

**GLASTONBURY TOWN COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2023**

The Glastonbury Town Council with Town Manager, Richard J. Johnson, in attendance, held a Regular Meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Town Hall at 2155 Main Street, with the option for 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 Paul Cavanna***

**2. Public Comment.**

***Kerry Warren of 173 Tall Timbers Road***, supports the BOE's proposed two turf fields. State and federal agencies have concluded that there are no elevated health risks from playing on artificial turf. The British Journal of Sports Medicine did not find any discernible difference in injuries from artificial turf versus natural grass fields. There is a big need for sports fields in Glastonbury. This proposal to bring in two additional fields will greatly increase equity to sports, which is also beneficial for students' mental health.

***Tom Metzner of 406 George Town Drive***, asked the Council to support House Bill 6664 to forestall building new waste energy capacity. He encouraged support of EPR which will save money and increase the recycling program. He also provided an update on the nips situation. The Town does not have the authority to ban the sale of nips. He supports changing state law to allow towns to decide whether to ban the sale of nips going forward.

***Pasha Metzner of 406 George Town Drive***, stated that he sees a lot of nips on the road when he rides his bike around town. He also asked council members to petition to change the state law prohibiting towns from banning the sale of nips.

***Ray McFall of 40 Bidwell Street***, advocated for artificial turf fields at the high school, which he argued are safe, cost effective, and environmentally sound. Chrome rubber fields have been tested more than other products and have been deemed to be safe. He shared various quotes and

studies to support his points. The authority on the matter has concluded that artificial turf is safe for outdoor use and borderline indoor use. The current turf at the high school cannot keep up with overwhelming demand, so new fields are sorely needed.

**Laurie Paternoster of 48 Chatham Hill**, was here a couple weeks ago to urge the Town to purchase the Rose property, which they did. She supports the Draghis continuing to farm the property.

**Michael Draghi of 121 Belltown Road**, has been the farm manager of Rose's Berry Farm for 14 years. He would like to continue farming the land. He approves the Town's purchase of the property, but requests to not proceed with an RFP. Instead, he asked the Town to hold a couple meetings to discuss the best way forward in preserving the farm's legacy. He hopes that the change of use possibilities will not include anything other than farming and open space.

**Bruce Bowman of 62 Morgan Drive**, agrees that youth need to participate in sports. However, this is a time of climate change and Glastonbury is a climate change leader with a sustainable purchasing plan. Artificial turf fields are a fossil fuel product. He advocates to not proceed with additional artificial turf fields at the high school.

**Al Gondek of 88 Tryon Street**, is in full support of the Town purchasing Rose's Berry Farm because farmland is disappearing rapidly. He supports Mike Draghi's proposal to run the property.

**Lisa Eldridge of 108 South Mill Drive**, argued that artificial turf fields are 40,000 pounds of plastic, and the Town does not need more plastic. She is against the turf field proposal.

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

**Daniel Callaghan of 189 Hampshire Drive**, has met with the Environmental Planner regarding the proposed turf field at the high school. They reviewed the adjacent private conservation easement, part of which is on his property. A 2010 study revealed a real threat to marine organisms from turf stormwater runoff to adjacent small watercourses. This easement-protected watercourse is downhill and less than 300 feet from the proposed turf site. He asked the Council to carefully consider the implications of a potential breach of the conservation easement agreement, which is the Town's responsibility to enforce.

**Brendan Cummings of 28 Littel Acres Road**, supports the artificial turf field project, explaining that modern turf fields are the norm in the state and across the country at all levels. They are cost-effective, pesticide-free, increase playing time, decrease water usage, and reduce injuries. He also supports the proposed on-campus weight-room at GHS because it will provide accessible, equal access for all students. He urged the Council to approve both projects, which will modernize GHS and benefit the student population and the overall community.

