

**GLASTONBURY TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES (AMENDED)
TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2020**

The Glastonbury Town Council, with Town Manager, Richard J. Johnson, in attendance, held a Regular Meeting at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom Video Conferencing. The meeting was broadcast in real time and via a live video stream. Also in attendance were Republican Registrar of Voters Lisbeth Becker, Democrat Registrar of Voters Mark Dobbins, and Town Clerk Joyce Mascena.

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 Mr. Niland*

2. Public Comment.

Ms. Carroll explained that, within the past week, many people have used the Town website service to submit their public comments. Most comments have been about the potential expansion of mail-in/absentee voting for the Presidential/Primary Elections, and a few concerned the potential Town acquisition of the Cotton Hollow property.

3. Special Reports. *None*

4. Old Business.

a. Continued discussion and action concerning Presidential Primary and November 2020 General Election – mail-in ballots and absentee ballots.

Motion by: Dr. Beckett

Seconded by: Mr. Osgood

MOVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby remove Item 4a from the table.

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

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby formally submits a letter to Governor Lamont, Secretary of State Merrill, Senator Cassano, Representatives Barry and Doucette, strongly recommending that for the August 2020 Presidential Primary and November 2020 General Election - that an absentee ballot be made available to any registered voter requesting one, further while universal mail-in ballot may not be presently possible, the necessary steps to achieve that objective should be undertaken as soon as possible.

Disc: Mr. Osgood asked for confirmation on the fact that the requirements of the absentee and mail-in ballot are established by the state constitution. Ms. Lisbeth stated that is correct. She further explained that Glastonbury is working in conjunction with the Secretary of State on how to proceed with voting this year. She reiterated that anything Glastonbury does will be what the state of Connecticut does. All of this is subject to the Governor's approval.

Chairman Gullotta asked the Town Clerk if, presently, they are prepared to handle 5,000 ballots in August and a potential 15,000 ballots in November. Ms. Mascena stated that it depends on what the process will ultimately be, which has not yet been determined. Mr. Niland asked if they would consider closing down some polling stations to protect poll workers. Ms. Lisbeth stated that if the August primary is a contested election, they would probably look at consolidating polling locations. They could also consider counting votes before election day.

Motion by: Mr. Osgood

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

MOVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby confirm that the State decides the format of the electoral process, and that the Town will conform to any decision the State takes regarding the primary election in August and presidential election in November.

Disc: Ms. LaChance stated that she will not support this motion because it does not go far enough to request what is needed. Mr. Niland felt it important to stress the need for mail-in ballots. Ms. Carroll stated that the whole point is for the Council to represent the voices of their constituents, who have overwhelmingly asked that the State push for and implement broader absentee ballot guidelines and move towards mail-in balloting. Dr. Beckett stated that he would like to hybridize both amendments to say that they would expand it to include illness. That way, anyone could apply for an absentee ballot and the state needs to provide them with money to implement those regulations.

Result: Motion failed {4-5-0}, with Mr. Gullotta, Mr. Niland, Ms. LaChance, Ms. Carroll, and Mr. McChesney voting against.

Amendment by: Mr. Osgood

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

MOVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council delete the portion of the proposed motion which concerns mail-in voting.

Disc: Mr. McChesney stated that recommending mail-in balloting (such as, expanding the definition of illness) is in their wheelhouse. His main concern at the moment is absentee balloting, and right now, time is of the essence. Mr. Gullotta reminded the Council that this motion is simply asking the State to move forward on the issue and work on absentee balloting. He does not see the two as mutually exclusive, and he will vote in favor of the original motion. Ms. Carroll stated that she cannot take out things that would make voting safer and more accessible down the road. Ms. Tanski stated that while she understands where other councilmembers are coming from, her opposition to the original motion is neither personal nor partisan. It is about the role of the Town Council, which she does not believe is to advocate for state or federal law, especially state constitutional law, when they do not have an immediate reason to do so.

Result: Amendment failed {4-5-0}, with Mr. Gullotta, Mr. Niland, Ms. LaChance, Ms. Carroll, and Mr. Cavanaugh voting against.

