

**GLASTONBURY TOWN COUNCIL
BUDGET WORKSHOP AND REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2024**

The Glastonbury Town Council with Town Manager, Jonathan Luiz, in attendance, held a Budget Workshop and Regular Meeting at 6:00 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
Ms. Jennifer Wang, Vice Chairman
Ms. Deborah A. Carroll
Mr. Kurt P. Cavanaugh
Mr. John Cavanna
Mr. Larry Niland
Ms. Mary LaChance
Mr. Jacob McChesney
Mr. Whit Osgood

a. Pledge of Allegiance. *Led by Tom Gullotta*

2. Budget Workshop. (Scheduled to conclude at 7:00 p.m. and then resume after Agenda Item 12(c)).

a. Budget Reviews for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 – Presentation and discussion concerning Town Operations, Debt & Transfer, Revenues & Transfers, Capital Reserve Fund, Capital Improvement Program and other budget related matters involving the combined 2024-2025 budget proposal.

Mr. Gullotta stated that the Council has directed the Town Manager to explore the possibility of bonding capital projects and to provide a recommendation on which avenue to pursue. Mr. Luiz will present this at Thursday's budget workshop. He then explained the changes that have been made to the budget from what was presented at the Annual Town Meeting. Since then, the grand list has increased from 0.26% to 0.66%, which equates to \$530,000 of additional revenue. Additionally, the payment in lieu of taxes grant has been decreased by \$12,000. He explained the reasons why his proposal would discontinue the municipal passport processing program.

Mr. Luiz stated that the Town Operating budget is a 3.19% increase from last year, which is about average for the last five budget years. He made a \$2 million reduction to the departmental budget request. A major component of this increase is wages, which accounts for 2.5 points of the increase. He explained that no full-time staffing is proposed in FY25, but several part-time positions are requested in various departments, as well as funds to restructure the Town's volunteer firefighter program.

Mr. Luiz then reviewed the seven other budget components, explaining that insurance, pension, and data processing and technology account for modest increases. The latter is partly due to new software and standard increases across the board for existing software. He noted that contractual services and utilities and fleet are almost flat, and capital outlay will increase by just \$15,000. He explained that 23 out of 40 line items in the operating budget achieved a savings of \$76,929, which accounts for -0.2% of the overall budget

increase. Mr. Luiz noted that the BOF made a \$157,000 adjustment to his budget proposal, which would result in a 2.87% increase.

Mr. Luiz explained that Debt Service is going down by 25.7%, while the Capital Reserve is increasing by 31.1%. He noted that this is a good opportunity to allocate more resources to the Capital Reserve Fund. He explained that Revenues and Transfers will see an increase of 3.43%. The BOF reduced the Capital Reserve by \$1.225 million, which changed the Debt and Transfer from a 0.3% increase to a decrease of 8.7%. The Capital Reserve Transfer Out is proposed at \$7.67 million in FY25.

He reviewed the summary of the BOF adjustments, which call for a \$475,000 reduction to the proposed Education budget increase. Mr. Luiz explained that Revenues and Transfers will see an increase of 3.43%, which is mainly due to the fact that the State of Connecticut's motor vehicle tax cap reimbursement program will decrease by 23.7%. The \$2.25 million that the Town received this year will go away next year because the Town's mill rate will drop, due to the increase in their property revaluation.

Mr. Luiz explained that investment income has increased significantly, by \$600,000 in the next fiscal year, with interest on investments projected at 4%. The BOF decided that the interest rate on investments should be 4.25%. He is concerned about that, given talks of the Federal Reserve decreasing interest rates. While he had anticipated stepping down the Use of the Fund Balance, he does not think that this is the year to do it, given the loss of intergovernmental revenues. Mr. Luiz believes that the Town can afford to use the Unassigned Fund Balance in the way in which they have. He then stated that the Grand List growth is significantly small compared to past years. At the Annual Town Meeting, the mill rate was proposed to increase by 4.22%, but the BOF proposed an increase of 3.0% next year.

Mr. Cavanaugh asked about the passport program. Mr. Luiz explained that he proposes to cut the program because it is a service that is offered by the federal government, through the USPS. The intention is that the administrative assistant at the Fire Department, who currently processes this, would now dedicate their time to emergency fire management. Mr. Gullotta is not excited about the passport service disappearing. Mr. Niland asked how fixed the intergovernmental revenue numbers are. Mr. Luiz stated that the governor's proposed numbers are the safest ones to use.

Mr. Cavanna arrived at 6:47 p.m.

