

Town of Easton CT
Board of Finance – Regular Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: Tuesday February 7, 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: Ira Kaplan, Art Laske, Michael Kot, Andy Kachele
Alternates in person: Michael Gutowski, Gregg Saunders, Maureen Williams

Absentees: Paul Skrtich, Jackie Kaufman

Guests: Christine Calvert, Treasurer and Finance Director
Jonathan Arnold, Chief of Emergency Medical Services
Wendy Bowditch, EMS Planning & Building Committee
John Foley, EMS Planning & Building Committee
Robert Klem, Fire Chief

Call to Order: By Chair Art Laske at 7:01 pm

Per emailed instructions from Jackie and Paul, Art appoints Maureen as alternate in place of Jackie and Gregg as alternate in place of Paul.

1. (Agenda item #1) Discuss and approve the meeting minutes of 12/6/22 (7:03)
Motion to approve minutes, by Andy/Maureen. Result: passes 6-0.
2. Discuss and approve the special meeting minutes of 1/17/23 (7:04)
Correction from Andy, minutes listed guest Jack Johnston, who was not present at meeting, but should have instead listed Fire Commissioner Dave Buchanan.
Motion to approve minutes as corrected, by Maureen/Ira. Result: passes 6-0.
3. Update on the EMS Headquarters (7:05)
Jon stated that only two site options remain under consideration: building attached to fire house, or standalone building on land adjacent to fire house. Funding sources were discussed, with practical options narrowed down to ARPA funds, EMS, and Town.
There was discussion of Requests for Proposal, Requests for Qualifications, and Requests for Quotes, and Andy warned of the dangers of deviating from the proper order of these steps.
There was discussion of the relative merits of the two site options.
We discussed need for initial funding to pay architect for pre-design work, and after consideration recognized that it would be inappropriate to combine private donations and town money to fund this. Since it is too much money for the BOF to allocate unilaterally, a special town meeting will be needed to approve funding – after a few other steps are taken to settle on which firm will be engaged.
4. Discuss and possible action on Library line item transfers (7:55)
Chris described the current lease for copier, and the suggestion to buy it out (requiring a transfer of \$2,025.31). Maureen and Andy took issue with the buyout terms, and Chris agreed she will pursue negotiations for a lower price. No other action taken.
5. Discussion on the preliminary Board of Education budget presentation (7:58)

There is a scheduling conflict for the BOE to present to the BOF, and BOF will likely need to have a meeting added the week of 3/20/23. Art says the superintendent's proposal is a 4.36% increase from last year. Art asked for questions about the budget.

Andy requested some more details, which have often been made available in past budget cycles: staffing chart, 5-year actual enrollment vs projections, actual YTD spending. Also an explanation of why a section was added for SSES.

Ira requested full year FY2022 actual expenditures; asked about requests for lower priority items (windows, carpet) instead of higher priority items (e.g. unit ventilators) as identified by KG+D report; asked about Science curriculum (funding inconsistency, and purpose); asked about teacher intern possibly lowering need for substitutes; asked about increase in HKMS custodial staffing in contrast with staffing levels at SSES.

Andy commented on BOE Facilities committee that is considering capital projects and expressed anticipation of needed funding in future (but not this budget cycle).

6. Overview of Budget Process (8:16)

Art reminds us to inform Department heads if certain cuts are desired, and to avoid surprises.

Chris informs us that there has been restructuring, and Assistant Town Clerks are now both part time.

Andy raises question about Library's free activities, and suggests charging for them, consistent with practices at Senior Center and Park & Recreation.

7. Treasurer's Report (8:27)

Chris informs us there is discussion of possible tax sale on some properties with very delinquent taxes.

8. Discuss and possible action on Munis Financial Report for appropriations and revenue presented by Finance Director. (8:34)

Chris says the number of home sales is down which is reflected in decrease in revenues for line 11 (Town Clerk). She also explains expenses for lines 32 (660 Morehouse Road) and 48 (EMS).

9. Motion to adjourn by Mike K/Maureen. Result: passes 6-0 at 8:37.

Submitted 2/9/23 by Ira Kaplan, BOF Clerk