

**GLASTONBURY TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2022**

The Glastonbury Town Council with Town Manager, Richard J. Johnson, in attendance, held a Special Meeting at 6:30 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
Ms. Deborah A. Carroll
Mr. Kurt P. Cavanaugh
Mr. John Cavanna
Ms. Mary LaChance
Mr. Jacob McChesney
Mr. Whit Osgood
Ms. Jennifer Wang

a. Pledge of Allegiance *Led by Jennifer Wang*

2. Public Communication and Petitions pertaining to the Call.

Stephan Maksymiuk of 275 Forest Lane, gave an update on the current situation in Ukraine. He asked the Council to adopt a resolution in support of the Ukrainian people and the territorial integrity of their nation. He also asked the Council to reach out to Ukrainian constituents to ask if they are okay. He then called on residents to donate to the humanitarian effort in Ukraine.

3. Special Business as contained in the Call.

a. Budget Reviews for Fiscal Year 2022-2023:

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

BOE Chairman Doug Foyle explained that the proposed budget increase of 3.25% is less than half of the inflation rate which is 7%. Superintendent Alan Bookman stated that the biggest line item is salary, which cannot be reduced. Supplies, professional development, athletic uniforms, technology software, and equipment were all reduced. The BOF has recommended a \$300,000 reduction. He then responded to questions that were sent by the Town Manager:

- LINKS program: The number of students in the program varies. Currently, there are 13 students, with two more coming in next week.
- Naubuc School project: He has been assured by personnel that there will not be cost overruns. The BOE will not return to request more funding. Dr. Foyle added that the

BOE believes that the \$3.2 million will suffice. If the project ends up costing more, they have set aside a contingency in the 1% fund to cover the difference.

- 1% fund: For the past several years, there has been a contribution to the 1% fund. In recent years, the fund has grown larger because of the challenges posed by the pandemic. However, that is a temporary situation. They plan to resume all events in the springtime.
- Student Support Centers (SSC): Staffing will consist of either certified social workers or counselors. The positions are for 10 months, not 12 months. For more information, the PTSO conducted a webinar on SSCs, which is available on the BOE website. Dr. Foyle added that most money in the 1% fund is expended within one year. However, the SSCs were an exception this year.

Mr. Gullotta believes that there is the potential for overlap between the SSCs and the Town's Youth and Family Services (YFS). He asked that the BOE memorialize a written agreement with the Town Manager, stating that the two entities have agreed to limit overlap as much as possible. He also noted that he watched the webinar on the SSCs and listened intently about comments on mental health issues in elementary schools. He asked Mr. Johnson to revisit the Town budget to expand the Youth Service Bureau budget to increase mental health services to elementary schools in town. Dr. Bookman stated that Glastonbury schools have worked collaboratively with YFS for decades. He will sign a written agreement, as long as the BOE is agreeable. Dr. Foyle also supports Mr. Gullotta's suggestion to expand this effort out to the elementary schools.

Ms. Carroll welcomes the idea of expanding mental health support in elementary schools. If there is a bandwidth for that through YFS, she thinks that would be a great asset with the SSCs. Mr. Cavanaugh supports Mr. Gullotta's idea so that services are not duplicated. He asked if the BOE budget would be reduced this year. Mr. Gullotta replied, not this year because there are no SSCs in the elementary schools, but it could bring down costs in future years by adding efficiency. Mr. Niland pointed out that YFS is understaffed and has a waiting list. He asked if adding a staff member and placing them in schools would be feasible. Mr. Johnson explained that it is difficult to find support during these challenging times. However, they are looking to add a full-time clinical social worker with a focus on the elementary schools.

Ms. Wang is struck by this coming up at this point in the budget process. While she appreciates the discussion, some of these issues were around before the pandemic, and they are not going to go away in the next budget cycle. She asked that, going forward, the two separate branches of government collaborate to support young people. Dr. Foyle clarified that the issue of mental health support in the elementary level is something that just came to the Board's attention recently. What is being discussed is flowing more resources into an existing program for a need that will not go away soon. Mr. McChesney echoed Ms. Wang. He wants to ensure that more conversations are held over the next year or so on how to evolve their approach to meet the mental health needs of youth in town.

