

**GLASTONBURY TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2020**

The Glastonbury Town Council with Town Manager, Richard J. Johnson, in attendance, held a Regular 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
Ms. Mary LaChance
Mr. Jacob McChesney
Mr. Kurt P. Cavanaugh
Mr. Whit C. Osgood
Ms. Lillian Tanski

a. Pledge of Allegiance

Led by Chairman Gullotta

2. Public Comment

Mr. Roger Emerick of 580 Hopewell Road, explained that the Cotton Hollow building ruins represent construction technology that could not be replicated today, so they must be preserved. He stated that the Town has a poor history of preservation, twice declining to purchase these mill ruins in the past. He also took issue with the safety issue that was given as grounds for demolition, arguing that zero deaths have been reported due to injuries from historic structures. The public deserves a right to have the Town publish a memorandum on the safety issues. He added that, at the very least, it is safe to look at the ruins.

Mr. Jason Poriss of 220 Three Mile Road, asked the Town Council to work with the landowner to save the mill, which is an emblem of this town and its history. He suggested they incorporate some of the advances they have made in the area of commerce to preserve some of the character of Glastonbury.

Mr. Shawn Googins of 74 Forest Lane, explained that they have to preserve historic structures, but they cannot disregard the Town's budget issues. Ideally, this would be handled through private funds, with a combination from the Historical Society and the Land Heritage Coalition, working with the landowner. Perhaps a portion of the ruins would be preserved and documented, and the liability reduced, such as taking down a good portion of the walls. Mr. Googins urged the Town to consider the liability and preservation issues, but under no circumstances should they take on this liability.

Mr. Steve Bielitz of 80 Newell Lane, and Glastonbury Restoration LLC, went over the early industrial history of Glastonbury regarding the mill. He explained that it is distressing that such a historical icon would even be considered for demolition. The mill is the symbol of this Town, as both an architectural and historical landmark. He stated that the Town should work with the owner and its citizens to save this landmark.

Mr. Michael Corcoran of 172 Woodland Street, shared his childhood memories of visiting the mill and, as a member of the Land Heritage Coalition, he is working to protect this iconic piece of history. He stated that the mills along the brook represent this community's heritage.

Mr. Chuck Jeffers at 19 Fairfield Lane, read for Emily Wright, who asked that the Town preserve the mill.

Dr. Brian Chiffer of 41 Stonepost Road, spoke as a representative of the Historical Society of Glastonbury. He shared that he received a thank you card from 9-year-old children who were doing a project on the old Hopewell Mill site. The Town saw fit to change their position, and that thank you card is but one result of those actions. It took great wisdom and courage for the Council to prioritize historic preservation. He asked that they demonstrate that same wisdom and courage by working with the current landowner to preserve and secure this site for the benefit of Glastonbury.

Mr. Jeffrey Vegiard of 261 Stanley Drive, asked, what will Glastonbury's history books say about this moment 100 years from now. He hopes that the mill is still around then. He explained that the ruins have been a liability since the roof fell 100 years ago, though steps have to be taken to mitigate liability. He noted that his house is older than the mill, but due to its stewardship, it is in excellent condition. Mr. Vegiard asked, if the property owner donated the land and the mill to the Town, would the Council accept it?

Mr. Robert Hale of 832 Hopewell Road, is an attorney. He brought a few visual aids of the Glastonbury Abbey in Glastonbury, England, explaining that the structure has stood as a ruin for over 400 years. He also noted that, while visiting Ireland, he climbed around ruins very much like this factory building. He explained that they could do that in this country, as well, if they prioritize history and act as its stewards. Mr. Hale showed photographs from the GHS Class of 1968 sitting on the site, so safety was not a big concern for them, though he acknowledged that the ruins have since deteriorated, due to the owner's actions. But it can still be stabilized, he concluded.

Mr. Mark Ruszczyk of 133 Indian Hill Trail, stated that he brings his children out on hikes to the mill because it is a rewarding bonding activity, which grows their love of nature. He would like for everyone to come together to preserve this mill, arguing that it should not be torn down, just to make a couple bucks. He expressed hope in coming up with a long-term solution.

Mr. Wes Harris of 61 Steep Hollow Drive, made an online petition to save the mill when he received the news of its scheduled demolition. He explained that it amazed him how quickly and widely the petition spread, receiving 4,000 signatures from all across the country and even beyond. When Mr. Harris moved to Glastonbury 8 years ago, places like the Cotton Hollow Mill connected him to this town. He then read aloud some of the comments made on the petition's landing page.

