

THE GLASTONBURY AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2023

The Glastonbury Agriculture Advisory Committee, with Jonathan Luiz, Town Manager, Thomas Gullotta, Town Council Chairman, and Gary Haynes, Planner, in attendance, held a Special Meeting at 6:00 P.M in Council Chambers of Town Hall at 2155 Main Street.

1. ROLL CALL

Commission Members Present

Andrew Reale
Kenneth Horton
Chris Bassette
Hutchinson Bronzi
Donald Preli
William Dufford

Meeting was called to order at 5:05 P.M.

2. New Business

a. ARPA Funds:

Town Council Chairman Thomas Gullotta introduced the State Legislators and expressed a need for their support in developing programs and legislation to help the farmers in our communities.

Committee member Andy Reale supported the idea of a statewide insurance program for farmers to protect their crops. State legislator Jill Barry said she is unaware of any other state that offers farmers assistance with an insurance program for farmers. She said the federal government has programs available for larger farms. Committee members said federal insurance programs are often limited to only certain crops and discussed deficiencies of such programs. They also said there are options for private coverage through insurances companies, but they are typically cost prohibitive.

State legislator Jason Doucette asked if farmers had applied for grant programs through the Department of Agriculture. Committee members expressed frustration with the grant programs, stating difficulties in qualifying and requirements making the project more costly than if they did the work themselves. Bill Dufford referenced grant programs for flood remediation did not allow farmers to start recovery work until grant was approved, which in many cases was 6 months to a year later. Committee members also said low interest loans were not helpful either.

Mr. Gullotta is hoping the State Legislators will support efficient and user-friendly programs to help our farmers by, using bond money, utilizing cannabis tax revenue, grants, statewide insurance, or legislation to reduce property taxes for farmers. Ms. Barry asked what would be most beneficial to the farmers? Committee members spoke in favor of allowing for higher

exemptions for property taxes. Currently State Statutes only allow for a hundred thousand dollar exemption for farmers. Mr. Reale said the Town has been supportive by allowing farmers to reduce property taxes as low as allowable per State Statute. State legislator Steve Weir said he could support legislation that would allow Towns more flexibility to raise the exemption to allow higher tax abatement for farmers as it would have no impact fiscally to the State. Legislator Jason Doucette said he could see expanding Public Act 490 to include personal property and not just the land.

With no further comments or questions, the meeting adjourned 6:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gary Haynes
Planner