

**GLASTONBURY TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2021**

The Glastonbury Town Council with Town Manager, Richard J. Johnson, in attendance, held a Regular Meeting at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom video conferencing. The Budget Reviews for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 convened first, followed by the Regular Meeting Agenda items. 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. Whit C. Osgood
Mr. Jacob McChesney
Mr. Kurt P. Cavanaugh
Ms. Lillian Tanski

a. Pledge of Allegiance *Led by Ms. LaChance*

2. BUDGET REVIEWS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022

Presentation and discussion concerning Town Operations, Debt & Transfer, Revenues & Transfers, Capital Reserve Fund, Capital Improvement Program and other budget related matters involving the combined 2021-2022 budget proposal.

Mr. Johnson reviewed slides on the Town budget. He noted that the biggest influence on the budget between the Annual Town Meeting and what the BOF has recommended is a reduction in the pension ROR assumption from 6.5% to 6.25%, which is an approximately \$820,000 contribution to the ADC. The budget prepared in January assumed \$150,000 as a hedge, and the BOF added \$323,708 to Town Operations. The BOE's share was about \$183,000, which the Board recommended be absorbed within their proposed budget. The BOF also recommends that \$1 million be transferred from the General Fund Unassigned Fund Balance to the pension fund, which will reduce the increase in the ADC by \$125,000.

Mr. Johnson continued by noting that, for the pension fund, the housing authority and special revenues increased by about \$40,000. The BOF proposed that the BOE reduce its budget by \$317,721, which is almost offset by the Town Operations increase. The most significant change is the ECS funding. When Mr. Johnson had prepared his budget, he assumed that there would be a reduction to ECS funding, but the Governor has let it remain flat, so that is a \$300,000 revenue gain, which has led to a 1.57% increase in the mill rate from 36.90 to 37.48.

The pension represents 1.47% of the 1.7% budget increase. The remaining 0.23% of the budget increase were accounted for by the following: combined Town wage accounted for 0.8% of the budget increase; combined insurance accounts were reduced, accounting for -1.1% of the budget increase; data processing and technology accounted for 0.27% of the increase; contractual services accounted for 0.11% of the budget increase; utilities and fuel affected the budget by -0.12%; capital outlay by -0.04%; all other line items accounted for a 0.28% increase. Mr. Cavanaugh asked when the fire chief position will be transferred to full time. Mr. Johnson stated that the change will likely be effective next month.

Mr. Johnson explained that during the Annual Town Meeting, the budget increase was proposed at \$663,428, or 1.47 points, but the BOF recommended an increase of \$987,136, or 2.19 points, to account for the reduction of the pension ROR assumption and contribution to the ADC. Pulling out the pension, the aggregate increase in the combined budget over the past 10 years is 19.2%, which compares to 16.4% in the aggregate increase in the CPI Northeast. Mr. Johnson stated that Glastonbury has generally been running along the CPI, despite the pressures they have received in cost operations and new programs and facilities. Mr. Johnson noted that the BOF asked him how he would have reallocated the \$150,000 in Town Operations, had it not gone to the pension ADC. Mr. Johnson broke it down as the following: Health Insurance: \$75,000-\$100,000; Capital Outlay: \$25,000-\$50,000; Technology H.R.I.S.: \$25,000; Legal Services: \$10,000-\$20,000.

Next to present were three Town directors on the virtual programming each respective department has been offering during the pandemic:

Director of Parks and Recreation Lisa Zerio began by reviewing the parks and recreation programming. Virtual programming consisted of fitness classes, jukebox bingo, and Valentine cookie kits. She also reviewed their in-person programming, such as gymnastics and after-school programs. She noted that senior service programming is considered essential, and the department has created many virtual programs for them, as well as in-person programs, which are run by volunteers. The most important of these in-person programs are the wellness calls, which the seniors really appreciate. Ms. Carroll thanked Ms. Zerio and her team for how they have rearranged programming and came up with new ways to keep people connected during this pandemic. Mr. McChesney also thanked staff for a great job and added that excluded from the presentation was the light tour from this past holiday, which was very nice.

