

**Town of Easton
Board of Finance – Special Meeting Minutes**

Date/Time: Tuesday, May 3, 2022 – 8:00 pm

Location: Samuel Staples Elementary School, Media Center
515 Morehouse Road, Easton, CT

Virtual meeting using the Zoom app.

A recording of this meeting is located at:

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/easton-board-of-finance>

Attendees: Members: Art Laske-Chair, Jackie Kaufman-Clerk, Andy Kachele, Ira Kaplan, Michael Kot, P. Skrtich; Alternates, Greg Saunders, Maureen Williams; Alternates Present on Zoom: M. Gutowski

Absentee(s): None.

Guest(s): Christine Calvert-Finance Director/Treasurer; Dr. Bindleglass, First Selectman; Robert Lessler, Second Selectman

Call to Order: Meeting called to order 8:04 pm by: Art Laske, Chairman at:

Appointment of Alternates

NONE.

Agenda Item 1 *Discuss & Possible Action on using American Rescue Plan Act Funds to purchase five (5) defibrillators for the Fire Department*

- Chief R. Clem and 1st Assistant Chief S. Waugh appeared on behalf of the Easton Fire Department to request covid relief funds in the amount of \$9,650 to replace aging defibrillators. The Fire Department represented that the existing units are seventeen (17) years old, and the average life span of the devices are only 10-12 years old. The new units will provide critical life safety benefits and will have a longer life span. The Fire Department will receive a monetary credit for returning the existing units.

Motion: J. Kaufman made a motion to approve the request for \$9,650 to be made to the Town of Easton Fire Department for replacement defibrillators from Covid Relief Funds.

Second: P. Skrtich

Vote: Unanimous.

Agenda Item 2 *Treasurer's Report*

- The Treasurer, Christine Calvert, presented the month's Treasurer's Report and answered questions from the Board. Ms. Calvert reported that 98.56% of taxes due have been collected; and, as a result, tax collection is slowing, as most of the money has been received.

- Ms. Calvert received the Budget Vote results: Proposed Budget (Question 1) passed 1250 in favor/366 opposed; Question 2 (Region 9 Budget) passed 1233 in favor/370 opposed; Question 3 (Demolition Delay) Ordinance passed 1161 in favor/345 opposed; Question 4 (South Park) passed 1056 in favor/574 opposed.
- Ms. Calvert addressed questions from the Board regarding the final Undesignated Fund Balance and potential increase by up to, approximately, \$800,000 from the Board of Education.

Agenda Item 3 ***Discuss & Possible Action on Munis Financial Report for Appropriations and Revenue Presented by the Finance Director***

- The Treasurer, Christine Calvert, presented the month's Minus Financial Report and answered questions from the Board.
- Town Clerk, Tax Collector and Building Department revenues have exceeded the prospective budgets and no department is in danger of overspending.
- Three (3) unexpected retirements have been announced and Ms. Calvert will have to check the contingencies, which will be tight because of union negotiations (Town Clerk & Assistant Town Clerk, too). Retirement can be costly due to accumulated sick time, among other things.
- Ms. Calvert answered questions from the Board about Munis revenue and credits, and Special Fund designation for EMS and Park and Recreation

Agenda Item 4 ***Discuss & Act Upon the Appointment of PKF O'Connor Davies as the audit firm to prepare the Town of Easton's Financial for fiscal year end June 30, 2022 as per Connecticut General Statutes 7-396 and 4-232***

- The Treasurer, Christine Calvert, reported that this is a 3-year contract (fiscal year) and the third (3rd) year of that contract. Ms. Calvert has, generally, been pleased with this firm.

Motion: P. Skrtich made a motion to appoint PKF O'Connor Davies as the audit firm to prepare the Town's Financial Report for fiscal year end June 30, 2022.

Second: A. Kachele

Vote: Unanimous.

Agenda Item 5

Discussion and Possible Action on the 2022/2023 budget machine vote, and if applicable, set mill rate, or begin adjustments, decide upon tax collection procedures, an any other action deemed necessary for the 2022/2023 fiscal budget year

- Chairman Laske confirmed the 2022-23 budget(s) have passed: Town of Easton Budget passed 1251 in favor/356 opposed; and Region 9 Budget passed 1233 in favor/370 opposed.

First Motion: A. Kachele made a motion to set the 2022-23 Mill Rate at 27.96 MILLS.

Second: M. Kot

Discussion: A. Kachele provided data supporting his motion for the 27.96 Mill Rate. A lengthy discussion among Board members followed regarding various aspects of setting the Mill Rate and Undesignated Fund Balance, including, but not limited to: the benefits and risks associated with reducing the Undesignated Fund Balance to a target range around 10%; review of expenditure plans and revenue; the impact of projected funding returns (surplus) from the Board of Education to the Town (up to \$800,000) and risks associated with considering projected/speculative returns in setting the Mill Rate (as the return/surplus amount has not yet been confirmed by the Board of Education); the eight (8) year history of setting the Undesignated Fund Balance and examples of transfers from the Undesignated Fund Balance into the Operating Budget for important expenses; \$350,000 insurance settlement and prospective collection; bond ratings; 2022-23 budget increase (1%); budget vote result; long term interests of the Town and taxpayers. Dr. Bindleglass commented on the Morehouse Road roof expenditure and asked questions of the Board about appropriated and unappropriated expenditure procedure. The Board and Ms. Calvert responded. The motion on the table would result in a \$3.65M reduction of the Undesignated Fund balance.