Mr. Cavanaugh asked about Fire Engine Tank 42, which he believes can go for at least another year or two. Fire Chief Mike Thurz explained that, if they put in the order this year, it will take three years for the new tanker to arrive because of a backlog. Additionally, each year, the costs increase by 12-15%. Mr. Cavanaugh believes that the standard is not a law, so towns should not be forced into purchasing a new apparatus that they might not need. He asked to look into different financing options.

Mr. Luiz reviewed the Town Council budget, which will increase by 0.2% in the next fiscal year, mainly due to the purchase of new iPads for council members. He then noted that the Town Manager's proposed budget will decrease by 10.3%, driven by elimination of a supply line and a decrease in service and charges. Because of a benefits increase, the Customer Service Center, which is under the Human Resources department, will increase by 19.8%.

3. Public Comment.

Chris Ackermann of 581 Thompson Street, remarked that, the last time he was before the Council, he complained about GPD not acting adequately after his home was robbed. He does not appreciate people making jokes about his situation and expects an apology from councilman McChesney.

Anya Mishra of 185 Stanley Drive, is part of Armored Artemises, a Glastonbury robotics team which seeks to share their skills with the greater community. She stressed the importance of increasing staffing at Welles Turner library, to allow use of the Maker Space.

Karina Weidmann of 2434 New London Turnpike, noted that the STEAM lab is only offered to GHS students, whereas the library's Maker Space would be available to the entire community. She asked to increase funding in the library budget to hire an additional staff member for the Maker Space.

Dee Becher of 27 Old Farms Road, is a senior at GHS. Her robotics team hopes to create interactive sessions at the Maker Space for the community to learn how to build 3D printers. She finds it important that the library's Maker Space be well staffed.

DJ McBride of 263 Spring Street Extension, explained how to arrive at the \$90,000 number, in order to accommodate for increased library staff.

Jen Hudner of 105 Coach Road, is a member of the library board. She stressed that the Maker Space studio needs an additional person who understands the technical equipment and can set up programs.

Denise Weeks of 334 Hollister Way, believes that funding for a review of housing-related zoning regulations in this year's budget is important to lay out the groundwork for the Town's commitment to providing adequate affordable housing.

Ellen Saunig of 186 Chimney Sweep Hill Road, encouraged the Council to increase the library budget to allow for an additional staff member.

Tom Metzner of 406 Georgetown Drive, stated that there is a hearing tomorrow in the state legislature on bill 5215. He asked that the Town submit testimony in support of this bill, which will let towns decide whether or not to ban the sale of nips.

4. Special Reports.

a. Update regarding Heroes Field and the LED lighting project by Don Longtin – Glastonbury Little League

Mr. Luiz introduced Don Longtin, Little League President, who presented a request to change the name of Ball Field 4 at Riverfront Park to Heroes Field, and to add a monument. He noted that there is a fundraising effort to replace the lighting at the field.

Don Longtin of 1579 Manchester Road, explained that the lighting system has not been replaced since the field was built in 2006. They seek to convert the lighting system to LEED, which will last longer than the extant lamps and save 40% in energy costs. The cost for this is \$170,600 plus an installation fee of \$35,500. They also propose a monument onsite, which will cost \$50,000, making the total cost of the project over \$200,000. Glastonbury Little League will cover all the costs; \$109,000 has been fundraised thus far.

Juan Ruiz of 143 Kinne Road, explained that renaming the field would honor all the officers and veterans who have served. Ryan Deane of Benesch volunteered his efforts to design the concept, which he modeled off the Korean War Memorial. He proposes three different types of granite piers, representing the fire department, the police department, and veterans. Mr. Gullotta stated that this item will be brought to agenda setting before returning as a public hearing.

5. Old Business. None.

6. New Business.

- a. Added to Agenda: Action to have the Town Manager provide written testimony in support of the bill that would allow municipalities the authority to ban the sale of nips in Town.**

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Ms. LaChance

Disc: Ms. Carroll attended the most recent GCAP meeting where there was conversation about who is purchasing nips. Much of it is being deposited in front of the high school. She is comfortable with municipalities restricting the sale of nips. Mr. Cavanna wonders where the line is drawn. Ms. Wang will support the scope of the current motion. However, the reasons for whether Glastonbury would ban the sale of nips is a more complicated discussion. She is more convinced of the potential for a positive impact on the environmental front, rather than discouraging underage drinking.

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

7. Consent Calendar. None.

8. Town Manager's Report.

Mr. Luiz presented his report. Mr. Osgood asked if the Nye Road applicants are trying to find additional funding sources. Mr. Luiz stated that they need more time to redesign the project. Mr. Osgood asked when the Council has to send a budget for approval. Mr. Luiz will check, but he noted that the final budget hearing is on March 20. Mr. Osgood would like to do so by March 12.