**Theresa Velenzas of 91 Grandview Drive**, urged the Council to consider the environmental impact of the proposed artificial turf fields project. The BOE says that those against artificial turf are influenced by seed companies, yet there is a legal filing against turf companies with the

Federal Trade Commission about deceptive marketing practices. She sees no such complaints against proponents of organically maintained fields. In addition, the plastic “blades” coating the fields are found to contain PFAS, which the EPA has deemed no amount to be safe. There are even suggested precautions for exposure to these fields. She urged the Council to at least pause this project so that it can be reviewed thoroughly.

***Lisa Mendum of 45 Candlewood Road***, is against the artificial turf project. Superintendent Dr. Bookman has implied that injuries, soil and groundwater pollution, off-gassing of methane, and PFAs are not an issue. For decades, the scientific, medical, and environmental community have been finding serious concerns, prompting towns across the country to ban installation of turf fields. Installing petrochemical-derived plastic turf fields that pollute undermines Glastonbury's climate leadership award and sustainable purchasing policy. Turf fields last 8-10 years, so \$1.5 million is a massive amount to spend on something with such a short lifespan. Not a single facility in the US is able to recycle a turf field. The CIP workshop budget showed that no money is needed for added maintenance or disposal, but this is not true. Children deserve upgraded, safe, natural grass fields, and more should be added, if needed.

***Mark Landers of 22 Carriage Drive***, believes that the installation of a weight room and addition of a full-size turf field at GHS is long overdue. The 2023 NICHE School Rankings recently ranked GHS as the second-best school district for student athletes, which is an amazing accomplishment, considering the current state of their facilities. The BOE has made health and wellness a top priority for all students. It is time that the Town works in partnership to ensure that students have the best resources and facilities to enhance their character, as well as physical and mental health.

***Pamela Lockard of 10 Southgate Drive***, stated that the technology for artificial turf fields is new and not well-researched. Numerous NFL players have come out against them because of the increased risk and severity of injuries. Eventually, turf fields will need to be replaced and will end up in a landfill. She asked to vote against CIP money going to artificial turf fields.

### **3. Special Reports.**

#### **a. Report on October 1, 2022 Grand List.**

Ms. Lintereur reviewed the highlights of the report. The list was signed on January 31 with an overall increase of 21%. Real estate increased by 23% while supply remained the same. The average increase in residential was 28% and the average increase in commercial/industrial was 8.6%. The swift rise in residential prices creates a shift of 3.3% of the tax burden, moving onto residential properties from commercial properties. Residential sales prices have exceeded 10% growth for two consecutive years in Glastonbury. The 14% increase in personal property was mostly due to one new business. Mr. Gullotta asked, if one's house assessment were to increase by 20%, what would the change in their tax bill be. Ms. Lintereur stated that the breakeven point is about 18-19%, when the influence of the property revaluation will largely go away. Mr. Johnson added that the presented budget would increase taxes about 1.07%. Everything else would be the result of the property revaluation.

#### **b. Report on clinical counseling services.**

Lori LaCapra is the Director of Youth and Family Services. She explained that there has been a dramatic increase in referrals for services, both through the schools and the community at large. Their current caseload is about 35 clients per clinician, with about 225 active clinical cases in the agency, and a waiting list of about 20-25 students. YFS has provided a full-time clinician at Smith School and GHS, and a part-time clinician at all the other schools. This year, they have added two full-time clinical positions: one clinician and one clinical supervisor to help with ongoing supervision of staff to navigate difficult cases.

Mr. Osgood asked if it would be better to allocate these funds to the schools and have them provide the social services. Ms. LaCapra explained that they have had that conversation. The need is so great, that schools have asked YFS to provide social services. Ms. Carroll asked if they are able to find enough clinicians to fill the spots they need. Ms. LaCapra explained that there is a shortage of mental health professionals who are interested in working in-person. They have recently hired an outreach worker in the high school. Keeping up with the waiting list is a very labor-intensive process.

