

**GLASTONBURY TOWN COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2024**

The Glastonbury Town Council with Town Manager, Jonathan Luiz, in attendance, held a Special 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 {excused}  
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 Shelley Caltagirone***

**2. Public Communication and Petitions pertaining to the Call. *None.***

**3. Budget reviews for Fiscal Year 2024-2025:**

- **Continued 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.**

Director of Community Development Shelley Caltagirone presented the revenue budget for her department, which is proposed to increase 11.5%. She explained that the main driver is the fee increases, many of which have not been updated in many years. One of the new fees is to charge applicants for building reinspection. She hopes that this would be a good compliance tool. She stated that while the new Inland Wetlands Commission fees would not collect much revenue, they would help compensate for staff time. Health Department fees are increasing slightly to adjust for inflation. Under Land Use fees, she explained that they would begin charging for zoning permits, as well as adding a \$100 fee for public hearings, to cover the increasing cost of noticing public hearings in the local paper; this is in addition to the application fee that applicants currently pay.

Mr. Cavanaugh asked if the Town Attorney has reviewed the proposal to charge a fee for a public hearing. Ms. Caltagirone stated that she has sent the proposed schedule for fees to the Town Attorney and is awaiting his response. Alternatively, she suggested simply increasing the application fee to cover the cost of the noticing. Mr. Gullotta asked, if these fees were to move forward, that Staff keep track of how many people do not comply, and what the unintended financial consequences of that could be for the Town. Mr. Cavanaugh asked about the Town's new blight ordinance. Ms. Caltagirone does not believe that the blight

ordinances were used successfully until this past year. Mr. Cavanna asked who determines the definition of blight. Ms. Caltagirone replied, the Building Official. Mr. Cavanna asked if the \$30 blasting fee is for every time a blasting permit is issued or for each time a blasting event occurs. Ms. Caltagirone clarified that it is for each permit, not each occurrence of blasting. Mr. Osgood likes the proposed fee increases.

Mike Manfre, Sanitation Supervisor, reviewed the proposed fee increases for refuse. He explained that both permit fees and trip and tip fees will increase this year. The permit increases for vehicles are going up, but there is a discount for seniors. Mr. Cavanna asked if that same discount could apply for veterans. Mr. Manfre believes that is a good idea to consider implementing. Mr. Osgood asked if someone who purchases an unlimited pass would still be charged a trip fee. Mr. Manfre replied yes, a trip fee is any non-processable item. He thinks that the department could do a better job of communicating this because they have received complaints.

Ms. Wang is still confused about the sticker permit versus unlimited permit. Mr. Manfre explained that the permit sticker gets someone a recycling pass, whereas the unlimited pass allows them to dispose of refuse. The one-day pass is for recycling only. For trash, they have to purchase a one-day pass and a trip fee for refuse. Mr. Osgood asked if they are still contemplating pay-as-you-throw bags. Mr. Manfre has spoken with other towns to see if it will work here. Mr. Gullotta thinks that it is a bad idea. He then asked if, with the new fee collections, they are in the 75% range. Mr. Manfre replied yes.

Mr. Gullotta does not understand why the former Town Manager pegged it at 75%. He asked why frequent users could not pay 100%. Mr. Luiz thinks that one of the reasons is because there are people who use the transfer station routinely, but there are also those who use it only once a year. Mr. Cavanaugh pointed out that the former Town Manager actually wanted it at 50%. He then asked to look into how many trips the Town has to make to move items, which were incorrectly placed in the transfer station, to the bulky waste facility. Mr. Manfre presented the non-processables fee increase, explaining that their target is to arrive at the 10.5 cents per pound number, which is the average weight. He noted that this should cover their expenses.

Director of Parks and Recreation Lisa Zerio presented the proposed fees and charges for her department, which has been reviewed and approved by the Recreation Commission. She explained the budget drivers, which include an increase in material and supply costs, a raise in vendor costs, staff expansion to accommodate waitlists, additional programs being offered, and a minimum wage increase.

Mr. Niland stated that the Town had a long conversation with the BOE yesterday about custodians in the schools. Ms. Zerio explained that the Parks and Recreation department maintains all the school and field grounds, which they utilize for summer programs, but they do not pay for the custodians. Ms. Wang wonders if other cost structures have been explored for the pool pass. Ms. Zerio has not researched that. Mr. Cavanaugh asked how much participation there is from gymnastics. Ms. Zerio will run the numbers on all the lessons during the week and report back. Ms. Wang asked what the policy is for families who cannot afford these fees. Ms. Zerio explained that they fill out a form and send it confidentially to their outreach social workers, to allow them to take the programs at a discount. They never turn away someone for an inability to pay. Mr. Osgood asked if they rent out the pavilion at the Riverfront Community Center. Ms. Zerio stated that the current pavilions are for casual use only.

