

**GLASTONBURY TOWN COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 2021**

The Glastonbury Town Council with Town Manager, Richard J. Johnson, Doug Foyle of the Board of Education, and Superintendent Alan Bookman, in attendance, held a Special Meeting at 6:00 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. Mary LaChance  
Ms. Deborah A. Carroll  
Mr. Whit C. Osgood  
Mr. Jacob McChesney  
Ms. Lillian Tanski  
Mr. Kurt P. Cavanaugh {excused}

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

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

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

**a. Budget reviews for Fiscal Year 2021-2022:**

**•Presentation and discussion concerning proposed Board of Education Budget.**

BOE Chairman Doug Foyle stated that there is enormous uncertainty in the budget for the next year, due to the pandemic. He noted that they had overestimated the amount of savings in personnel turnover by \$400,000. They will make up for the shortfall by maneuvering their budget. Superintendent Alan Bookman explained that the Board approved a budget of 2.07%, of which 1.81% is in salaries, and benefits are 0.13%, which is quite low. At this stage, the Board has lowered the increase in health care for next year to 0.4%, which they are okay with because they have saved a great deal of money this year in their health insurance reserve fund. Dr. Bookman noted that salary count was also short by about \$140,000. Combined with the personnel turnover shortfall, there are \$540,000 of added costs that need to be met, which they

intend to do with the least amount of harm done to students and their education. Dr. Bookman then reviewed their savings, which are \$48,000 in lease and \$130,000 in electricity.

Mr. Osgood asked how much the pension reduction is. Mr. Johnson replied it is a quarter of a percent, at \$182,279. Ms. Tanski stated that ongoing yearly funding for the high school STEAM project was to be fundraised through private sources. She asked what the goal is for spending in the current and next year's budget. Dr. Foyle stated that they will present a special report Monday night on the STEAM program. Dr. Bookman explained that part of that money was used for architectural purposes, but they also put money in the operating budget for equipment for the STEAM labs because they were not able to fundraise for it this year. As soon as COVID-19 is on the backburner, they fully intend to have their committee do that fundraising work.

Mr. Niland asked about the savings due to students not going into school every day. Dr. Bookman stated that they are waiting for the dust to settle on that, so they do not have set numbers to report on yet. Mr. Niland remarked that the number of teacher retirements is astounding. Dr. Bookman stated that this year ties for the least number of retirements in a year. Ms. LaChance suggested they view the lack of retirements this year as a one-time expense/savings. Dr. Beckett asked how much they grew in health care over the year before. Dr. Bookman stated that they saw a growth of about \$3-4 million this year, which is quite large, but they try to flatten out the increases. Dr. Foyle added that, over the last five years, they have averaged \$100,000 growth in the reserve per year. He explained that the Board is looking for guidance on how aggressively they should manage this risk-reward, in the context of the overall Town budget.

Dr. Beckett asked what they are basing most of their budgeting on, because the past year was exceptional, due to COVID-19. Dr. Bookman stated that they have looked at the 2018-19 budget cycle, and they have made a lot of cuts, such as purchasing only four school buses instead of five or six. Ms. Carroll asked what will be cut, due to the shortfalls discussed combined with the BOF's reduction to the BOE budget. Dr. Bookman stated that they will nickel and dime this, but he cannot say exactly what they will cut. Mr. Gullotta commented that the PPE will be reimbursed, so he does not understand why it is repeatedly brought up as an expense. Dr. Bookman clarified that there is a grant that will partially cover PPE expenses, but the full amount spent will not be reimbursed.

Mr. Osgood asked what the purpose is of the new administrative position of the Diversity Inclusion Officer. Dr. Foyle explained that after George Floyd's murder, they signed on to combat racism and promote diversity, and a new position was identified to work on those areas. He noted that 40% of Fortune 500 companies have a comparable position, and several of their peers in central Connecticut already have them. The Board thinks that the position is a great step forward. Dr. Bookman added that this is not a temporary position, and it is long overdue.

Mr. Osgood asked for the total cost plus the benefits. Dr. Bookman replied, \$142,000 for the salary + \$16-18,000 on average for the benefits, so about \$160,000 total, not including retirement, which they may choose to opt out of. Ms. LaChance is happy to see this position, as well as a school psychologist position, in the budget this year, considering the tolls that the pandemic has taken on children's mental health. Ms. Carroll seconded, adding that it is fundamental to have someone whose sole job is this task because just a consultant is not enough. Dr. Foyle noted that the person filling the position will provide a yearly report.

Ms. Tanski asked what impact they have seen in the operating budget in food services this year. Dr. Bookman stated that they are not covering the cost of reimbursements for those meals, so there will be about a \$350,000 shortfall in the food service account, which they will have to make up.

**• Discussion concerning questions or unfinished business regarding Town Operations, Debt & Transfer, Revenues & Transfers, Capital Reserve Fund, Capital Improvement Program and other budget related topics (as applicable). *None***

**4. Adjournment.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:04 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

**Lilly Torosyan**

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Recording Clerk

Thomas Gullotta

Chairman