

**GLASTONBURY BOARD OF FINANCE
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2023**

The Glastonbury Board of Finance, along with Finance Director, Keri Rowley, and Town Manager, Jonathan Luiz, held a special meeting at 9:00 a.m. in the Council Chambers of Town Hall at 2155 Main Street with an option for Zoom video conferencing. The video was broadcast in real time and via a live video stream.

Roll Call

Members

Mr. Constantine “Gus” Constantine, Chairman
Mr. Jared Soper, Vice Chairman
Mr. James Zeller
Mr. Robert Lynn
Ms. Susan Karp
Mr. Kevin Graff

1. Public Comment Session: Comments pertaining to the call

Jenn Jennings of 34 Cranesbill Drive, supports applying for the HVAC grant, but would like to have a taskforce put together a master plan for projects. This would identify gaps and prevent squeezing in grant concepts at the eleventh hour, like what is happening now.

2. Communication: Minutes of November 15, 2023 Regular Meeting

Minutes were accepted as presented

3. Discussion and Possible Action on \$1,190,000 appropriation and transfer from the General Fund – Unassigned Fund Balance to Capital Projects Fund – HVAC and Indoor Air Quality Improvement to Public Schools

BOE Chairman Doug Foyle stated that when members of the BOE show up for public comment, they speak as individuals, not in the position of the board. Only the BOE Chairman has the right to speak on behalf of the board’s position.

He then explained that the proposed HVAC upgrade will improve the air quality of the cafeterias and gyms at various schools in town. The State of CT will dedicate a significant amount of funds to projects like this. If approved, the Town will receive a 33% reimbursement of the \$1.19 million, so about \$350,000. The application is due on December 31, 2023 for this one-time reimbursement. He noted that while none of the air handling units need to be replaced next year, they are relatively near-term projects that will need to be done at some point. This is a choice between deciding to do the project now with a 33% reimbursement, or later with no reimbursement.

Superintendent Alan Bookman explained that the unit on top of Naubuc gym was scheduled on the CIP list for FY28, but it needs to be done sooner. There are also six rooftop units on top of the gym with a life expectancy of 20 years, but some of the units are starting to fail. Therefore, that project will need to be moved up, as well. Some of the units at the elementary schools are from 2008, so they could last a little longer. However, because this is an opportunity for a reimbursement, they included them in the proposal. He stressed that the elementary school units will only be completed now if the grant is approved. The BOE has approved all of these projects. The Council sent this over to the BOF for review, and the matter will return to the Council for final approval. Much of the process has been done already to prepare for applying for the grant.

Mr. Constantine asked about the time period of the project completion. Dr. Bookman stated that it must be completed within 12 months from the award. Ms. Karp asked if \$830,000 (\$630,000 for the high school gym plus \$200,000 for the Naubuc unit) of the \$1.19 million is an immediate cost that they would see. Dr. Bookman stated that is correct. Mr. Soper asked to clarify what is meant by 'short-term' because he heard FY28. Dr. Foyle explained that, last night, the BOE approved their list for FY25. A year from now, it is likely that Naubuc would be on their FY 26 CIP list.

Mr. Zeller asked why the BOE approved a CIP budget that did not include that. Al Costa, Director of Operations/Maintenance, explained that this grant opportunity has afforded them the possibility to move up the project from FY28 to FY25 or FY26. This is the second round of this grant. If they do not receive it, then they have to find another way to fund the project. Mr. Zeller questioned why this was not included in Phase 1 of the grant. Mr. Costa explained that the first phase was offered almost two years ago. At the time, the priority was Gideon Welles. Mr. Zeller asked about the BOE's 1% fund. Mr. Costa explained that the money in that fund has been allocated for other things. Dr. Foyle added that the 1% also came up at the Council meeting. While there is roughly \$3.5 million in that fund, almost all the money is encumbered for other projects.

Mr. Zeller countered that when this started two years ago, that money was not encumbered for either Naubuc or the weight room facility. Mr. Soper clarified that this program started in 2022, not 2021. Ms. Karp finds it more productive for the BOF to evaluate what they have before them and make a decision based on that. Mr. Soper finds this conversation relevant because Dr. Foyle said that the weight room facility was approved last night. Dr. Foyle clarified that the weight room facility was approved last May for the BOE to fully fund. Last night, the BOE approved the actual design of the facility. The grant approval before the BOF today was approved at the BOE's November 14 meeting.

Mr. Zeller is confused about the lifespan of the air conditioning units because, in a 2016 report, the consultant states that the units were at the end of their life span. Dr. Foyle stated that none of the things they are talking about today concern the units that were listed in the cited study. Dr. Bookman stated that they had a limited amount of money for the first round, so they put it in Gideon Welles, which was the high priority at the time. This round, Mr. Costa feels more confident because there is 2.5 times more money than in the first round.

