

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY – BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – MARCH 11, 2024
“AMENDED”**

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CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the Simsbury Board of Selectmen was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. Present were: First Selectman Wendy Mackstutis; Deputy First Selectman Steven Antonio; Board members Curtis Looney, Heather Goetz, Diana Yeisley and Kevin Beal. Others in attendance included: Town Manager Marc Nelson; Deputy Town Manager Tom Fitzgerald; Finance Director/Treasurer Amy Meriwether; Budget Director Melissa Appleby; Parks and Recreation Director Tom Tyburski; Director of Public Works/Town Engineer Tom Roy; Director of Social Services Kristen Formanek; Library Director Lisa Miceli; Police Chief Nicholas Boulter and other interested parties.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

- **Participants can address the Board of Selectmen in person at the meeting**
- **Email townmanager@simsbury-ct.gov by noon on Monday, March 11, 2024 to register to address the Board of Selectmen live thru Zoom**
- **Written comments can be emailed to townmanager@simsbury-ct.gov. Written comments will not be read into the record, but forwarded to all Selectmen via email**

Jan Litner, 12H Wiggins Farms Drive, an advocate of the Flower Bridge and design professional, spoke about the rehab on the Flower Bridge. She said the Bridge hasn't been painted in 30 years. She said there was a presentation on the Bridge last year and the wear and tear could be seen by everyone in attendance. She asked the Board to please keep the repairs in the budget as this is an icon on Simsbury.

Christine Winters, Executive Director of the Simsbury Housing Authority, said they are recommending Amber Abbuhl to the Board of Commissioners. Ms. Abbuhl was the Board of Selectmen liaison for the past 2 years. Ms. Winters went through Ms. Abbuhl's credentials and said she has the knowledge to be on the Board. She also shows a lot of interest in the Housing Authority to help in reaching their goals for safe and affordable housing. She asked that this Board approve Amber Abbuhl.

Dave Bush, 4 Katherine Lane and Chairman of the Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission, said they are given a charge as an advisory board to plan the Town's recreational needs for the future. He said the pool in Town is done as is costing a lot of money to keep up. They need to replace it or find an alternative for it. They are looking for the funding to do an analysis as the camps have always had a water component. He said Recreation brings value to Simsbury and the pool generates revenues, which could also be done with a splash pad. He asked that the Board consider giving them \$150,000 to go through the design phase of this project.

Joan Coe, 26 Whitcomb Drive, spoke about comments made at the February 26, 2024, meeting about the Police Department. She also spoke about the budget saying it was over the Finance Departments regulations. She spoke about revenues and expenditures and the Board of Education budget.

Mark Orenstein, 82 Old Meadow Pine Road, spoke about a public hearing on March 14, 2024, for CT TV and tech revisions being discussed in the Legislature. He spoke about cable and streaming. He spoke about the

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Town standing up for them with HB5446 and what he would like the Board to do for them. He asked that the Board sign a letter to support Simsbury Media in this matter.

Sharon Byron said she is in support of the splash pad. There are other models around that should be checked out about this pad. She also said she wanted to ensure the safety and cleaning of the bike trail.

FIRST SELECTMEN’S REPORT

Ms. Mackstutis, First Selectman, reviewed her First Selectman’s report.

TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT

Mr. Nelson, Town Manager, reviewed his Town Manager’s report.

LIAISON AND SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a) **Personnel** – There was no report at this time.
- b) **Finance** – There was no report at this time.
- c) **Public Safety** – Ms. Goetz said there will be a Public Safety meeting on March 28, 2024.
- d) **Board of Education** – There was no report at this time.

Mr. Beal said the Library and DEI Council are hosting a Human Library at the Public Library on Saturday March 23, 2024 at 10 a.m.

Ms. Yeisley said Aging and Disability is still looking for funding for their programs like Souper Thursday and ongoing disability events. They are also having a program about loneliness in seniors, which is a 4-part series.

Ms. Yeisley said Parks and Recreation made a list of their priorities, including a splash pad, which is all in the budget.

Mr. Antonio didn’t have a report tonight.

Ms. Mackstutis said Hometown Heros met last week as they have a change that allows people from an appointed board to be nominated if their work is not related to their board or commission. They are also getting a new member.

Ms. Goetz said Planning is working on the POCD with other boards on implementation and prioritization.

Mr. Looney said there was no Juvenile Review Board as there are no new cases.

Mr. Looney said the Police Commission said Officer Jared is a new officer and 2 more officers will be starting next month. They are also starting a new system – Rapid SOS – which works with 911. He said there was a proposed resolution for a retirement plan that was accepted.