Mr. Cavanna asked what the root cause of this youth mental health crisis is. Ms. LaCapra replied, it is a number of factors. There is a heightened awareness about therapy and an increased pressure to excel, often driven by social media. COVID-19 increased isolation and the inability to practice skills. The post-pandemic era has not shown a slowdown in mental health concerns. There has also been an increase in substance use. Mr. Niland asked how the student support centers at the high school are working out. Ms. LaCapra stated that there are three of them: at GHS, Gideon Welles, and Smith Middle School. They are still gathering data because it has only been a year, but the centers have been successful.

Ms. Wang asked if there is the potential to increase access to activities that would off-ramp the need for clinical services. Ms. LaCapra iterated that prevention is key, and YFS has implemented several initiatives at different levels, such as peer mediation and community giveback programs. After-school programs and programs that help develop and practice socialization skills are important. Mr. Gullotta pointed out that school staff run on a 10-month contract, whereas YFS staff run on a 12-month contract, which is good for youth because mental health does not stop in the summer. YFS's creative services program has made a difference in thousands of kids' lives, so prevention is the preferable way.

**4. Old Business.           None**

**5. New Business.**

**a. Action on letter to State Legislators – pending and proposed projects.**

***Motion by:*** Ms. Carroll

***Seconded by:*** Mr. Cavanaugh

*BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby approves the attached letter dated February 14, 2023 to Senator Rahman and Representatives Barry, Doucette, and Weir concerning State DOT projects in Glastonbury, as described in a report by the Town Manager dated February 10, 2023.*

*Note: Letter dated February 14, 2023 attached.*

**Disc:** Mr. McChesney hopes that this letter will result in a meeting between town officials, state representatives, and the DOT to resolve issues. Mr. Osgood worries that going to their legislators without specific comments might upset the DOT, as the Town continues negotiations with them on multiple issues. Mr. Johnson explained that the Town presented the roundabout on Buttonball Lane and Main Street, which the DOT stated they would not consider. Regarding the roundabout at New London Turnpike, they will talk to DOT staff over the next couple days. The first steps should be to talk with state representatives and get their take on it. Mr. McChesney commented that the discussions with DOT on a lot of topics just stopped. On two projects, DOT told them what they are going to do, so he is not worried about upsetting them by contacting their representatives.

**Result:** Motion passed {8-1-0}, with Mr. Osgood voting against.

## **PUBLIC HEARING:**

### **NO. 1 ACTION ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO TOWN CODE ARTICLE XVI, RESERVE FOR LAND ACQUISITION AND PRESERVATION, SECTION 2-287(A) THE TYPES OF LAND TO BE CONSIDERED FOR ACQUISITION (TABLED FROM JANUARY 24, 2023).**

**Motion by:** Ms. Carroll

**Seconded by:** Mr. Cavanaugh

*BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby untables the motion.*

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

Mr. Johnson explained that the Town Attorney has reviewed this and had a concern about the language going back retroactively. This motion is drafted for acquisitions going forward.

There were no comments from the public.

Mr. Osgood stated that they went to the voters with specific language, which was passed 2:1. He sees no reason to change the language, but if they do, then he suggested doing so prior to the next referendum. Mr. Cavanna countered that the voters knew that this was for open space and farmland preservation. He does not believe that voters ever would have anticipated the municipal use being there. He supports changing the language. Mr. Niland pointed out that this language is for acquisitions going forward, not backward, so he supports the change.

Mr. Osgood explained that the intent of the St. Paul's acquisition was to control the development of that site, not to preserve open space. If a similar type of acquisition came up now, it would not pass. Mr. Gullotta disagreed. Mr. Johnson explained that if the Council enacted the ordinance as now proposed, and there was a parcel that fell outside of that, they would allocate other resources to that purpose. Mr. McChesney was concerned that taking out the municipal uses would mean that the Town would be unable to conduct a deal like the one with St. Paul. They have received

assurances that these changes will not prevent such deals. The other discussion was that the Council would go through the process of holding a public hearing and allocating funds to reimburse the land use fund for that land. Personally, he is comfortable with preserving this as an open space land purchase fund.

