

**GLASTONBURY TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2019**

The Glastonbury Town Council with Town Manager, Richard J. Johnson, in attendance, held a Special Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at the Council Chambers of Town Hall, 2155 Main Street, Glastonbury, Connecticut.

1. Roll Call

Council Members

Mr. Thomas P. Gullotta, Chairman
Mr. Lawrence Niland, Vice Chairman
Dr. Stewart Beckett III
Ms. Deborah A. Carroll
Mr. Kurt P. Cavanaugh
Ms. Mary LaChance
Mr. Jacob McChesney
Mr. George P. Norman
Mr. Whit C. Osgood *{excused}*

1. Roll Call.

(a) Pledge of Allegiance.

Led by Chairman Gullotta

2. Public Communication and Petitions pertaining to the Call.

Mr. Johnson brought the attention of the Town Council to a memo he wrote answering the questions about the teacher retirement element within the Governor's budget. He explained the normal cost versus the added cost due to the salaries being over the state median.

3. Special Business as contained in the Call.

(a) Budget reviews for Fiscal Year 2019-2020:

- **Presentation and discussion concerning proposed Board of Education budget.**

Mrs. Susan Karp, Chairman of the Board of Education, appreciated the work of all involved in the process. She said she also appreciated the Board of Finance even though she didn't agree with their decision to reduce their budget. She spoke to the Board of Education budget being

prepared the first week in January and there is information now that they didn't know then. She also said she appreciated this opportunity and the support of education in town. Dr. Alan Bookman, Superintendent, said that he froze the current budget January 14, to save as much money as possible, due to shortages they now know about in the coming year requiring cuts in other areas. He spoke to unexpected costs in utilities, bus driver wages, special education and fuel. He emphasized that with no other reduction, the Board of Education must make up a \$520K shortfall. He said that his proposal to the Board of Education to address the shortfall involves replacing only 5 busses instead of 6, postponing the move of paras from part-time to full-time, postponing the hiring of an electrician and continuing the freeze for supplies.

He continued saying that if the Town Council votes for further cuts, they are facing cuts for four elementary teachers raising class sizes to 25, 26 or 27. He said that they try to reduce where there are retirements at the high school adding that last year, there was an increase in enrollment at the high school but no new staff. He said they may reduce a school psychologist, not replace the box truck, not replace a special education teacher retiring from Smith, eliminate library paras, cut curriculum and professional development and not go forward with a part-time teacher and admin staff member for LINKS. He said that he worries about the erosion of the attractiveness of the school system. He emphasized that they already have to address the \$520K shortfall and then address any cuts the Town Council decides.

Ms. LaChance said that she reviewed enrollment numbers and thinks the increase required for kindergarten in the current year is not a fluke. She expressed concern for capacity. Dr. Bookman noted that there are options if there's a bubble that exceeds capacity. Vice Chairman Niland asked about the 15-16 projections compared to now and Dr. Bookman said there was a difference of about 300 students. Mr. Cavanaugh questioned where the money came from for the additional unbudgeted kindergarten section and when those decisions are made. Dr. Bookman said that they had turnover and retirements addressed in July. Dr. Bookman noted a question submitted about LINKS revenue and directed the Council to the page in the budget book dedicated to the program noting that some money is put aside for maintenance at Eastbury. Mr. Norman confirmed with Dr. Bookman that there is no accounting for an exchange of dollars for in-district students. Mr. Cavanaugh noted they had asked for a periodic update but had never gotten it. Dr. Bookman said they are happy to do it and a consensus was reached to send a report quarterly.

Ms. Carroll asked who pays utilities over the summer when the town is using the facilities. Dr. Bookman said that the schools do but there's a deal regarding snowplowing and the like. Ms. Carroll asked what was meant by supplies targeting a cut. Dr. Bookman said everything. Ms. Carroll said that the older students get a list and the parents go out and purchase, but the younger

students come home with what they need and parents would be willing to pay for them. Dr. Bookman said they can look at it again, it was reviewed in the past and there isn't that much savings. Vice Chairman Niland asked about high school classes with lower enrollment. Dr. Bookman said that they won't let them run with small enrollment except in upper level foreign language when there is a commitment to the student for continuity of study. Vice Chairman Niland asked about the work of tech job titles which Dr. Bookman explained. Vice Chairman Niland said that when faced with cuts, he always hears about teachers and not clerical or administrative synergies with the town or innovation. Dr. Bookman reviewed cuts they have made in non-teaching positions.