(30:05)

Ms. Yeisley made a motion to amend the agenda to include the support for Mr. Orenstein’s request for HB5446. Mr. Beal seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

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Ms. Yeisley made a motion to move action items A and C and appointments A, B and C to the consent agenda. Mr. Antonio seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

SELECTMEN ACTION

a) Tax Refund Requests – This item was moved to the consent agenda.

b) Proposed Amendments to the Town Code Chapter 141 Article V: Tax Abatements 33:39

Mr. Fitzgerald said the only changes were the 2 years to 1 year to qualify for the abatement. This was reviewed by the Town Attorney and no further Public Hearing is needed. He also said the abatement would only apply to Real Estate and Motor Vehicles and not Business Personal Property.

Ms. Goetz made a motion, effective March 11, 2024, to adopt the proposed amendments to the Town Code Chapter 141 Article V: Tax Abatement for Volunteer Firefighters and Ambulance Association personnel as presented, which shall be effective 21 days after publication in a newspaper having circulation in the Town of Simsbury and further move to authorize a summary of the revised ordinance to be published. Mr. Antonio seconded the motion. After discussion with friendly amendment to add a language amendment on clarity for personal ownership on residential property. All were in favor and the motion passed.

c) Pine Hill Sanitary Sewer Easements – this item was moved to the consent agenda.

d) FY24/25 Budget Discussion and Adoption (36:00)

- 1) Mr. Nelson said his team found some opportunities to adjust the vacancy rate factor to save \$100,000 to help decrease the operating budget.
 - 2) There is a possibility to cut on paving by \$100,000 on operating.
 - 3) There is a proposal to assist SVAA funding – instead of \$200,000 from operating we could use reserves as the Board needs more information an MOU/Agreement with them for 1 – 3 yrs.
 - 4) There was a proposed \$205,000 for Simsbury Farms contribution, but there was a correction as an error on pension funds.
 - 5) There are 4 positions proposed. The Social Worker is now being funded by ARPA funding and if cut that would save \$100,000.
 - 6) Seeing as we have had a good winter, we could reduce the salt item by \$25,000.
- The total of these saving would be \$700,000 +.

Mr. Nelson said the Board of Finance guidance asked this Board to cut \$560,000 off the budget. Now they have \$700,000 to work with, so they could make all of these cuts or just some of them to mitigate a tax increase.

Mr. Nelson said originally the splash pad for \$150,000 design was for bonding, but now it would come out of reserves. Also, there is clarity for the \$900,000 for the 2nd year in capital to be changed to \$475,000 in bonding and \$475, 000 in grants. Therefore, they are reducing bonding by \$625,000 and supporting the \$150,000 for the splash pad design phase.

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Ms. Meriwether said she has some plans she wants to discuss with the Board of Finance after this Board gives her their priorities.

Mr. Beal made a motion, effective March 11, 2024, to accept all 6 reductions suggested by the Town Manager. Ms. Yeisley seconded the motion. After discussion, all were in favor and the motion passed.

Ms. Meriwether said the budget was 5.53 without ARPA and now it is 2.92. This would make a tax increase of 5.29% as long as the Board of Education comes down to their guidance. Median home would pay \$446 more.

(57:10)

Mr. Beal made a motion, March 11, 2024, to include the Public Works position of Mechanic/Driver in the Board of Selectmen's budget for FY 24/25 at a cost of \$51,424. Ms. Goetz seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Ms. Yeisley made a motion, effective March 11, 2024, to include the Police Department's position of records clerk in the Board of Selectmen's budget for FY 24/25 at a cost of \$92,510. Mr. Antonio seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Ms. Yeisley made a motion, effective March 11, 2024, to include the Finance Department's position of Town Hall Administrative Specialist in the Board of Selectman's budget for FY24/25 at a cost of \$99,833. Mr. Looney seconded the motion. After discussion, Mr. Beal and Mr. Looney approved the motion, with Ms. Yeisley, Ms. Mackstutis, and Ms. Goetz voting against and Mr. Antonio abstaining.

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Mr. Beal made a motion, effective March 11, 2024, to remove from the Town Manager's budget the proposed Human Resources Director and Human Resources Generalist. Ms. Yeisley made an amendment to the motion: to separate the Generalist from the Human Resources salary increase potential promotion. After discussion, Mr. Beal, Ms. Yeisley, Mr. Antonio and Ms. Goetz were for cutting the generalist position with Ms. Mackstutis and Mr. Looney against it. Therefore, the motion passed.

Ms. Meriwether said there is a correction – the tax increase would be \$539 with the Board of Selectmen a 2.37% increase.

