



Town of Thomaston

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DRAFT

THOMASTON BOARD OF FINANCE SPECIAL MEETING TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2015

Present:

George Seabourne, Mike Madow, Luke Freimuth, Tom Duffany Frank Treglia (arrived a few minutes late), Tracy Decker, and First Selectman Ed Mone. Members of the community.

Not in attendance was Steve Turner.

Call to Order:

Meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairman Seabourne.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Those in attendance stood and recited the Pledge.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by T. Duffany to approve the minutes of March 24, 2015 special meeting as presented. Motion was seconded by L. Freimuth. Motion carries 5-0.

New Business/Board of Education Budget Discussion 2015-2016:

Todd Bendtsen presented for BOE.

Mr. Bendtsen addressed the Board explaining that the Board of Ed and the staff of the Thomaston schools are trying to establish a balance between addressing the needs of the students and the financial impact on the taxpayers for the cost of this education. The focus of the 2015-2016 budget is the mission of the Board of Ed as follows:

“In partnership of family, school and community, our mission is to educate, challenge and inspire each individual to excel and become a contributing member of society”.

With this in mind, the 2015-2016 budget includes new and expanded programs at all grade levels. Here are some of the programs:

Academies	Status: Expand	Grade Level: 4-6	Mission: Challenge/Inspire
Afterschool Program	Status: New	Grade Level: 4-6	Mission: Challenge/Inspire
PATHS (Positive Alternatives to Traditional High School)	Status: Re-Establish	Grade Level: 7-12	Mission: Educate/Inspire
Certified Nursing Assist. Program	Status: New	Grade Level: 9-12	Mission: Educate/Challenge
Emergency Medical Responder Program	Status: New	Grade Level: 9-12	Mission: Educate/Challenge
Forensics	Status: New	Grade Level: 11-12	Mission: Educate/Challenge
Athletic Trainer	Status: Expand	Grade Level: 9-12	Mission: Educate

As these programs have a higher impact on the budget proposed, the level of experience of current school staff members and some creative solutions and collaboration have brought these programs to fruition for significantly less. The hopes are that the new courses/programs will help retain more students (i.e. certified nursing assistant program, emergency medical responder, forensics, etc.) and the PATHS program will reduce student outplacements and generate tuition/revenues to offset the cost of the program.

Athletic Training should be provided for every sport (CIAC). Trainers would be present at every home game only and would handle all non-life threatening injuries.

M. Madow wanted asked where the new PATHS program would be housed. Superintendent Coss indicated that it would be the High School. Chairman Seabourne asked how PATHS is different. Superintendent Coss and Aimee Turner indicated that the PATHS program (alternative program for grades 7-12) is provided through a contract with an outside agency that will collaborate with THS staff to implement the program at our facility. PATHS will reduce the need to place students in therapeutic schools resulting in reduced transportation and tuition costs. THS will charge tuition for those coming from neighboring districts to offset the costs of the program. In the end, it should increase the graduation rate. Chairman Seabourne asked that a cost breakdown be provided for PATHS.

The current operating budget for FY 2014-2015 is \$15,256,129 and the proposed budget for FY 2015-2016 is \$15,733,701 which is an increase of \$477,572 or 3.13% increase. With an increase in grants/revenues of 12.32%, the results are a 2.63% increase to the Town allocation or \$380,341. There are always uncontrollable factors that can impact a budget like unanticipated special ed student outplacements and building maintenance issues that arise.

The Board of Ed has updated the 2015-2020 capital budget to reflect current and future facility and equipment needs.

Old Business – none

Communications – none

Financial Director's Report – none at this time

Selectman's Report – none at this time

Member Comment:

Chairman Seabourne wants to take this opportunity to thank Superintendent Coss, Todd Bendtsen and the Board of Ed for their hard work on this presentation. He has suggested that in future budgets, "actual" line items be shown.

Public Comment:

Diane Labonte – There was a PATHS program in place before and it was not successful. How will this one be different?

Diane Labonte – the newspaper states that ECS funding will be funded 79%. Superintendent Coss said yes, that is for this year.

Diane Labonte – why do we need to be medical and psychiatric workers in schools now? Aimee Turner said that because of the Sandy Hook incident, it has now been mandated – we need to do this.

At Next Regular Meeting (April 14):

- Capital Improvements
- Library
- Fire Department

A motion was made by T. Duffany to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 p.m. Motion was seconded by L. Freimuth. Motion carries 5-0.