Barbara Bailey, Library Director, then presented on the library's programs, whose adult programs have enjoyed phenomenal success. She explained that they hold programs once a week and try to offer a variety. Children's programs like the Wee Rock program and preschool story time are now virtual and held twice a week. The programs targeting teenagers have been more difficult to attract, with the exception of yoga, practice college entrance exams, and food programs. Ms. Bailey then discussed the library addition project, noting that it is coming along nicely, with a lot of interior demolition underway. The project is on schedule and within budget. They had to retool their curbside pickup, so they cannot use the back entrance right now, but it is working for the time being. They can have 70% capacity and hope to open around the middle of March. Mr. McChesney asked to pass along his family's appreciation for what staff has done

regarding virtual programming. He suggested holding children's events at different times to accommodate more children. Ms. Tanski also thanked staff for these programs.

Lori LaCapra, Director of Youth and Family Services, stated that they have also found attendance difficult for virtual programming, but as time goes on, the public has been catching on. Their virtual programs include GHS peer education meetings, music lessons, wellness presentations, and support groups. They have done a lot of support online for parents, such as launching a newsletter, and they are about to launch a virtual student support group for GHS and are looking to include virtual theater and arts programs. Mr. Niland asked if they have been able to meet with the Youth and Family Services Commission. Ms. LaCapra stated that the last in-person meeting was in February 2020. They had their first virtual meeting last week, and they intend to meet every other month. At the next meeting, they will discuss the possibility of starting a mentorship program.

Mr. Johnson returned to continue his presentation on the Town budget. Mr. Gullotta asked about the bicycles. Police Chief Porter explained that in 1993, they sent their first three officers to bicycle training. Since then, they have certified several officers with six certified to ride right now. Their bikes are around 15 years old and only two or three are functional right now. The request is for \$2,5000 for replacement low-to-mid-range bikes that will be suitable for duty purposes. Mr. Cavanaugh stated that if the department needs a better bicycle, they should ask for it. Mr. Osgood agreed. Chief Porter agreed to speak with his staff who are more knowledgeable to see if they should ask for something else. Mr. Niland agreed, adding that he supports the safety of their officers. Mr. McChesney stated that bicycle usage is cheaper than cars and engages the public more. He asked if there are ways of expanding bicycle usage in the force. Chief Porter stated that they do not have officers dedicated to bicycle patrol, which is a challenge.

Mr. Johnson reviewed Debt and Transfers, which has a minor net change. He noted that the projected debt service, which includes the library and land acquisitions, is relatively flat through 2024. Between 2024-25 and 2025-26, there will be significant reductions in debt service as costs are paid down. The Capital Reserve Transfer is the primary source of funding for the Town's highly successful pay-as-you-go capital program. He left it at \$5.75 million in the coming year. Mr. McChesney stated that he recalls the drop happening earlier. He asked if the delayed windfall is due to the land acquisitions. Mr. Johnson stated that Mr. McChesney might be recalling that from two budgets ago, but he will send out the sheets from previous budgets. He noted that in the 2019-20 budget, there was a \$1.3 million decrease in debt service, but it was relatively flat. Mr. Gullotta remarked that the projected savings will evaporate quickly when the school roofs come online. Mr. Johnson stated that the roofs are out a few years.

Mr. Johnson then reviewed Revenues and Transfers. He noted that, at the Annual Town Meeting, they had assumed that the 10-year decrease in ECS funding would be put in place, but the Governor has since recommended keeping the ECS funding level. The largest decrease is investment income and fund balance, but all of the non-tax revenues were projected to decrease about \$1 million, which is about 0.23 mills. The Grand list was projected at 0.84%. The intergovernmental revenue net is now a \$39,000 increase because of the \$300,000 gain in ECS

funding and the \$987,000 net decrease in non-tax revenues is now \$678,000. The use of fund balance is sustained at \$975,000, with a total proposed revenue change of 1.7%.

