

Town of Easton
Board of Finance – Regular Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: Tuesday, February 1, 2022 – 7:00 pm

Location: 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,
Paul Skrtich, Ira Kaplan, Michael Kot; Alternates Present, but not seated: Maureen
Williams, Michael Gutowski
Absentee(s): Gregg Saunders
Guest(s): Christine Calvert-Finance Director/Treasurer, Dr. David Bindelglass-First Selectman, Kristi
Sogofsky, Second-Selectmen,
Call to Order: Meeting called to order at: 7:01 pm by: Art Laske

Appointment of Alternates

NONE.

Agenda Item 1 ***Discuss and approve the meeting minutes of January 4 , 2022.***

Notes:

- A. Kachele recommended that motions/decisions in the minutes be expressly captured– votes should be identified by members in favor or opposed and unanimous votes should be identified as such.
- Discussion of EMS headquarters: presentation was by Jon Arnold representing private EMS, not the EMS Commission. Moving forward those representations should be expressly noted in the minutes to avoid confusion.
- Board of Ed: page 3, impact of enrollment percentages: based on enrollment prior to October (OCT 2021 sets the stage for the budget). A. Kachele noted he was trying to emphasize that the split had been fixed for next year's budget and whatever happened to enrollment as the 2022 school year begins would not influence the number.

Action/Motions: P. Skrtich made a motion to approve, as revised.

Motion (Second): M. Kot seconded the motion.

Result: Unanimous vote to approve.

Follow Up:

Agenda Item 2 ***Town Wide Revaluation***

Notes:

- A.Laske provided an introduction of the matter as a courtesy to the citizens and Board to review the revaluation process and if it impacts BOF discussion and decision making.
- Town of Easton Assessor, Rachel Maciulewski, CCMA 1, presented an overview of the Revaluation process and the appeal process and establishment of Mill Rate and Grand List (Grand List increase by 14%).
- Appeal Applications are available March 1 in Town Hall
- Discussion of Aquarion Assessment

- P. Skrtich – Grand List: is there a breakdown of the 1- and 3-acre properties? R. Maciulewski said not yet, but they may have breakdown when the Revaluation company completes its report.
- I. Kaplan – asked about clarification of Farm Land Assessment to be consistent with State requirements for Farm designation. R. Maciulewski replied that those were corrected in 2018.
- A. Kachele – asked how did the last revaluation change after the appeals process was completed? R. Maciulewski did not have the data available at the meeting but would follow up.

Action/Motions: --
 Motion (Second): --
 Follow Up:

Result: --

Agenda Item 3 *First Selectmen's Report*

Notes:

- Dr. Bindelglass presented brief comments on the following:
- Easton attended a METROCOG meeting regarding State funding. He asked that the Town and BOF please give thought to what Town citizens would like to have State funding for. If we do not offer METROCOG ideas and opportunities, it will be challenging to receive certain funding or relief. Any help with ideas from the Town is welcome.
- Discussion of advancement of EMS redevelopment and building committee, which is currently being established:
- A. Kachele revisits the costs associated with the proposed/conceptual EMS rebuild. He noted that if the Board of Finance is not going to look favorably to giving a significant amount of money to a private entity to rebuild, it should advise EMS Private Association of this fact so it may plan accordingly. In the future, will the EMS Private Assoc. be able to maintain this new building? Easton needs a new EMS building, but it is not appropriate to turn that building over to a private entity without a plan.
- A. Laske noted the plans are starting to be firmed up. With the federal endowment, the generalized concepts are being accelerated in a more meaningful way. He would prefer to allow for the Selectmen to form its committee to direct this conversation and decide financing, ownership, and maintenance issues to address the issues Mr. Kachele has raised.
- I. Kaplan agreed with A. Kachele that more thought needs to be given to the financing; and agreed with A. Laske that there is nothing more for the Board of Finance to do until the Committee is formed and provides recommendations.
- P. Skrtich agreed that this must commence with a building Planning Committee and believes there must be thorough investigation to relocating the building on the Fire Department land. Grant money, EMS and Fire Department may be enough to help finance this project.
- A. Laske agreed any future committee should vet this.

