

**GLASTONBURY TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2023**

The Glastonbury Town Council with Town Manager, Richard J. Johnson, in attendance, held a Special Meeting at 7:00 p.m. in Community Room B of the Riverfront Community Center, at 300 Welles 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 {participated via Zoom video conferencing}

Mr. Jacob McChesney

Mr. Whit Osgood

Ms. Jennifer Wang

a. Pledge of Allegiance. *Led by Finance Director Keri Rowley*

2. Public Communication and Petitions pertaining to the Call.

Jen Jennings of 34 Cranesbill Drive, stated that if a CIP master plan had been rolled out, then the Williams Memorial Academy project would have been included in the turf field proposal. She asked for a greater master plan on all capital improvement projects.

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

Joe Muro of 151 Riverview Road, is against ARPA funding to renovate the Williams Memorial Academy. This is a personal matter and an unsound financial investment. While he understands the desire to make the building operational in some form, the total spend is egregious. Other spaces in town could provide meeting room space at a fraction of the cost. He suggested using the money instead to improve hiking trails and removing invasive species at parks and trails.

PUBLIC HEARING:

FINAL BUDGET HEARING – 2023-2024 GENERAL FUND – TOWN OPERATIONS, EDUCATION, DEBT AND TRANSFER, REVENUES, TRANSFERS AND USE OF FUND BALANCE, CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, AND SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS.

3. **Old Business.**

a. **Action on Resolutions Adopting the 2023-2024 Operating Budget.**

1. **General Fund Appropriations and Transfers.**

● **Town Operations**

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council approves an appropriation of \$48,604,244 for the 2023/2024 **Town Operating Budget** for presentation at the Final Budget Hearing.

Amendment by: Mr. Niland

Seconded by: Ms. Carroll

To restore \$200,000 to the Town Operating Budget

Disc: Mr. Osgood favors cutting more money, rather than adding. Mr. McChesney does not favor adding the \$200,000 back but neither does he support cutting more. Mr. Cavanaugh does not want the new town manager's career to start with \$200,000 in the hole, so he will support the amendment. Mr. Niland agreed. Mr. Gullotta stated that the BOF was reluctant to make any reduction to the Town's side, and this money will help the new town manager start off on the right foot. Mr. Cavanaugh supports the amendment. Mr. Osgood noted that the budget as proposed will result in an average tax increase of 4.5% to residents, which he finds excessive. Adding \$200,000 back into the budget is irresponsible given their current tax situation. Ms. LaChance agreed, noting that this is an especially tough year. Mr. Cavanaugh clarified that, absent revaluation, taxes would have gone up by just over one percent.

Ms. Wang will also vote against restoring the \$200,000, explaining that the BOF made the recommendation with fair consideration of all options. Given the inflationary environment, she finds the cut appropriate. Mr. Cavanaugh explained that the BOF originally wanted to cut \$1 million from the BOE, but settled on a compromise, which was to take a percentage from the BOE and a similar percentage from Town Operations. The Town budget is a lean one, so Mr. Cavanaugh would like to leave it as it was originally proposed. Mr. McChesney contended that the BOF's final recommendation to the Council was a split cut between the BOE and the Town. Additionally, Ms. Lintereur noted a few weeks ago that a majority of the town will experience a substantial tax increase because of revaluation, so reductions should be made to help citizens.

Ms. Carroll stated that the Town provides services which enhance the quality of life in Glastonbury. The Council must be thoughtful about where reductions will be made, and the Town budget is not the place. Mr. Johnson explained that his budget did not account for \$385,000 of new revenue in Governor Lamont's budget. This would more than offset the proposed \$200,000 reduction, so there will be no tax impact on voters. Mr. Gullotta stated that it would do more harm to not restore this money than to have the cut be sustained. Mr. Osgood explained that cuts made to the BOE budget over the years have amounted to \$7 million, which is a sizable savings. \$200,000 may not be much, but it can also add up over many years.

Result: Amendment passed {5-4-0}, with Mr. Osgood, Ms. Wang, Mr. McChesney, and Ms. LaChance voting against.

