

**GLASTONBURY BOARD OF FINANCE
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2021**

The Glastonbury Board of Finance, along with Finance Director, Julie Twilley, and Town Manager, Richard J. Johnson, held a special meeting at 3:30 p.m. via dial-in conferencing.

Roll Call

Members

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

1. **Public Comment Session:** Comments pertaining to the call *None*
2. **Communication:** Education Operating Budget

BOE Chairman Doug Foyle explained that their budget is the lowest increase proposed since 1992. The bulk of the increase is due to contracted salary increases for personnel. The budget is at a level trend line. Ms. Sanford asked if we are taxing our citizens properly. She then asked what the pace of implementing STEAM is. Dr. Foyle stated that many of the things they planned this year slowed down because of the pandemic. There were a number of one-time savings achieved, but a small fortune was spent on the PPE, for example. Dr. Bookman agreed with Dr. Foyle about the unexpected effects of the pandemic on their budgetary plans. He then added that there are plans to spend the STEAM money this year to buy additional equipment, but it is in process. Ms. Sanford asked for a list of specific budgetary items that were affected by the pandemic. Dr. Foyle replied that those were included in the material for their meeting with the Council, which can be accessed online.

Mr. Zeller expressed concern that the BOE typically does not spend over the budget that the BOF allocates them every year, but they still ask for more. He also stated that their per pupil increases are higher than their year over year increases. He then asked about Dr. Bookman’s earlier comments about how the Special Education budget would not increase this year. Dr. Bookman clarified that the increase was due to wages and increases, but Mr. Zeller responded that citizens were left with the impression that Special Education was not going to grow, which is not the case. Mr. Zeller then pointed out that comparing Glastonbury’s per pupil expenditure to those of towns in Fairfield County and the Gold Coast is not a good reflection of

Glastonbury's actions to save money. He noted that when compared to comparable towns in the DRG, Glastonbury is the second most expensive in per-pupil expenditure, after Simsbury. Dr. Foyle replied that, in comparison to Glastonbury's most similar towns (Avon, Farmington, Simsbury, and sometimes West Hartford), there is little variation between them in per pupil costs.

Ms. Sanford asked if other towns have similar types of revenue-enhancing programs, like LINKS, or is it inappropriate to compare. Dr. Bookman stated that it varies from town to town, so to make an apples-to-apples comparison based on that is difficult. Mr. Zeller asked to be emailed the state information on DRG. Dr. Bookman agreed to send it to Chairman Constantine. Mr. Zeller remarked that it would be helpful to see the measure of performance going back ten years instead of a five-year average.

Mr. Zeller asked about hiring someone dedicated to studying the area of diversity. Dr. Foyle stated that 40% of Fortune 500 companies have someone who does this; Farmington has hired someone, and West Hartford has two people, so they are behind their peers on this. Mr. Zeller asked if the BOE would limit the pension to not extend the legacy plan for this professional. Dr. Bookman stated that they do not have a hybrid plan for their nine professional personnel, so unless that changes, they would not do that. Mr. Zeller concluded that he was impressed by the BOE's interest in the need to take greater risk, particularly in the funding of health insurance. Dr. Foyle stated that he is looking for guidance from the BOF at what level of reserve would be prudent to draw down on and how much that should be. Ms. Sanford stated that is a good discussion. She views the cash in the account as insurance that must be weighed against taxing citizens.

Mr. Cusson commended the BOE, the Superintendent, and their staff for meeting the challenges that were posed by the pandemic. Mr. Lynn echoed Mr. Cusson's statement. While he is concerned about the cost to taxpayers, he will share those thoughts later on. Mr. McIntosh asked a series of questions, including why the retirement classified (under benefits) is up 8.81%; if the workers' compensation increase is related to COVID-19; why equipment operations and maintenance is up 215%; and if the projected \$40,000 savings in energy will show up in the kilowatt hours or not. Dr. Bookman stated that he will check on these items and report back.

Ms. Sanford remarked that retirement and pension benefits are growing in double digits, whereas wages are growing more linearly. She asked what the Superintendent's thoughts are on this. Dr. Bookman stated that they adhere to whatever the Town Manager tells them they need to contribute to the pension. Dr. Foyle added that there are three moving components to the pension, and they are always actively evaluating whether those factors all suggest that this is the right place to be.

Mr. Constantine asked what they see as the future of transportation. Dr. Bookman stated that some students attend school exclusively virtually and, in general, school bus use has been discouraged this year, because of the pandemic. If COVID-19 is still a factor next year, they are unsure what to do on Wednesdays.

3. Communication: Education Capital Projects

Dr. Bookman noted that they have corrected the fiscal year listed on the document, which was incorrect before. He then briefly reviewed the CIP projects proposed. There were no questions from the Board.

4. Communication: Discussion regarding FY 2021-2022 Operating, Capital and Revenue Budget Proposals

Ms. Sanford asked about Milliman's answer to the suggestion of adding \$1 million to the pension and the impact to the liquidity. Mr. Johnson stated that he will ask Becky Sielman in the morning about the liquidity question and she may join the Board on their February 17, 2021 meeting.

5. Action: Transfer for Automated Building Permitting Software

Motion by: Mr. Zeller

Seconded by: Mr. Cusson

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Board of Finance hereby transfers \$60,000 from the Health - Full Time Wages and Fire Marshal - Part Time Wages accounts to the Community Development - Office Equipment/Furniture account.

Result: Motion passes unanimously {6-0-0}.

6. Action: Confirm date for BOF Special Meeting for BOF to Propose Budget to Council, if not done on February 8.

Motion by: Mr. Zeller

Seconded by: Mr. Cusson

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Board of Finance hereby schedules the BOF Special Meeting for BOF to Propose Budget to Council on February 17 at 3:00 PM, if not done on February 8.

Result: Motion passes unanimously {6-0-0}.

7. Adjournment

Motion by: Mr. Cusson

Seconded by: Mr. McIntosh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Board of Finance moves to adjourn their meeting of February 3, 2021, at 5:29 p.m.

Result: Motion passes unanimously {6-0-0}.

Respectfully submitted,

Lilly Torosyan

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Recording Clerk

For anyone seeking more information about this meeting, a video on demand is available at 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.