomaston asking the members of the Board of Selectmen to refuse to reappoint Anne Marie Deluca to the Economic Development Commission, to refuse to appoint Ms. Deluca to both the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Inland Wetlands Commission because they felt she did not carry out her duties according to the statutes of the State of Connecticut. This is still pending with the FOI Commission.

Tony Durso asked if the 75% abatement part of the tax incentive package that was done by the last administration. First Selectman Mone said this is the first one that has been presented to the Board – the first one in the pipeline from EDC.

Tony Durso also asked about the grant that was received for repointing the bricks – is it crucial for the Town to do this? First Selectman Mone said yes because it is a safety issue, especially when bricks break off and fall to the sidewalk below. Very dangerous. Maura Martin was very creative when applying for this grant.

Christine Yoos said she agrees with the full-time Assessor position. It's needed.

A motion was made by Selectman Scheppard to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. Motion was seconded by Selectman Barrett, Sr.. With all in favor, motion carries.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Deborah Bournival, Administrative Assistant to the First Selectman.