

# Art Laske (D), Board of Finance, Candidate Bio and Statement

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## Candidate Bio

Art Laske has served on the Board of Finance since he moved to town 22 years ago. Art was brought up in Trumbull, and is a graduate of Fairfield Prep, Boston College and the University of Connecticut School of Law. He is a self-employed trial attorney and is the father of four children who have all attended Staples, Keller and Joel Barlow.

Art lives in a home on Center Road that was built in 1765. The home and very unique barn have been renovated and restored, and his property has been the scene of many Halloween parties in the “spooky barn” and “haunted pumpkin maze” for lots of Easton kids over the years. Presently, “Art’s Barn” is a special place where Art and his musical friends share their music while enjoying the beauty of our community.

Art’s kids attended our local schools and participated in extracurricular activities, little league, AYSO, where Art was also a coach for many years. Art has always understood and appreciated the importance of a properly funded school budget so that our kids can get the educational experience — including extra-curricular activities and sports — that helps develop well-rounded, successful students. He also knows how important our Park and Rec Department has been to provide first-rate fields and playgrounds for our community to enjoy. Art has also consistently supported Senior Tax Relief programs to

assist our older residents so they can remain in our wonderful town.

Art's fight to support the educational community, and our Park and Rec programs has never been more important than in recent years, when efforts by certain members of the Board of Finance to inflict draconian and irresponsible cuts to the educational budgets, and to completely de-fund our Park and Rec Department, needed to be defeated.

## Candidate Statement

Will Easton continue to be a community that values education and succeeds in providing the kind of Park and Recreational services that our citizens deserve?

I have been on the Board of Finance for 22 years and — until very recently — I had never seen such an aggressive assault on the educational budgets as has been advocated by certain members of the Board of Finance. Even more disturbing has been the complete lack of respect shown to our Park and Rec Department by members of the BOF, culminating in a motion by a member of the majority party (R) and seconded by another majority party member, to completely de-fund the Park and Rec Department during our 2021 budget process.

Without any notice to the members of the Park and Rec Board, or to the many dedicated employees of the department, Republican members of the majority party advocated eliminating the entire department and firing all the employees without any plan to address the benefits that department brings to the town. Did these BOF members know that the Park and Rec Department earns the town a significant amount of revenue through its programming efforts that pays for new playgrounds for our kids, renovates tennis courts, and improves our sports fields? Did they even care?

The efforts by certain members of the majority to inflict unrealistic and devastating cuts to the educational budget over the last few years have left our kids without extra-curriculars, a middle school media center specialist for the library and many other basic

and necessary programs and services.

I have been a vocal advocate for concerned parents and taxpayers who rely on a strong educational system to maintain their property values, but as long as the BOF is dominated by irresponsible voices who are part of the 4-2 majority, the ability to fight back against devastating cuts to the educational budget and Park and Rec will remain limited.

I'd like to win my election to the BOF seat to allow for a 3-3 balance on the BOF so that the voices in town in favor of responsible educational spending and supportive of our park and recreational programs will be heard.

In the last two years Easton has made great progress to address many issues that remained unresolved under prior administrations — we are now a part of a much more effective Health District that provides more services to our town than ever before.

We are making progress on protecting and planning for the South Park property purchased many years ago, and efforts to provide EMS with a new headquarters have been accelerated. Whether we will continue that progress, or change course toward another candidate who seems to be too closely associated with divisive and antagonistic political figures in town will likely decide this question.

The Board of Finance will be better balanced with a 3-3 representation from each party, and I hope you will support me, Ira Kaplan, and Jackie Kaufman on Nov. 2.