Dr. Edward Guimont of 62 Chimney Sweep Hill Road, is a history professor but he spoke as a citizen, upset by this news. He argued that history is a common resource and this site must be protected. He expressed outrage at the current property owner for her actions against the site.

Ms. Jennifer Siskind of 101 Fairview Terrace, stated that once, during a hike, she spoke with Mrs. Raycroft, the previous property owner, who described buying the property. Ms. Siskind asked the Council how legitimate and impactful the public's presence and comments are tonight. She informed the audience that in order to appeal the demolition permit, they have to send a first-class letter to the Town's building official and the current landowner, which would trigger a 90-day waiting period. She brought a stack of empty envelopes for those who were interested.

Ms. Amy M. Bouchard of 1162 Neipsic Road, stated that she discovered Cotton Hollow after her doctor told her she would not be able to walk again. One day, she was walking along the path when Mrs. Raycroft saw her idling and took her in, where she took a picture by the window. She explained that the site has an unbreakable healing magic.

Ms. Marie Fortin of 193 Wells Street, stated that, she loves taking a walk in the woods and witnessing a builder's hand from the past. In preserving this artifact, the Town will become the preservationists of awe. She stressed that they need these special spaces, which are the basis for beautiful art, inspiration, and contemplation. The beauty and aesthetics of the Cotton Hollow Mill brought her to Glastonbury, and she hopes that remains.

Ms. Bethanne Dufford Couture of 593 Tryon Street, stated that the Town has missed the opportunity of purchasing this property by not being proactive. A beautiful and safe solution can be created in this case, as well as for a lot of other things in town that should also be preserved. She urged the Council to come up with 5 and 10-year plans going forward, on how to move from being defensive to proactive on this issue.

3. Special Reports.
a. Report on October 1, 2019 Grand List.

Assessor Nicole Lintereur reviewed the grand list, noting that new home constructions were up by 32% and the motor vehicle increase is the largest since 2011. Mr. Osgood inquired about the motor vehicle increase, noting that new car purchases were down. Ms. Lintereur stated that there has been an uptick in the value of older model cars, so the increase is likely due to the new(er) used cars. Mr. Osgood asked when the revaluation is. Ms. Lintereur replied 2022.

4. Old Business. None

5. New Business.
a. Discussion concerning Cotton Hollow building ruins.

Mr. Johnson explained that the property owner was required to obtain a demolition delay ordinance, which covers the destruction of buildings that are 500 square feet or more and 75 years old. The Cotton Hollow ruins qualify in both areas. Ms. Amy Rio, the real estate agent who has been listing the property, filed the application for a demolition permit on January 29, and it was published on February 6, giving Town residents until March 6, 2020 to file an appeal, which would then trigger the 90-day waiting period. He noted that the person filing the appeal must present a reasonable alternative for demolition. Mr. Johnson stated that they are waiting to see if there are any options the Council would ask him to explore.

Ms. Carroll asked if it is one appropriately filed appeal that will trigger the 90 days. Mr. Johnson replied yes, there is only one 90-day period. There could be one appeal or 100 appeals. Ms. Carroll asked if it is up to the property owner to determine whether or not the appeal is reasonable. Mr. Johnson said there needs to be a reasonable beneficial option that is acceptable by the property owner because it is private property. Mr. Niland thanked the public for coming out and speaking and asked if there is any mechanism for the Council to deny the permit. Mr. Johnson said no, he does not believe there is.

Motion by: Dr. Beckett

Seconded by: Ms. LaChance

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby instructs the Town Manager to begin discussions with Ms. Amy Rio on possible options to save the ruins, which could include the town buying the property, Ms. Rio donating the property, or some form of a public/private partnership.

Disc: Ms. LaChance was impressed by how this issue brought together their community. Mr. Cavanaugh asked for clarification on the incorrect statements made by some members of the public, specifically in regard to how they have dealt with this issue in the past, with private property owners. Mr. Johnson explained that, over 20 years ago, the Town spoke with Dr. Raycroft, the previous owner, who in the end, decided not to proceed with demolition. In 2017, there were discussions with Dr. and Mrs. Raycroft about the Town acquiring either part of the parcel or part of the property, but those discussions did not reach a conclusion because the parcel was later sold without Town knowledge.