Mr. Cavanaugh asked how much the contingency is for the Naubuc School project. Dr. Foyle replied, \$100,000. Mr. Cavanaugh asked if the BOE contacted the State when formulating the project and dollar amount for the asbestos abatement. Dr. Bookman stated no, an architectural firm called Silver Petrucelli & Associates conducted the feasibility study. Their only contact with the State has been to ensure that the project is eligible for reimbursement. Mr. Cavanaugh asked

if rising inflation poses a concern. Dr. Foyle noted that there is an inflation number built into the \$3.2 million and the \$100,000 contingency. Mr. Cavanna asked how the project would be funded, should the contingency not be enough. Dr. Foyle stated that they would look to get it out of gains on operations at the end of the fiscal year as a one-time expenditure. Dr. Bookman added that there is no expectation that the number will be large. It will be manageable within the budget.

While Mr. Niland is pleased that there will be an increase in Open Choice seats, Glastonbury is still dramatically below other equivalent towns in their number. He asked if more students could be brought in, and what the net cost per pupil is. Dr. Foyle explained that in late 2020, nine Open Choice students entered kindergarten. The following year, they increased that number to ten students and added one student in first grade. They have considered other grades as well but have found that students entering in later years have a harder time adjusting to the rigor of the academic work in Glastonbury schools. He pointed out that research shows that more diverse classrooms yield better learning outcomes for students.

Dr. Bookman stated that they receive \$3,000 per student from the State, but the per pupil cost is about \$9,000. He noted that the \$3,000 could change, as the State could scale it to \$4,000 or something else. Dr. Bookman added that it does not make sense for the BOE to make any changes until the State decides how they will proceed in the fall. While Ms. Carroll supports expanding the Open Choice program, she takes issue with the comment that children beyond grade 1 struggle with transitioning into a new school/district. She has a hard time believing that, given how much turnover there is with children in Glastonbury schools. Dr. Foyle clarified that it is not about a social transition, but the rigor of the work, which many students may not be prepared for, depending on their academic background.

- **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).**

Mr. Gullotta stated that there has been discussion about how to pay for the Naubuc School project. He asked which method would produce the greatest return to Glastonbury so that there would be additional funds to spend in CIP. Mr. Johnson pointed out that the Governor is allocating \$90 million to towns for heating, cooling, and ventilation improvements in schools. Regarding the Naubuc School project, he will present two funding scenarios to the Council:

- Taking out the \$700,000 and funding the entire project with the \$3.2 million would maximize the 33.57% State grant reimbursement.
- Funding the entire project by ARPA money will receive no reimbursement from the State. Other projects that would have been funded by ARPA would be funded by the Capital Reserve Fund.

Mr. Cavanna suggested that the \$280,000 for pickleball courts be moved to transition a tennis court into a pickleball court and allocate more funding to the dog pound. Mr. Cavanaugh pointed out that tennis courts are not adaptable for pickleball courts. Mr. Johnson added that the orientation of the two courts is different. He is also not certain that the Town would save a lot of

money doing that. In that case, Mr. Cavanna supports moving the totality of the funds into the dog pound instead. Ms. LaChance supports both the pickleball project and the dog pound, noting that it is not an either/or situation. Mr. Niland agreed that the two are not mutually exclusive. He does not want to take away anything from seniors or dogs. Ms. Carroll concurred. Ms. Wang noted that pickleball is a quickly growing sport. If the project proceeds, she supports creating an indoor court so that the use could be year-round. Mr. Osgood noted that there is indoor pickleball at Glastonbury Tennis Club, but people play the sport outdoors year-round. He does not support taking a tennis court out of operation, as it is another facility that Glastonbury does not have enough of. Mr. Niland agreed. He referred to last month's Glastonbury Life, which did a story on pickleball, calling it the fastest-growing sport in the country.

Mr. Osgood asked about the size of the dog pound. Mr. Johnson stated that the new facility would be larger than the current one. He will know the exact amount soon. Mr. Osgood asked what the protocols are for the dog pound. Mr. Johnson will provide that soon, as well. Mr. Osgood is inclined to save taxpayers money by funding the Naubuc School project entirely through ARPA monies. This way, the Town would spend only \$10 million instead of \$13 million. Ms. LaChance remarked that that is a false comparison. Funding the project entirely through ARPA is a worse deal because it would lose out on the State reimbursement.

4. Adjournment.

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby adjourns their Special Meeting of March 1, 2022, at 7:47 pm.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Lilly Torosyan

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Recording Clerk

Thomas Gullotta

Chairman