

TOWN OF EASTON
Select Board Public Hearing and Meeting – Draft Minutes
August 21, 2026

Select Board

Brian Suthoff (Chair) - Present
Toni Woodruff – Present
Dave Bogdziewicz – Present

Select Board Secretary

Kathy Ryan – Not Present

These minutes of the Town of Easton Select Board have been recorded by the Secretary or substitute. Though believed accurate and correct, they are subject to additions, deletions, and corrections by the Select Board at the next meeting when the Board votes its final approval of the minutes. These draft minutes are made available at this time to conform with RSA 91:A.

Meeting officially called to order at 4:32 pm by Brian Suthoff.

Public in Attendance: Jason Arquitt, Mark Hansen, Brent Detamore, Bob Lamanna

Public Hearing

Brian S moved to open the public hearing on the proposed acceptance by the Town of Easton of a gift of personal property, namely a replacement fire apparatus offered by Campton-Thornton-Ellsworth, pursuant to RSA 31:95-e, II. Dave B Seconded, all in favor, none opposed. Passed.

There was a good discussion of the used fire engine that may be donated, how it compares to the Town's existing Engine 2, the opportunity to sell Engine 2, and the risk and rewards of these transactions.

The main issue with Engine 2 is that it is a two-stage dual-clutch manual in hilly terrain that only one or two volunteer firemen can drive without damaging the clutch. As a result, it is rarely used. The condition or quality of the apparatus is good, and can be successfully used by another department who have the operators and the terrain for where it is a good fit.

The potential donation has specs similar to our Engine 2 but with automatic transmission, a stronger pump, and it seats an extra person. The donated engine is already outfitted and uses the same radio we already have. The potential donation also fits in the Fire Department garage. There were questions about why the donation is valued at less than Engine 2, and the probable reasons include that it is three years older, has more miles, and is not considered a premium brand. Assuming the donation goes forward, we expect to receive it late Oct or Nov.

The Town would need to sell Engine 2 to make room for the donation, and that was viewed as positive for the functionality of our department and the town's finances. The Fire Department thinks that Engine 2 can be successfully sold, and another town has already expressed interest. There may be some conditions on a sale, such as a recent pump test, but they are viewed as reasonable. If sold, it was recommended that the net proceeds be used to replenish the Fire Department Vehicle and Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund.

Ned Cutler, Fire Deputy Chief and Emergency Management Director, was unable to attend the meeting but submitted a letter in advance that supported accepting the donation and selling Engine 2.

Brian S moved to close the public hearing at 5:11 PM. Dave seconded all in favor, none opposed. Passed.

Acceptance of Donated Fire Apparatus

Brian S moved that the Board of Selectmen, having held a public hearing this evening pursuant to RSA 31:95-e, II, and acting under the authority adopted by the Town at Town Meeting pursuant to RSA 31:95-e, I, accept from Campton-Thornton-Ellsworth the gift of a fire apparatus described as a 2002 (year) Central States Fire Apparatus / Freightliner FL80 (make and model), Vehicle Identification Number 1FVABXBS32HH62045 for the public purpose of fire protection and emergency response.

The Board notes, pursuant to RSA 31:95-e, III, that this acceptance does not bind the Town to raise, appropriate or expend any public funds for the operation, maintenance, repair or replacement of the apparatus.

This acceptance is conditioned upon delivery to the Town of a signed instrument of gift and certificate of title from the donor, together with evidence that the donor's governing body authorized the conveyance, and upon the apparatus being added to the Town's property and liability coverage effective upon delivery.

Toni W seconded, all in favor, none opposed. Passed.

Authorization to Sell Engine 2

Brian S moved that the Board of Selectmen adopt the following findings and authorization.

First, that the Town's fire apparatus known as Engine 2 — a 2006 (year) International 7500 (make and model), Vehicle Identification Number 1HTWKAZR76J256489, purchased by the Town in 2019 under Article 21 of the 2019 Annual Town Meeting — is equipped with a two-stage, dual-clutch manual transmission that the majority of the Easton Volunteer Fire Department's membership cannot safely operate, particularly on the terrain of Easton and of the communities to which Easton provides mutual aid; that this limitation has persisted despite training efforts since 2019; that the Board has received and reviewed written recommendations to this effect from Fire Chief Jason Arquitt and from Deputy Chief and Emergency Management Director Ned Cutler; and that the apparatus is accordingly no longer suited to the operational needs of the Department and is surplus to the needs of the Town.

