

**GLASTONBURY TOWN COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2021**

The Glastonbury Town Council with Town Manager, Richard J. Johnson, in attendance, held a Special Meeting at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom video conferencing. Also in attendance were members of the Board of Finance and Board of Education, as well as department heads of town and education staff. 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. Mary LaChance  
Ms. Deborah A. Carroll  
Mr. Jacob McChesney  
Mr. Kurt P. Cavanaugh  
Ms. Lillian Tanski  
Mr. Whit C. Osgood

**a. Pledge of Allegiance**

***Led by James Zeller***

**2. Public Communication and Petitions pertaining to the Call.   None**

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

**a. Annual Capital Improvement Program Budget presentation and discussion.**

Before beginning his presentation, Mr. Johnson explained how tonight's virtual meeting would proceed. He will review about five slides at a time, then stop for questions, which will be transmitted via the technological assistance of Mr. Niland. Mr. Johnson noted that about 30 projects are proposed in the Capital Reserve Fund, which is typical for most years. 20 of those projects, totaling \$6.8 million, take care of what the Town currently owns.

Mr. Johnson explained that the road overlay allocation has grown over the last several years. A phased increase in this account is proposed, in order to keep up with road maintenance. In regard to the sidewalk maintenance allocation, Mr. Johnson explained that while the Town has a significant number of sidewalks, they need to be mindful of the care, maintenance, and monitoring of them, to avoid issues like trip and fall lawsuits. Regarding infrastructure and major

equipment, Mr. Johnson explained that the appropriation for this account is typically rolled over from year to year. Therefore, they expect to cover part of the costs of equipment that need replacing, such as the street sweeper. He then noted that this is the third year of a \$100,000 allocation for storm drainage.

Mr. Johnson explained that they would like to further support sustainable community initiatives in Town. One such opportunity to do this has been the Main Street reconstruction project. Mr. McChesney stated that, last year, the Council allocated \$200,000 for brick relaying in that area. Mr. Johnson stated that is correct. After that allocation, they learned of the grant opportunity for \$1.86 million, so the \$200,000 would be encompassed in that scope, in order to conduct other work in the Town center. Dr. Beckett asked if cutouts can be made for buses to pull over, so that they do not obstruct traffic in the Town center. Mr. Pennington agreed to coordinate with transit to accomplish that. Mr. Niland asked about the condition of the street sweeper. Mr. Pennington stated that it is a high maintenance piece of machinery. The manufacturer no longer exists, so in addition to its age, they have difficulty finding parts to repair it. Therefore, it is prudent to replace it now.

Mr. Johnson continued his presentation with a review of public safety communications, stating that these initiatives are part of an ongoing effort to update their systems. They continue to work with a consultant who is identifying the needed costs, to be funded in phases: \$420,000 a year for four years, totaling four years, \$1.6 million. He explained that it is better to fund this on a cash basis because technology and equipment become outdated very quickly, so bond payments last longer than the equipment, in many cases. The BOF approved a \$400,000 transfer from the General Fund to buy new self-contained breathing apparatuses for the Fire Department. This proposal pays back the General Fund in one year. Mr. Zeller remarked that while paying back the General Fund is welcomed, the idea of raising taxes this year to pay more money into the Unassigned Fund Balance is something he would have to give a lot of thought to, and he asked others to do the same. Mr. Lynn added that, going forward, he would like to bundle these so that they could take advantage of historically low bond rates. This way, they could better fund their pension obligation and allow future citizens to pay for the benefits of some of these capital items.

Mr. Johnson then reviewed the various education projects, explaining that the BOE's highest priority in its capital program is to replace the lockers in elementary schools. Dr. Bookman stated that these lockers are original to the building, which dates back to 1942. While they have needed to be replaced for a long time, the BOE finally put it on their list this year. In regard to the high school athletic building, Mr. Johnson explained that the locker room and restroom project was sent out to bid, which was very successful. The low bid is \$2.04 million, which does not include an extra \$360,000 worth of costs, namely hazardous material abatement, removal of underground storage tank, and some A&E for contingency. He suggested that, should the project move

forward, the funding of this element proceed over the short term and outside the budget cycle. The reasoning behind this is, if they wait, it will not be possible to complete the work by the end of August 2021. Dr. Bookman added that the BOE had put aside money from their 1% fund to fund the lockers, and the BOE will have to make the decision on whether or not they want the covering/connection for the two parts, which consist of the locker rooms and the restrooms. He further explained that, in the spring season, they will not have use for the locker rooms, but they do expect there to be a fall season with the football team. Part of the requirements to hold home football games is to have locker rooms.

