

**Town of Easton CT**

**Board of Finance – Special Meeting Minutes**

Date/Time: Tuesday March 28, 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, Ira Kaplan  
Alternates in person: Gregg Saunders, Maureen Williams

**Absentees:** Member Jackie Kaufman, Alternate Michael Gutowski

**Guests:** Christine Calvert, Treasurer and Finance Director  
Dave Bindelglass, First Selectman  
Bob Lessler and Kristi Sogofsky, Board of Selectmen  
Justin Giorlando, Land Use Consultant  
Raymond Martin, Planning and Zoning Commission Chair  
Val Buckley, Senior Center Director  
Jason McKinnon and Stephanie Ugol-Pierson, ER9 Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent  
Randy Hicks, Easton Board of Education Chair  
Sara Scrofani, ER9 Director of Finance, Operations, and Technology  
Richard Doyle, Chief of Police  
Richard Colangelo, Chair of Board of Police Commissioners  
Lynn Zaffino and Mary Beth Rassulo, Library Director and Assistant Director  
Krista Kot, Tax Collector

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

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

Motion to move Tax Collector to first in order of presentation, by Maureen/Mike K. Result: passes 5-0

1. (Agenda item #1) The Board of Finance will make revisions and prepare final recommendations for the budget document to be presented at the Annual Town Meeting on April 24, 2023 to include any and all departments with specific attention to the following:
  - a. Planning & Zoning (7:16)
  - b. Senior Center (8:05)
  - c. Board of Education (8:56)
  - d. Police (8:14)
  - e. Library (8:33)
  - f. Tax Collector (7:07)

Krista explained the rationale for requesting an increase of about \$1,600 to allow for earlier replacement for a retiring employee in spring 2024. Chris clarified the cost was \$1,613. Motion to increase the Part Time Union line item from \$22,832 to \$24,445 for an increase of \$1,613, by Ira/Maureen. Result: fails 3 (Ira, Maureen, Mike K) – 3 (Art, Andy, Paul).

Ray and Justin answered questions about the requested increase in Consulting line item in the P&Z budget. Questions were asked about the work backlog. Motion to reduce the Consulting line item from proposed \$99,528 to \$61,776, by Mike K/Andy. Result: fails 3 (Mike K, Andy, Paul) – 3 (Art, Ira, Maureen). Motion to reduce the Consulting line item from proposed \$99,528 to \$80,000, by Paul/Andy. Result: fails 3 (Mike K, Andy, Paul) – 3 (Art, Ira, Maureen). Motion to reduce the Consulting line item from proposed \$99,528 to \$85,000, by Paul/Ira. Result: passes 4 (Paul, Ira, Art, Maureen) – 2 (Andy, Mike K).

Andy asked about the Capital Project at South Park Detention Basin, and there was discussion about when land would transfer to Aspetuck Land Trust, ongoing maintenance needs, protecting the river and trout, etc. Motion to eliminate the proposed \$6,000 expenditure for the Stormwater Quality Planting Project, by Mike K/Andy. Result: fails 3 (Mike K, Andy, Paul) – 3 (Art, Ira, Maureen). Motion to reduce the proposed \$6,000 expenditure for the Stormwater Quality Planting Project to \$5,000, by Maureen/Paul. Result: passes 4 (Maureen, Paul, Art, Ira) – 2 (Andy, Mike K).

Val Buckley answered questions about the increase in the part time non-union line item in the Senior Center budget. Two positions are affected, and Chris clarified that an additional line should be used because one of the positions is union. That union position is at a higher salary than originally planned, so that line increased from \$27,395 in early March to \$30,337 today. Andy expressed that there was consensus in favor of the increase, and thus no motion nor vote was needed to include this change in the proposed budget (though Paul opposed the increase).

Rich Doyle and Rich Colangelo answered questions about the Police budget. There was discussion that the up-front payment for new tasers provided such a small discount that we will stay with the multi-year payment plan. Andy asked about SROs (School Resource Officers), about whether they were effective, and if the money could be better spent on a different position. Jason joined in to express strong support for our current arrangement. Rich Colangelo explained that we have one ASSO (Armed School Security Officer) funded via the BOE, and one SRO funded through the Police. Ira gave his view on the effect of Police Special Duty Revenue on the budget, and asked if the budget is properly offsetting expenses with revenue.

Lynn and Mary Beth answered questions about the Library budget. Motion to eliminate proposed funding of \$4,680 for a new hire as pager, by Andy/Mike K. Result: fails 3 (Mike K, Andy, Paul) – 3 (Art, Ira, Maureen). There was some debate about the budget process, with Andy raising the question of if a department budget is properly in the proposal if it was challenged, but not affirmatively approved. Maureen asked about the \$647 increase for a Saturday program. Motion to reduce the part time non-union proposal by \$647 from \$37,583 to \$36,936, by Andy/Paul. Result: fails 3 (Mike K, Andy, Paul) – 3 (Art, Ira, Maureen). Motion to reduce the proposed Materials and Supplies line item by \$1,000 from \$21,378 to \$20,378, by Andy/Mike K. Result: fails 3 (Mike K, Andy, Paul) – 3 (Art, Ira, Maureen).

Randy, Jason, Stephanie, and Sara answered questions about the Board of Education budget. Questions touched on utility costs, math instruction, the Facilities Committee, and Facilities and Operations management. Andy asked about future capital project needs. Randy said there had been a shortfall on the part of the BOE over the years in addressing facilities and capital project needs, but nothing is allocated or requested yet, as the studying of needs is in progress. Paul and Andy raised the possibility of a different approach for funding, similar to fire trucks, of regularly allocating money to a fund before the need is upon us. Ira asked if there would be a coherent plan for facilities and capital project needs by December, and Jason said there would. Gregg and Randy discussed the new Facilities and Operations Manager position. The proposed budget is \$18,599,949 for an increase of \$639,807 over last year. Motion to approve a BOE budget of \$18,599,950, by Andy/Mike K. Result: passes 5 – 1 (Paul).

2. Motion to adjourn by Mike K/Paul. Result: passes 6-0 at 9:41.

Submitted 3/29/23 by Ira Kaplan, BOF Clerk