Amendment by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

To add an additional \$85,000 to the Town Operations budget to support a half year salary for an Assistant Town Manager

Disc: Ms. Carroll supports a plan to assist the new town manager. Ms. LaChance believes that a succession plan is necessary for the town as an insurance policy but cannot vote for this because of the \$200,000 that was just restored to the budget. Mr. Niland finds that not supporting a succession plan is reckless. Ms. Wang contended that while succession planning is crucial, this proposal is overly narrow and restrictive. A succession plan is very different from prescribing a specific person. Other towns have different approaches to this, so there is no one size fits all. If something were to happen to the new town manager, there are long-term senior staff members who can step in to assist. Additionally, it is the town manager's job is to appoint an interim manager. Mr. McChesney agreed. It is not prudent to add an \$85,000 position when the new manager has not even started yet, especially in such a tough year. The appropriate time to have a conversation about new succession planning is when the new town manager comes in.

Mr. Osgood is also against this proposal. He asked how the Council would go about providing the funds for an assistant town manager in the middle of the year. Mr. Johnson explained that they would first use any available funds which could be reprogrammed from the current budget. Absent that, there could be a supplemental appropriation. Mr. Gullotta supports the proposal. Good stewardship demands creating an administrative structure that prepares for contingencies. An assistant town manager needs to be added to their organization. Mr. Cavanaugh will also support it. He noted that Glastonbury has had three town managers and the first two had assistant town managers. A succession plan has been discussed several times but never been realized. Implementing one would be good governance. Additionally, the incoming town manager, Mr. Luiz, has expressed support for an assistant town manager.

Result: Amendment failed {4-5-0}, with Mr. Osgood, Ms. Wang, Mr. McChesney, Ms. LaChance, and Mr. Cavanna voting against

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council approves an appropriation of \$48,804,244 for the 2023/2024 **Town Operating Budget** for presentation at the Final Budget Hearing.

Result: Motion passed {5-4-0}, with Mr. McChesney, Ms. Wang, Ms. LaChance, and Mr. Osgood voting against.

- Education

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council approves an appropriation of \$120,268,065 for the 2023/2024 Education Budget for presentation at the Final Budget Hearing.

Amendment by: Mr. Osgood

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

To reduce the Education budget by an additional \$200,000

Disc: Mr. Cavanaugh stated that the BOE has sufficient funds to absorb this reduction. Mr. McChesney supported the cuts that were made but does not support any further reductions because of the negative impacts it might have. Ms. LaChance agreed.

Result: Amendment failed {3-6-0}, with Mr. Osgood, Mr. Cavanaugh, and Mr. Cavanna voting for.

Result: Motion passed {6-3-0}, with Mr. Osgood, Mr. Cavanaugh, and Mr. Cavanna voting against.

- Debt and Transfer

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council approves an appropriation of \$13,632,922 for the 2023/2024 Debt & Transfers Budget for presentation at the Final Budget Hearing.

Disc: Mr. Cavanaugh asked if the Council should ask the BOF to reconsider the collection rate assumption. Mr. Johnson's opinion is to leave it at 99.15%. He noted that a 99.2% collection rate assumption would generate an additional \$75,000 - \$80,000.

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

2. General Fund Revenues, Transfers and Use of Fund Balance.

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council approves the 2023/2024 General Fund Revenues and Transfers in the amount of \$182,505,231 for presentation at the Final Budget Hearing.

Disc: Mr. Niland noted that the Governor’s motor vehicle grant is an additional \$340,000, which would be prudent to recognize in revenues. Mr. Johnson stated that is correct. The Governor’s motor vehicle grant is \$2.398 million. The budget presented at the town meeting was \$2.055 million, so the difference is about \$340,000.

Amendment by: Mr. Niland

Seconded by: Ms. Carroll

To add \$200,000 to Revenues, from the Governor’s proposed motor vehicle grant

Disc: Mr. Osgood finds that reducing the General Fund Transfer In is a good idea. Mr. Johnson cautioned that the motor vehicle grant could significantly change downward in the FY25 budget. Mr. Gullotta explained that opening cash is surplus funds which are used to keep down the tax rate. This means that to lower the opening cash is to increase taxes on residents. Mr. McChesney is concerned with this shortfall. Ms. Carroll does not support adding an additional \$200,000 to new revenues and transfers, which would set them up for a challenging situation.

Mr. Niland withdrew his motion. Ms. Carroll withdrew her second.