Mr. Cavanaugh stated that Glastonbury has a brand, which they are losing to developers, and they need to preserve their historical aesthetics. Mr. McChesney suggested the public also voice their comments and concerns at the TPZ meetings, as well. He stated that he was appalled when he heard the news of the demolition, as he and his wife moved to Town in large part because of its history and character. They should explore every option at their disposal to preserve the ruins. Mr. Niland stated that this is an amazing piece of property and to let it disappear would be a disservice to everybody who came before them, everyone who lives here now, and in the future. He stressed that no matter how angry residents may be, that they maintain civility on this issue.

Mr. Osgood asked if the current property owner's actions of removing the stone from the site, prior to the application of the permit, is considered a violation. He suggested the Town Manager strongly pursue the option of having the landowner donate this land to the Town. Ms. Tanski stated that they should explore other options, as well. She asked that they get very specific information on what the remediation costs

would be and additional information on legal issues. She acknowledged that, while the site is a tremendous part of their history, they have to be very careful with which responsibilities they place on the Town. She reminded the public that the Council is also looking into the financial impact of gifts they receive going forward. Ms. Carroll stated that they should move forward with the goal of preservation. In order for the Council to explore the options discussed, she strongly urged the public to draft at least one good strongly worded appeal letter, in order to trigger the 90-day waiting period. Mr. Gullotta stated that the extension of historic districts is one of the ways they can preserve histories, so they need to look into that. He also offered \$1,000 towards a public-private partnership to acquire the property.

Result: Motion passed unanimously {9-0-0}.

6. Public Hearing and Action on Public Hearing.

NO 1: ACTION ON PROPOSED \$1.45 MILLION APPROPRIATION AND TRANSFER FROM THE CAPITAL RESERVE-UNASSIGNED FUND BALANCE TO CAPITAL PROJECTS-FISHER HILL ROAD BRIDGE.

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby approves a \$1.45M appropriation and transfer from the Capital Reserve-Unassigned Fund Balance to Capital Projects-Fisher Hill Road Bridge, as described in a report by the Town Manager dated February 7, 2020 and as recommended by the Board of Finance.

Disc: Mr. McChesney asked if they are trying to get grant funding for this project. Mr. Johnson replied no, this is already approved for 80% reimbursement. This action puts the appropriation in place, allowing execution of the contracts to ensure completion in 2020.

Result: Motion passed unanimously {9-0-0}.

b. Discussion concerning Bulky Waste Facility - Closure Fund.

Mr. Johnson explained that they have been looking at the bulky waste facility for a while now, assessing whether a closure fund is a good idea or not. Mr. Johnson and Mike Bisi, Director of Sanitation, believe that it is. They are looking at closing the site in 3 phases: the first would be filled and ready for capping in 10 years, the second would be 50 years later, and the third 50 years out from that (so 110 years from now). Mr. Johnson reviewed the various sources for funding that the Council could consider, such as through user fees, a miscellaneous revenue in the general fund, or an allocation from the Capital Reserve Fund. Mr. Bisi reiterated that they divided the site into 3 areas, and in 2030, they will return to the Council to request millions of dollars to close out the first leg of the facility. Mr. Niland asked for an estimate of how much it would cost to close the first area in 10 years. Mr. Johnson said about \$2.4 million, so they escalated it out at either 2% or 3% over 10 years, which would come out to about \$3-3.25 million.

Mr. Cavanaugh asked if the fill area is still operational. Mr. Bisi said yes. Mr. Cavanaugh asked if they expect a revenue source to fund the project every year with the fill. Mr. Johnson said yes, but it varies. They can assume that \$25k to \$30k a year over an ongoing period is a reasonable assumption, though they would look at establishing a flat line of a reasonable assumption. Mr. Cavanaugh asked if they would charge differently for commercials as opposed to residential. Mr. Johnson said yes, they would just have to put in fail-safe systems. Mr. Niland asked which surrounding communities charge tipping fees. Mr. Johnson stated that a lot of communities do not have a scale, and Glastonbury is fortunate that it does. Their analysis reflects a good range, but generally, Glastonbury is on the low end, at \$72 per ton, compared to about \$100 / \$110 per ton being the average across towns. Mr. Bisi added that a lot of towns take material, but they do not have a landfill, so they have to take it offsite. He tried to convert those fees by the yard to tons to know how much they weigh to scale. Dr. Beckett suggested they raise the surcharge to be competitive with the range and that they ensure that residents are recycling properly, in order to reduce cross-contamination.