Mr. Cavanaugh asked the new Fire Marshal what the 5-10 time sensitive reviews per day are. Fire Marshal Mike Makuch explained that those are tied to building permits. Anything greater than a two-family home requires Fire Marshal review and sign off. Mr. Cavanaugh asked about the two proposed part-timer positions. Mr. Makuch stated that their department is accomplishing only 20% of their legally-mandated inspection levels. He expects that each new hire would inspect 700 occupancies on a low year and 1800 on a

high year, which would be a tremendous help in getting them into compliance. Mr. Cavanaugh asked what would happen in the event of a car accident involving an employee who is in their personal vehicle, instead of a town vehicle. Mr. Luiz will check and report back.

Mr. Luiz presented a proposal to bond for capital projects and what the associated mill rate would be. He explained the various adjustments that he has made, following the updates to the budget that was proposed at the Annual Town Meeting. However, he did not include the BOF's recommendation to increase the collection rate from 99.15% to 99.2% because he is concerned about the possibility of a recession. He also did not include the BOF's decision to increase the interest rate on investments from 4.0% to 4.25%. This is because he worries about the Federal Reserve cutting interest rates this year. He also explained the change to bond for Fire Engine Tanker 42, as well as to bond for two school roofs: at Gideon Welles and GHS. He explained that these two items will be eligible for a 33% reimbursement from the state. It would also allow them to construct the animal shelter. If all these things get done, the tax increase would be 3%, which is what the BOF approved.

He handed out a sheet showing how these changes will impact the Town's debt schedule, using a 10-year versus 20-year bond schedule scenario. He explained that the first year that the principal interest would kick in is FY26. Mr. Osgood asked which rate they used. Ms. Rowley replied, 2.75%. Mr. Luiz added that this is the number they received from their advisors. Mr. Gullotta's understanding was that they needed to bond for the full amount of the roof, excluding the reimbursement amount. Ms. Rowley explained that the appropriation would be higher, but they do not go out to bond until expending the money; therefore, the bond would be for the 66% that they are responsible for. Mr. Luiz added that Mr. Gullotta's understanding used to be correct, but the law changed about seven years ago.

Mr. Niland asked if they are creating a \$2 million cliff next year by using the ARPA funds in the CIP this year. Ms. Rowley clarified that ARPA is a completely different fund. Because it is not reflected in the General Fund operating budget, they will not have that gap next year. Mr. Osgood stated that, in FY 24-25, the Capital Reserve Fund is \$11.1 million, but now they are proposing it at \$7.1 million because of bonding. He asked what the \$6.296 million is. Ms. Rowley stated that that is the General Fund Transfer in (or transfer out to the Capital Reserve Fund).

Ms. LaChance asked if, historically, they have bonded for items like this. Mr. Luiz would have to do research on that. Mr. Cavanaugh does not recall bonding for a roof or fire apparatus in the past. Ms. LaChance feels like they are kicking the can down the road. She does not want to place a bigger tax burden on the newer generations by avoiding tough decisions on this now. Mr. Osgood agreed. Mr. Cavanaugh had asked to bond over a decade ago, when rates were low. He countered that bonding for these items is responsible because people will benefit from their use in the future and not have any tax liability on it.

Mr. McChesney thinks that roofs are good candidates for bonding. He asked what the budget impact might be on reallocating the ARPA monies that were appropriated for Williams Memorial, should that project not proceed. Mr. Luiz explained that if that money were to be reallocated to other capital projects, then it would reduce the mill rate. Mr. McChesney asked what would happen to the \$1.25 million that has already been committed to the project. Mr. Luiz explained that, for ARPA projects, they need to issue the purchase orders by the end of December 2024, which is why he proposes the full funding for the animal shelter. STEAP grants take a long time to get processed, so he is concerned about using that funding source for it. If the budget is approved as proposed, he is confident that all the ARPA money would be processed on time. Mr. Osgood added that, if they decide not to proceed with the Williams Memorial project, then the \$1.25 million that was already allocated would have to be reprogrammed to another project; it would not be lost.

Interim Maintenance Director John Elsesser reviewed the history of the Williams Memorial/Academy building, noting that while much of it is used for storage today, it is an integral part of Town Hall. He stated that the environmental testing has been done, and the additional testing was more favorable than he thought it would be. The primary material of concern is asbestos. PCBs were not tested for but potential locations were identified; lead paint was also identified, but under the current regulations is not as urgent a matter. He stated that if the Town serves as a project manager for this, he could guarantee meeting the ARPA deadline.