9. Committee Reports.

- a. Chairman's Report.**

Mr. Gullotta supports Glastonbury determining whether or not nips should be sold in town. Mr. Osgood is not ready to make a decision on this because banning nips might become a revenue burden on liquor store owners. Ms. Carroll noted that the letter will simply state that municipalities have the right to make the decision; it does not lock Glastonbury into any decision regarding banning or allowing the sale of nips.

Ms. Carroll moved to place the item on the agenda, as Item 6a (New Business).

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Ms. LaChance

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

Mr. Gullotta stated that there is an opening on the ASDRC because of the loss of Bob Shipman. If anyone with knowledge of trees and landscaping would like to volunteer, he asked that they reach out to the Town Manager.

b. MDC. None.

c. CRCOG.

Mr. Luiz stated that they continue to work on the regional trail equipment sharing grant.

10. Communications. None.

11. Minutes.

a. Minutes of February 13, 2024 Regular Meeting.

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby approves the minutes of the February 13, 2024, Regular Meeting.

Result: Minutes accepted unanimously {9-0-0}.

12. Appointments and Resignations.

a. Reappointment of Debra DeVries-Dalton (Special Landscape Architect) to the Architectural and Site Design Review Committee (2-year term).

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby approves the reappointment of Debra DeVries-Dalton (Special Landscape Architect) to the Architectural and Site Design Review Committee (2-year term).

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

b. Reappointment of David Flinchum (Landscape Architect) to the Architectural and Site Design Review Committee (2-year term).

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby approves the reappointment of David Flinchum (Landscape Architect) to the Architectural and Site Design Review Committee (2-year term).

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

c. Reappointment of Jeff Kamm (Architect) to the Architectural and Site Design Review Committee (2-year term).

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby approves the reappointment of Jeff Kamm (Architect) to the Architectural and Site Design Review Committee (2-year term).

Result: Motion passed unanimously {8-0-0}.

The Council recessed at 7:42 p.m. and returned to continue discussion on the Town Budget.

Human Resources Director Sherri Tanguay presented the HR budget, which is proposed to go up by 0.52%, or a total of \$4,835. The drivers of that increase are wages, offset by a decrease in services and charges and capital outlay. Mr. Cavanaugh asked how they can improve recruitment at the police department. Ms. Tanguay suggested utilizing PoliceApp, which would increase visibility. Mr. Cavanaugh asked if there is any reason why a candidate would go to East Hartford or Manchester instead of Glastonbury. Ms. Tanguay will look into those particular departments.

Interim Facilities Director John Elsesser presented the facilities budget, which was prepared by the previous director. Mr. Gullotta asked about the proposal for renovating the Academy complex. Mr. Elsesser believed that additional testing was warranted on that site for asbestos. On Monday, they took an additional 60 samples; the results will be shared soon. He explained that the request is to do the remedial work by floor, for all three floors in the building. Ms. Wang asked if there are other opportunities to expand solar energy in town. Mr. Elsesser stated that there are always opportunities for more solar. A lot of their focus is on town building mechanical systems. He pointed out that Glastonbury schools are working on heating system upgrades, which will be funded via various grants.

Community Development Director Shelley Caltagirone provided the major budget highlights for their four divisions. There is a proposed 8.9% increase in total community development, which is largely driven by the staffing needs at the Fire Marshal's office. Two new part-time staff will be dedicated solely to conducting periodic inspections for commercial and multifamily residential buildings, which is a code requirement that is currently not being met. She also noted that they would like to replace the Ford Explorer, which is a hand-me-down from the police department.

Mr. Osgood asked if they charge for inspections. Ms. Caltagirone explained that it is best practice to not charge for fire inspections because it discourages the public from coming in. However, they would like to charge for reinspections, which they hope would help with compliance. Mr. Gullotta asked about the \$75,000 study for the affordable housing plan. Ms. Caltagirone stated that the scope of the regulation updates would include addressing what is already in their affordable housing plan.

Finance Director Keri Rowley reviewed the Administrative Services Department budget, which is proposed to increase by 4.3%. Mr. Osgood asked if the \$89,000 for the retiree health insurance is OPEB. Ms. Rowley stated yes, it is their Medicare supplement. Mr. Gullotta asked how the primaries will go. Republican Registrar of Voters, Lisbeth Becker, explained that 5-6 people will staff the early voting location. They hope to gain valuable experience in those first four days as a trial run for the November election. Mr. Osgood stated that they received a state grant for \$10,500, but their cost for early voting went up by \$51,000, so he believes that this is another unfunded state mandate. Ms. Becker explained that the legislature might take up that issue.

