



# Town of Simsbury

933 Hopmeadow Street Simsbury, Connecticut 06070

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## Board of Finance

Regular Meeting and Public Hearing on the Budget – April 3, 2024 – 6:00 p.m.

Tariffville Room, Simsbury Public Library

\*Meeting May Be Held in a Virtual Only Format if Inclement Weather is Expected on Day of Meeting\*

### CALL TO ORDER

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

### PRESENTATION

- a) Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget Process and Overview
- b) Proposed fiscal year 2024/2025 Board of Education Operating and Capital Budgets
- c) Proposed fiscal year 2024/2025 Board of Selectmen Operating and Capital Budgets

### ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

- d) Public Hearing on Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Operating and Capital Budgets (Pages 1-2)  
*Then Close or Continue the Public Hearing to April 16<sup>th</sup> at 6pm*
- e) Budget Discussion and Possible Action

### REVIEW OF MINUTES

- f) March 19, 2024 Regular Meeting (Pages 3-5)
- g) March 21, 2024 Regular Meeting (Pages 6-7)

### ADJOURN

#### ***Board of Finance Meeting Schedule:***

*4/16/24, 4/17/24, 5/14/24, 6/18/24, 7/16/24, 8/20/24, 9/17/24, 10/15/24, 11/12/24, 12/17/24, 1/14/25*



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**TOWN OF SIMSBURY  
BUDGET SUMMARY**

	Adopted	Proposed	Change	
	FY2024	FY 2025	Dollar	Percentage
Board of Selectmen	31,679,397	28,740,677	(2,938,720)	-9.28%
Debt Service & Capital	7,806,810	8,915,868	1,109,058	14.21%
Board of Education	81,576,437	85,217,644	3,641,207	4.46%
Non-Public School	605,699	588,724	(16,975)	-2.80%
<b>Total Appropriations</b>	<b>121,668,343</b>	<b>123,462,913</b>	<b>1,794,570</b>	<b>1.47%</b>
<b>LESS ESTIMATED NON-CURRENT YEAR TAX REVENUES</b>	<b>17,154,066</b>	<b>12,721,197</b>	<b>(4,432,869)</b>	<b>-25.84%</b>
<b>BALANCE TO BE RAISED</b>	<b>104,514,277</b>	<b>110,741,716</b>	<b>6,227,439</b>	<b>5.96%</b>

	ACTUAL REVENUE 2023	ACTUAL REVENUE 12/31/2023	BUDGET REVENUE 2024	PROJECTED REVENUE 6/30/2024	ESTIMATED REVENUE 2025
<b>GENERAL FUND REVENUES</b>					
Property Taxes - Prior Year & Interest & Liens	777,275	407,804	430,000	500,000	580,000
Intergovernmental Revenues & Payments in Lieu of Taxes	9,227,086	2,491,450	9,196,826	9,895,742	7,884,731
Investment Income	1,617,668	1,261,977	800,000	2,588,464	1,300,000
Charges for Goods & Services & Misc	1,994,664	1,098,186	1,798,290	1,896,084	1,829,701
Fines & Forfeitures	12,596	6,014	8,200	10,039	9,972
Rental of Town Owned Property	181,040	91,033	114,300	131,900	114,900
Licenses & Permits	920,566	312,954	740,050	721,646	741,886
Operating Transfers In (Belden Trust)	26,960	27,380	27,380	27,380	28,350
Operating Transfers In (Capital Project Funds)	822,029	281,187	281,187	281,187	231,657
Operating Transfers In (ARPA Fund)	3,757,833	3,757,833	3,757,833	3,757,833	-
<b>Total General Fund Revenue Budget</b>	<b>19,337,716</b>	<b>9,735,818</b>	<b>17,154,066</b>	<b>19,810,275</b>	<b>12,721,197</b>

	FY 2023 ACTUAL	FY 2024 12/31/2023	FY 2024 BUDGET	FY 2024 6/30/2024	FY 2025 PROPOSED
<b>GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES BY FUNCTION</b>					
General Government	1,647,264	846,862	1,614,485	1,543,069	1,634,688
Financial Services & Information Technology	1,706,839	840,919	1,763,376	1,718,853	1,861,877
Planning & Development	751,236	368,076	791,403	763,517	851,676
Public Safety	6,040,144	3,175,669	6,553,196	6,493,711	6,643,957
Public Works & Engineering	4,749,325	2,279,733	4,933,286	4,592,384	4,974,983
Health and Social Services	1,052,795	423,381	933,561	928,647	883,370
Parks and Recreation & Library	3,064,262	1,474,786	3,147,065	3,147,272	3,265,001
Fringe Benefits & Liability Insurance	6,463,291	4,644,618	7,838,098	7,381,365	7,988,170
Operating Transfers	8,387,602	3,972,186	4,104,927	3,972,186	636,956
<b>Total Board of Selectmen Operating Budget</b>	<b>33,862,757</b>	<b>18,026,230</b>	<b>31,679,397</b>	<b>30,541,003</b>	<b>28,740,677</b>
Debt Service	6,371,525	1,173,813	7,806,810	7,806,810	8,915,868
Education	77,551,189	34,529,916	82,182,136	82,882,136	85,806,368
<b>Total General Fund Budget</b>	<b>117,785,471</b>	<b>53,729,958</b>	<b>121,668,343</b>	<b>121,229,949</b>	<b>123,462,913</b>