**Motion by:** Ms. Carroll

**Seconded by:** Mr. Cavanaugh

*BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby approves amendment to Town Code Article XVI, Reserve for Land Acquisition and Preservation, Section 2-287 (a) “The types of land to be considered for acquisition and preservation” as follows:*

1. *(a)(1) – delete “as outlined in the park and recreation plan of development”;*
2. *(a)(2) – delete in entirety;*
3. *(a)(4) – add “and/or” between “historical” and “archeological”;*
4. *(a)(6) – delete in entirety;*

*all, as described in a report by the Town Manager dated February 10, 2023 and as recommended by the Council Policy & Ordinance Review Subcommittee. Said amendment shall be effective March 13, 2023.*

**Result:** Motion passed {8-1-0}, with Mr. Osgood voting against.

**b. Action to appoint Town Manager and authorize Council Chairman to execute Employment Agreement.**

**Motion by:** Ms. Carroll

**Seconded by:** Mr. Cavanaugh

*BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby appoints Jonathan Luiz to the position of Town Manager effective March 31, 2023 through December 31, 2026 and authorizes the Council Chairman to execute the Formal Employment Agreement for this appointment.*

**Disc:** Mr. Niland thanked all the candidates who applied. He looks forward to Mr. Luiz starting soon. Ms. Carroll is thrilled and yet very sad that it will be the end of Mr. Johnson’s exceptional tenure. Mr. McChesney agreed. Ms. Wang thanked all who engaged in the hiring process. Mr. Cavanaugh’s comments will be presented at the February 28 meeting, when Mr. Luiz is presented to the public. Ms. LaChance thanked Town Staff for their help in this process. Mr. Gullotta stated that he and Mr. Johnson have known each other for over 40 years. Tonight is bittersweet.

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

**6. Consent Calendar.                      None**

**7. Town Manager’s Report.**

Mr. Johnson stated that the budget workshop will be on February 28 at 6:00 P.M. The Education Workshop is scheduled for March 1. He asked whether the Council would like to start at 6:00

P.M. or 6:30 P.M. that night. The Council voted for 6:00 P.M. He then noted that the National Night Out program is scheduled for August 1 at the RCC. The next review of the Capital Program will be on February 28. The Governor’s proposals for ESC and the motor vehicle grants increase. He noted that there could be a potential for a revenue cliff in FY25.

Mr. Niland asked to provide the slides that were distributed to the BOF. Mr. Johnson agreed to do so. Mr. Cavanna asked about changing the rules regarding parking of commercial vehicles on residential driveways. Mr. Johnson will provide an update at the February 28 meeting. Ms. Carroll thanked the Parks and Recreation Department for continuing to offer open gym all summer. Mr. McChesney asked if the new Library Director has been hired yet. Mr. Johnson replied yes, she starts on February 27. Mr. McChesney asked if the library can encourage inter-departmental organizations to create directed programming. Mr. Johnson explained that work is in progress to establish a cross-functional team – Library, Youth & Family Services, Recreation and Senior Services for programming at the Library and new Makerspace. Mr. McChesney asked for an update on the pollinator pathways. Mr. Johnson will ask the Rotary Club.

Mr. Cavanaugh asked if the CGS 8-30g proposal on Krieger Lane was originally withdrawn and then resubmitted. Mr. Johnson does not recall it being redrawn. He thinks that it was on hold, but he will confirm and report back. Mr. Osgood thought that it is not a permitted use because the project is not located in an industrial zone. Mr. Johnson explained that state funding has been approved. Because of that, the applicant has argued that it would supersede the opinion of the Town Attorney. They have asked the applicant’s counsel to provide more information on the basis of that decision. Mr. Osgood asked what will happen if the Town does not like what their attorney says. Mr. Johnson stated that the Town Attorney will advise the Town as to what their review is.

