

Town of Easton Ct
Board of Finance – Regular Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: Tuesday July 11, 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, Ira Kaplan, Jackie Kaufman
Alternates in person: Michael Gutowski, Maureen Williams, Gregg Saunders
Member on Zoom: Paul Skrtich
Absentees: Member Michael Kot
Guests: Christine Calvert, Treasurer and Finance Director
Dave Bindelglass, First Selectman
Bill Andrews, EMS Planning and Building Committee Chair
Adam Goldstein, EMS Assistant Chief of Operations
Call to Order: By Chair Art Laske at 7:09 pm

Motion to appoint alternate Mike G in place of Jackie until Jackie arrives, and Gregg in place of Mike K, by Ira/Andy. Result: passes 4-0. Jackie arrives 7:30.

1. (Agenda item #1) Discuss and approve the meeting minutes of June 6, 2023.

Motion to approve minutes, by Gregg/Mike G. Result: passes 6-0.

2. Discussion and update from the EMS Planning and Building Committee Chairman Bill Andrews. (7:12)
Art summarizes history and status and invites Bill to present. Bill introduces himself and gives overview of his approach and perspective, suggesting a range of costs from \$4,000,000 to \$6,800,000. Dave, Art, and Andy discuss rules guiding the requirements regarding prevailing wage. Art asks about the number of bays. Andy asks about need for office space and discusses the annual cost if we issue bonds. Adam says the 650 calls per year is projected to increase to 1000 in five years per ESCI Report, which would dictate need for three bays. Bill seeks guidance on acceptable amount, Art suggests providing different designs at different amounts, Bill says it is challenging to do that without paying an architect. Art asks if EMS can accept \$3,000,000 total funding, and Bill says it would be difficult for EMS to operate if that was the limit. Andy asks for prioritized list of needs. Paul suggests limit of \$3,000,000 town spending including ARPA, is willing to use Undesignated Fund Balance but is not willing to Bond, and is skeptical of ESCI projections. Art suggests \$3,000,000 to \$4,000,000 might be okay but \$7,000,000 is not. Bill says we would have to evaluate the risks incurred in having a facility with less space than requested. Ira asks for comparison with EMS buildings in similar towns. Ira suggests, referring to ESCI recommendations, that operating rules must be settled before the BOF agrees to funding, that this can be as much of an obstacle as other aspects. Art agrees and suggests a working group to address. Dave says EMS needs space for three ambulances, that we must agree on that to go forward. Art asks why 1000 calls per year dictates need for three vehicles, and Adam says he will get an answer to that. Jackie would like to see the cyclical maintenance plan. Bill suggests a list of deliverables for him to present to the BOF next time. Andy reminds Bill that if preliminary architectural work is over \$20,000, the BOF cannot allocate the funding without a Special Town Meeting. Bill discusses the need to represent different interests in the working group on operating rules, and Dave says he would join that group.

3. Discuss and act upon the appointment of CLA LLP as the audit firm to prepare the Town of Easton's Financials for fiscal year end June 30, 2023 as per Connecticut General Statutes 7-396 and 4-232. (8:43)
Chris reports CLA was the only bid. The charge for this year would be \$52,750 (a portion charged to BOE), with a three-year commitment (next two years at about \$58,000 and \$63,000). Chris said Region 9 and Redding have agreed with selection. Motion to appoint CLA LLP as audit firm by Andy/Gregg. Result: passes 6-0.
4. Treasurer's Report. (8:46)
Tax collections are coming in. Ira followed up on a question from last month, and Chris responded that funds in Janney are about \$4,000,000 in T-bills with the remainder (about \$1,100,000) in mortgage-backed securities.
5. Discuss and possible action on Munis Financial Report for appropriations and revenue presented by the Finance Director. (8:48)
Chris says we will need some line-item transfers in next two months. Police Special Duty was very high this past year, over \$700,000. The state had announced a large pension charge increase a few months ago; Chris says they recently lowered it below 25%. She guesses it will reduce expenses about \$20,000.

Before adjournment, we discussed various topics. (8:51)
Andy updated us on Joel Barlow project based on discussions with Region 9 Board member Todd Johnston and ER9 Finance Director Sara Scrofani. He said the approved \$4,500,000 was planned to cover all costs including septic, that additional funds should not be required after all. He discussed Participation Notes and Callable Bonds, usage of leftover funds if any, contracts and bidding.
Art discussed possibly cancelling the regular August meeting, instead having a Special Meeting to address EMS as needed.
6. Motion to adjourn by Gregg/Andy. Result: passes 6-0 at 8:57.

Submitted 7/14/23 by Ira Kaplan, BOF Clerk