

**THOMASTON BOARD OF FINANCE
SPECIAL MEETING
TUESDAY, July 28, 2026**

Present: Finance Board Members Luke Freimuth, Chairman; Mike Madow, Vice-Chair; George Seabourne, Jack DeOliveira, Jim Campbell

Also Present: Rich Sileo, First Selectman; Tracy Decker, Finance Director; Attallah Roundtree, Business Manager Board of Education; Julie Ingham, Steve Carr, Dave Colavecchio, Board of Education members including: Nathan Vieira, Chair; Roxann Fainer, Frank Treglia

1. Call to Order: 7:00PM

2. Pledge of Allegiance: Recited by all.

3. Quorum Confirmation: The presence of quorum was confirmed.
Chairman Freimuth welcomes New Board of Finance Member Jim Campbell.

4. Approve or Amend Minutes: June 9, 2026, Regular Meeting

MOTION made by G. Seabourne, Seconded by M. Madow to APPROVE the Board of Finance Minutes from the June 9, 2026, Regular Meeting as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

5. New Business:

a. Discuss/Approve: Public Works HVAC for breakroom.

First Selectman Sileo offers that they took some quasi-used storage space at the town garage and turned it into a break room so the team could have a clean, organized space to have their lunches and meetings etc. Much of the work came out of last year's budget. The hope was that they could tap into the existing air conditioning unit which provides cooling to the offices just below. It did not work well. Floor units already available were also tried; they just could not keep it cool. First Selectman Sileo says he would like to put a proper Air Conditioning Unit in. Three bids were sought, with lowest bid being \$8850 the highest being \$11,000. First Selectman Sileo requests \$8850. For the installation of an HVAC Unit for the Thomaston Public Works Departments breakroom.

Discussion ensued.

MOTION made by M. Madow, Seconded by G. Seabourne to APPROVE an Expenditure of \$8850 to install an HVAC system in the Town Garage Break Room. To be funded out of Undesignated Capital. Motion passed unanimously.

b. Correspondence regarding: Board of Education Budget Overrun

Chair Freimuth states; as the BoE were closing out their books for the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year, it was noted there were some significant overruns. A small portion which were communicated to the BoF, a large portion which were not.

Because of this we have tried to get a better understanding of the expenditures and offsets we might have as a town and what the impact might be to the 2026-2027 budget year.

Attallah Roundtree is here to help the BoF understand the variances for budget to actual spend for the period. What they have determined is NET all in including encumbrances (open purchase orders, checks not written for the 2025-2026 year) they found an overage of about \$496,000. Chair Freimuth points out that within that amount are some benefits as it relates to some spending freezes and other initiatives that were taken by the BoE throughout the year which is really a savings of about \$190,000 which brings it closer to \$700,000.

Chair Freimuth invites A. Roundtree up to walk the BoF and public through the budget.

A. Roundtree points out she assumed this role in October of 2025.

She states the shortfalls stem from the following accounts:

Employee Benefits overrun is \$282,418 stemming from an increase in the number of employees enrolling in benefits and new hires coming in at higher rates.

Professional Technical Services for legal services. She reports a change in Legal Fees from \$225 an hour to \$430 an hour. M. Madow asks if this was due to a change in vendor? A. Roundtree affirmed.

Discussion ensued.

Chair Freimuth encourages the Board of Education to pull together a budget that is in line with what the taxpayers approved. He then presented some Remediation Items for the 2025-2026 budget year. Discussion ensued. Tracy Decker and Attallah Roundtree to work on final numbers for the next meeting.

Chair Freimuth then presented a 2026-2027 Budget Analysis in which he added a 2% budget increase which shows a shortfall of \$582,280. He encourages the Board of Education to sharpen the pencil, see what levers can be pulled to get a better understanding and get us back in line with the budget that was approved by the taxpayers in the last budget cycle.

G. Seabourne asks when the Board of Education can hold a Special Meeting? BoE Chair Nathan Vieira states they are working on arranging a meeting. BoF Chair Freimuth states he and Chair Vieira are trying to put a meeting together; appreciating that some people are unavailable. BoF Chair Freimuth states taking that into account, the BoF at least expects a check-in at the next Regular BoF meeting August 8, 2026. Once the BoE has had a chance to meet and devise a plan, a Special Meeting can be scheduled to walk through where we are with the 2026-2027 Budget.

G. Seabourne then asks if the BoE has taken any steps, for instance a freeze in non-essential spending for this next budget year. A. Roundtree states she has spoken to Superintendent Coss, and they do have some plans in place that they would like to speak to BoE Chair Vieira about; some of those plans include spending freeze and hiring freeze. She says they will come up with a plan when they meet in two weeks.

J. Campbell asks if the line items that were highlighted tonight typically come in over budget annually. Chairs Freimuth and Vieira both state legal tends to. Chair Freimuth says professional services and special education. A. Rountree adds health benefits also tend to go over budget.

Chair Freimuth opens the floor to First Selectman Sileo.