Mr. Beal made a motion, effective March 11, 2024, to reduce the Main Street Partnership line item from \$100,000 to \$50,000 or level funding at this time. Ms. Yeisley seconded the motion. After a lot of discussion, Mr. Beal and Mr. Looney approved the motion with Ms. Yeisley, Mr. Antonio, Ms. Mackstutis and Ms. Goetz against. Therefore, the motion did not pass.

Ms. Yeisley made a motion, effective March 11, 2024, to amend the motion to include the contingency of \$50,000 contingent upon the agreement. Ms. Goetz seconded the motion. Ms. Yeisley, Mr. Antonio, Ms. Mackstutis and Ms. Goetz were in favor with Mr. Looney and Mr. Beal against. Therefore, the motion passed.

Ms. Appleby said there was discussion at Saturday's meeting on the Historical Society's request for planning the 250th events for our nation. Ms. Mackstutis said she was thinking of \$2,500/2,500 over 2 years if there are events with any other departments like Parks and Recreation. There are grants out there they could get. Ms. Meriwether said CNR would have to be over \$10,000. There would be no impact if it is just \$2,500. Ms. Goetz said we

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should be behind it, but we need some kind of plan first. They would need to do a presentation and do a supplemental appropriation.

Mr. Nelson said he sent the Board an email on the traditional payback and impact on the operating budget. He said if \$60,000 it would put back \$300,000 to the good on CNR. He feels more analysis is needed on the Board of Finance level. The term recommendation is to pass this to the Board of Finance.

CIP

Ms. Goetz asked about what would happen if all of the CIP was approved-what happens to the debt slope next year?

Ms. Meriwether said she reached out to the bond advisor and there are 4 different options she needs to discuss with the Board of Finance. She said they could offset the \$500,000 each year of 1.3 million and then 1 million on out-years. She needs to give them some plans and scenarios to discuss and see what direction they want to go in.

There was discussion on delaying the district flooring and roofing at Tootin’ Hills, Eno lighting and curtains, the Auditorium and Amphitheatre projects and network infrastructure work. There was discussion on the splash pad design for \$150,000, closing the pool or rebuilding it for \$3+ million and also the bathhouse. There was also discussion on Town Hall rooftop units, etc.

(2:29:57)

Mr. Antonio made a motion, effective March 11, 2024, to cut the Board of Education District flooring improvements from FY 24/25 to FY 26/27. Ms. Yeisley seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Looney said he feels the PAC is a good idea and gives the Town many benefits. There was discussion on scheduling a payment plan before anything is done. The Board of Selectmen will have to approve the whole plan.

CNR

There was some discussion on the funding for a new pickleball court in a time when we are trying to find some savings. Mr. Tyburski said this is all part of the improvements for the park in Tariffville and draws more people to the area. Ms. Mackstutis said this project has already been delayed by 2 years due to FEMA.

There was discussion on the Iron Horse landscaping and if that can be moved out. Mr. Roy said they would need another \$4,000- \$5,000 just to maintain it.

Ms. Yeisley made a motion, effective March 11, 2024, to move out \$60,000 from Iron Horse Blvd. to 25/26 and 26/27 and to increase line items in the Public Works operating budget by \$5,000 for landscaping. Mr. Antonio seconded the motion. After discussion, all were in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Nelson noted that this proposed budget goes to the Board of Finance for changes or approvals and then comes back to the Board of Selectmen for approval. He said there has been discussion on the use of reserves and the staff is recommending the Board could spend another \$830,000 from Capital Reserves if they needed to.

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Ms. Mackstutis said they could possibly make \$500,000 for the Flower Bridge (instead of bonding), the Board of Education Network infrastructure for \$350,000 and use some reserves. There would still be \$1.5 million left in reserves.

Mr. Nelson went through some of the changes and feels they did an excellent job with the Board of Finance guidance.

(3:10:40)

After discussion about changes in the CNR, Capital and Operating budgets, Mr. Looney made a motion, effective March 11, 2024, to reconsider the Human Resource positions. Mr. Beal seconded the motion. After a lot of discussion and explanation from Mr. Nelson, Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Tyburski expressing the priority of these positions, all were in favor and the motion passed.

The Board moved to Executive Session to discuss an attorney client memo at 9:58.

