

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Selectmen Budget Workshop was called to order at 9:08 a.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. Present were: First Selectman Eric Wellman; Board members Sean Askham, Michael Paine (via phone and video conference), Jackie Battos, Chris Peterson, and Wendy Mackstutis. Others in attendance included Town Manager Maria E. Capriola; Deputy Town Manager Melissa Appleby; Director of Culture, Parks and Recreation Tom Tyburski; Director of Planning Michael Glidden; Director of Public Works Tom Roy; Information Technology Manager Rich Bazzano; Library Director Lisa Karim; Director of Finance/Treasurer Amy Meriwether; Director of Social Services Kristen Formanek; Police Chief Nicholas Boulter; Town Engineer Jeff Shea; Director of Systems Technology (Board of Education), Jason Casey; and other interested parties.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

Mary Glassman, President of SCTV, thanked the town for its past support of \$5,000 and asked the Board to consider an increase in support as the residents benefit greatly by the support they provide.

OVERVIEW OF BUDGET

• Revenues and Budgeting Assumptions (Tab 2)

Ms. Capriola said the grand list increased by 2.66% or \$64,982,848 generating approximately \$2.4M in new revenue. Real estate increased by 1.46% or \$31,609,308. The State cap of 45 mills on motor vehicles remains.

General Government Departments

• Town Clerk (Tab 8)

Ms. Butler said the Town Clerk’s budget increase is 3.03% or \$7,028. She is excited to say that they are now accepting credit cards. Areas of focus for FY20/21 include applying for CT State Library Historic Documents Preservation Grant of \$7,500 for the preservation and conservation of the Town’s permanent records. Other focus areas include organizing records on existing and newly installed high capacity shelving units in the Town Clerk vault and creating a record inventory list. They will also begin using the State of CT Electronic Death Registry System to register death certificates, issue permits, amend certificates, etc.

Ballots were sent out yesterday for people traveling or out of the country for a possible primary in August and a Presidential election in November. An increase in absentee ballots could result in additional hours being worked during the month of October (possible July/August as well).

Ms. Butler told the Board that about 25% of fees taken in by the Town go to the State.

• Registrars/Elections (Tab 7)

Ms. Butler said the Registrars/Elections department has a \$132,100 proposed operating budget, 5.24% increase or \$6,579. The budget includes a proposed 2.35% increase for registrars, effective 1/1/21. They have asked for a \$1,103 increase to program supplies to provide lunch for poll workers, \$4,050 increase to equipment maintenance for additional memory cards for the presidential election and a \$600 increase to conferences and education for required state training.

- **IT (Tab 11)**

Mr. Bazzano said the budget increase for IT is 3.91% or \$12,902 for wages, equipment and contractual obligations. The Department has a 93% completion of support requests within 24 hours for over 1,400 devices and growing. The focus areas for FY20/21 include continuing cybersecurity employee awareness training program, enhancing security levels and protecting measures for intranet and internet connected technologies, continuing fiber optic build-out to remaining satellite locations and updating the disaster recovery plan.

IT budget highlights include a \$5,322 increase in full-time salaries which reflects anticipated general wage increase for FY20/21, \$1,200 added to overtime for after-hours response calls for hourly staff, \$6,000 increase in technical and program equipment for anticipated replacement copiers.

Mr. Bazzano stated that they just received direction from the State that they are moving to a different browser so they will need to conform to that, they will continue security assessments and implement appropriate protection measures, adapt to expanding mobile fleet and provide mobile data management, plan for future changes in network storage and disaster recovery solutions as current platform reaches end of useful life. The CNR project coming up is for network storage and virtualization, the cost is \$130,000 and includes the replacement of the current hyper-converged storage environment that will reach end of life in 2021.

- **Finance, including Revenue and Assessment (Tab 10)**

Ms. Meriwether said the proposed FY20/21 proposed budget is \$922,669, which is a 5.6% increase from the prior year. The majority of the \$48,782 increase in the Finance Department full-time salary account reflects the full year cost of an Accountant position, as the FY 19/20 budget only included funding for a half year. For FY 20/21 they will be implementing a new financial management system. The major area of focus includes maintaining a tax collection rate above 99% and continuing to decrease the amount of outstanding tax balances due.

Ms. Meriwether spoke about CNR, which includes the grand list revaluation in 2022. The contract should be awarded by July 2021, with work to begin around September 1, 2021.

The service improvement requested is for fieldwork inspections at the cost of \$25,000. The Department is asking for a contractor to assist with field inspections for new development and misc. building permits that are in excess of those that can be completed by town staff in a timely manner, estimated to complete 1,000 field inspections, estimated to increase the grand list by \$1,750,000, estimated to increase tax revenue by \$65,000.