Chairman Gullotta said that he thought Dr. Bookman had stated years ago that they avoid hiring teachers at the beginning of their career. Dr. Bookman said that they will hire the best and it's okay if they are at the beginning of their career. Mr. Norman noted the PPE is going up across the DRG and Board Chairman Karp noted that there are less students. Mr. McChesney asked about tasks of some job titles and class sizes which Dr. Bookman explained. Mr. McChesney asked about students with free or reduced lunches and Dr. Bookman said that there is more than you would think. Mr. Norman asked about the studies on class sizes. Dr. Bookman said that there is nothing new and nothing definitive.

Dr. Beckett commended town for the drop in FTE and asked Dr. Bookman about the future. Dr. Bookman said that if student enrollment doesn't decline, they would not see a drop in FTE. Dr. Beckett asked if they had considered taking in foreign students paying tuition and Dr. Bookman said that they have not discussed that. Dr. Beckett noted the governor's suggestion to consolidate small towns and asked if they would consider students from other towns. Dr. Bookman said that this is early in the game and they are unsure where it's going but the Board of Education would make that decision at that time. Dr. Beckett questioned if some of their back office services could be offered to other towns. Dr. Bookman said that he didn't know if there was a market or interest but he could bring it up at Superintendent meetings. Dr. Beckett asked about pay to play and Dr. Bookman said it is always a possibility. Dr. Beckett noted that he said in 2010 that ECS is going away and high mil rates have resulted in citizen push back in California and Massachusetts expressing concern they are moving in that direction. He said that they always look at a one-year fix but no sustainable change. He stated the world is shifting under their feet and the grand list is not keeping up. He emphasized they must work to raise revenues and cut expenses. Dr. Bookman noted their efforts to do both.

Dr. Bookman reviewed the proposed two-year plan to get lockers for a 2020 construction. Board Chairman Karp said she understood the cost was more than they would like but they do feel it is a need and would be happy to consider anything less costly to meet the need. Mr. Johnson spoke

to the three scenarios for the capital transfer saying that if they reduce the transfer, they will either have to catch up or reduce the projects. Mr. McChesney asked if they could do the field house over three years. Mr. Johnson said that the project would be delayed to 2021 and there would likely be some escalation. Mr. Cavanaugh confirmed that there is no weight room considered as part of the current field house project. Mr. McChesney confirmed they are actively working with the architect to reduce project costs.

Ms. LaChance said both the town and education presentations were good and that they are facing a tough year with the state. She continued saying that they don't want to be in this position and have some tough decisions but also expressed concern about hurting the education system as happened in the town she ultimately left to come to Glastonbury. Mr. Norman said he had no tactical concerns with the budget but questioned if they could do things differently, try harder and think differently not just for one year. He questioned what would attract and keep people in town. Ms. Carroll noted many move to town for education and there are many ways to look at making cuts from large scale to smaller scale that add up. Mr. McChesney echoed the comments about the education system being the biggest draw of people to town and they would have to thread the needle to balance affordability with ensuring they maintain the quality that is the draw.

Chairman Gullotta noted the state financial situation and that the pressure on schools will not change noting the push to consolidate school systems of towns under a 40K population. He asked that they not think about this as a yearly struggle but a fundamental change with the time to act being now. He said that the teacher pension may not pass this year with the towns having no leverage to negotiate but it is likely coming. He thanked the Board of Education representatives for coming and said that they take no pleasure in their choices. He said that they will try to do best by the Board of Education balanced with the overall needs of the town remarking they won't be able to make everyone happy.

- **Discussion concerning questions or unfinished business regarding Town operations, Debt & Transfer, Revenues & Transfers, Capital Reserve Fund, Capital Improvement Program and other budget related topics (as applicable).**

He asked how long they had the patrol boat and why was it purchased. Mr. Johnson said he thought 33 or 34 years but would look into it. Mr. Cavanaugh said that he thought the Police Chief and Fire Chief were going to meet. Mr. Johnson said that he met with them and would give a report at weeks end.

4. Adjournment.

Motion By: Ms. Carroll

Seconded By: Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby adjourns their special meeting of March 6, 2019, at 8:48 pm.

Result: Motion passes unanimously {8-0-0}.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Meanix Miller

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Recording Clerk

Thomas Gullotta
Chairman