

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

Date/Time: Wednesday March 15, 2023 – 7:00 pm  
Location: Easton Senior Center, 650 Morehouse Road; also on Zoom  
Recording: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/easton-board-of-finance>

**Attendees:** Members in person: Art Laske, Andy Kachele, Michael Kot, Paul Skrtich, Jackie Kaufman, Ira Kaplan  
Alternates in person: Gregg Saunders, Michael Gutowski, Maureen Williams

**Absentees:** none

**Guests:** Christine Calvert, Treasurer and Finance Director  
Dave Bindelglass, First Selectman  
Bob Lessler and Kristi Sogofsky, Board of Selectmen  
Mark Cooper, Aspetuck Health District Director of Health  
Richard Doyle, Chief of Police  
Richard Colangelo, Chair of Board of Police Commissioners  
David Smith, Board of Police Commissioners  
Edward Nagy, Department of Public Works Director

**Call to Order:** By Chair Art Laske at 7:04 pm

1. (Agenda item #1) Review Budgets for the Following:
  - a. Health (7:05)
  - b. Police (Communication, Police, and Animal Control) (7:31)
  - c. Emergency Management
  - d. Tree Warden
  - e. Public Works, 660 Morehouse Road, Recycling, Street Lights (8:20)

Mark presented the Health budget, explained the assessment per town (Easton, Weston, Westport), and some changes in amounts due to recategorization of expenditure lines. Mark answered questions about the District surplus, generators, septic systems, Lyme disease, Covid testing counts, and some typos in the FY23 listed expenditures.

Rich Doyle presented the budget for Communication Dispatchers (7:31), noting increases in medical insurance and overtime. He then presented on Emergency Management (7:35), and we discussed the stipend, and Paul raised the possibility of seeking grants. Rich presented the Animal Control budget (7:40), and Andy explained why the FY25 Capital request should be recategorized. Andy also recommended checking rates from SCG to refine the Utilities request.

In response to a question about the Emergency Management stipend increase, Chris reported stipend increases for Tree Warden, Social Services, Fire Marshal, EMS, and DPW Director as well.

Rich Doyle presented the Police budget (7:48). He expressed satisfaction with the contracted services assisting with Tier 1 accreditation and explained the request for Tier 2. He explained the need for Taser replacement, vehicle replacement, and other capital projects. Andy suggested Rich find out what discount is available if Tasers are paid for up front (rather than spread out over 5 years). Ira asked about an error in the FY23 Pension rates, and Chris explained that the error is only as presented in the Police budget summary, but that the correct amount is in the Pension budget itself. She also noted a recently announced change, further increasing the FY24 Pension budget (more below on this). Chris also noted an error in the payments for Taser Replacement in the 5 year Capital Plan. Rich explained the FY24 Revenue estimate, dominated by Special Duty Billing.

Ed presented the Recycling budget (8:20) and discussed increasing rates per ton. He presented the 660 Morehouse Road budget. Last year's roof repair will get 50% recovery, according to our insurer. There was discussion of the FY23 Capital budget of \$45,000 (though Ed had \$10,000 written), but it seems there will be money remaining from that budget, and we discussed the possibility of transferring the balance to fund replacement of a basement chill unit in FY23 (currently in the FY24 Capital request at estimated \$30,000). This can be investigated and taken up at a later meeting. Art asked about building revenue and leases. Mike G asked about Surge Suppressors. Mike G asked about alternative energy sources, and Dave B explained the recommendation of the Energy Task Force against it as impractical given our configuration.

Ed presented the budget for Street Lights (8:48) and then moved on to Public Works (8:49). Ed discussed staffing shortages due to health issues, and difficulties hiring new employees (there are two openings). Public Works wages are penciled in at FY23 levels, a new contract effective 7/1/23 is still to be negotiated. Ed explained the Road Highway Capital Outlay request of \$319,000. There is currently a large balance in FY23 for this fund, but Ed hopes to be able to expend it all on highway work this spring (so none would be available for FY24). Ed described the difficulty of the Fiscal Year cutoff of June 30<sup>th</sup>, how it makes planning and work difficult. Ed mentioned that Southbury has a different approach with a rolling fund. Ira and Paul urged that we consider adopting such an approach, and there was agreement to consider doing so. Ed and Chris will provide a 5 year Capital Plan to the BOF. Art asked about money to be returned from FY23 budget, and Ed explained why there would be money to return but did not provide an estimate.

Art briefly mentioned the Tree Warden budget (the stipend increase noted earlier is the only change), and no questions or discussion ensued.

2. Fill-in budgets: Any other budgets as deemed necessary. (9:17)

Chris followed up on some items: Town Hall utilities are revised down from \$57,000 to \$54,000, and as requested EMS Chief and Assistant Administrative Services stipends were shifted to Salary line. Chris received notification from the State that the Police and Fire Pension charges are increased from 23.45% to 25.69%, which increases our projected budget \$85,000. Because of a new employee's insurance, and a new increased recommendation for medical insurance funding from Brown & Brown (from 8.0% to 8.4%), the Fringe Benefits budget request will increase \$61,000.

Paul asked if the BOF would receive an updated Master Budget file. Chris will provide that, reflecting updated BOE budget as well. Chris reports the updated total represents a 4.07% increase over FY23. Art asks about the Undesignated Fund Balance, but Chris does not have an updated estimate at hand.

Art will present the budget requests from departments at 3/27/23 Public Hearing. BOF members should inform Art of departments we want additional discussion with for 3/28 and 3/29 meetings. Andy encourages BOF members to attend 3/27. Gregg requests a breakdown on how much of the 4.07% increase reflects contractual wage increases.

3. Motion to adjourn by Mike K/Paul. Result: passes 6-0 at 9:31.

Submitted 3/16/23 by Ira Kaplan, BOF Clerk