Ms. Meriwether said that the personal property audit was started, the contractor has done one so far and it already paid for what was spent.

- **Town Manager’s Office/General Government/Legal (Tab 4)**

Ms. Capriola said the Town Manager’s proposed operating budget is \$486,444, a 4.02% increase or \$18,796. The main increase in the budget is an anticipated medical leave, \$9,700 increase to the part-time account due to medical leave, \$2,500 increase to the advertising account to account for increased job postings due to upcoming retirements.

Ms. Capriola said the General Government’s budget increase is 12.42% or \$12,070 which includes tuition reimbursement, copy/print funds for Town Hall, telephone service funds, organization-wide training and postage. Budget highlights include a \$10, 5000 increase for telephone service; contractual increase plus \$5,000 for maintenance on the new system. \$3700 for allocation for executive coaching.

Ms. Capriola reported the BOS-Community Service’s budget increase is 0.24%, or \$287. The budget includes the First Selectperson’s stipend, funding for commission clerks, funding for legal notices and dues for membership organizations.

- **Board of Selectmen/Public Agencies/Health (Tab 5)**

Ms. Appleby said a \$162,364 contribution to Farmington Valley Health District reflects a \$11,404 or 7.55% increase and the per capita assessment has increased from \$6.05 to \$6.50. For FY20/21 the areas of focus include to continue to coordinate and support the work of the newly established Economic Development Commission and to continue to work with the Finance Department to improve the financial management programs, incorporate the findings of the Town Facilities Master Plan and Parks and Open Space Master Plan into the 6 year CNR and CIP plans.

They are currently piloting shared services in the area of Finance with the Board of Education.

They are currently negotiating five out of six labor contracts, for the next fiscal year with focus on implementing any negotiated changes.

- **General Liability and Workers Compensation Insurance (Tab 19)**

Ms. Appleby report that they received favorable premium indicators from the Town’s insurance carrier, CIRMA for liability, auto and property insurance and workers compensation insurance. Following an analysis, a larger portion of LAP insurance was reallocated to the sewer enterprise fund budget, reduced the sewer budget workers’ compensation premium and reallocated a greater portion to the General Fund for a new savings to the General Fund of \$3,088.

- **Health Insurance Fund (Tab 25)**

Ms. Appleby reported that they are in a much improved and stable position. The health insurance fund balance is projected to be at 24% of expected claims for FY 20/21. They have been meeting with the firm on a quarterly basis to stay on top of trends and issues.

Ms. Appleby said the CNR project includes a compensation and classification study estimated at \$40,000, these funds will provide for consulting services to conduct a comprehensive, town-wide assessment of current job classifications, job descriptions and analysis of existing pay grades. The benefits of the study were discussed. Ms. Capriola said a great outcome of this would be current job descriptions, which is what they are lacking right now.

- **Boards and Commissions (Tab 6)**

There was no significant change in the Boards and Commissions budget.

- **Probate (Tab 9)**

There was no significant change in the Probate budget.

Community Development

- **Planning (Tab 12)**

- **Building (Tab 12)**

Mr. Glidden said the Planning and Community Development budget decreased by 0.75% but the Building budget went up by 3.15%. Last year, the building department processed 2,087 permit applications for a value of \$103,412,000.

Mr. Glidden went through the services provided by Planning and Building. He also went through the areas of focus including amending the zoning regulations, which will be more user friendly. They are also exploring options for new building permit software.

Mr. Glidden said that the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps for the Farmington River Watershed are scheduled for a re-study and those draft maps are expected to be distributed in the summer. DEP has been in contact and they have asked the Department to host a meeting in April. This is a challenge that the Department will face as homes may be moved into flood zones and require new or more insurance coverage. There will be a 90 day appeal process. The impact on town owned assets was discussed.

The current public project is the Henry James addition. The commercial projects include the Big Y construction, McLean Independent Living Expansion, Ensign Bickford. The current residential development includes Ridge at Talcott Mountain, Highcroft Place, Cambridge Crossing.

Mr. Glidden discussed the CNR project, a request for \$27,000 for a building permit software upgrade. The current permit software is set to expire and the contract will be with a new vendor that provides services through CRCOG.

Community Services

- **Social Services (Tab 16)**

Ms. Formanek said the Community and Social Services total proposed operating budget is \$612,829, a decrease of \$4,637 or 0.75%. The service and programs offered were discussed. They have recently started adding more veterans programming and are continuing to add on to their sensory friendly series. They are in the second year of providing CHOICES counseling.