Mr. Osgood asked if the Naubuc School project will not go out to bid until June. Mr. Johnson explained that they need the typical notwithstanding language. The BOE is hoping to get the state to sign off on the plans and acquire the notwithstanding language so that they do not have to wait until June to go out to bid. Mr. Osgood asked the BOE to provide cost estimate plans before moving forward. Mr. Gullotta asked about the use of the St. Paul’s property for potential community gardens. Mr. Johnson stated that they do “brush hog” that site periodically. It is on the radar screen to become a community garden. Ms. LaChance asked when the Strawberry Moon Festival is coming back. Mr. Johnson will inquire.

## **8. Committee Reports.**

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

Mr. Niland explained that CRCOG discussed a new level of the Sustainable Initiative to strive for. They also discussed regionalization opportunities which would provide an opportunity to save taxpayers money. Mr. Johnson is aware of the Gold Level and explained that the Town is working towards it. He has yet to see a report confirming how the regionalization initiatives will

save money.

**9. Communications.**

- a. Thank you letter from Glastonbury MLK Community Initiative.**

**10. Minutes.**

- a. Minutes (Amended) of January 19, 2023 Special Meeting (CIP Workshop).**

*Motion by:* Ms. Carroll

*Seconded by:* Mr. Cavanaugh

*Disc:* Mr. Osgood stated that, on page four, the BOE Chairman is quoted as saying that the Naubuc project is out for bid, but that is incorrect. It will go out to bid this summer. Mr. McChesney countered that one cannot change what was said at the meeting. Mr. Johnson agreed.

*Result:* Amended minutes approved unanimously {9-0-0}.

- b. Minutes (Amended) of January 24, 2023 Special Meeting (Annual Town Meeting).**

*Motion by:* Ms. Carroll

*Seconded by:* Mr. Cavanaugh

*Result:* Amended minutes approved unanimously {9-0-0}.

- c. Minutes (Amended) of January 24, 2023 Regular Meeting.**

*Motion by:* Ms. Carroll

*Seconded by:* Mr. Cavanaugh

*Result:* Amended minutes approved unanimously {9-0-0}.

**11. Appointments and Resignations.**

- a. Reappointment of Geoffrey Dellenbaugh to the Historic District Commission (D-2028).**
- b. Appointment of John Langmaid as a regular member (from alternate) to the Historic District Commission (D-2028).**
- c. Reappointment of Barbara Theurkauf to the Historic District Commission (R-2028).**
- d. Reappointment of Henry von Wodtke to the Historic District Commission (R-2028).**
- e. Resignation of Matthew Saunig from the Economic Development Commission (D-2023).**
- f. Appointment of David Grady to the Historic District Commission (Alternate, D-2023)**

*Motion by:* Ms. Carroll

*Seconded by:* Mr. Cavanaugh

*Result:* Appointments, reappointments, and resignations all approved unanimously {9-0-0}.



**12. Executive Session.**

- a. Potential land acquisition.**
- b. Review of Developer Qualifications and proposals.**
- c. Draft terms and conditions – RFP Matson Hill parcel.**
- d. Personnel matter – Town Manager.**

**Motion by:** Ms. Carroll

**Seconded by:** Mr. Cavanaugh

*BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby enters into executive session to discuss a potential land acquisition, review of developer qualifications and proposals, draft terms and conditions - RFP Matson Hill parcel, and a personnel matter - Town Manager, at 8:47 P.M.*

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

*Present for the Executive Session items were council members, Mr. Tom Gullotta, Chairman, Mr. Lawrence Niland, Vice Chairman, Mr. Kurt Cavanaugh, Ms. Deborah Carroll, Mr. John Cavanna, Ms. Mary LaChance, Mr. Jake McChesney, Mr. Whit Osgood, and Ms. Jennifer Wang, with Town Manager, Richard J. Johnson.*

The Executive Session ended at 9:30 P.M. No votes were taken following the Executive Session.

The meeting adjourned at 9:31 P.M.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Lilly Torosyan**

**Lilly Torosyan**

**Recording Clerk**

**Thomas Gullotta**

**Chairman**