

**GLASTONBURY BOARD OF FINANCE
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2024**

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 {participated via Zoom video conferencing}
Mr. Kevin Graff

1. Public Comment Session: Comments pertaining to the call *None*
2. Possible Action (continued item from meeting on February 21, 2024): The Board of Finance pursuant to Section 605 of the Town Charter submits to the Glastonbury Town Council the following proposals:

Mr. Zeller clarified that his colleagues wanted to make deeper cuts to the BOE budget, but in the interest of compromise, he settled for a number closer to what the Democrats wanted. No matter what they decide, he believes that the BOE will make it work. Mr. Soper stated that Mr. Zeller wanted a total reduction of \$2 million, while Ms. Karp was looking at \$1.5 million. Under Mr. Zeller’s scenario, a total of \$930,000 would be cut from operations; under Ms. Karp’s scenario, that number would be \$430,000. Currently, they are at a \$670,000 reduction, which is very close to the midpoint.

Mr. Soper also considered Mr. Zeller’s suggestion to cut \$500,000 to the BOE and \$170,000 to the Town, with a \$1.2 million reduction to the CIP. He is more in favor of a \$1 million cut to the CIP and a \$1 million cut to operations because they have not maintained their infrastructure. Hopefully, that will be addressed by bonding. If approved by the Council, he stated that the increase to the BOE’s budget - with the \$500,000 reduction - will be the largest increase on a percentage basis in over ten years and the largest dollar increase in the Town’s history. His goal is to keep taxes at, or below, 3% and to bend the curve.

Ms. Karp has no doubt that the BOE will make it work, regardless of the cuts, but that does not mean that there will not be gaps. Every BOF member came in with different starting points. The number that she presented at the last meeting represented the collective agreement of the Democrats. She believes that they made good compromises, especially on the capital side.

However, she was unaware that the goal from the Republican side was to take as much out of the operational side as possible, which led to the differences in discussion on Wednesday.

Mr. Graff agreed with Mr. Zeller that negotiations are not supposed to be extreme suggestions from both sides to then meet in the middle. He reflected positively on how far they have come. In the course of the last meeting, he felt that the Republicans made a lot of suggestions, with the Democrats agreeing to almost all of them. He noted that there was no desire from the other side to proceed with Mr. Constantine's suggestion of a \$450,000 cut to the BOE budget increase. He stated that a \$2 million adjustment by the BOF is a historically high number. He placed Mr. Constantine's suggestion back on the table.

Mr. Zeller stated that, in the future, they could be looking at substantial staffing increases to the BOE, so that is why they have to pull back on the baseline. The 3% tax increase was his goal. He believes that they could have taken substantially more out of education, rather than the CIP budget. Almost 27% of people at the Annual Town Meeting voted against the budget. He does not believe that there is a spending problem in capital projects or in town operations, but rather, in education. He stressed the need to bend the curve. Mr. Lynn agreed. His concern is that the Town's grand list is anemic, so education costs will continue to go up. He believes that they have to do more with less. Mr. Constantine asked if they expect any increases to the grant list next fiscal year. Mr. Luiz does not see anything major on the horizon.

- a. Action: Propose to Town Council FY23/24 Town Operating Budget

Motion by: Mr. Graff

Seconded by: Mr. Lynn

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Finance submit to the Glastonbury Town Council the proposed appropriation of \$50,205,500 for the 2024/2025 Town Operating Budget.

Disc: Ms. Karp believes that a \$157,000 reduction here will be difficult, but she hopes that there will be some relief in the next year.

Result: Motion passed {4-2-0}, with Mr. Zeller and Mr. Soper voting against.

- b. Action: Propose to Town Council FY23/24 Education Budget

Motion by: Mr. Zeller

Seconded by: Mr. Soper

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Finance submit to the Glastonbury Town Council the proposed appropriation of \$124,446,745 for the 2024/2025 Education Budget.

Disc: Mr. Graff stated that the job of the BOF is to evaluate the budget as a whole, not to cut the BOE budget. He will support a cut of \$475,000 to the BOE budget as an act of good faith. Initially, Mr. Zeller was not prepared to go below a \$663,000 cut, so \$500,000 was a huge compromise for him. Ms. Karp thinks that the important thing is to get a budget to the Council who will make the final decision. She will vote for a \$475,000 cut, but not \$500,000.

Result: Motion failed {3-3-0}, with Mr. Graff, Mr. Constantine, and Ms. Karp voting against.

Motion by: Mr. Lynn

Seconded by: Mr. Graff

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Finance submit to the Glastonbury Town Council the proposed appropriation of \$124,471,745 for the 2024/2025 Education Budget.

Result: Motion passed {4-2-0}, with Mr. Zeller and Mr. Soper voting against.

c. Action: Propose to Town Council FY23/24 Debt & Transfers Budget

Motion by: Mr. Zeller

Seconded by: Mr. Lynn

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Finance submit to the Glastonbury Town Council the proposed appropriation of \$12,443,300 for the 2024/2025 Debt & Transfers Budget.

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

d. Action: Propose to Town Council FY23/24 General Fund Revenues & Transfers Budget

Motion by: Mr. Graff

Seconded by: Mr. Zeller

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Finance submit to the Glastonbury Town Council the proposed 2024/2025 General Fund Revenues & Transfers Budget in the amount of \$187,120,545.

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

Motion by: Mr. Lynn

Seconded by: Mr. Zeller

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Finance hereby changes the collection rate to 99.2%, an increase of five basis points.

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

e. Action: Propose to Town Council FY23/24 Capital Improvement Program Budget, including Capital Reserve Fund and Town Aid Road

Motion by: Mr. Zeller

Seconded by: Mr. Lynn

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Finance submit to the Glastonbury Town Council the proposed 2024/2025 Capital Improvement Program Budget in the amount of \$15,708,141. Funding will be provided as follows:

Capital Reserve Transfer:	\$8,114,421
Town Aid Road:	\$461,217
American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA):	\$1,832,503
Sewer Sinking Fund	\$5,300,000

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

- f. Action: Propose to Town Council FY23/24 Sewer Operating Fund Budget (Special Revenue Fund)

Motion by: Mr. Graff

Seconded by: Mr. Lynn

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Finance submit to the Glastonbury Town Council the proposed Special Revenue Fund appropriations, revenues and transfers of \$3,519,400 for the 2024/2025 Sewer Operating Fund.

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

The BOF then discussed sending a transmittal letter to the Council to consider bonding for critical capital infrastructure needs. Mr. Soper would like to specify a dollar range, such as \$8-10 million, because it will give some direction to the Council on what they can afford and what the needs are to maintain the \$6.4 million CIP as they have it. Because this is the first step in the process, Mr. Graff is uncomfortable with throwing around dollar numbers that could be interpreted as being the BOF's preference. Ms. Karp agreed. Mr. Zeller stated that the CIP could not get done without \$10-12 million in bonding. He believes that a little more push is important because they have sent this letter before to the Council several times. Mr. Soper stated that this should be placed in the transmittal letter, and as an action item at their next meeting; that way, it will indicate that this is a priority.

3. Adjournment

Motion by: Mr. Zeller

Seconded by: Mr. Lynn

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Board of Finance moves to adjourn their meeting of February 23, 2024, at 9:51 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 link to access the 'Town's Video OnDemand platform.'