Mr. Johnson explained that, for the Smith Middle School gym floor project, the BOE is looking at a vinyl flooring sports floor, in order to mitigate the moisture issue. Dr. Bookman reminded the Council that, last year, they funded the initiative at \$200,000, while asking the BOE to make sure that they knew what the problem was before using the money. He noted that the BOE did exactly that; they researched the issue extensively, identified the problem, and are now ready to move forward with this solution, which costs just \$100,000.

Mr. Zeller noted that this is the second placement floor in 10 years. The problem the last time was that the company went out of business. He asked if the BOE is comfortable that this will not happen again. Dr. Bookman stated that they do not have any concerns. Mr. Cavanaugh noted that there were issues with the floor at the RCC. He asked if the material at the Smith School is the same. Mr. Johnson explained that the original floor there was bamboo, which was replaced with a laminate which is similar to the flooring proposed at Smith School. Town Building Superintendent Dave Sacchitella echoed Mr. Johnson's response, adding that the vinyl laminate at the community center has been in over five years and has performed flawlessly.

Mr. Johnson explained that the roof of the Gideon Welles School is 29 years old. He noted that, because the roof is over 20 years old, it is eligible for state reimbursement, but the grant approval process will take a few years. Therefore, their proposal is to fund the design and cost estimate of the work to prepare for a grant application, which will likely take place in 2024 or 2025. Ms. Tanski asked that, as part of the study to research updates, they take a look at the longevity of different proposed materials for roofs in town, since town buildings use many different types and quality roofs.

Mr. Osgood asked if they did an estimate for the cost of the interior of the field house. Dr. Bookman replied yes, it is about \$210,000, which they will take from the BOE's 1% fund. Mr. Osgood then asked for an estimate for the roof over the breezeway. Dr. Bookman stated that it is \$42,000. Mr. Osgood asked what the total cost of this project will be. Mr. Johnson stated that it will run about \$2.5 million. Mr. Osgood commented that he would not mind this project going to bonding. Mr. Zeller requested checking on whether or not they might be able to bond these very

large projects. Mr. Johnson stated that he will look into it. Mr. Gullotta remarked that, in order to move forward on this project, the Council needs to put it as an agenda item for their meeting next week. The Council agreed to do so.

Dr. Beckett stated that if there are any big projects on the BOE's horizon, such as the replacement of the elementary schools' locker rooms, they would need time to discuss those initiatives so that they are not rushed through at high costs. Mr. Doug Foyle, Education Chairman, explained that the BOE has put together a five-year facilities plan. The elementary school lockers had been delayed for a long time. As part of the next five-year plan, they will evaluate the situation of their buildings and conduct research on their student populations, in terms of growth, reductions, etc. Mr. Niland asked if the BOE has considered an alternative to lockers because children do not really use them anymore. Dr. Bookman replied, the locker usage in elementary schools is massive, so they are a necessity.

Mr. Johnson explained that this is the third year of an annual capital allocation for street trees, which become a lawsuit liability when they get torn down. He noted that the Town is currently awaiting a \$128,000 grant to assist in this important ongoing project. The Addison Park renovations incorporate a phased approach of \$225,000 that was allocated this past July, supplemented by an additional \$70,000. The Riverfront Park and Boat House is looking at a number of improvements to ensure public safety and to enhance the sprinkler system, as well as to realign the dock system. Mr. Osgood asked about the outdoor storage at the boathouse. Ms. Lisa Zerio, Director of Parks and Recreation, stated that there is a waiting list of 20 people for use of the outdoor racks. Dr. Beckett asked for a sketch of the realigned boat docks. Mr. Johnson explained that it is a work in progress, and while they have some thoughts, there is no design to present, at this time.

Mr. Johnson reviewed the Town Hall project to complete renovations to the academy structure, particularly the kitchen area, for a self-serve food bank. He explained that the underground storage tank behind the Police Department is the Town's primary source for unleaded fuel. DEEP requires removal after 30 years, which will be up in 2025. While they have an insurance policy and inspect the tank annually, some towns have had bad experiences with these kinds of tanks; therefore, the proposal is to remove it sooner rather than later and replace it with an above ground tank. Mr. Zeller agreed that replacing the underground storage tank is a good idea but felt that an above ground tank in a residential area also seems hazardous. He suggested the private sector take on the liability as an option for the Council to consider. Mr. Niland asked how much fuel they use and how much of a savings they realize over what the market rate might be. Mr. Johnson agreed to confirm those numbers. He then discussed the Bulky Waste Closure Fund, which has three funding sources: the Capital Program, the sale of fill, and tip fees.

