

MEETING MINUTES
Easton Board of Selectmen
Regular Meeting February 18, 2021
7:30 PM
Town Hall Conference Room A
ZOOM: BOARD OF SELECTMEN

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87380819246?pwd=YzFHakl5NGJCb3FiSFUzN3o3Nm9VUT09>

Meeting ID: 873 8081 9246

Passcode: 06612

David Bindelglass called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Present: David Bindelglass, Kristi Sogofsky and Robert Lessler

1. Kristi Sogofsky moved to approve the minutes of the Board of Selectman Meeting, February 4, 2021, as amended. Robert Lessler seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
2. A resident commented on the UI tree work being done, lots of standing around and not being very friendly when asked about the work. Dave Bindelglass stated that we are not paying them directly, and are not directly responsible for the amount of work being done. A second resident stated that all government meetings should return to in-person. She felt that there is power in in-person meetings and that we should get back to normal lives again. The auditorium at Joel Barlow can hold 600 people so that could be an option. Town Meetings should also be held in person even if it means waiting until May. Another resident echoed the previous public comment, that all town meetings be held in person and that holding Zoom meetings undermines Governor Lamont's Resolution 7B and that the town meeting is how we do business. Zoom meetings do not allow for two way conversations limiting honesty and transparency. How can we certify callers?
3. Robert Lessler moved to approve the following tax refunds as recommended by Krista Kot, Tax Collector: 1. DURELLE GREEN - \$146.47; 2. NEWTOWN SAVINGS BANK - \$122.50; 3. USB LEASING LT - \$51.34; 4. TIMOTHY AND EVELYN SABOL - \$7,908.57; 5. USB LEASING LT - \$335.26. Kristi Sogofsky seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
4. Robert Lessler moved to accept the resignation of Lisa Keane, a member of the South Park Advisory Committee and Tara Gottlieb, an alternate on the Board of Finance. Kristi Sogofsky seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Kristi Sogofsky moved to appoint Shari Perlman as an alternate on the Board of Finance for the unexpired term of 1/2/2021 - 1/2/2027, stating that the political balance should be kept for alternate positions. Robert Lessler moved to appoint Ira Kaplan as an alternate on the Board of Finance for the unexpired term of 1/2/2021 - 1/2/2027. Dave Bindelglass seconded. Kristi Sogofsky expressed her concerns that Ira Kaplan's wife is the principal of Helen Keller Middle School, which may cause a conflict of interest. Dave Bindelglass stated that the Board of Finance does not have line item controls over Board of Ed salaries. Robert Lessler and Dave Bindelglass voted in favor, Kristi Sogofsky voted against. Motion carried. Robert Lessler moved to appoint Hillary Desmond as an alternate on the

Easton Diversity and Inclusion Task Force for the unexpired term of 1/2/2020 – 1/2/2022. Kristi Sogofsky seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

5. A discussion was held regarding a Special Town Meeting (virtual) March 15, 2021, at a time to be announced and then adjourning to a machine vote on March 23, 2021, at Samuel Staples Elementary School from 6:00 am – 8:00 pm. There are potentially five items on the agenda which will be set at the March 4, 2021, Board of Selectmen meeting.
6. An invitation to bid for the replacement of the South Park Bridge Project # 04213 was publicized. Attendance is mandatory for all bidders at a pre-bid meeting to be held on Thursday, February 25, 2021, at 10:00 am at the site. Sealed bids should be sent to the office of the First Selectman no later than 2:00 pm Wednesday, March 10, 2021, at which time the bids will be opened.
7. Robert Lessler moved to appoint the firm of Berchem Moses PC to represent the town in the FOI complaint Docket #FIC 2020-0639; *Christopher Michos v. Chairman, South Park Advisory Committee, Town of Easton; and South Park Advisory Committee, Town of Easton*. Kristi Sogofsky seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
8. Non-union employees did not receive a wage increase for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. Dave Bindelglass recommended a 3% wage increase for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. After a discussion, Kristi Sogofsky moved to approve a 3% wage increase for the coming fiscal year. Robert Lessler seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
9. Dave Bindelglass informed the board that the town is going to arbitration on February 23, 2021, regarding NJR Construction settlement.
10. Dave Bindelglass announced the resignation of Launa Riley as Easton Assistant Assessor. The job opening will be posted. Any inquires, resumes and cover letters should be sent to Christine Calvert at CCalvert@eastonct.gov.
11. Dave Bindelglass stated that the number of COVID cases is slowly declining, as are the rates of hospitalizations. He had an employee staff meeting today as we move more towards normalcy with the goal to re-open Town Hall to the public.
12. A resident asked about town hotspots if you do not have Optimum as your service provider. He also agreed with the two other resident comments regarding town meetings and suggested holding the meeting outside at Morehouse Park. A resident asked for clarification on the pending FOIA case and also regarding the Public Hearing that must occur prior to a vote to have Easton join the Westport Weston Health District. She also went on to say Ed Nagy and his crew have done a bang up job and has gone above and beyond regarding snow removal and keeping our residents safe. Another resident is pushing for opening up our state like South Dakota and Florida. She said the Governor is becoming a dictator and it is time to push back. With respect to the resolution passed last summer declaring racism a public health issue, this resident feels it is far reaching and ill advised. Another resident requested that we consider a Saturday referendum, which would save money.
13. No board member comment.
14. Kristi Sogofsky moved to adjourn at 9:05 p.m. Robert Lessler seconded. Motion passed unanimously.