Police Chief Marshall Porter presented the police department budget, which is proposed to increase by 0.1%. He explained that there was a 73% decrease in capital outlay because the vehicle, equipment, and upfitting are being charged to the Private Duty Special Revenue Fund. Mr. Cavanaugh asked about that fund. Ms. Rowley explained that it is a zero budget balance; any surplus will run into the fund balance. Mr. Niland

asked if the budget accounts for the fact that the police department is always understaffed. Mr. Luiz stated that, in the past, they have had offsets. One of the proposals is to reduce two officer positions to halftime. Ms. LaChance asked to account for the vacancy factor as a bottom line adjustment. Mr. Luiz pointed out that they often do not budget for severance payouts, which can be significant, so the savings from a lack of full staffing can end up with a wash factor.

Fire Chief Mike Thurz presented the fire department budget, which is proposed to increase by 27.5%. The largest driver is wages, accounting for over 46% of the increase. \$243,000 will go towards restructuring the firefighters incentive program to preserve their volunteer structure. There is also a 19% increase in supplies, which will go towards training and replacing tools and equipment. He then answered questions from Mr. Cavanaugh regarding the independent study on recruitment and retention. He explained that the study was removed from this year's budget and could be implemented next year.

Mr. Niland asked about the replacement of the self-contained breathing apparatuses. Chief Thurz explained that they have a total of 150. The Fire Council recommended that they stagger the replacement, to avoid coming in with one large request in 11 years. Mr. Osgood believes that it makes more sense to wait and replace them when they need to be replaced. Mr. Gullotta suggested earmarking money for a decade from now. Mr. Luiz will report back with more information. Mr. Cavanaugh asked if the budget has been presented to the Fire Commission. Chief Thurz explained that he has had conversations with them about it, and they blessed the budget, but there was no formal vote.

Mr. Cavanaugh is still unclear about the reprogramming of the volunteer department. He would like for the Fire Commission to be more proactive in this process. Chief Thurz explained that the Town Attorney is finalizing the memorandum, which will be discussed with the Council, the HR Director, and the Fire Commission. Mr. Luiz anticipates having an executive session on this matter on Thursday. Mr. Cavanaugh is concerned with the language of this budget, which appears to indicate that the Fire Chief is trying to turn this into a paid full-time department. Mr. Luiz stated that the Fire Chief does not have to defend that interpretation.

Mr. Cavanna asked if the fire department has ever conducted a climate study on what can be improved to keep firefighters happy. Chief Thurz explained that they do exit interviews when firefighters leave. Mr. Luiz noted that Mr. Cavanaugh had earlier asked a question about the status of the police private duty fund after \$200,000 were expended on vehicles; there will be a remaining balance of \$350,000.

Town Engineer Dan Pennington stated that the proposed physical services budget, which is comprised of three different divisions, will increase by 4.6%. The reason for the large increase in the engineering division relates to the state LOTCIP grant program. He explained that there was a question about how they determine police department vehicle replacement. Once it has been identified, they look at which vehicles are suitable for reassignment in the system. Mr. Gullotta stated that the amount for snow and ice materials is indicated at \$389,000. He would like to know what the average cost is. Mr. Pennington will report back.

Mr. Cavanaugh asked if the trees at the intersection of Eastern Boulevard and Addison Road will be replaced. Mr. Pennington does not think that it was a requirement of the TPZ approval. Mr. Gullotta suggested that the two dump trucks suggested for replacement could be good candidates for bonding; in which case, they could move over to CIP. Mr. Osgood countered that if the department has to purchase a new truck every year, then it becomes an operating cost, so it cannot be in the CIP budget.

Sanitation Supervisor Mike Manfre explained that refuse and water pollution are under his control. There are no significant program changes at the refuse station, but he is proposing a 5% permit increase to cover their

tipping fees. They are on year three of their five-year refuse contract. Another main driver is the non-processable waste. Mr. Gullotta asked how much it costs to ship the Town's municipal solid waste to Ohio. Mr. Manfre stated that it will total about \$167,000 next year. Mr. Niland asked how their tipping fees compare with that of other towns. Mr. Manfre explained that many towns entered into three year contracts instead of five, which they are now regretting. Many towns pay for recycling, which could become a problem for Glastonbury after 2027, when their contract expires.

Ms. Wang asked what kind of an impact composting at the schools would have. Mr. Luiz has spoken about this with the Superintendent, who has indicated that they have their own trash containers, which is reflected in the BOE's budget. Mr. Gullotta asked if the Town is not involved in school waste handling. Mr. Manfre stated that is correct. Mr. Gullotta would like to know what that expense is and how much trash they have moved. Mr. Luiz will relay those questions to the Superintendent.