Ms. Formanek went through her budget highlights, which include \$8,000 town match for Youth Service Bureau Funding moved from Administration budget to Operating transfer, \$9,300 increase in Senior Center part-time

line, which reflects full cost of Wednesday lunch program with offsetting revenue from the Belden Trust. There was a \$15,090 decrease in Senior Center contract services account, \$10,480 in expenses moved to Senior Center special revenue fund where related program revenues are recorded, \$5,000 reallocated to Parks & Recreation. There was also a \$3,480 decrease in senior transportation.

Ms. Formanek reported that her CNR Project is \$63,000 for a Dial-A-Ride Van, \$12,600 to be funded through the Dial-A-Ride fund, 80% anticipated to be funded through a state grant.

- **Library (Tab 17)**

Ms. Karim said the proposed operating is \$1,670,632, an increase of \$54, 5777 or 3.37%. Ms. Karim shared that 50% of the Town’s population does have a library card, while the state average is about 40%. The library has the anticipated Friends of the Simsbury Public Library support, which equals about \$69,935, however it is not guaranteed support. They once again are a recipient of the CT Library Association Excellence in Library Service Award.

Ms. Karim reported that they have added an 80-seat program space in the library's lower level, funded in part by a grant from the State, they have become a certified passport acceptance agency (the start of the rollout has gone very slowly, as they are not allowed to renewals, which has been part of the issue), and have implemented a pilot fine free initiative.

The areas of focus were discussed, which include increased community engagement within the library facility, the goal is to increase the number of card holders by 2% along with program attendance, increase material circulation by 1.5%, continue to invest in the development of the library staff. They will also focus on increasing the equipment and offerings of Innovator's Workshop to support entrepreneurs and increase workshop use by 2%

Ms. Karim went through her budget highlights, which include a \$10,970 increase in electricity due to extended duration of warm weather, \$1,200 increase in facilities maintenance for annual testing of the generator’s oil tank and the need for additional de-icing material, \$500 addition to the budget to provide oil to run the library’s new generator.

Ms. Karim reported that library staff are working to explore more flexible use of existing library areas.

The materials budget was discussed as the materials allocation has dipped and never quite recovered. Ms. Karim said they are requesting an additional \$20,000 to restore material funding to the 2008 level, which will bring the allocation per capita to \$7.38.

- **Culture, Parks and Recreation (Tab 24)**

Mr. Tyburski reported that the proposed operating budget is \$3,167,588, the largest drivers are due to minimum wage and tree maintenance (\$30,000 for tree maintenance, due to age, climate and tree disease). Mr. Tyburski said they maintain 535 acres of parks and over 2,500 acres of open space including the Farmington Valley Greenway, 235 acre Simsbury Farms Recreation Complex, and will be taking on the Hop Brook Landing at the Flower Bridge coming this spring.

The areas of focus include increasing participation and awareness of Department programs and events, begin implementing recommendations and concepts from Parks and Open Space Master Plan, increase diversity of

program offerings, hopefully getting into more after school programs, and concentrating on trail fencing and trees.

C.P.R. budget highlights include a \$10,000 increase across all divisions for water/sewer charges, \$25,000 increase from General Fund to Special Revenue Fund, \$5,000 is a reallocation from Social Services accounting change to fund community events such as spring egg hunt, movie in the park, block parties, etc.

Mr. Tyburski reported that the total net per capita spending for Parks and Rec services remains the lowest of all comparable Greater Hartford municipalities.

Mr. Tyburski shared the CNR projects include \$42,000 for a new F350 pickup with plow, \$30,000 for building staining, \$25,000 for playground improvements, \$10,000 for parks and golf maintenance garage ventilation system, \$60,000 for Simsbury Farms ice rink system controls panel and \$30,000 for a feasibility study of parking areas at SPAC and Curtiss Park.

CNR projects also include \$16,000 for park entrance sign replacements (most park signs are rotted, they have a 5 year plan to replace all park entrance signs to be consistent at all recreation facilities), \$8,000 for Simsbury Farms rink fencing, \$45,000 for a greens mower replacement, which would be paid out of the golf equipment fund. CNR projects also include \$135,000 for greenway improvements, improvements to existing greenway system including resurfacing, fence replacement, signage, pavement markings and related work, The Department is also seeking \$95,459 for a Parks and Facility Maintenance Technician, who will perform repairs and routine maintenance tasks at all parks and facilities, basic carpentry, electrical, plumbing, HVAC, irrigation systems, etc. Mr. Tyburski said the Parks and Open Space Master Plan will recommend 2-3 additional parks staff.

