

**Town of Easton-Special Town Meeting  
MINUTES**

**March 25, 2024 – 7:00 p.m.**

**Samuel Staples Elementary School, 515 Morehouse Road, Easton**

**Present:**

David Bindelglass, First Selectman  
Kristi Sogofsky, Selectman

Nick D'Addario, Selectman  
Deborah Szegedi, Town Clerk

**Presenters and Attendees:**

Paul Lindoerfer-Chair of the Tax Relief for the Elderly Committee  
Attorney Douglas Lomonte from the Law Office of Berchem Moses, P.C.  
Dr. Jason McKinnon Superintendent  
About 100 Easton Residents, Including members of The Board of Finance and Board of Education.

Meeting livestream available on Facebook with 181 views at:  
<https://business.facebook.com/events/1161701908349379/>  
Meeting will also be available on the Town Website.

Registrars of Voters checked-in attendees with identification at entrance.

David Bindelglass convened the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

The Town Clerk read the call of the meeting.

The First Selectman said the first order of business was to elect a moderator and the chair will entertain motions from the floor to select a Moderator. Nanette DeWester nominated Bob Lessler, motion was seconded by Ira Kaplan. Wendy Bowditch nominated Tom Herrmann, motion was seconded by Dori Wollen. First Selectman Bindelglass asked if were any other nominations for Moderator. Having none, motion was made to close nominations. Motion was made by Ira Kaplan and seconded by Anne Hughes. A hand count was taken, Bob Lessler won the nomination as Moderator.

The moderator welcomed everyone to the Town Meeting and went **over** the ground rules.

The moderator asked for a motion on item 1 **Shall the Town of Easton approve the Tax Relief for the Elderly Ordinance as recommended by the 2023 Tax Relief for the Elderly Committee.** A motion was made by Ann Hughes and seconded by Anne Manusky.

Paul Lindoerfer-Chair of the Tax Relief for the Elderly Committee spoke about the program, tax abatement, tax deferral programs and explained the changes to the existing Ordinance. Paul explained that the parameters of the program are set by an Ordinance that is required to be reviewed every three years. A report and summary were prepared of the changes the Committee is requesting to the Ordinance and was presented to the Board of Finance in February. The Board of Finance approved these changes and now a Town vote is needed to approve the Ordinance. All information related to the Ordinance can be found on the Town Website at: <https://www.eastonct.gov/home/news/reminder-special-town-meeting-public-hearing-03-25-2024-700-pm-sses>

The moderator asked if anyone wish to comment on the changes to the Tax Relief Committee to please step up to the microphone and state your name and address. Questions and Public comments were made by:

Gia Watkins

Anne Manusky

Jeff Becker

Ira Kaplan

Robert Auer

Jeff Stopa

The moderator asked if anyone else would like to be heard on this amendment. Having none the moderator stated that we will vote now if you are in favor of leaving the language as it was your vote would be aye. If you are opposed to going back to the old language your vote would be no. He asked if everyone understood, there was confusion on how to vote from the public. The moderator stated that if you are in favor of the motion that's on the floor, you would vote aye, which will have the effect of reverting back to the original language of the Ordinance. If you vote no you are supporting the revised Ordinance that Mr. Lindoerfer described a few minutes ago. A member of the public asked if this was just for 13, 14, 15 which the moderator clarified that we not yet on the main motion. He then asked if everyone was clear all those in favor of removing the cited sections and reverting back to the original Tax Relief for the Elderly Ordinance signify by saying aye. All those opposed signify by saying nay. The nays have it so the Ordinance as presented is back on the floor. The moderator asked if anyone would like to be heard on the motion as it was presented originally by Mr. Lindoerfer. A resident asked the moderator if he could see a show of hands as it was not very clear on the ayes or nays, another resident asked if we could vote again. Another resident stated that Roberts Rules should be mentioned at the start of the meeting and declaring voice vote, show of hands or splitting the room. No other residents had comments so the moderator moved on the main motion to approve or not approve the Ordinance as presented tonight. He asked if anyone else wanted to be heard on the main motion, being none. He explained that he wanted to be clear we are doing this as a voice vote. If you are in favor of adopting the ordinance as presented by the Committee tonight, please say "aye". If you are opposed please say "no". The "no's" have it. The Ordinance was not adopted.

The moderator moved on to item #2 and asked for a motion regarding the acceptance of the Urban grant in the amount of \$396,270 from the Department of Emergency Services. The motion was made by Francisco Acosta and seconded. The moderator asked if someone was going to speak as the sponsor of this. David Bindelglass introduced this Agenda item. He spoke about the plan to renovate the Emergency Medical Services Building that has been agreed to by the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance. He spoke about how the funding was from multiple sources ARPA grant(COVID money), funds raised by the Board of Trustees in the Emergency Medical Services, and ultimately the Town. As the project was moving forward the Town became aware of an opportunity to obtain funds from the State of Connecticut through the Governor's Bond Commission which Dave spoke about and also about the problems with the current septic system at the EMS Building, purchase of adjacent land in order to increase the footprint, state

drainage pipe that needs to be moved. Attorney Douglas Lomonte was present to answer questions on the grant.

The moderator asked if anyone had any questions.

Questions and Public comments were made by:

Anne Manusky

Andy Kachele

June Logie

Jeff Becker

A resident was confused on whether this was a Bond or a Grant and asked for clarification from council. Attorney Lomonte was unable to answer the question, but Selectman Kristi Sogofsky was able to. She spoke about how the grant program goes through the State Bond Commission directed by Emergency Services and Public protection and is dispersed as grant money. After other residents commented the moderator asked if anyone else would like to be heard, having no other comments he moved to a vote on the question by voice vote. If you vote "aye" you are accepting the grant in the amount of \$396,270, if you are voting "no" then you do not wish to accept the grant, with that all in favor signify by saying "aye" and all opposed signify by saying "nay". The "aye's" have it, motion passed.

The moderator moved onto question 3 and asked if anyone would like to make a motion on the special appropriation requested by the Board of Education. Debbi Baer made the motion and was seconded by Jeff Parker. Motion on the floor Dr. Jason McKinnon to explained the shortfall was due to: increase in the number of special education students & needs, staff vacancies and shortages, hiring of more staff to meet student's needs and student outplacement. The moderator then opened up the floor for comments and questions. Residents spoke of their experiences with having a special needs Child in the School system.

Questions and Public comments were made by:

Debbi Baer

June Logie

Jill Madeo

Lori Longo

Anne Manusky

Art Laske

The moderator asked if anyone else wanted to be heard seeing no one a vote will be taken on the motion. The moderator said to signify by saying "aye" in you are in favor of the special appropriation of \$600,000 for the Board of Education and signify "nay" if you are opposed. The "aye's" have it motion carried.

Having no other Agenda items, the moderator called for a motion to adjourn and asked the public not leave and stay for the budget hearing. The moderator asked all those in favor to adjourn say "aye" and opposed to say "nay" motion carried, meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Submitted by,

Deborah Szegedi Town Clerk