First Selectman Sileo says there are a couple of fundamental things he would like to address. First and foremost, he believes the processes and controls in place are insufficient; he states he gets the monthly business report. Further stating he reads it; and did not see this until May. He believes that at some point things changed and because of the high level of the business report it was not visible to everyone who would have relied on it to identify some challenges coming forward. First Selectman Sileo respectfully requests that the Board of Education and Superintendent Coss and her team review those processes, review those reports and really look at a different model for how the budgets are viewed. He states he means no disrespect to anyone; but he is not sure the reports are telling the whole story. Restating that, he read the reports, and he did not see this coming. He goes on to innumerate a few of the line items specifically Certified and Non-Certified Personnel being roughly \$200,000 over budget; those two items did not happen in May or June. In an effort to figure out what is a better set of reports and a better set of controls, we need to go back and see when those positions were filled and to see if an analysis was done to understand whether those hires would fit in the budget. There should have been some run rates in there to understand and some projections to see where these things were going to go when those costs were being committed. First Selectman Sileo states he cannot make a hire on the town side, without understanding what it does to the overall budget for the entire year. He would like unexpected changes; special education busing, benefit changes etc. to be projected forward with an estimate of what it will do to the overall budget and to be brought to the BoF at the time it was identified. He believes that if some better processes and controls and reporting in place we will be able to manage better going forward.

First Selectman Sileo goes on to say he is very concerned about this year's budget. He has low confidence in the 2026-2027 budget and whether we have a full understanding of where we are going to be. Where we need to be is exactly where the taxpayers decided. It is July, whatever changes need to be made need to be made immediately; we cannot exceed what the taxpayers gave us.

BoF Chair Freimuth closes with if the Board of Education has any questions or needs any help, they are welcome to reach out to the BoF. Otherwise, he thinks this can be discussed again after the BoE has had a chance to take a deeper look.

Chair Freimuth opens the floor to the Board of Education for comment:

BoE Chair Vieira states he agrees with First Selectman Sileo; conversations need to be had. As a board they have a huge responsibility. He states he has heard from members of the Board of Finance that "this is the budget"; but it is not the budget the Board of Education approved. We will make the hard decisions to get the job done. He finishes by thanking the BoF, First Selectman Sileo and all involved.

c. Discuss/ Approve: Old Northfield Road –Tighe and Bond Off-Site Mitigation Engineering

First Selectman Sileo starts with he has been before the BoF regarding this project; there is an area where we disturbed a streambed and we must repair it. We have been working with DEEP and submitted a plan, which they gave a preliminary ok; but they came right back with the need for us to rehab another stream bank of equal size. An area at the transfer station has been identified as matching the criteria. A plan for removal of invasive species, replacing with native species. The DEEP has given the ok but has given 30 days to come back with the engineering. Tighe and Bond has been working with us on this. The cost for engineering is \$10,000 and we are about 14 days into the 30 days. The DEEP will also require monitoring of the area for 5 years; First Selectman Sileo states he will be back before the BoF with that plan.

MOTION made by G. Seabourne, Seconded by J. DeOliviera to EMPLOY Tighe and Bond to Perform Task's 1 and 2 of the Old Northfield Road Stream Stabilization Project, Amendment 2-Off Site Mitigation Services in the Amount of \$10,000 dollars to be FUNDED out of Capital Expenditures. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Member Comment:

M. Madow asks First Selectman Sileo if Tighe and Bond gave an idea of when they will have a work plan put together. First Selectman Sileo said they are working on it now and will have it before the deadline.

G. Seabourne states he feels a freeze in spending and no new hires; is the absolute minimum. And it may take cutting the budget, because we are not going to save half a million dollars by cutting schoolbooks again. He encourages them to look deeper than just holding the line.

BoF Chair Freimuth reiterates what was on there was just a simplified 2026 spend plus, the BoE needs to look at what the 2027 budget is and what happened in 2026.

7. Public Comment:

Chair Freimuth opens the floor to public comment, asking that they direct questions to the BoF directly. He reminds the public to state their name and address prior to addressing the board.

Frank Treglia asks if the Board of Education has budgeted the attorney fees at the higher rate because they are likely to be used more rather than less.

Julie Ingham states she was at the Board of Education Meeting in June, and nothing about the budget overrun was brought up, when did the Board become aware of this.

Dave Colavecchio suggests six sigma type tactics, 5 why's. Are we marketing and recruiting appropriately. Find the root cause of the problem.

Steve Carr former BoE member asks if the budget audit committee meetings, there would be a link to the budget which included the percentage of use. He encourages more transparency between the BoE and the BoF.

Roxann Fainer asks about payroll numbers being included in the encumbrances line item.

She goes on to state she is on the Budget Committee, and they look at the budget every month; and she feels they have communicated to the BoF since the beginning of February; she respectfully disagrees that the numbers were not in the reports.

With regards to Special Education, when the BoE meets with the BoF they agree that they do not know what the outplacement numbers are going to be, so they do not budget extra money.

BoF Chair Freimuth opens the floor to Public Comment from online participants.

No online Comments made.

8. Adjournment

MOTION made by G. Seabourne, Seconded by J. DeOliviera to ADJOURN the meeting at 7:59PM. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Walker

Recording Secretary