Amendment by: Mr. McChesney

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

MOVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby add language to the proposed motion to expand the definition of illness to include the ability to claim the COVID-19 crisis as grounds to have an absentee ballot, and that any increased costs be funded to municipalities.

Disc: Mr. McChesney explained that he finds this addition necessary because they need to be able to put forth some type of interpretation as to why they should be able to do this action. It behooves them to put forth the reasoning, which, in this case, is interpreting the language of illness for COVID-19. Ms. Tanski stated that Mr. McChesney is correct. Legally, a change in interpretation is very different from a change in law. Mr. Osgood remarked that they do not have the ability to define what is determined as an illness.

Result: Amendment passed {5-4-0}, with Dr. Beckett, Ms. Tanski, Ms. LaChance, Ms. Carroll, and Mr. McChesney voting in favor.

Original Motion (with Amendment) by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby formally submits a letter to Governor Lamont, Secretary of State Merrill, Senator Cassano, Representatives Barry and Doucette, strongly recommending that for the August 2020 Presidential Primary and November 2020 General Election - that an absentee ballot be made available to any registered voter requesting one, further while universal mail in ballot may not be presently possible, the necessary steps to achieve that objective should be undertaken as soon as possible. Such expansion of access to absentee ballots to include, for instance, expanding the definition of illness to include the COVID-19 crisis and funding for any increased obligation on municipalities.

Result: Motion passed as amended {6-3-0}, with Mr. Osgood, Mr. Cavanaugh, and Ms. Tanski voting against.

5. New Business.

- a. Action on proposed land acquisition (refer to Town Plan and Zoning Commission; refer to Board of Finance; set public hearing).**

Mr. Johnson indicated to Council that this matter was not ready for Council action.

- b. Action on proposed amendment to Town Code - Council appointees to Board of Assessment Appeals (set public hearing).**

Mr. Johnson asked that Council hold this action pending further review.

- c. Action on Town Attorney and Alternate Town Attorney – extend term of appointment.**

Motion By: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby extends the current term for Town Attorney - Shipman & Goodwin and Alternate Town Attorney - Murtha Cullina through June 30, 2021, as described in a report by the Town Manager dated April 24, 2020.

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

- d. Discussion concerning remote meeting protocol for public hearings and action to reschedule public hearings:**

- Amendment to Town Code Article XVI, Reserve for Land Acquisition and Preservation, Section 2-287 (A) The Types of Land to be Considered for Acquisition.
- \$50,000 appropriation and transfer from the Capital Reserve-Unassigned Fund Balance to Capital Projects-Public Water Service.
- Amendment to Building Zone Regulations - Building Heights - Reschedule public hearing.

Motion By: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby reschedules the public hearing postponed from the Regular Council Meeting of March 24, 2020 concerning the proposed amendment to Town Code Article XVI, Reserve for Land Acquisition and Preservation, Section 2-287 (a) The types of land to be considered for acquisition to 8:00 p.m. at the Regular Council Meeting on Tuesday, May 26, 2020, as described in a report by the Town Manager dated April 24, 2020.

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

Motion By: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby reschedules the public hearing postponed from the Regular Council Meeting of March 24, 2020 concerning the \$50,000 appropriation and transfer from the Capital Reserve-Unassigned Fund Balance to Capital Projects-Public Water Service, to 8:00 p.m. at the Regular Council Meeting on Tuesday, May 12, 2020, as described in a report by the Town Manager dated April 24, 2020.

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

Motion By: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby reschedules the public hearing postponed from the Regular Council Meeting of March 24, 2020 concerning the proposed amendment to the Building Zone Regulations - Building Heights to 8:00 p.m. at the Regular Council Meeting on Tuesday, May 26, 2020.

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

- e. Action on \$150,000 appropriation and transfer from the General Fund-Unassigned Fund Balance for upgrade of public access equipment (refer to Board of Finance; set public hearing).**

Motion By: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby refers to the Board of Finance the request for a \$150,000 appropriation and transfer from the General Fund-Unassigned Fund Balance to Capital Projects-Town Manager/Machinery and Equipment to update public access television equipment in accordance with the \$150,000 grant award under the Public Educational and Governmental Programming and Educational Technology Investment Account (PEGPETIA) Grant Program, and schedules a public hearing for 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 26, 2020 in the Council Chambers of Town Hall at 2155 Main Street to consider the \$150,000 appropriation and transfer, all as described in a report by the Town Manager dated April 24, 2020.