	ACTUAL REVENUE FY 2023	BUDGET REVENUE FY 2024	ACTUAL REVENUE 12/31/2023	PROJECTED REVENUE 6/30/2024	ESTIMATED REVENUE FY 2025
<b>SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS - REVENUES</b>					
<b>Water Pollution Control Fund</b>					
Total Water Pollution Control Fund	4,793,285	4,212,824	3,819,382	4,481,794	4,318,233
<b>Residential Property Fund</b>					
Rental of Town Owned Property	99,951	77,100	38,171	97,000	97,000
<b>Simsbury Farms Complex</b>					
Total Simsbury Farms Complex	2,678,825	2,548,091	1,184,470	2,541,291	2,855,485
<b>Total Special Revenue Funds</b>	<b>7,572,061</b>	<b>6,838,015</b>	<b>5,042,023</b>	<b>7,120,085</b>	<b>7,270,718</b>

	FY 2023 ACTUAL	FY 2024 BUDGET	FY 2024 12/31/2023	FY 2024 6/30/2024	FY 2025 PROPOSED
<b>SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS - EXPENDITURES</b>					
<b>Water Pollution Control Fund</b>					
Total Water Pollution Control Requests	4,249,997	5,771,929	3,943,665	5,478,872	4,808,496
<b>Residential Property Fund</b>					
Total Residential Properties	59,147	47,122	24,893	41,170	55,827
<b>Simsbury Farms Complex</b>					
Total Simsbury Farms Complex	2,680,590	2,918,370	1,703,993	2,758,476	2,884,828
<b>Total Special Revenue Funds</b>	<b>6,989,734</b>	<b>8,737,421</b>	<b>5,672,551</b>	<b>8,278,518</b>	<b>7,749,151</b>

FY2025 CAPITAL & NONRECURRING FUND BUDGET	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Requested 24/25	FY2025	
						Charge -Back Against General Fund	Other /State Grants
<b>BOARD OF SELECTMEN</b>							
BOARD OF SELECTMEN TOTAL	416,250	416,250	416,250	416,250	2,485,794	422,250	2,063,544
<b>BOARD OF EDUCATION</b>							
BOARD OF EDUCATION TOTAL	570,500	550,300	550,300	550,300	550,300	550,300	-
TOTAL CAPITAL & NON-RECURRING	986,750	966,550	966,550	966,550	3,036,094	972,550	2,063,544

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

		FY 2025 Financing
Memorial Pool Redesign	\$ 150,000	Cash
Sidewalk Reconstruction	\$ 223,400	Bonds
Town Hall Rooftop Units	\$ 275,000	Bonds
Municipal Site and Safety Improvements (Town Hall)	\$ 460,000	Bonds
Barn and Facility Repairs - Wolcott Road	\$ 275,000	Bonds
Dam Evaluation & Repairs (Stoddard Dam Breach)	\$ 171,000	Bonds
District Network Infrastructure	\$ 350,000	Bonds
SHS - Auditorium & Amphitheater Improvements	\$ 400,000	Bonds
Tootin Hills - Replace Roof	\$ 1,120,000	Bonds/Grants
Public Works Truck Replacement and Plow	\$ 266,220	Cash
Old Drake Hill Road Flower Bridge Rehabilitation - Supplemental*	\$ 2,646,000	Cash
Highway Pavement Management	\$ 1,600,000	Cash/Grants/Bonds
Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center Bandshell Addition	\$ 2,782,881	Grants/Cash
Tariffville Connection - East Coast Greenway Gap Closure	\$ 450,000	Grants/Cash
Sewer Replacement - Pine Hill	\$ 200,000	Sewer Use
<b>TOTAL PROPOSED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS</b>	<b>\$ 11,369,501</b>	

\* \$2,151,000 was appropriated in prior years, proposed budget is to appropriate an additional \$495,000 to be paid for via cash

**Board of Finance**  
**TOWN OF SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT**  
**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
**Tuesday, March 19, 2024, at 5:45 P.M.**  
**In Person Meeting /Simsbury Community Media Live Stream**