Mr. Cavanaugh asked how they can use the \$32 million in the bank to alleviate a tax increase. Mr. Johnson stated that they would move money into opening cash and look at how that influences the general fund, which is mainly the result of one-time revenues from sale of land not ongoing operations. They cannot repeatedly move \$1 million out of that account year after year because the fund balance will drop quite quickly, signaling an alarm to credit rating agencies. Therefore, they will have to make it up in other sources, such as other revenues, taxes, or decreasing expenditures. Mr. Johnson offered to present a model to the Council. Mr. Gullotta remarked that walking a path that could only be pursued for a year or two and not a decade does not sound feasible. Mr. Cavanaugh agreed, but he stated that it is hard to explain to the public that they are sitting on that much cash. Mr. Cavanaugh asked Mr. Johnson what reduction would have to take place with combined budgets to reduce the tax increase from 1.6% to 1%. Mr. Johnson agreed to provide that calculation.

Mr. Johnson continued his presentation by noting that they project a \$643,000 decrease in the estimated investment income this year, which they expect to make up for by revenues that are overachieving. Mr. Gullotta asked what is in the investment income. Mr. Johnson clarified that the \$32 million from the General Fund Unassigned Fund Balance is within the pool of cash that is invested. Mr. Gullotta followed up by asking which measures are in place that prevent the Town from making lucrative short-term investments, such as in GameStop. Mr. Johnson explained that there are statutory restrictions on how they can invest municipal money which is intended to protect the principal. Dr. Beckett asked if they could invest some of that money in something less risky than GameStop but with a higher yield than U.S. treasury bonds. Mr. Johnson stated that he is not aware of another vehicle that would get the Town significantly higher returns without putting their principal at risk, but he will look into it. Ms. Tanski asked if they could get a letter from the BOF that outlines their reasoning for their recommendation on putting money into the pension fund. Mr. Johnson agreed to provide a short explanation in a document to the Council.

Mr. Johnson explained that because of the significant influence of the mortality tables last year, the General Fund transfer in was increased from \$575,000 to \$975,000, with the thought that it would be phased down. However, he left it at \$975,000 this year because the combined reduction in non-tax revenue was almost \$1 million, so instead of adding another \$100,000 to that, the General Fund transfer could be left flat. For the General Fund projections, Mr. Johnson cautioned that the Council be mindful going forward about the gain and loss on operations, and that the fund balance does not trend down towards that 12% level. The minimum unassigned balance has to be 12% of the adopted budget, which is \$170 million, so about \$21-22 million. Mr. Osgood stated that they do not want to go below 15% but going from 16% or 17% to about 15% seems reasonable. Mr. Gullotta agreed, adding that they cannot make these transfers at the rate they are being made and continue to do so for many years.

Mr. Johnson explained that the Grand List growth this year is 0.93%, and their 10-year average is 0.98%. He also presented a 10-year history of the tax increase and mill rate. The mill rate is proposed to increase from 36.9 to 37.48. The CIP net estimated capital funding is amended from

the \$6.485 million presented at the Annual Town Meeting to \$6.125 million. Part of the funds he set aside is for sidewalk projects. Mr. Osgood is inclined to go to capital projects that are undesignated at this time because they are already spending a lot of money on sidewalks and it would allow for flexibility. Mr. Gullotta stated that there are other options, so he is interested in discussing further before taking action on this.

The Council took a brief recess before beginning their regular meeting agenda.

3. Public Comment.

Ms. Carroll read the written comment received, as listed on the Town website.

Deborah Harrod of 221 Country Club Road, stated that, as a lifelong resident of Glastonbury, she is delighted that councilmembers Gullotta and Cavanaugh have raised the possibility of expanding Glastonbury's existing historic and village districts in the town center and South Glastonbury.