His suggested first priorities include replacing all windows and lighting; addressing the lead paint concerns; strengthening the four support columns in the Teen Center and renovating the Teen Center; replacing the Teen Center lift that would also go up to the second floor; installing an elevator to connect the hallway outside the gym with the Teen Center and Williams Memorial; adding a new staircase; and adding high-density records storage in the old kitchen area. Mr. Luiz clarified that these first priorities would be paid for with the existing \$1.25million allocation. Mr. Elsesser listed the possible immediate uses after the first phase of the project is completed, which include a variety of uses as town gathering and training/educational space.

Mr. Elsesser then reviewed a list of suggested next priorities, which include adding central air conditioning. While he is unsure of the cost for this, he estimates that it would be around \$250,000. Mr. Luiz stated that, two years ago, they received a quote from Silver Petrucelli, for about \$190,000. The other suggested priorities are to add internet access points; tech for board/commission meeting space; furnishings and final fit out for selected end uses; and an additional bathroom in the gym hallway. Mr. Elsesser noted that these next priorities would be paid for with the additional \$1 million to be allocated. Mr. Osgood asked if the \$2 million appropriation could turn the space into a new council chambers. Mr. Elsesser believes so, but the air conditioning would be a vital component of that.

Mr. Niland believes that this is a worthy proposal, but it goes beyond the scope of what the Council had initially reviewed. He believes that they need another tour of the whole site, not just the Williams Memorial section that was originally approved. He also has concerns about using the remaining \$1 million without knowing what the work will cost. He would like to avoid a scenario in which the work ends up costing less than \$1 million, and the Council has to scramble to reappropriate the rest of the ARPA monies by the deadline.

Mr. Luiz explained that he initially did not realize that Williams Memorial referred to just the hall, and not all three floors. He agreed that it might be prudent to change the name of the account to reflect the greater scope of the project. He does not think that this would need to return to the BOF because the Council could use their budget authority to make that change. In the event that the ARPA money is not spent by the deadline, Mr. Luiz suggests rerouting that money to the Road Overlay program.

Mr. McChesney agrees that they technically need to reallocate this budget cycle to reflect that greater scope. Mr. Elsesser iterated that the architect has paused because they were told to wait for feedback from the Council. He asked the Council to allow them to proceed, so that the architect could provide the cost estimates. Mr. McChesney believes that this project makes more sense than a new Council Chambers. He sees the value of having more usable community space. He is okay with leaving the funds that are currently allocated. His focus is on whether they should allocate all the funds that are currently proposed or reduce it. Mr. Niland has spoken with State Representative Jilly Barry about the possibility of the state being involved in bonding. Mr. Luiz has been in conversation with her, as well. He also noted that there is a STEAP grant coming out this summer.

Mr. Cavanaugh stated that, last night, Mr. Niland asked Superintendent Alan Bookman whether the Hebron Avenue parking lot, which the BOE proposes be repaved, could be sealed instead. Town Engineer Dan

Pennington explained that the BOE has identified Hebron Avenue school as their top priority, but it is not his top priority. He believes that there are areas that could benefit from crack sealing. Mr. Gullotta clarified that Dr. Bookman seemed deferential to Town Staff to decide how to proceed with the project. Mr. Pennington explained that the Town Manager's budget includes \$200,000 for the paving of town facilities, without identifying which ones those would be. Mr. Niland countered that there is a \$290,000 line item for Hebron Avenue schools specifically. Mr. Luiz will look into that.

Mr. Osgood believes that, if they are to bond for school roofs, then the roof at Naubuc should be included, as well. Mr. Gullotta asked about the animal control shelter. Mr. Luiz stated that the design has been approved by the state; they have been scouring for alternative locations in town which would allow for a more economical design, but the options are very limited. Mr. Osgood cannot bring himself to spend \$2 million on a dog pound. At Monday's meeting, Mr. Luiz will explain the fire compensation and as much new information that Mr. Elsesser can provide on the Williams Memorial/Academy building.

#### **4. Adjournment.**

**Motion by:** Mr. Niland

**Seconded by:** Mr. Cavanaugh

*BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby adjourns the Town Council meeting of February 29 at 8:43 p.m.*

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

Respectfully submitted,

Lilly Torosyan

Lilly Torosyan  
Recording Clerk

Thomas Gullotta  
Chairman