**PRESENT:**

Lisa Heavner, Art House, Robert Helfand, Todd Burrick, Mike Doyle, and Art Wallace

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Amy Meriwether, Finance Director/Treasurer; Marc Nelson, Town Manager; Tom Fitzgerald, Deputy Town Manager; Melissa Appleby, Budget Director; Tom Roy, Public Works Director/Town Engineer; Tom Tyburski, Culture, Parks and Recreation Director; Orlando Casiano, Parks Superintendent; Lisa Miceli, Library Director; Nick Boulter, Police Chief; Chris Davis, Deputy Police Chief; Wendy Mackstutis, First Selectman; Steve Antonio, Deputy First Selectman; Curtis Looney, Selectman; Diana Yeisley, Selectman; Kevin Beal, Selectman; Heather Goetz, Selectman

**Call to Order - Establish Quorum**

Ms. Heavner called the meeting to order at 5:45 P.M.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Audience**

Ms. Heavner opened the floor to Public Audience.

Joan Coe, 26 Whitcombe Dr. spoke about Simsbury Meadows being on a flood plain related to the Performing Arts proposed project and said the project will be a drain on future budgets.

The proposed budget should include \$50,000 to fund the Simsbury Farms parking area drainage as this is a public safety issue.

She also spoke about the Simsbury volunteer ambulance services saying the taxpayers should not be supporting a failed business plan.

She said overall the approved budget should not place an undue burden on the taxpayers.

Lori Boyko, 15 Oakhurst Road, spoke about the Board of Education 4% budget saying that it should not be referred to as a “cut” because it was just a reduction of the 6% wish list they had hoped for. She mentioned how the residents are struggling financially and spoke about spending and noted some cost savings. She said there must be a balance between excellence and real people and family budgets.

Jeff Dornenburg, 225 Old Farms Road, Simsbury. Spoke as the current President of the Simsbury Performing Arts Center Board and asked for support in the budget for the performing arts project. He noted it represents a public private partnership and said he’s available to address any questions as needed.

**Presentation: Board of Selectman Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget**

Ms. Mackstutis presented the Board of Selectmen proposed budget for the FY 2024/2025. She started off with opening comments including thanking the Board of Selectmen members who had put time into preparing and their due diligence working on the budget. She went through the staffing positions needed to shape the Town Hall for the future. She mentioned she is a resident of the town and feels the burden of the tax increases. She noted they do not have the \$7.5M American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding this year which was used in previous years to improve town's assets and not create any fiscal cliffs. She also noted some tradeoff's residents will have to consider.

Ms. Mackstutis went through the budget goals, budget calendar, and a summary of the numbers. She reported on the Revenue assumptions and the grand list, past and projections. She presented the Operating Budget Changes and the staffing changes. She reviewed the Capital Improvement Plan and talked through the projects listed and the associated costs. She reviewed the CNR projects and their costs. The Board asked several questions which were discussed and addressed. Ms. Mackstutis and Mr. Nelson elaborated on the staffing needs and their overall approach to how they came to their final numbers. Ms. Heavner thanked the Board of Selectman for their work on the budget and followed up with some additional questions which were addressed. Ms. Heavner did request that the team keep pushing for the Henry James Middle School audit as there is approx. \$2M waiting to be used as soon as it's released. There was a lengthy discussion on the Splash Pad and additional questions from the Board.

The Board of Finance took a five-minute recess.

Following the break Ms. Yeisley spoke further on the splash pad project and the basis for approving the \$150K. She noted it would put the Town in a better position to apply for grants as the project would be "shovel ready."

**Budget Discussion**

Ms. Heavner provided an overview of the next steps in the budget process. Ms. Meriwether went through the Levy Calculator and talked in detail through two scenarios and how they affect taxes in the current year and the out years. The Board asked questions which were addressed. Ms. Heavner reiterated the amount of work that went into these scenarios and said the key factors they adhered to were that it is within their policies, there is no risk to their Aaa bond rating, and there's still a plan to use capital reserves in a methodical way. She added the biggest disadvantage is that the proposal only allows for \$5M a year (or \$10M biannually) in bonding which is less than the current plan and it will involve prioritization. Ms. Heavner said the Boards will have to revisit their CIP for the next meeting on April 3rd with this new direction in mind. She said it will help get the taxes down to 4.9%. Ms. Heavner explained the process they use for funding capital in the ensuing year and said the proposed scenario will limit how this is done, but it will help get them back on track. She added it will take discipline and comprises so it may not work. She added the community will have to decide if they want the Grand List to grow or do they want to pay more taxes. The Board agreed with the plan as presented and Ms. Heavner asked Ms. Meriwether to prepare motions to review on April 3rd.