Vote: In Favor: A. Kachele, M. Kot, P. Skrtich; Opposed: I. Kaplan, J. Kaufman, A. Laske; Motion Fails.

- *Board of Finance Takes a Brief recess at 9:51p.m. and shortly resumes its Special Meeting -*

Second Motion: P. Skrtich made a motion to set the 2022-23 Mill rate at 27.99 MILLS.

Discussion: The motion on the table would result in a \$3.6M reduction of the Undesignated Fund balance.

Second: None.

Vote: None. Motion Failed due to no Second.

Third Motion: P. Skrtich made a motion to set the 2022-23 Mill rate at 28.06 MILLS.
Second: M. Kot
Discussion: The motion on the table would result in a \$3.5M reduction of the Undesignated Fund balance.
Vote: In Favor: A. Kachele, M. Kot, P. Skrtich; Opposed: I. Kaplan, J. Kaufman, A. Laske; Motion Fails.

Fourth Motion: J. Kaufman made a motion to set the 2022-23 Mill Rate at 28.57 MILLS.
Discussion: The motion on the table would result in a \$2.75M reduction of the Undesignated Fund balance.
Second: None
Vote: None. Motion Failed due to no Second.

Fifth Motion: P. Skrtich made a motion to set the 2022-23 Mill rate at 28.13 MILLS
Second: M. Kot
Discussion: The motion on the table would result in a \$3.4M reduction of the Undesignated Fund balance.
Vote: In Favor: A. Kachele, M. Kot, P. Skrtich; Opposed: I. Kaplan, J. Kaufman, A. Laske; Motion Fails.

Sixth Motion: Paul Skrtich made a motion to set the 2022-23 Mill Rate at 28.33 MILLS
Second: M. Kot
Discussion: The motion on the table would result in a \$3.1M reduction of the Undesignated Fund balance.
Vote: In Favor: A. Kachele, M. Kot, P. Skrtich; Opposed: I. Kaplan, J. Kaufman, A. Laske; Motion Fails.

Seventh Motion: Paul Skrtich made a motion to set the 2022-23 Mill Rate at 28.56 MILLS.
Second: J. Kaufman

Discussion: The motion on the table would result in a \$2.75M reduction of the Undesignated Fund balance.

Vote: In Favor: I. Kaplan, J. Kaufman, A. Laske; Opposed: A. Kachele, M. Kot, P. Skrtich. Motion Fails.

Eighth Motion: Paul Skrtich made a motion to set the 2022-23 Mill Rate at 28.4 MILLS.

Second: M. Kot

Discussion: The motion on the table would result in a \$3M reduction of the Undesignated Fund Balance.

Vote: In Favor: A. Kachele, M. Kot, P. Skrtich; Opposed: I. Kaplan, J. Kaufman, A. Laske; Motion Fails.

Ninth Motion: J. Kaufman made a motion to set the 2022-23 Mill Rate at 28.55 MILLS.

Second: I. Kaplan

Discussion: The motion on the table would result in a \$2.78M reduction of the Undesignated Fund Balance.

Vote: In Favor: I. Kaplan, J. Kaufman, A. Laske; Opposed: A. Kachele, M. Kot, P. Skrtich; Motion Fails

Tenth Motion: A. Kachele made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Second: None

Vote: None. Motion Failed due to no Second.

Eleventh Motion: J. Kaufman made a motion to set the 2022-23 Mill Rate at 2.85 MILLS

Second: P. Skrtich

Discussion: The motion on the table would result in a \$2.85M reduction of the Undesignated Fund Balance.

Vote: In Favor: J. Kaufman, A. Laske; Opposed: A. Kachele, I. Kaplan, M. Kot, P. Skrtich

Twelfth Motion: P. Skrtich made a motion to approve the 2022-23 Mill Rate at 28.44 Mills.

Second: J. Kaufman

Discussion: The motion on the table would result in a \$2.95M reduction of the Undesignated Fund Balance.

Vote: In Favor: A. Kachele, J. Kaufman, M. Kot, P. Skrtich; Opposed: A. Laske, I. Kaplan; 2022-23 Mill Rate at 28.44 Mills Passes.

Adjournment

Motion Made: A. Kachele made a motion to adjourn at 10:36 p.m.

Second: M. Kot

Vote: Unanimous.

Submitted by,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jacqueline J. Kaufman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jackie Kaufman – Clerk