Action/Motions: --
 Motion (Second): --
 Follow Up:

Result: --

Agenda Item 4	<i>Discussion of Presentation of the Board of Education from January 4, 2022</i>	
Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Laske raised the January 4, 2022, presentation from the Board of Education to the Board of Finance as an opportunity for further discussion. He encouraged the BOF and interested citizens to review the Board of Education page and presentations that are available online, as the level of detail and formatting are new and may be of interest. A. Laske further suggested that the upcoming Board of Education meetings and recordings of same would be beneficial to the Board of Finance members to observe in advance of the Board of Education budget presentation to the Board of Finance. I. Kaplan asked for clarification on ARP funding that the Easton Board of Education may receive. Dr. Bindelglass said he believed the Easton Board of Education just received approximately \$400,000, but was unsure. A. Kachele said Mr. Stinson would provide a report that will address how this money will be used. A. Laske will follow up on this. P. Skrtich asked whether there is a comparison of cost per Easton student and other towns. Information is available on the State website but Easton and ER9 is not combined to provide a comprehensive Easton-only K-12 view. A. Kachele raised questions/considerations about the addition and value of a new Facilities Director in the Easton, Redding, ER9 budget and why this role is not under the purview of the Central Office. 	
Action/Motions:	--	
Motion (Second):	--	Result: --
Follow Up:	--	

Agenda Item 5	<i>Discussion of the Board of Finance Budget Process</i>	
Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Laske reviewed the Board of Finance Budget calendar and process and requested comments from the Board and others. A. Kachele clarified the meetings before the public hearing are for informational purposes so that the public hearing decision-making process can be effective. I. Kaplan asked for clarification of the "fill in schedule." A. Laske stated that we must discuss every budget. Smaller budgets that do not take much time and analysis, are called "Fill In's", and can be reviewed generally and without a department head. This will help us eliminate meetings. A. Kachele clarifies that any board can come in, no matter the size of its budget. One of the fill-in's is Debt Service, which is not small, but it is self-explanatory. C. Calvert clarified that a fill-in can also be any budget that doesn't have a department head or require a presentation by one. 	
Action/Motions:	--	
Motion (Second):	--	Result: --
Follow Up:	--	

Agenda Item 6	<i>Treasurer's Report</i>	
Notes:	<p>The Town Treasurer, Christine Calvert, presented this month's report and answered questions from attendees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Calvert discussed the Money Market account is up to \$12million She did not have a credit card collections report. \$800,000 new in credit card collections. Reported Easton has nearly \$3million in credit card collections. A. Laske asked: Is there a way for BOF to communicate with Tax Collector of arrearages? Do we need a policy? 	

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- Ms. Calvert has arrearage reports that she can share.
 - A.Laske wants to understand the collectability.
 - Ms. Calvert said Tax Collector is open to guidance on collection policy. When setting a policy, all small pieces of land that have not been included, must be addressed, and understand the consequences of that.
 - A delinquency list is sufficient for now.

Action/Motions: --
Motion (Second): --
Follow Up: --

Result: --

Agenda Item 7 ***Discuss for appropriations and revenue presented by the Director of Finance***

Notes: Ms. Calvert raised the cemetery and that there is a grant coming in. The technology budget should be considered (small amount that may require an appropriation). Hardware (Town computers that require replacement) and technology needed for public meetings.

Action/Motions: --
Motion (Second): --
Follow Up: --

Result: --

Agenda Item 8 ***Adjournment***

Action/Motions: P. Skrtich made a motion to adjourn at 8:26 pm.

Motion (Second): M.Kot seconded.

Result: Unanimous vote to adjourn.

Submitted by,

Jackie Kaufman – Clerk