Mr. Beal made a motion to adjourn executive session at 10:18. Seconded by Mr. Antonio. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Ms. Yeisley made a motion, effective March 11, 2024, to approve the Board of Selectmen FY 24/25 budget of \$28,740,677 to include the following changes from the Town Manager’s budget:

- \$100,000 – increase contingency for vacancy rate (Operating transfers)
- (\$100,000) – decrease in paving (Highway facilities and programs)
- (\$200,000) – decrease in Board of Selectman Public Agency Support (SVAA funds)
- (\$205,749) – decrease in Simsbury Farms contribution (operating transfers)
- (\$100,000) – Eliminating Youth and Family Social Worker position
- (25,000) – decrease in Road Safety (Highway facilities and programs)
- \$ 5,000) – Increase to Public Works for Iron Horse medians

Mr. Antonio seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Ms. Goetz made a motion, effective March 11, 2024, Water Pollution Control FY 24/26 operating budget in the amount of \$4,808,496, (including Avon and Granby CWF share). Ms. Yeisley seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Ms. Yeisley made a motion, effective March 11, 2024, to approve the Residential Property FY24/25 operating budget in the amount of \$55,827. Mr. Antonio seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Ms. Yeisley made a motion, effective March 11, 2024, to approve the Simsbury Parks and Recreation Fund FY24/25 operating budget in the amount of \$2,884,828. Ms. Goetz seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Antonio made a motion, effective March 11, 2024, to approve the Debt Service FY 24/25 operating budget in the amount of \$8,915,868. Ms. Goetz seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Ms. Yeisley made a motion, effective March 11, 2024, to approve Capital Non-Recurring Plan for FY 24/25 in the amount of \$2,425,794 including:

\$714,496 to funded by the General Fund via the Five-year payback method

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\$284,337 to be funded by the General Fund
\$709,385 to be funded by the Capital Reserve Fund
\$91,580 to be funded by the Town Aid Road Fund
\$250,000 to be funded by the Sewer Use Fund
\$ 42,000 from project savings
\$21,500 from the Eno Trust Fund
\$ 95,000 from the Golf Equipment Fund

Mr. Antonio seconded the motion All were in favor and the motion passed.

Ms. Yeisley made a motion, effective March 11, 2024, to add the following new projects to the Capital Improvement Plan for FY 24/25 in accordance with the Charter Section 803(b):

Tariffville Connection – East Coast Greenway Gap Closure	\$450,000
Old Drake Hill Road Flower Bridge Rehabilitation – Supplemental	\$2,646,000
Town Hall Roofing Units	\$275,000
Sewer Replacement – Pine Hill – Supplemental	\$200,000

Ms. Goetz seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Ms. Yeisley made a motion, effective March 11, 2024, to approve Capital Improvement Projects including the following projects 2024-2025, with total funding of \$11,369,501 for 2024-2025:

		Recommended funding
Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center	\$2,782,881	Capital reserve fund, grants, donations,
Bandshell Addition		project reserves
Memorial Pool Redesign	\$ 150,000	Cash
Highway Pavement Management	\$1,600,000	Bonds, Grants, Cash
Public Works Truck Replacement & Plow	\$ 266,220	Cash
Sidewalk Reconstruction	\$ 223,400	Bonds
Tariffville Connection – East Coast Greenway – Gap Closure	\$ 450,000	Grants, project savings
Old Drake Hill Road Flower Bridge Rehab – Supplemental	\$2,646,000	Prior Authorizations, Cash
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 and Repairs (Stoddard Dam Breach)	\$ 171,000	Bonds
Sewer Repairs – Pine Hill – Supplemental	\$ 200,000	Sewer Use Funds
District Network Infrastructure	\$ 350,000	Cash
SHS – Auditorium and Amphitheatre Improvements	\$ 400,000	Bonds
Tootin’ Hills – Replace Roof (V3, V4)	\$1,120,000	Bonds

Ms. Yeisley seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Looney made a motion, effective March 11, 2024, to refer Capital projects to the Planning Commission in accordance with CGS Section§8-24:

Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center – Bandshell addition
Memorial Pool Redesign

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Highway Pavement Management
Public Works Truck Replacement and Plow
Sidewalk Reconstruction
Tariffville Connection – ECG Gap Closure
Old Drake Hill Road Flower Bridge Rehab – supplemental
Town Hall Rooftop Units
Municipal Site and Safety Improvements (Town Hall)
Barn and Facility Repairs
Dam Evaluation and Repairs (Stoddard Dam Breach)
Sewer Replacement – Pine Hill – Supplemental
District Network Infrastructure
SHS – Auditorium and Amphitheatre Improvements
Tootin’ Hills – Replace roof (V3, V4)

Mr. Antonio seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

- a) **Resignation of Amy McLean -Salls from the Sustainability Committee** – this item was moved to the consent agenda.
- b) **Resignation from and Appointments to the Hometown Hero Selection Committee** - this item was moved to the consent agenda.
- c) **Appointments to Various Boards and Commissions** - this item was moved to the consent agenda.

Mr. Beal made a motion to adjourn at 10:28 p.m. Ms. Goetz seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathi Radocchio
Clerk