Mr. Lynn agreed with Ms. Jennings' suggestion to have a master plan. He asked why there is a sense of urgency now. Dr. Bookman explained that the state provided them with a very short timeline, which is why many districts do not apply for this grant. Mr. Lynn asked about the remaining ARPA funding. Mr. Luiz stated that there are many other possible uses for the

remaining ARPA funds. Ms. Karp heard that they cannot use grant money if they are to receive state reimbursement. Mr. Luiz clarified that they can use local ARPA funds for the match because he received a form from the CT Department of Administrative Services which states ARPA as a funding source. If the BOF is inclined to use ARPA match funds, he suggested using them on 66% of the project, with the remaining one-third coming from the General Fund-Unassigned Fund Balance. That way, the reimbursement would be considered for the Unassigned Fund Balance.

Mr. Graff noted that he watched the state webinar. Their impetus for this grant program is because of a statewide concern about indoor air quality in schools. It is a three-year program, which seems like a significant amount of money to be rolled over. He asked if they could hold off a year and apply as part of the third year of the program versus doing it now. Dr. Foyle stated that the BOE has not discussed anything past December 31. Mr. Costa stated that it is a vague answer. The money may or may not be available, so their focus is on the second round of this grant.

Mr. Graff also wishes that there was more long-term planning. He wants the town and the BOE to be on the lookout for new grant opportunities and to be strategic about not leaving money on the table. Dr. Foyle explained that the BOE has two long-term master plans. The one piece is the maintenance plan. There is also a long-term plan in terms of school facilities. With the strength and conditioning facility, they will have completed their 20-year plan. The BOE unanimously adopted a five-year facilities plan, which will evaluate all their elementary facilities. It has been 25 years, so it is time for a new look. There will be lots of conversations from the BOE about what a master plan will look like for their K-6 schools. Dr. Bookman added that they are looking at a couple other things, such as the turf field and enrollment.

Should a member choose to cite old documents, Mr. Graff would appreciate that they be circulated to all members prior to the meeting. Mr. Zeller explained that he only received his packet on Monday, so he did not have time to share the 2016 study with the BOF, but he is happy to do so now. In it, the consultant stated that dehumidifying was not a good way to go. Mr. Zeller asked if air conditioning would be installed in those areas. Mr. Costa countered that dehumidification is air conditioning. Mr. Zeller stated that the consultant said that dehumidifying does not cool the air. He then asked if the classrooms are served by any rooftop units. Dr. Foyle stated that GHS, Smith, Nayaug, and some of Gideon Welles are. The other schools are all with ductless split vents and do not have rooftop units.

Mr. Soper looks at roofs at these two schools as a very high priority. Phase 2 of this grant was approved on September 7. He asked why this matter was not addressed back in September. Dr. Bookman explained that he could not present anything to the Council or the BOF before going before the BOE. And he could not present anything to the BOE without doing all the legwork, such as having an engineer review the project and seeing what it would cost. The timeline that the state has given is extremely difficult.

Mr. Soper expressed disappointment in last summer's exchange. He had emailed Dr. Foyle about meeting directly with himself and the BOF Chairman, but Dr. Foyle stated that it was not a good idea. He would like direct communication to improve. Dr. Foyle finds the suggestion a bad idea because he believes in transparency and in conducting business at publicly-noticed meetings. He and the BOE are willing to meet with the BOF whenever they want, with some notice. He does

not like the idea of a private offline discussion because they need to have a public online discussion.

Ms. Karp appreciates the communication. She also supports this grant opportunity to improve the air quality and temperature for their students. This is money that they will spend in the future which they would be saving now. She is hesitant to recommend funding from ARPA. If they were to take the full amount from the Unassigned Fund Balance, it would still leave them over the limit that they have set. Knowing that they would receive about \$396,000 back, she is fine with doing it this way. Mr. Lynn asked where else the priority is for ARPA. Mr. Luiz stated that there are a myriad of options for the Council to consider. He does not yet have a clear direction from the Council on what to do with this money.

Motion by: Ms. Karp

Seconded by: Mr. Lynn

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Board of Finance hereby approves the BOE's request for \$1,190,000 appropriation and transfer from the General Fund – Unassigned Fund Balance to Capital Projects Fund – HVAC and Indoor Air Quality Improvement to Public Schools, as described in a report from the Director of Finance and Administrative Services, dated November 22, 2023.

Result: Motion passed unanimously {6-0-0}.

4. Communication: Budget Schedule FY 2024/2025

Ms. Rowley stated that they can approve the CIP in December, and Fiducient is working on fixed income variations that were requested at the last meeting. They can do that in January, as long as it is before the CIP workshop. The budget schedule will be finalized and sent to the Board later this week.

5. Adjournment

Motion by: Ms. Karp

Seconded by: Mr. Zeller

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Board of Finance hereby adjourns at 10:14 a.m.

Result: Motion passed unanimously {6-0-0}.

Respectfully submitted,

Lilly Torosyan

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Recording Clerk

For anyone seeking more information about this meeting, a video on demand is available at www.glastonbury-ct.gov/video; click on Public Broadcast Video On Demand, and an audio recording is available in the Finance and Administrative Services Office.