Mr. Osgood asked if there is any way to chip the wood that comes in under demolition and debris to sell it. Mr. Bisi stated that it does not make sense to do so because there is no market for it. Mr. Osgood asked about the revenue and operation costs. Mr. Bisi stated that there is no cost to them, and the fee is in the bid. They expect about \$25-50k from selling the sand. Mr. Osgood asked how much they are getting from the fee coming in. Mr. Johnson replied around 75% of their operations are covered, with operating revenues offsetting the operating expenses. Mr. Osgood stated that they should probably increase the fee to \$110 per ton, just to cover the operating cost of the facility, and maybe another \$50 surcharge for the closure. Mr. Johnson stated that they can look into that as an option. Mr. Gullotta summarized that everybody on the Council agrees that a closure account makes sense. He tasked the Town Manager to come up with price points to present to them at a later date. Mr. Johnson agreed to do so.

c. Discussion concerning Pension Actuarially Determined Recommended Employee Contribution (ADREC).

Mr. Johnson walked through a general overview of the actuarially determined contribution to the Town benefit plan, explaining that the legacy plan was closed 7 years ago. The unfunded liability and actuarially determined contribution would go up, but once the new mortality tables are in place, they will return to being 100% funded by 2031, with a plan of significant decrease in the following years, as the hybrid plan becomes the main plan. He noted the options of smoothing this a bit by extending the amortization by either one or two years. Mr. Osgood asked if the credit lenders care either way. Mr. Johnson answered, generally speaking, they look at the pension plan and how they compare to others. They like the fact that Glastonbury is not “treading water” and that they have a plan to reduce liability over 13 years. He does not think a one-year extension would be a material difference, but 13 years is ideal.

Mr. Gullotta stated that spreading the increase over 2 years would help relieve the tax burden, so he argued that it is not a bad approach. Dr. Beckett agreed, arguing that he would rather have a peak for the next 2 years, and in 2023, they could start to lower the investment assumption, which could smooth out some of the spike. He suggested adjusting the amortization to 15 years, so that they could afford the mortality tables. Mr. Osgood dissented, stating that pension obligations are a liability that they are generating today, and they should make it one of their key priorities. Mr. Niland expressed skepticism, stating that he does not wish to

push this out to a time when they hit a major recession. Right now, paying for it makes sense and 2 years seems a bit excessive. Ms. Tanski agreed with Mr. Osgood and Mr. Niland, remarking that though they have a lot of costs this year, they are not in a crisis period. It is a difficult truth that they could pay for this this year. She stated that they have to prioritize their pension, not only because they have a commitment to their employees, but also because they do not know what the future holds, so they should meet their needs responsibly while they can. Mr. Gullotta stated that he does not know if one year of dividing the cost makes it such a risk.

Mr. McChesney stated that he appreciates people saying it is an option. They need to have a global review of the budget to see what the most reasonable option is to have the least mill rate increase possible. He is not sure if it is the best option, but they should be open to the option of discussing it. Dr. Beckett clarified that he proposed level funding for 3 years, letting the peak stay out until 2024/2025 and then tailoring off; that way, they do not hurt people by taxing them out of town.

d. Action to approve Settlement Agreement – Riverfront Park.

Motion By: Ms. Carroll

Seconded By: Dr. Beckett

“BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby approves the Settlement Agreement as to form and content for the Glastonbury Riverfront Park Phase 2 and 2A project and authorizes the Town Manager to execute the Settlement Agreement subject to the Design Consultant’s satisfying all requirements of the Agreement and upon notice by the Town Attorney confirming same, as described in a report by the Town Manager dated February 7, 2020.”

Disc: Mr. Niland thanked the Town Manager for all of his efforts and hard work in this matter.

Result: Motion passes unanimously {9-0-0}.

7. Consent Calendar.

8. Town Manager’s Report.

Mr. Johnson reviewed his report, noting the follow up on the stop sign intersections and the reaffirmation of the Town’s AAA and Aaa bond ratings. Mr. Cavanaugh asked if the Town Manager looked into the tree on the Oak Street Stop and Shop. Mr. Johnson explained that it was not brought to the tree warden’s attention, and it was on the plans that were approved. Their position is that it needs to be replaced with one or two trees. Mr. Cavanaugh stated that, at the leadership meeting, they discussed the BOE office space. He asked for more information. Mr. Johnson said he could not provide it at this time. Mr. Cavanaugh noted that a recent letter to the editor in the Citizen newspaper explained that there was a nasty word written in the upper deck of the boathouse. Mr. Cavanaugh asked if there are cameras posted at the boat house, so that they could see who the individual was who wrote this. Mr. Johnson explained that, while there are no cameras there now, security cameras will be installed there over the next few months. Mr. Gullotta added that, at the

boat house, he has noticed many instances of improper recycling, with chairs and couches in the paper recycling bins. He stated that those violators should be fined.