Amendment by: Mr. Niland

Seconded by: Ms. Carroll

To increase the opening cash from \$775,000 to \$975,000

Disc: Mr. Cavanaugh stated that when Mr. Johnson looks out on the horizon, he is typically correct. This would not solve the projected FY25 cliff, but will simply moderate it, which is not good enough for him to support the proposal. Mr. Osgood stated that the General Fund is basically their savings account. Taking money out of it to do operations lowers one’s savings. If revenues and transfers were increased by \$200,000, he asked where that would come from. Mr. Johnson explained that, right now, if the revenues are unchanged, it will go to the tax rate. The Council needs to recognize that additional \$200,000 as revenue to keep the same tax rate as what the BOF recommended.

Mr. Niland looks at the General Fund as a savings account that the taxpayers have already paid into. Mr. McChesney favors increasing revenues by \$200,000 to prevent an impact on taxpayers. He has strong concerns with the proposal. Ms. Wang understands that this is a one-time move, but it does not seem wise and feels like a step in the wrong direction. It is less risky to go with recognizing the revenue from the motor vehicle rate.

Mr. Johnson reminded the Council of his concern for potential significant reduction in the motor vehicle grant in FY2025.

Mr. Niland withdrew his motion. Ms. Carroll withdrew her second.

Amendment by: Mr. Niland

Seconded by: Ms. Carroll

To recognize an additional \$200,000 from the Governor’s motor vehicle grant assumption towards the Town’s General Revenue

Disc: Mr. Cavanaugh's instinct is to stay with what the Town Manager has recommended and what the BOF has confirmed. Ms. Carroll would have preferred to increase opening cash, but the end goal is to mitigate the effect on taxpayers, so she will support it.

Result: Motion passed {7-2-0}, Mr. Cavanaugh and Mr. Osgood voting against

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council approves the 2023/2024 General Fund Revenues and Transfers in the amount of \$182,705,231 for presentation at the Final Budget Hearing.

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

3. Capital Improvement Program.

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

To combine the study of the turf field with a study to determine the suitability of one of the buildings at Nye Road for BOE offices, at \$50,000

Disc: Mr. Osgood believes that this should be divided up more appropriately. Mr. McChesney has an issue with these studies being so expensive, so he favors the combination.

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

Motion by: Mr. Cavanaugh

Seconded by: Ms. Carroll

To expand the study for the Williams Memorial Academy to include the gymnasium, at \$150,000

Disc: Mr. Johnson explained that the coming year's capital program includes \$1 million for the Williams Memorial Academy. This would incorporate funding for the gymnasium in the \$150,000 study. Mr. Osgood stated that the agenda for tonight is not last year's CIP but this year's CIP. Mr. Gullotta remarked that he is amending the language of this year's CIP, which is permitted. Mr. McChesney understands the concern, but Mr. Johnson has confirmed that it is okay to do this tonight.

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

Ms. Wang noted that \$50,000 were budgeted in this year's CIP for traffic calming. Mr. Johnson explained that an additional \$100,000 is available from the FY22 capital budget, so there is \$150,000 total. Ms. Wang asked what traffic calming measures would be implemented. Mr. Johnson stated that there has been discussion about having additional marked or signalized crosswalks. \$150,000 is a good start to build medians and bump outs, but a lot more will be needed. Ms. Wang noted that Rankin Road was included in the Town Center resurfacing plan. She asked if that project has received grant funding. Mr. Johnson replied yes, the project is fully grant-funded, at a little over \$1 million.

Mr. Niland supports an independent study for the turf fields. He also noted that the BOE has listed the weight room project as their top priority. Pursuing this project is fiscally responsible because not doing so would end up costing the town more money in the long run, through higher leases for an off-campus facility. He suggested a one-time transfer from the Unassigned Fund Balance, then the BOE's 1% fund could cover the rest of the cost. That way, there would be no change to the tax rate this year.

Motion by: Mr. Niland

Seconded by: Ms. Carroll

To make a one-time transfer of \$500,000 from the General Fund Unassigned Fund to the Capital Reserve Fund - Capital Projects Fund, for a new weight room for the high school.

Disc: Ms. Carroll stated that a weight room on campus will serve all students and the community at large. However, she does not support the project at this time because it is a tough year. She does support the study on the turf field. Mr. Cavanaugh noted that the BOE did not respond satisfactorily to several concerns raised by the BOF regarding the weight room proposal. The Superintendent stated that a weight room attached to the gym would be too expensive but was unable to provide a cost estimate. Mr. Cavanaugh will not support the project until there are more numbers and rotations discussed.

