

Town of Easton CT
Board of Finance – Regular Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: Tuesday January 9, 2024 – 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, Paul Skrtich, Jackie Kaufman
Alternates in person: Gregg Saunders, Maureen Williams, Joe Glavan
Absentees: Member Michael Gutowski
Guests: Christine Calvert, Treasurer and Finance Director
Nick D'Addario, Selectman
Call to Order: By Chair Art Laske at 7:04 pm

Motion to appoint alternate Maureen in place of Mike, by Ira/Jackie. Result: passes 5-0.

1. (Agenda item #1) Discuss and approve the meeting minutes of December 5, 2023. (7:14)
Motion to approve minutes as submitted, by Paul/Jackie. Result: passes 5-0-1 (Maureen abstains).

Motion to change Agenda to switch items #3 and #2, by Maureen/Ira. Result: passes 6-0.

2. EMS headquarters update. (7:17)
Art reads 1/9/24 email letter from committee chair Bill Andrews. Art notes that \$396,270 was approved as a grant from the State Bonding Commission in support of the EMS building project. There was discussion about that money going into General Fund once received, and how to appropriate it to EMS Building Committee Capital Building Fund afterwards.
3. Discuss and possible action on long term budget discussions, potential topics to include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Better coordination between BOE and Town regarding maintenance of school facilities; (7:30)
 - b. Options to address undesignated fund balance; (8:06)
 - c. Longer term capital expense projects (including potential ARPA qualified expenses); (8:19)
 - d. EMS funding options in the event that ARPA deadlines cannot be maintained for expenditures;
 - e. Review of any particular Town Departmental operations or staffing; (8:37)
 - f. Special duty accounting of funds. (8:43)

Art began with (a) discussing both maintenance and planning for capital projects, noting Redding's planning for both town and BOE. Andy noted differences between towns in approach to bonding. Jackie noted how better planning would give better direction for undesignated fund balance (UFB) policy. Andy and Gregg agreed with this effort reflecting a more formal and disciplined approach to the 5-year capital plan. Art suggested that the BOE Facilities Committee coordinate with Ed Nagy (DPW) and BOF, and Andy suggested the Committee add as a non-voting member a member of the BOF. Jackie discussed the benefits of capital plans and budgets having an accessible interface like the BOE budget interface. Recognizing broad agreement on these issues, Art will seek to discuss these ideas with ER9 Superintendent Dr. Jason McKinnon.

(b) We discussed why the UFB has grown over the years, and how to bring it down. We discussed using it for unusual expenditures vs. operational costs, and using it too smooth tax increase spikes.

We discussed capital projects and EMS (c and d). Chris read the requirements for ARPA funding ("Recipients must obligate the funds by Dec. 31, 2024, and spend them by Dec. 31, 2026" and obligation means "an order placed for property and services and entering into contracts, subawards, and similar transactions that require payment."). There was general acceptance that the EMS timeline meant that very soon we would need to find

other uses for ARPA funds (Paul suggested fire truck), with the town having to directly fund a larger portion of the EMS Building than previously considered (possibly using the UFB).

Regarding Town Department budgets (e) Art would prefer a pre-budget season discussion of certain questions. Requests for review were made for EMS stipends, Library staffing, Parks & Recreation, and Police staffing.

Re Police Special Duty (f), Chris and Ira will discuss offline and report back.

4. Treasurer's Report. (8:44)
Gregg asks for updated UFB levels.
5. Discuss and possible action on Munis Financial Report for appropriations and revenue presented by the Director of Finance. (8:50)
No action taken.
6. Motion to adjourn by Ira/Andy. Result: passes 6-0 at 8:53.
Next regular meeting Tuesday, February 6, 2024.

Submitted 1/10/24 by Ira Kaplan, BOF Clerk

Art Laske

From: William Andrews <wandrews178@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 8, 2024 8:47 PM
To: Art Laske
Cc: jarnold eastonems.com; Victor Malindretos; Wendy Bowditch; Mike Gutowski; Robert Klem; Schuyler Sherwood; David Bindelglass; John Foley (johnfoleyeaston@gmail.com)
Subject: Building Committee Update

Art,

Here is current status from the Easton EMS Building Committee. The holidays limited some of the activity.

1. **Purchase of property** - negotiations continue.
2. **Selection of Architects** - Per the Committee plan to work toward the selection of an architect concurrently with the purchase of the property, the Committee met with 3 potential candidates during the week of 1/2/2024. The purpose of the meetings was to assess architect qualifications while also determining which architect would work best on the project. The Committee is meeting on 1/9/2024 to compare notes and determine next steps. The objective is to have an architect recommendation to BOF soon after the land is purchased.
3. **Grant from State** - Dr. Bindleglass has the details on the amount and the restrictions on the grant and will submit a separate update.
4. **Expenditures** - No expenditures have been presented to the Committee.

Respectfully,

Bill Andrews
Chair
Easton EMS Building Committee