Ms. Carroll thanked the Town Manager for his hard work and leadership for the Moody's ratings. She also noted that Peter Marteka is no longer reporting on Glastonbury for the Hartford Courant. She wished him well. Mr. Osgood concurred. He then inquired if they could encourage the BOE to move to the hybrid plan for their employees. Mr. Johnson explained that the BOE talked to the Town's actuaries, who deduced that it is not economically feasible for them to do so. Mr. Osgood asked if there is any requirement for the CC/IWWA Commission to opine on building a demolition within 50 feet of a stream. Mr. Johnson stated that he will have to check with them. It is within the buffer zone, and they were looking at how the Commission wanted to handle that. Mr. Osgood remarked that they had discussed putting up signage for access to public lands. He inquired if there has been any progress on that. Mr. Johnson explained that there are 7 or 8 locations where they are either in place or about to be put in place. Mr. Osgood asked if they had spoken with the owners of the parcel that abuts the Chamberlain Road acquisition about acquiring that parcel, as well. Mr. Johnson replied, not yet.

9. Committee Reports.
a. Chairman's Report.

Mr. Gullotta watched last Wednesday's BOF/BOE meeting and found it extremely instructive. He urged his fellow councilmembers to watch it, as well. He stated that the BOF meetings are typically held and (re)broadcasted at 4:00 pm, which is inconvenient for most working people. He suggested they make streaming available so that people can watch the meetings later in the evenings.

b. MDC.

Ms. LaChance explained that, last night, MDC voted on the Raymond Road and Kimberly Lane water installation service fee. They were grandfathered in, but the fee structure was changed so that, in the future, installation would be \$150 per foot. There was also discussion about MDC's responsibility in PFAS going into sewers. Ms. LaChance noted that they also voted on the lawsuit against MDC involving Glastonbury. The settlement will cost MDC \$7.68 million for customers who had MDC service in non-member towns from March 6, 2012 to October 1, 2014. They will supply a credit to those customers; if they are not MDC customers anymore, they will cut them a check. Mr. Osgood expressed that this is good news and the Town Council should feel rewarded for bringing the class action lawsuit to proceed. However, he worries that MDC might make up the difference with a surcharge, which would affect non-member towns more. Mr. Osgood suggested they change their charter to prevent that from happening.

c. CRCOG. None

10. Communications.
a. Letter from Richard Sawitzke, Land Heritage Coalition – Cotton Hollow Mill

11. Minutes.

a. Minutes of January 14, 2020 Regular Meeting.

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby approves the amended minutes for the meeting held January 14, 2020.

Disc: Mr. Cavanaugh noted that under Item 5A, on the first line of the second paragraph, it should read “**the developer**” not “MDC.”

Result: Motion passed unanimously {9-0-0}.

b. Minutes of January 23, 2020 Special Meeting (CIP Workshop).

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby approves the minutes as submitted for the meeting held January 23, 2020.

Result: Motion passed unanimously {9-0-0}.

c. Minutes of January 28, 2020 Special Meeting.

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby approves the minutes as submitted for the meeting held January 28, 2020.

Result: Motion passed unanimously {9-0-0}.

d. Minutes of January 28, 2020 Annual Town Meeting.

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby approves the minutes as submitted for the meeting held January 28, 2020.

Result: Motion passed unanimously {9-0-0}.

12. Appointments and Resignations.

- a. Resignation of Charles Murray (Alternate) from Zoning Board of Appeals (D-2023).**
- b. Resignation of Woody Baird from Insurance Advisory Committee (R-2019).**

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby approves the resignations of Mr. Charles Murray from the Zoning Board of Appeals and Mr. Woody Baird from the Insurance Advisory Committee.

Result: Motion passed unanimously {9-0-0}.

13. **Executive Session.**
a. **Potential land acquisition.** None

14. **Adjournment.**

Motion By: Ms. Carroll

Seconded By: Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby adjourns their regular meeting of February 11, 2020, at 9:35 pm.

Result: Motion passes unanimously {9-0-0}.

Respectfully submitted,

Lilly Torosyan

Lilly Torosyan
Recording Clerk

Thomas Gullotta
Chairman