Mr. Johnson explained that this grant will update their production equipment from analog to digital. The expectation is that the grant will fund 100% of the project cost. This is a great improvement at no net cost to Glastonbury. Mr. Cavanaugh inquired whether this includes any changes to the Council table microphones. Mr. Johnson replied, no, not at this point.

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

6. Consent Calendar.

a. Action on Town Code Article IV, Tax Abatement Regulations for Public Safety Volunteers, Section 18-45 – Abatement Schedule.

Mr. Johnson explained that no action is required for this item.

7. Town Manager's Report.

Mr. Johnson explained that there is a pending land acquisition, which he expects to complete by next week. In which case, the document would be ready for execution by the Council at their next meeting. Mr. Johnson then gave a brief overview of the COVID-19 situation in Glastonbury, explaining that, as of the weekend, the overall positive cases jumped to 153 and there have been 36 deaths, with the average age of those who passed away ranging between their 50s-60s.

Mr. Johnson explained that he has a diary for discussion of the Town Operations budget at the end of May. He also noted that Town Clerk Joyce Mascena is retiring soon and her replacement, Michelle Krampitz, the current Assistant Town Clerk of Manchester, will begin on May 11, 2020. He also noted that the Town's fuel efficiency program has been doing really well, reducing CO2 emissions. The annual Memorial Day Parade has been postponed, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Motion by: Mr. McChesney

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

MOVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby approve the Town Manager's expense report.

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

Mr. Johnson continued that the transfer stations are open three days a week. They have focused on separation and trash removal. Starting next week, they are looking at extended hours for people who would like to discard scrap material. Mr. Osgood asked if they could include cardboard among the materials. Mr. Johnson stated that he will look into it. Mr. Cavanaugh asked if the gas electric hybrid police vehicles are less safe than gas vehicles. Mr. Johnson stated that they do not expect any changes from a safety standpoint.

Mr. Cavanaugh then inquired about the pavement rehabilitation for Glastonbury Boulevard. Mr. Johnson replied, there have been three or four bid respondents. Mr. Osgood asked if they have heard any response from state representatives regarding the MDC land acquisition deal. Mr. Johnson replied, no. Mr. Osgood suggested possibly holding off on approving any documentation until they receive some input.

Chairman Gullotta asked if the new Town Clerk has had experience with elections. Mr. Johnson said yes. Mr. Gullotta asked if there is any possibility that municipal town staff could help fill in for the shortage of poll workers. Mr. Johnson stated that they will look at every opportunity to work with the registrars' office.

8. Committee Reports.

- a. **Chairman's Report.** *None*
- b. **MDC.** *None*
- c. **CRCOG.** *None*

9. Communications. *None*

10. Minutes.

a. Minutes of March 24, 2020 Regular 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 March 24, 2020.

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

b. Minutes of April 6, 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 April 6, 2020.

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

11. Appointments and Resignations.

a. Resignation of Matthew Saunig from the Town Plan & Zoning Commission (Alternate, D-2021).

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby approves the resignation of Matthew Saunig from the Town Plan & Zoning Commission (Alternate, D-2021), with regret.

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

12. Executive Session.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby enters into executive session to discuss a potential land acquisition at 8:45 pm.

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

Present for the Executive Session item were council members, Mr. Tom Gullotta, Chairman, Mr. Lawrence Niland, Vice Chairman, Dr. Chip Beckett, Ms. Deb Carroll, Ms. Mary LaChance, Mr. Jake McChesney, Mr. Kurt Cavanaugh, Ms. Lillian Tanski, and Mr. Whit Osgood with Town Manager, Richard J. Johnson.

No votes were taken during the Executive Session.

Motion By: Ms. Carroll

Seconded By: Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby exits executive session at 9:00 pm.

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

13. Adjournment.

Motion By: Ms. Carroll

Seconded By: Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby adjourns their regular meeting of April 28, 2020, at 9:01 pm.

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

Lilly Torosyan

**Lilly Torosyan
Recording Clerk**

**Thomas Gullotta
Chairman**