

Subject to Approval

**Town of Simsbury Board of Finance
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, September 20, 2016 at 5:45PM
Simsbury Town Offices – Main Meeting Room
933 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, Connecticut**

PRESENT: Barbara Petitjean, Jeff Blumenthal, Kevin Prell, Robert Pomeroy, and Linda Schofield.

ABSENT: Moira Wertheimer.

ALSO PRESENT: Finance Director Sean Kimball, Simsbury Public Schools Business Manager Burke LaClair, First Selectman Lisa Heavner and other interested parties.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Barbara Petitjean called the meeting to order at 5:45PM.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

All those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 16, 2016:

MOTION: Mr. Blumenthal, Ms. Schofield second, **to approve the August 16, 2016 Minutes; unanimously approved.**

4. 2017 REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE:

As the Board considered the 2017 Regular Meeting Schedule, a discussion ensued regarding the location of their meetings and the constraints that arise from having a firm end time to meetings when the Conservation Commission has meetings scheduled at 7:30PM for the same room.

MOTION: Mr. Pomeroy, Mr. Prell second, to request the Board of Selectmen to move the Conservation Commission on the nights of the Board of Finance meetings to the Board of Education Conference Room; unanimously approved.

5. APPROVAL OF FY2016 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS:

Ms. Petitjean reminded the Board that during the budget cycle, in an effort to relieve the need for increases a couple projects were identified as appropriate to pay cash as part of FY2016. This action avoids the need to bond for these projects. Ms. Petitjean noted that the Board of Selectmen approved this measure at that board's September 13, 2016 meeting.

A. \$25,000 NEASC Certification.

B. \$115,000 – Board of Education CNR Items.

MOTION: Ms. Schofield, Mr. Blumenthal second, to approve FY2016 Supplemental Appropriations of \$25K for the NEASC Certification and \$115K Board of Education Capital Non-Recurring Payment for FY2017 items; unanimously approved.

6. APPOINTMENT OF TWO MEMBERS TO THE CULTURE, PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION SPECIAL REVENUE FUND COMMITTEE:

Ms. Petitjean reported that the Culture, Parks & Recreation Commission is seeking to reconstitute a Special Revenue Fund Committee. Mr. Pomeroy and Ms. Schofield agreed to serve as the Board of Finance two representatives to this committee.

7. FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Finance Director and Treasurer Sean Kimball referred to a report previously submitted via email to Board members. He noted that once again, the Town has received the GFOA (Government Finance Officers Association) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. Ms. Petitjean provided accolades to Mr. Kimball for stepping in during the transition and still being able to pull this off.

While Mr. Kimball noted that he did not have final transfers yet for FY2016, he noted that with all the revenues booked and re-classed pursuant to the auditor's requirements, the Town is at approximately \$1.55M favorability.

It was noted that the revenues received through the Town Clerk's office is the conveyance tax that is collected through property transfers.

Noting that FY2016 expenditures as booked, the Board of Selectmen's budget was briefly reviewed. The overtime cost of the Police Department's budget being higher was largely a result of an emergency management training exercise, according to Mr. Kimball. First Selectman Lisa Heavner explained that the budget overage of the Culture, Parks and Recreation Department was due to additional tree cutting for safety reasons. Mr. Kimball explained that the increased bank fees creating a budget overage for the Tax Department still result in a net savings as the service has allowed staff and benefits reductions in that department.

Mr. Kimball then briefly reviewed the upcoming Assessor's revaluation. Ms. Petitjean reminded the Board that this is a mid-cycle revaluation.

Simsbury Public Schools Business Manager Burke LaClair reported that as part of Opening of School Report at the Board of Education (BOE) last week, the Director of Personnel did a preliminary enrollment report as of September 1, 2016. He shared with this Board a copy of three slides from that report. Mr. LaClair reported that the District is down 37 students so far. He reminded this Board that the BOE had projected 106, although noted that the numbers will be more finalized as part of the October 1 Report. Mr. LaClair reported somewhat of a surge at Squadron Line with fifty-six more students than projected. He explained that the Kindergarten class there was projected at 234 but actually saw an uptick to 265 students. Mr. LaClair noted that this is the first in-migration trend seen in several years. He pointed out that this does not make a trend but does reflect a change. Mr. Blumenthal questioned whether additional staff was added. Mr. LaClair confirmed that 3 FTEs (full-time equivalents) were added. Mr. LaClair shared that anecdotally, other Hartford County area school superintendents noted similar changes: not that enrollment is increasing only that the decrease in enrolled students is not as large as projected.

Mr. LaClair then provided brief comments on the court decision by the Connecticut Supreme Court of CCJEF (Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding) v. Jodi Rell. He noted that the Attorney General is likely going to file an appeal. He noted that he will be following the case. Mr. LaClair noted the Town receives approximately \$6M in ECS (Education Cost Sharing) from the State of its \$67M education budget.

8. REPORT OF LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE:

Ms. Schofield reported that the Committee had a discussion about drivers that could effect both the budget and the revenue in the next five years. She noted the goal is to deliver a tool that can be used, in terms of best and worst case scenario as budgets are reviewed.

Ms. Petitjean reminded the Board that it was agreed during this previous budget season to begin planning earlier for FY2018. She suggested holding a meeting with the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education in November. Ms. Petitjean noted that she had asked both Boards during the last budget cycle to provide updated information, at least on the big capital items, and requested that Mr. Kimball and Mr. LaClair bring back updated information next month.

It was noted that an updated goals page will be requested from both boards. Mr. LaClair reported that the Board of Education heard very clearly this Board's request about getting things earlier. He explained that at the Board of Education's next meeting, they will be discussing and focusing the Henry James Middle School, the current status and next steps, to be in a position to provide that to other boards and the public.

Ms. Petitjean shared a conversation that she had recently where it was suggested that the Town would not be potentially faced with a 3½% tax increase for FY2018 had this Board just raised taxes each of the last three years by 1% rather than having held them flat. She explained that this Board focused on keeping taxes flat in an effort to make Simsbury more attractive in the Valley as the mill rate was higher than neighboring towns.

9. FY18 BUDGET PLANNING CALENDAR AND GOALS:

The Board reviewed dates for the FY2018 budget cycle. It was noted that both the dates as part agreed to for the 2017 Regular Meeting Schedule as well as those for the FY18 budget cycle will be available at the next meeting.

10. OTHER ITEMS:

It was agreed that the CNR policy discussion will be skinned next month but discussed in earnest during the December meeting.

Discussion occurred regarding members phoning in for meetings when they are unable to attend.

11. ADJOURN:

MOTION: Mr. Blumenthal, Mr. Prell second, to adjourn at 7:13PM; unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

**Pamela A. Colombie
Commission Clerk**