Ms. Meriwether said the Quarterly reports will be ready for the April 16<sup>th</sup> meeting and Ms. Heavner said the motions will need to be done the same time.

Ms. Heavner mentioned the audit presentation is scheduled for Thursday and asked if anyone cannot make it to let her know so they have a quorum check.

Ms. Heavner went over the next steps in the budget process and the requirements in relation to the motions. Ms. Heavner added it will take some time for the motions to be drafted up because they are changing for this budget and bond counsel will need to review them. After the hearing once they hear from residents, they will have an opportunity to update the budget again if needed. Ms. Heavner added that public safety, maintain current assets, and perhaps spend to save should be their top priorities. Ms. Heavner reviewed the process and next steps in the upcoming hearing process.

**Approval of Minutes – March 5, 2024**

**MOTION:** Mr. Helfand made a motion, effective March 19, 2024, to approve the minutes from March 5, 2024, as submitted. Mr. Doyle seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

**Adjourn**

**MOTION:** Mr. Helfand made a motion, effective March 19, 2024, to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 P.M. Mr. Doyle seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marion Lynott  
Commission Clerk

**Board of Finance**  
**TOWN OF SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT**  
**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
**Tuesday, March 21, 2024, at 5:45 P.M.**  
**In Person Meeting /Simsbury Community Media Live Stream**

**PRESENT:**

Lisa Heavner, Art House, Robert Helfand, Mike Doyle, and Art Wallace

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Kelsey Chamberlain, Deputy Finance Director; Nikoleta McTigue, Auditor CLA; Jessica Aniskoff, Auditor CLA.

**Call to Order - Establish Quorum**

Ms. Heavner called the meeting to order at 5:45 P.M.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Presentation: CliftonLarsonAllen LLP (CLA) – Fiscal Year 2021/2022 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report**

Auditors from CLA (CliftonLarsonAllen) presented their findings on the Town of Simsbury fiscal year 2022/2023 audit. Ms. McTigue went over the terms of engagement and presented on the financial statements stating they had an unmodified opinion which is the highest opinion an entity can receive. She also noted no findings were reported on the Town's internal controls over financial reporting. Discussion ensued.

Ms. McTigue presented on the State and Federal single audit reports, which included financial highlights. She reported an unmodified opinion on the major programs that were tested, and confirmed there were no compliance findings. She went over the Governmental Activities numbers for the year and reported a net position of \$136M which is an increase from the prior year which was \$126M.

Ms. McTigue went over the numbers in the Governmental Funds, the General Fund, the Pension and OPEB Funds, and how they changed from last year. The Board asked questions which were addressed.

Ms. McTigue went through the various Auditors Communications stating the new standards adopted which was GASB subscription based information technology arrangements (SBITA's). A discussion ensued on what is included and not included in the financial statements due to being under a threshold. Ms. Heavner asked Ms. Chamberlain for a list of what was not included.

Ms. McTigue reviewed the management advisory letter with their recommendations for improvements to be implemented by December 2024 which included Capital Asset Reporting, Fraud Risk Assessment, and Accounting Procedures Manual.

Ms. McTigue reported on GASB Standards implemented in FY24 and FY25.

Ms. Heavner said on occasion it looks like the Board of Education has more intergovernmental spending that they budget for and asked for an explanation. Ms. McTigue went through how it worked, and Ms. Heavner said it might be worth having a narrative inserted.

Ms. Heavner also asked how Simsbury compares to other municipalities and they auditors said they are very similar.

Ms. Heavner asked if there is anything they can do to help reduce the time needed on the audit or to see if they can get it by January or February to fit in with the budget schedule and Ms. Aniskoff said they are working with Ms. Meriwether.

Ms. Aniskoff concluded stating they do an unpredictability test, and nothing came to their attention, and the audit overall went as expected. She added that they would like to get things earlier in October or November to get it complete by December 31. Ms. Chamberlain said they should be in a better position this year to reduce the timeline.

### **Approve Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Proposed Budget to Public Hearing**

**MOTION:** Mr. Doyle made a motion, effective March 21, 2024, to move the Board of Selectmen's budget as proposed, and the Board of Education's budget as amended on March 18, 2024, and forward the two budgets to the scheduled Public Hearing in accordance with Section 808 of the Charter. Mr. Helfand seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Approval of Minutes – March 14, 2024, Special Meeting**

**MOTION:** Mr. Helfand made a motion, effective March 21, 2024, to approve the minutes from March 14, 2024, Special Meeting as submitted. Mr. Doyle seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Adjourn**

**MOTION:** Mr. Doyle made a motion, effective March 21, 2024, to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 P.M. Mr. Helfand seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marion Lynott  
Commission Clerk