Mr. Manfre then reviewed the Sewer Operating Fund (Water Pollution Control Division), which is proposed to increase by 3.4%. The WPCA's conservative sewer rate is proposed to increase modestly. Like most of the other town departments, the key budget driver of their increase is wages. He noted that debt service payments for the plant upgrade are scheduled to end in November 2030. Mr. Gullotta asked what percentage they are picking up at the transfer station. Mr. Manfre explained that it is 100% funded by the people who are served by the system.

Mr. Manfre noted that they did not receive the state energy efficiency grant they were hoping for, but their aeration blowers are oversized and addressing this could save a lot in electricity costs. \$210,000 in a CIP account is earmarked for energy conservation, but it will cost a little more. Mr. Luiz added that this project was about 90% designed in the past; they are reaching out to the design company on construction costs, in anticipation of saving money.

Director of Youth and Family Services (YFS), Lori LaCapra, reviewed the YFS budget, which is proposed to increase by 0.8%. The driving force of this was a wage increase of 5.6%, which was offset by an 8.3% decrease in services and charges. There was one question around their substance abuse coordinator position. She explained that their current coordinator is leaving tomorrow, and they are recruiting for that position, as well as two other part-time vacancies.

Library Director Amy McCue reviewed the Welles Turner Memorial Library budget, which is proposed to increase by 9.4%. The main driver is wages, which will bring them up to base operations. She noted that she has received questions about three staff positions, which are not included in the budget; however, the Maker Space position would provide the most impact overall. She was asked whether library staff have training in Maker Space equipment. She replied yes, many are trained on one piece of equipment, but no one is trained in all the equipment. She also noted that the library often coordinates programming with the YFS.

Mr. McChesney asked if library usage has increased since pre-covid. Ms. McCue stated yes, their current numbers are higher than the 2019 numbers on every metric. Mr. McChesney recalls past discussions of creating a part-time maker space position, which was never filled; that is why they dropped it. Ms. McCue believes that that was one of the unfunded positions they did not fill, so it was eliminated in the last round. The number that she is asking for is just the base operations. Mr. McChesney echoed calls for increased staffing at the library. He asked if consideration has been made to shift staff hours to weekends and evenings to accommodate for working parents. Ms. McCue stated that they have started that discussion, but no one has volunteered to make that change. She hopes that they can find another way. Ms. Wang wonders if there is a way to incentivize staff to volunteer to cover those hours. Mr. Luiz will discuss that with Ms. McCue and Ms. Tanguay.

Parks and Recreation Director, Lisa Zerio, reviewed the Senior and Social Services budget, which is proposed to increase by 2.12%. The main driver is wages, which will go up 5.39%. Mr. Cavanaugh asked about the computer lab. Ms. Zerio stated that it has not been functional for a few years. Currently, it is used as office space, but they have designed it for use as a fitness center. Mr. Luiz clarified that this is new funding which came in from the state, specifically for senior centers.

Ms. Zerio then reviewed the Parks and Recreation division budget, which will increase 1.92%. Ms. Wang had asked if it is possible to plow the Addison Bog trail after a snowstorm. Ms. Zerio stated that the Inland Wetlands Commission had issued a permit prohibiting winter maintenance in that area. Mr. Gullotta had asked how they recover the electricity costs of the fields. Ms. Zerio explained that youth teams pay a per-player per-season fee. Mr. McChesney asked how the tree work budget differs from the CIP tree management. Ms. Zerio stated that they need both. In the past, they were blowing through the General Fund, so the CIP was necessary to cover the remaining costs for work that needs to be addressed immediately.

Mr. Gullotta had asked about the silting issue at the boat launch. Ms. Zerio explained that they plan to go out for an RFQ in a couple months to look at the order of magnitude for costs, which would be included in the next CIP budget. Mr. Cavanaugh asked why they cannot just go out for a request to get the work done. Ms. Zerio explained that they do not know what exactly needs to be done, so they would like to hire a consultant who is a marine expert. Mr. Luiz added that they seek a structural fix to prevent this issue from recurring every so often. Mr. Gullotta had asked how much it costs to launch a boat at the Riverfront Community Center. Ms. Zerio replied, a seasonal pass for residents is \$60 and double for non-residents. She noted that the boat launch attendants are also parking attendants, so they do double duty.

13. Executive Session. None.

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanna

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby adjourns the Town Council meeting of February 27, 2024 at 10:40 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Lilly Torosyan

Lilly Torosyan
Recording Clerk

Thomas Gullotta
Chairman