Mr. Osgood does not approve taking funds out of the unassigned fund balance for this project. Mr. McChesney's bigger concern is that this is a very difficult year. They have started a dialogue about a new weight room, but they are not yet ready to vote on it. He shares Mr. Cavanaugh's concerns that more discussions need to happen as to where the building will be the most economically viable and meet the most people in town. Ms. LaChance would like to keep taxes down as much as possible this year. It is prudent to take a step back on major projects.

Result: Motion failed {1-8-0}, with Mr. Niland voting for.

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

To remove \$1 million of ARPA monies designated for the Williams Memorial Academy and place it back in the ARPA fund.

Disc: Mr. Gullotta stated that the intention is not to expend the money but to leave it in limbo. Ms. Carroll finds this to be a great project but would like to hear the community's preferences. Mr. McChesney has had issues with this project since last year. Its total value is over \$2 million, which comprises over 20% of the ARPA funds. He finds that unreasonable. Until last week's discussion, the discussion was just about refurbishing one room. If the goal is to increase meeting space, there are cheaper options, such as increasing remote capability of all meeting spaces throughout town.

Ms. Wang also did not support last year's allocation. She did not even support this study because it is just a nice-to-have project. She has not seen a convincing answer for why 20% of ARPA funds need to be spent to work on this project. Residents have not asked for this project, so it is not a priority. Mr. Cavanna cannot support the project at this time because it is going to be a bad

year. Mr. Cavanaugh wants the town to utilize the space, but he also recognizes that there have been concessions this evening. He supports holding this money. Mr. Gullotta explained that this study is not focused on a single room but has been expanded to include changes to the gym.

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

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

To reallocate the \$35,000 that is currently earmarked for the Center Green Fountain Study to Traffic Calming.

Disc: Mr. Johnson explained that the Center Green needs renovations and updates to the irrigation systems. However, there are also concerns about the ability to have adequate funding for traffic calming. This proposal will reappropriate savings from the Police Department towards mobile speed monitor systems. Mr. Gullotta asked whether the Council deems pedestrian safety to be of such importance that it must be taken care of now. He finds this to be a value judgment. Mr. Osgood noted that \$150,000 has already been allocated for traffic calming. There are issues at the park which need to be addressed, so he is against the proposal.

Mr. McChesney takes offense to the idea that supporting this is not supporting pedestrian safety. He asked if grants could be received for traffic calming measures. Mr. Johnson replied, possibly. Mr. McChesney agreed with Mr. Osgood that they cannot allow such an important part of town to deteriorate. He finds it prudent to allocate resources to refurbish the central area. Ms. Wang supports the study done soon. She also finds that the \$150,000 set aside for traffic calming will be enough to work with in the next fiscal year. She does not support the measure because both projects are needed, and both can be adequately funded. Ms. Carroll supports the motion.

Result: Motion failed {2-7-0}, with Ms. Carroll and Mr. Gullotta voting in favor

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council approves the 2023/2024 Capital Improvement Program Budget in the amount of \$8,346,217 for presentation at the Final Budget Hearing. Funding will be provided as follows:

Capital Reserve Fund	\$7,885,000
Town Aid Road	\$461,217

Disc: Mr. Cavanaugh asked if the rehabilitation of Main Street could still be delayed without losing the grant. Mr. Johnson replied yes, the project could be delayed for at least another year.

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

4. Sewer Operating Fund.

- Sewer Operating Fund

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council approves the 2023/2024 **Special Revenue Fund Appropriations, Revenues and Transfers** for presentation at the Final Budget Hearing as follows:

Sewer Operating Fund	\$3,404,662
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Result: Motion passed unanimously {9-0-0}.

b. Action on Policy Amendment – General Fund – Unassigned Fund Balance.

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby amends the policy entitled General Fund – Fund Balance Policy to change the minimum General Fund-Unassigned Fund Balance from a minimum 12% to a minimum 16%, as recommended by the Board of Finance and as described by the Town Manager in a report dated March 17, 2023.

Disc: Mr. Cavanaugh asked about a neighboring town which lost their AAA rating. Mr. Johnson explained that their fund balance was relatively lower than Glastonbury's.

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

4. Adjournment.

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby adjourns their meeting at 9:28 P.M.

Result: Motion was approved unanimously {9-0-0}.

Respectfully submitted,

Lilly Torosyan

Lilly Torosyan

Recording Clerk

Thomas Gullotta

Chairman