Next, Mr. Johnson reviewed ongoing projects and initiatives, which have been funded in several prior years. One such project is the property revaluation, the next one of which will take place in October 2022. Energy/sustainability efforts have been a success for Glastonbury. Since 2008, the Town has reduced consumption by about 25% and Education by about 33%. For the Town's Disaster and Emergency Preparedness, storm responders and staff have proposed a \$250,000 allocation to respond to what they have identified as system-wide needs for emergency response.

Mr. Johnson explained that the Main Street sidewalks project is in its third phase. The Council will hold a public information hearing on adding another section. Should the project move forward, construction will proceed this coming season. Mr. Osgood asked if Town staff have looked at a comparable price for construction on the east side instead. Mr. Pennington stated that, while they thought about it, there was a concern about the safety of the crossing at a busy road. Mr. Zeller asked if there has been consideration to putting in batteries at the traffic lights to kick in when the power goes out. Mr. Pennington said yes, it is feasible. Several of the newer lights have batteries, but the problem is when power goes out for days. To combat this, they have installed controllers with a receptacle that could be plugged in a small backpack-type generator, which worked well this past summer. Mr. Johnson summarized that almost \$1.25 million worth of new sidewalks are to proceed in the next year.

Mr. Johnson then reviewed the four new projects and proposals, totaling \$1.9 million. He clarified that there is another pending grant for the Bell Street sidewalks. He is optimistic that the grant will be approved, which will provide \$600,000 of the \$775,000 price tag for the project. The Gateway Corporate Park will be 100% funded, and \$100,000 is proposed for education feasibility analysis/cost estimating. Mr. Foyle explained that, at the top of the BOE's priority list, is to bring all of the elementary schools up to the same physical standard, so they seek to close the open classrooms at the Naubuc School. Dr. Bookman added that another concern they are looking into is the heating at Naubuc School, which is scheduled for replacement.

Mr. Johnson explained that \$80,000 is proposed to be allocated for the construction of pickleball courts, which will support the livable communities and sustainability initiatives. Mr. Osgood asked to instead consider constructing it as two tennis courts and line them for pickleball courts. Several people have also approached him asking for paddleball courts, as well. He also suggested installing lighting. Mr. Johnson stated that they expect to put in the conduit to have lighting. He noted the idea to construct two tennis courts as interesting and agreed to take a look at it. Mr. McChesney asked if the proposed location for the pickle ball courts will significantly impact the Apple Harvest and other events held there throughout the year. Mr. Johnson stated that they tried to move it as southerly on the property as possible. Ms. Zerio added that most of the Apple Harvest's activities have historically been further north. Mr. Johnson agreed to take a look at their most recent layout as compared to where these courts are proposed.

The estimated Capital Reserve Funding totals about \$6.48 million for the 30 projects proposed. Mr. Johnson then reviewed other projects to be funded through the Sewer Sinking Fund and Town Aid, such as the Eastbury Pump Station and analysis of the sanitary sewer force mains. He noted that the Capital Reserve Fund Transfer has gone down, to \$5.75 million in 2022, but assuming a 3% cost escalation and loss of purchasing power, he expects that number to go up in the following two years. The Unassigned Fund Balance is about \$2 million, and there is a decrease of \$2.46 million in the Debt Service, which includes the most recent library acquisition and bond sale of July 2020, but not the land acquisition of \$3 million. Mr. Johnson then briefly went through other projects, such as the proposal to update the Grange Pool, the Town Center streetscape improvements, and traffic calming. He showed a chart illustrating various debt service scenarios, assuming a 20-year bond at various interest rates.

Mr. Cavanaugh asked when the State plans to start the project regarding the New London Turnpike and Douglas Road intersection. Mr. Johnson explained that they have had discussions with the DOT and raised a concern about the cues for the lights back to Douglas Road. The Town agreed that installing a roundabout was the right solution. However, the DOT's initial cost estimate for the project was about \$1.1 million for a signalization option versus \$2.5 million for installing a roundabout. Mr. Johnson noted that they are in the process of researching the scope of what a roundabout would cost, and the earliest that construction could possibly begin would be in 2022. With no further comments or questions, Mr. Johnson completed and summarized the presentation.

#### **4. Adjournment.**

Chairman Gullotta thanked Mr. Johnson for a very thorough presentation and closed the meeting at 8:34 P.M.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Lilly Torosyan**

**Lilly Torosyan  
Recording Clerk**

**Thomas Gullotta  
Chairman**