Mr. Niland opened the floor for comments from attendees.

Elizabeth Drolet of 242 Hubbard Street, of also spoke on the Historic District, asking what the criteria councilmembers Gullotta and Cavanaugh used were to designate the proposed districts and what the educational, cultural, and economic values are that those particular districts would promote.

With no further comments, Mr. Niland closed the public comment session.

4. Special Reports. None

5. Old Business. None

6. New Business.

a. Discussion and possible action – Main Street sidewalks.

Mr. Johnson explained the previous options discussed about moving forward on this project. He noted that the third option would be a lower wall and moving only some of the utility poles. However, it is not clear that this option would work because it has not been fully vetted. He asked for direction from the Council on which way they would like to proceed so that they could put together more detail and a formal cost estimate from Eversource. The Council agreed by consensus for Mr. Johnson to pursue those next steps.

b. Discussion concerning satellite recycling program.

Mr. Johnson explained that there are two options: either to grin and bear it or simply shut down the site because of the repeated, sustained abuses. Sanitation Superintendent Mike Bisi explained that the program began in 1977 with four locations. For whatever reason, this site has become a

dump. Over time, they have tried many different methods to curb the abuse, but it seems to no avail. It has been very labor-intensive to go out there daily and get that material into recycling as opposed to trash. The best option at this time is that they eliminate the transfer station. Dr. Beckett pointed out that the area around it is wooded, so people may dump trash there, should this site be removed. He asked how they should approach it so that they do not continue to have a problem. Mr. Bisi stated that they would look at that, but they would rather clean up the area sans the satellite site.

Mr. Osgood is fine with removing the site, particularly if it is being abused. Mr. Niland stated that the amount of abuse there is staggering. However, he does not want to punish the people who use it in good faith. He suggested holding a public hearing to get public input on this. Ms. Carroll stated that she uses that site, and she believes that they should shut it down because the significant abuses there are ridiculous. If the resource is not used properly, it should be taken away. She does not feel that they need a public hearing because there have been countless updates and notices about it and the abuse continues to happen. Dr. Beckett agreed, stating that there is a full-time person just cleaning up the trash, which is a waste of town resources. Mr. Cavanaugh also uses the recycling facility and agrees that it should be shut down.

Mr. McChesney is in favor of a public hearing because they owe it to the people who use this facility to at least have a say before they make a decision. He stated that perhaps if they make it clear that this is the last stop for this recycling facility, it will have an impact into what is happening. Ms. Tanski stated that she usually defaults to hope, but she does not believe that they need a public hearing because the satellite site is not salvageable at this point. The financial cost and risk to their employees is too great. Mr. Gullotta remarked that he has had several conversations with senior citizens who want to continue to use this site and do not want to go to the transfer station. He agrees that the least they could do is allow those individuals the opportunity to have their say and then go to a vote.

Motion by: Mr. Niland

Seconded by: Mr. McChesney

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby holds a public hearing on the satellite recycling site at the corner of Hebron Avenue and Manchester Road.

Result: Motion failed {3-6-0}, with only councilmembers Niland, McChesney, and Gullotta voting in favor.

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council begin the closure process of the satellite recycling site at the corner of Hebron Avenue and Manchester Road.

Result: Motion passed {6-3-0}, with councilmembers Niland, McChesney, and Gullotta voting against.

c. Action on proposed Historic/Village Districts (refer to Historic District Commission).

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby refers to the Glastonbury Historic District Commission the proposal to establish new local Historic Districts or Village Districts as follows:

- *Main Street/New London Turnpike to South Glastonbury along Route 17 – Draghi Stand*
- *High Street to Dug Road and Ferry Lane*
- *Hubbard Street from Main easterly*

and the Commission is asked to evaluate this proposal and present its report and recommendations to the Council within six months of this referral, as described in a report by the Town Manager dated February 19, 2021.

