

**GLASTONBURY BOARD OF FINANCE  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2020**

The Glastonbury Board of Finance, along with Finance Director, Julie Twilley, and Town Manager, Richard J. Johnson, held a special meeting at 4:00 p.m. via dial-in conferencing to discuss, and make possible action on, a \$225,000 appropriation and transfer for proposed purchase of the Cotton Hollow Mill site.

**Roll Call**

*Members*

Mr. Constantine “Gus” Constantine, Chairman  
Ms. Jennifer Sanford, Vice Chairman  
Mr. Robert Lynn  
Mr. James McIntosh  
Mr. James Zeller  
Mr. Walter Cusson {excused}

**1. Public Comment Session Pertaining to the Call** *None*

**2. Action: Possible recommendation to Town Council and funding of proposed Town purchase**

Mr. Johnson explained the background of the matter, which came up in early 2020, involving the two remaining Cotton Hollow mill walls that are located off of Cotton Hollow Road, a private road that runs along the north side of Roaring Brook. The walls date back to the early 1800s when there were mills in the areas. When the property was purchased, there was work underway to take away the stones, but a petition was signed by approximately 5,000 residents to halt the demolition. The Town Manager was asked to approach the owners to discuss options to preserve the mill walls.

The current owners executed an agreement on September 22 to sell an acre to the Town that includes the mill walls and stones that can be used to restore the mill. The purchase price is \$225,000 but some other costs will accrue, such as installing fencing around the mill, landscaping, and likely tree removal. The Historical Society plans to fundraise to support their planned restoration, and also to help offset the Town cost to get the area protected with fencing and trees. Mr. Johnson assured that this does not increase the Town’s liability coverage, and the site will not be accessible to the public.

Mr. Constantine asked about a right of way. Mr. Johnson explained that, for two years, there will be access via a driveway, which may continue on a month-to-month basis afterward, depending on the property owner’s schedule for restoring the property there; after that period, access will be via a farm road on the north side. Mr. Johnson clarified that the access points are only to the Town to maintain the mill. Mr. McIntosh asked about access on the south side. Mr. Johnson

stated that the south side is bordered by Roaring Brook. He had tried early on to build a bridge crossing over Roaring Brook but was told that the likelihood of getting the necessary regulatory approvals would be slim to none.

Mr. Zeller asked if there is an intention to turn this site into an area for public viewing, similar to what was done with the Slocomb Mill. Mr. Johnson replied no, they will put in a series of interpretive panels that describes the history, but there will not be any walking up, since the walls are considerably higher than those of the Slocomb property.

Mr. Zeller stated that the Historical Society fundraised only \$13,000 in 18 months for the Slocomb project, and this site is far larger and needs far more work. He is not convinced that the society will be able to raise enough funds to be able to stabilize the walls. He asked what kind of stabilization is needed in order for the Town to not be put in the situation where they will have to take down the walls. Mr. Zeller added that, if the Historical Society will indeed be held by the Council to foot the bill, then he will vote favorably on tonight's action.

Ms. Sanford asked what the other funding options are and why the Town Manager chose the Capital Reserve Fund. Mr. Johnson stated that the other option was the General Fund, and neither one of the funding sources is more correct than the other. Ms. Sanford asked, if any of the options changed for the fencing plans, would there be an increase to the Town's liability. Mr. Johnson stated that he has never seen a particular property acquisition specifically influence their liability coverage. The expectation is that they will follow best practices by installing a fence, but they do not know what the cost of that will be, as of yet.

Ms. Sanford asked what the context is of the \$225,000 price tag. Mr. Johnson stated that the value is based on three factors: what the owner is willing to sell it for, the value of the stone on the open market, and the value of 200 years of Glastonbury's history. Mr. McIntosh remarked that, while the Town is hesitant to pursue this process, the concept of eminent domain would allow them to acquire the property without a willing seller, should the seller not offer a price that is fair to the Town. Mr. Zeller interjected that he does not find it necessary to go down that road. Mr. Lynn does not believe that \$225,000 is a fair ask at all because the owner makes out well from this deal, getting to sell the house that remains for \$400,000, while the public cannot even enjoy the walls. Mr. Lynn believes that the price tag would be better spent in pension.

Ms. Sanford commented that the \$225,000 is not the true cost, so it would be important to know the additional costs, with some range provided. Mr. Johnson suggested, if it would make the Board feel more comfortable, they can recommend a transfer of \$300,000 instead, which would give a \$75,000 leeway for the fencing costs. Ms. Sanford stated that the intention should be to inform the public that the true cost will be more than \$225,000. Mr. Lynn expressed that he would rather just approve of the \$225,000 and have the Town Manager return in November with the fencing costs. The rest of the Board agreed.

**Motion by:** Mr. McIntosh

**Seconded by:** Ms. Sanford

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Board of Finance hereby recommends to the Town Council the transfer and appropriation of \$225,000 from the Capital Reserve Fund, in order to purchase the Cotton Hollow mill site.

**Result:** Motion passed unanimously {5-0-0}.

### **3. Adjournment**

**Motion by:** Mr. McIntosh

**Seconded by:** Mr. Lynn

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Board of Finance moves to adjourn their meeting of October 6, 2020, at 4:45 p.m.

**Result:** Motion passes unanimously {5-0-0}.

**Respectfully submitted,**

*Lilly Torosyan*

Lilly Torosyan  
Recording Clerk

*For anyone seeking more information about this meeting, a video on demand is available at [www.glastonbury-ct.gov/video](http://www.glastonbury-ct.gov/video); click on Public Broadcast Video On Demand, and an audio recording is available in the Finance and Administrative Services Office.*