

**GLASTONBURY TOWN COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
FRIDAY, JUNE 19, 2020**

The Glastonbury Town Council with Town Manager, Richard J. Johnson, in attendance, held a Special Meeting at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom video conferencing. The video was broadcast in real time and via a live video stream.

**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. Cavanaugh***

**1. Public Communication and Petitions pertaining to the Call.**

Ms. Carroll read the written comments received:

***Alison Bliss of 34 Hubbard Run Drive***, asked for all public restrooms to be opened and equipped with proper sanitizing products, so as to reduce the spread of germs.

***Dawn Hearne of 45 Cobblestone Road***, expressed appreciation and support for Glastonbury teachers. As a GHS alumna and parent of students in town, she called on the Council to join her in supporting teachers.

***Lisa Cordova of 1032 Neipsic Road***, supports this contract, which was made in good faith. Teachers have gone above and beyond during this time. She asked that the Council supports the contract.

Mr. Niland opened the floor for comments from attendees:

***Marilyn Mathes of 172 Mill Stone Road***, explained how incredible her daughter's teachers have been with their time and support during the COVID-19 closure. She urged the Council to show their support to teachers and their contract.

**2. Special Business as contained in the Call.**

**a. Discussion and possible action concerning proposed agreement between Board of Education and Glastonbury Education Association – July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2025.**

Mr. Doug Foyle, Chairman of BOE, explained that the schools are integral to Glastonbury's local economy. He noted that the Council had asked for the teachers to consider withdrawing the contract, and for the BOE to suspend the contract until December. Mr. Foyle explained that the BOE did not approach the teachers' union to ask for consideration of a contract withdrawal because of the following reasons:

- Negotiations cannot be paused for two months because of a state labor law prohibiting such action.
- The Council did not specify what outcome they are looking for, other than delaying the contract.
- Any arbitration agreement will only cost taxpayers more than the original contract.
- The structure of the deal balances costs of salary with healthcare.
- The net effect of the contract is to bend the curve of the budget's growth rate down in the manner that the Council requested.
- This deal starts in July 2021. It is the Council's job to think strategically using long-term judgment, and not get absorbed in the heat of the current state of the economy.
- The teachers have committed to meet with the BOE before the start of the contract in July 2021, if the Town's financial situation deteriorates, which means that they are understanding of the concern of an impending financial crisis. They care about this town.

Dr. Alan Bookman, Superintendent, added that if the Council accepts the current contract, the change in health insurance will reduce their increases in salaries. However, if they reject it, that would result in an increase in incurred costs with no savings, and arbitration would occur within 5 days. He concluded that they will need the teachers' cooperation.

Mr. McChesney stated that, according to his reading of the statutes, mediation could be a possibility before arbitration. Dr. Bookman explained that their lawyer did not say there would be a separate mediation, but he can check that out. Mr. Johnson explained that a mediation process would begin 160 days before the budget adoption, but according to the statutes, if the legislative party rejects the contract, it goes right to arbitration within 5 days.

Mr. McChesney then asked about the 6% rise in the premium rate for healthcare. Dr. Bookman explained that every percentage point less than 6% saves them \$130,000 in the budget. Mr. Foyle clarified that the healthcare line was just a model they developed to give the Council a sense for planning purposes; it is a prediction based on past experience, not a prediction. The structure of the deal is to transition healthcare from 0% to 16.5% premium contributions over the four years. So, the savings overall grow as the transition occurs.

Mr. McChesney asked why 16.5% five years from now is doing enough when compared to other towns, such as West Hartford, who are currently paying more than that. Mr. Foyle stated that the towns he mentioned are in pool plans, so it is like comparing apples to oranges. Also, the Town received bad advice a few years ago from a healthcare consultant. Dr. Bookman added that 19%

rather than 16.5% premium contributions would be more beneficial to their budget, but they came from 0% and 4%. At the next contract round, they will raise that rate.

Mr. McChesney acknowledged that it could be apples to oranges, and he respects the position that they would be better off with a higher rate. Part of his concern is a movement to correct an error in an old contract, which is why he asked for a comparison. Mr. Foyle explained that the error in the projections did not have a significant budgetary impact on the taxpayers because they were in a very good financial situation.

**Motion by:** Ms. Carroll

**Seconded by:** Dr. Beckett

*BE IT RESOLVED the Glastonbury Town Council hereby accepts the Agreement between the Glastonbury Board of Education and Glastonbury Education Association for the four-year term July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2025, as recommended by the Board of Education.*

**Disc:** Mr. Osgood stated that the BOE is an advocate for education, while the Council is responsible for the Town's budget. He is very concerned with the Town's tax rate reaching unacceptable levels. He cannot support a four-year contract with a 3% annual increase in teachers' salaries in this uncertain economy, which could potentially extend through 2021.