Disc: Mr. Cavanaugh proposed amending the motion to distinguish between a historic district and a village district. He explained that the village district would be proposed to be referred to the TPZ, as the statute calls for. The Historic district is sent to the Historic District Commission. The village district proposal would be from Katz Hardware on Main Street to the beginning of the existing historic district (from Naubuc Avenue to Rankin Road).

Amendment by: Mr. Cavanaugh

Seconded by: Mr. Osgood

Disc: Mr. Cavanaugh explained that his reasoning for this amendment is that he does not want their downtown area to become more urban and less suburban and historical. Mr. Osgood stated that if the recommendation is to create a new district which does not come back to the Council, he will vote against it. Mr. Johnson clarified that the Council is the final zoning authority, so it would come back to the Council. Ms. Tanski will not support the amendment if the action will not return to the Council. She is concerned about the idea of beginning a project whose sole goal is to put more restrictions on commercial property owners. They have a very good zoning process and regulations in Town. A lot of the damaging actions happened decades ago.

Ms. Carroll stated that she comes from a town in Massachusetts which was basically one large historic district. It gave the Town an ongoing historic character and new build. The goal here is the preservation of that character. She suggested a councilmember be on the Plans Review subcommittee of TPZ, to help assuage the lack of communication on what gets approved there. Mr. Cavanaugh pointed out that the subcommittee is comprised of members of the TPZ, so he does not believe that councilmembers could be a part of it, though they could attend the meetings. He noted that he and Mr. Osgood are a part of the Joint Pad Subcommittee.

Dr. Beckett is not in favor of the village district here. If the Council has concerns for the TPZ, they can ask the Town Attorney for suggestions on a more harmonious look. They should do this over the whole historic district, not just over one or two blocks. Mr. Niland is also concerned with the character issue. If this is just a referral and it is coming back to the Council, then he will support it.

Mr. Cavanaugh offered a friendly amendment to his amendment that this be reviewed by the Town Attorney to determine whether the Council is the final authority, before sending it to the TPZ.

Mr. Niland asked if this will still require the buy-in of two-thirds of the people in that area. Mr. Gullotta stated that the Town Attorney will return to the Council with that information. Mr. Osgood stated that, instead of that action, they just ask the Town Attorney for their opinion first, then discuss how to move forward. Ms. Carroll agreed. Mr. Cavanaugh agreed to withdraw his amendment and Mr. Osgood agreed to withdraw his second. Ms. Carroll also agreed to withdraw her original motion and Dr. Beckett agreed to withdraw his second. A new motion was proposed.

Motion by: Mr. Cavanaugh

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby requests that the Town Attorney review Connecticut General Statute 8-2J to determine if the Town Council is the final zoning authority on village districts, and what they can and cannot prescribe in the village district zones.

Disc: Mr. Cavanaugh requested that, when the Town Attorney reviews the document, that it be sent to the Council first for review. Mr. Johnson agreed to do so. Mr. McChesney was originally concerned that a lot of this seemed nebulous, so he is pleased that they will get the answers that they need before taking action.

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

Motion by: Mr. Cavanaugh

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby refers to the Historic District Commission the extension of the historic district from Hubbard Street, from Main Street to Glastonbury High School.

Disc: Mr. Cavanaugh stated that the same thoughts and reasoning applies in this motion. He wants to have the commission present a report and recommendation to the Council. He addressed the public comment made by Ms. Drolet from Hubbard Street. He believes that her property is too far back to be included in a historic district. Ms. Tanski asked her colleagues what the requirements are for the historic district as they go through this process, and at which point are the homeowners advised and brought into the process. Mr. Johnson replied that there is nothing that restricts the Historic District Commission to hold a public hearing right from the start, which might be a reasonable first step to see what the homeowners have to say.

Amendment by: Ms. Tanski

Seconded by: Mr. Osgood

BE IT RESOLVED that the Glastonbury Town Council include a request of the Historic District Commission that they mail a letter to the affected homeowners upon taking up this inquiry.