Second, that the Town has the opportunity to replace Engine 2 at no acquisition cost with an apparatus the Department's membership can operate, and that continuing to hold an apparatus the Department cannot reliably drive to a fire scene presents an operational risk to the Town and to the communities Easton serves through mutual aid.

Third, that the sale of Engine 2 for an estimated sum of \$85,000 to \$95,000 is in the best interest of the Town of Easton.

Fourth, that the Chair is authorized to execute and deliver on behalf of the Town a written purchase and sale agreement, bill of sale, certificate of title, odometer disclosure statement and such other instruments as may be necessary or convenient to convey Engine 2 to the buyer for the final sale price, on an as-is basis and with written disclosure to the buyer of the transmission and pump conditions known to the Town — provided that no such instrument shall be executed,

and no possession of the apparatus shall be transferred, until each of the following conditions has been satisfied:

- A. Town Counsel has advised the Board in writing that the Board is authorized under RSA 41:8 to make this sale without prior authorization from Town Meeting;
- B. the purchase price is payable to the Town of Easton and is delivered to the Town Treasurer; and
- C. all Town radio equipment and registration plates have been removed from the apparatus.

Fifth, that the Fire Chief is authorized and directed to proceed with the buyer's inspection, to finalize the written terms of sale for the Board's review, and to prepare the apparatus for transfer; and that the Fire Chief is not authorized to execute any instrument of transfer or to release possession of the apparatus, that authority being reserved to the Board and to the Chair acting under this vote.

Toni W seconded the motion, all in favor, none opposed. Passed

Expenditure For The Pump Control Module And Pump Test

Brian S moved that the Board authorize the expenditure of up to \$3000 from account 4220630 Truck Inspection, Maint, & Repair for the pump control gauge module and the pump test required under the terms of sale; that the Town's total expenditure in satisfying the buyer's conditions be capped at \$5,000; and that if the cost of satisfying those conditions would exceed that cap, the Chair is authorized to renegotiate the price on an as-is basis or, failing agreement, to terminate the transaction without further liability to the Town.

Toni W seconded the motion, all in favor, none opposed. Passed.

Administrative Directions

Brian S move that the Board direct as follows:

- A. That the proceeds of the sale of Engine 2 be receipted by the Town Treasurer to revenue account 3501, Sale of Municipal Property;
- B. That it is the intent of the Board to place before the 2027 Annual Town Meeting an article appropriating the net proceeds from the December 31, 2026 unassigned fund balance to the Easton Fire Department Vehicle and Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund, and that accordingly the Treasurer is directed not to include those proceeds in any amount of unassigned fund balance applied to reduce the 2026 tax rate;
- C. That the replacement apparatus be added to the Town's property and liability coverage effective upon delivery, and that Engine 2 be removed from that coverage upon transfer of title and possession; and
- D. That the Town's schedule of capital assets be updated to reflect both transactions, and that the Town's accountant and auditor be advised, in accordance with the Town's procedures.

Dave B seconded the motion, all in favor, none opposed. Passed.

Summary Statement

The Board wishes the record to reflect the reasoning behind these votes. Engine 2 is a sound piece of apparatus in good mechanical condition. Its problem is not condition but fit: it has a two-stage, dual-clutch manual transmission, and in seven years the Department has not been able to build and hold a roster of volunteers who can drive it safely on Easton's terrain. That is a limitation of the match between this truck and this department, not a defect in the truck, which is why an apparatus that is of little use to Easton can be worth a significant purchase price to a department situated differently.

The Board is satisfied that holding an engine most of the Department cannot drive to a fire scene is a greater risk to residents than the inconvenience of replacing it. The transaction now before the Board resolves that risk at no acquisition cost to the Town, recovers a significant portion tax dollars spent on Engine 2, and if Town Meeting so votes in March 2027, restores those funds to the capital reserve account that will pay for the Town's next apparatus.

Brian Suthoff made a motion, seconded by Dave Bogdziewicz to close the meeting at 5:30 pm. All in favor; none opposed. Passed.

Next Select Board Meeting – Monday, September 7, 2026, 4 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Brian Suthoff, Chair