Dr. Beckett wants all teachers and parents to know that his vote against the contract is not about the teachers but reflects his frustration with general spending and how unaffordable taxes are becoming. It is about the BOE adequately representing the citizens of Glastonbury. Education spending has exceeded overall town spending by 1.5-2% a year, and they have to get that under control. While he conceded that this is a much better contract than the one from four years ago, it is not acceptable to the taxpayers and citizens of Glastonbury.

Ms. Carroll voted yes for the contract but rejects the narrative from the BOE, which is that if the Council rejects any of their proposals, then they are against education and teachers. As a mother of students and a councilmember, these two positions do not need to be in opposition. She fears that arbitration would potentially create a more expensive contract. She also lamented that the BOE did not feel it was an appropriate action to even ask the union to consider withdrawing their contract. The BOE has sent a clear message to the Council and the people of Glastonbury that they intend to bulldoze their way forward, regardless of the economic context. She suspects that will have real consequences when the Council is asked to approve the next budget.

While Ms. LaChance voted for the contract, she also expressed concerns about how it was negotiated. The Council was not invited to the negotiating table, despite asking to be.

Mr. McChesney voted against the contract and added that no one should think that any council member discounts teachers. He is very concerned with the economic situation they are facing. He has gone through two years of difficulty meeting the needs of the BOE and suspects that they will return with more asks next year that the Council will not be able to meet, such as replacing retiring librarians. Therefore, this contract is not in the best interest of the town.

Mr. Niland is also unhappy with the fact that the Council was not included in the process of negotiations. He suspects that if the teachers were actually approached, they would have given serious consideration to the Council's ask. He explained that, in the event of arbitration, the BOE has already said that they would come back with this exact contract. Winning that suit would still result in a loss because it would cost the Town millions. Therefore, he is voting yes for the contract. However, if the economic situation is tough next year, and the BOE asks for more things that they cannot afford, they will need to own this moment.

Ms. Tanski explained that she would like the BOE to change the unproductive narrative that if the Council does not give the BOE every cent they ask for, there will be pandemonium. It is essential for them to rebuild trust and start long-term planning and communication in the future. The Council has a very blunt and effective instrument for controlling the growth of the BOE budget, and this is where they can begin to take leadership to be fiscally responsible and accountable to all taxpayers. She is also against arbitration and believes that the teachers' union showed an investment and a faith in their community. She also believes that the BOE did show an interest in controlling costs, but they will have to take responsibility for this contract.

Mr. Gullotta stated that the concern that this was not a good process is a very bipartisan one. With his vote against, they will be hitting the restart button.

**Result:** Motion failed {5-4-0}. Dr. Beckett, Mr. Cavanaugh, Mr. Osgood, Mr. McChesney, and Mr. Gullotta voted against the motion. Ms. Carroll, Ms. LaChance, Mr. Niland, and Ms. Tanski voted in favor.

**Motion by:** Ms. Carroll

**Seconded by:** Dr. Beckett

*BE IT RESOLVED the Glastonbury Town Council hereby rejects the Agreement between the Glastonbury Board of Education and Glastonbury Education Association for the four-year term July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2025, as recommended by the Board of Education.*

**Disc:** Mr. McChesney explained that if the Council rejects this contract, the BOE will just present the same contract and go to mediation or arbitration, which would be a taxpayers' expense. He voted against affirming it because he does not think it is the right thing for the Town. Ms. Tanski remarked that the Council has a perspective that the BOE does not, but the BOE also has a perspective that the Council does not. She is concerned that this has been made into a showdown between the two parties. A vote to reject this contract is disrespectful to the actions made in good faith made by the members of the bargaining unit.

**Result:** Motion failed {4-5-0}. Ms. Carroll, Ms. LaChance, Mr. McChesney, Mr. Niland, and Ms. Tanski voted against the motion. Dr. Beckett, Mr. Cavanaugh, Mr. Osgood, and Mr. Gullotta voted in favor.

Mr. Johnson explained that a failure to reject the contract means that it passes and will become effective in 30 days.

**3. Adjournment.**

***Motion by:*** Ms. Carroll

***Seconded by:*** Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby adjourns their special meeting of June 19, 2020, at 8:08 pm.

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

Respectfully submitted,

**Lilly Torosyan**

**Lilly Torosyan  
Recording Clerk**

**Thomas Gullotta  
Chairman**