Disc: Mr. Osgood stated that the commission might save themselves a lot of time if they receive a preponderance of people who do not want their homes to be included. Mr. Cavanaugh stated that they all have their roles. They should just refer this action to the Historic District and let them have their own sovereignty on this issue. Ms. Carroll thinks that notifying homeowners is appropriate. Dr. Beckett stated that it is perfectly appropriate to ask the Historic District Commission if there are other areas that are appropriate to include for the historic district and hear the public's opinions, but he agrees with Mr. Cavanaugh's statement that the commission needs their independence to do what they need to do. Mr. McChesney asked when the affected public would be notified in this process. Mr. Johnson stated that it will come down to how the Council and the Historic District Commission would choose to go forward. Mr. McChesney supports notifying the residents, as does Mr. Niland.

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

Result: Original motion passed unanimously {9-0-0}.

- d. Action on potential land acquisition (refer to Town Plan and Zoning and Board of Finance; set public hearing). *On hold***
- e. Action to schedule public information hearing – proposed communication tower off Sequin Drive.**

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby schedules a public information hearing for 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 27, 2021 through Zoom Video Conferencing to hear public comment concerning the proposal by ARX Wireless Infrastructure LLC to construct a communication tower on a site located off Sequin Drive, as described in a report by the Town Manager dated February 19, 2021.

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

7. Consent Calendar.

- a. Action on FY 2021 Public Health Emergency Preparedness Grant - \$22,453.**

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

BE IT RESOLVED, that Richard J. Johnson, Town Manager, is authorized to make, execute, and approve on behalf of the Town of Glastonbury, any and all contracts or amendments thereof with the Capital Region Council of Government for the FY 2021 Public Health Emergency Preparedness Grant.

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

8. Town Manager's Report.

Mr. Johnson explained that his report is straightforward, and he is open to questions. Mr.

Cavanaugh inquired about the Dairy Queen situation. Mr. Johnson explained the history, noting that a waiver was granted by Town staff that was appropriate with an escrow agreement, but the applicant did not follow the instructions of Town staff when he paved the lot before putting in the external holding tank. Mr. Cavanaugh asked Mr. Johnson to keep an eye on this and, in particular, what the signage approval is for Main Street. Mr. Johnson stated that has made it clear that there will be no certificate of occupancy issued until all of the steps are followed, but he will reconfirm. Ms. Carroll asked what people should do about the coyotes off of Bell Street who have taken out a few dogs. Mr. Johnson stated that he will talk to the Animal Control officer and possibly DEEP to see how they can get the word out to homeowners. Mr. Niland noted that the wastewater numbers are included on the Town website, but he asked if they could also be included in the Town Manager report. Mr. Johnson agreed to do so.

9. Committee Reports.

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

10. Communications.

- a. Letter from Stephen Becker, EDD regarding public meetings.**

11. Minutes.

- a. Minutes of February 9, 2021 Regular Meeting.**

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

Result: Minutes were accepted unanimously {9-0-0}.

12. Appointments and Resignations.

- a. Appointment of Beth Hillson to the Commission on Aging (D-2023).**
- b. Appointment of Denise Weeks to the Commission on Aging (D-2023).**
- c. Appointment of Kevin Kuzla to the Human Relations Commission (R-2023)**

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Dr. Beckett

Result: The appointments were accepted unanimously {9-0-0}.

13. Executive Session.

- a. Potential land acquisition.**
- b. Personnel matter.**

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Osgood

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby enters into executive session to discuss a potential land acquisition and a personnel matter at 9:52 P.M.

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

Present for the Executive Session item were council members, Mr. Tom Gullotta, Chairman, Mr. Lawrence Niland, Vice Chairman, Dr. 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, which ended at 10:35 P.M.

Meeting adjourned at 10:36 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Lilly Torosyan

Lilly Torosyan
Recording Clerk

Thomas Gullotta
Chairman