PUBLIC WORKS

• Engineering (Tab 14)

Mr. Shea went through the Engineering proposed budget of \$286,290, a 1.06% increase or \$3,016.

Services and programs provided were discussed. The areas of focus include Henry James Memorial School phase 3, Drake Hill Road bridge/riverside road improvements, Tariffville to Bloomfield multi-use trail project, municipal site and safety improvements project, multi-use trail from Route 10 to Curtiss/Pattison Park, Firetown Road bridge over Bissell Brook Rehab, Barndoor Hills Road Bridge, and Simsbury Farms rec complex site lighting/fiber

Mr. Shea stated that other departmental activities include the continued technical support for MS4 storm water management, to continue to pursue grant opportunities to leverage town funds, and to assist with FEMA risk map re-study.

As far as budget highlights, there are no significant changes. There is consideration for implementing permit fees for Excavation Permit Program, currently no fees are charged for roadway excavation permits, if the restoration is not done properly we own the roadway defect, permit fees will allow some cost recovery for inspection services. According to a survey of permit costs for other towns, we were the only surveyed town not changing permit fees. It is recommended that permit fees be implemented starting July 2020, consistent with the current practice.

- Highway (Tab 15)
- Facilities (Tab 15)
- WPCA (Tab 15)

Mr. Roy said that the proposed operating budget is \$4,176,018 for public works, administration increase 4.8%, building & grounds 1.6%, facilities -0.4%, highway 1.6%, transfer station 0%, taking salaries out of the mix, the budget is actually decreasing.

The areas of focus include the Town-wide facilities master plan, possible redevelopment of MIRA facilities, year two of the implementation of new sidewalk rehabilitation program, Greenway and Farmington River Trail paving and reconstruction, compliance with MS4 storm water requirements, tree removal associated with Emerald Ash Borer, continue pavement management work(looking to pave about 10 miles per year).

FY 20/21 budget highlights include a \$43,370 increase in full-time salaries, \$7,340 increase in town building electric due to increased use of air conditioning, \$21,502 decrease in various supply accounts based on review of actual spending, \$20,000 increase in operating for revised paving estimates.

Mr. Roy said their trends and challenges include the new sidewalk program, estimated to repair or replace 1.2 miles of sidewalk, estimated to replace 19 ramps, bringing those into ADA compliance. The Town-wide facility master plan will also be a significant undertaking and the results will be a valuable tool for capital budgeting purposes.

Another challenge the Department faces is the capacity of the existing custodial department as the library programs continue to grow with additional programs and high level of expectations for the facilities along with increased activity at Eno/Social Services; larger food donations and substantially more weekend activities.

Mr. Roy said his CNR projects are \$125,000 for various drainage improvements, \$36,500 Emerald Ash Borer management (third year of multi-year program to remove over 400 trees that have been infected with the Emerald Ash Borer), \$21,000 for painting of Eno clock tower, \$46,000 for utility van replacement, \$180,000 for a highway plow truck, \$20,000 for replacement of a 11' snow plow, \$51,000 for a crew leader truck, and \$258,000 for a 10-wheel heavy dump truck with wing plow.

The capital projects include \$1,205,000 for highway pavement management, \$330,000 for public works facility paving & storm drainage, and \$200,000 for sidewalk resurfacing and reconstruction (3rd year of funding for a 20 year plan).

WPCA

Mr. Roy shared the WPCA is a utility operated by the Town and that they are right in line or cheaper than neighboring communities. The annual fee for residential homes is \$360 while businesses are charged by usage.

WPCA CNR projects are \$100,000 for sewer improvements, Woodland Street/Hopmeadow Street sewer upgrade for \$50,000, secondary clarifier weir covers for \$275,000 to eliminate algae growth.

Public Safety

- **Police (Tab 13)**
- **Dispatch (Tab 13)**
- **Animal Control (Tab 13)**
- **Emergency Management (Tab 13)**

Chief Boulter said their proposed operating budget is \$5,433,781, an increase of \$159,018 or 3%. The recent motor vehicle thefts were discussed. The Chief reported that medical calls alone in 2019 were just over 1700 calls, that's 125 more than the year before. In 2019, they responded to 564 accidents, there were over 4000 car stops last year and over 6,000 E911 calls.

Lieutenant Sheehan, who oversees patrol, highlighted medical calls and domestic violence calls.

Lieutenant Fred Sifodaskalakakis, administrative commander, went over animal control, reporting that in 2019, they took over 932 animal complaints.

Chief Boulter went through the following budget highlights: \$109,838 increase in full-time salaries, \$25,000 increase in overtime, \$5,000 reallocation from policy holiday pay to overtime training, \$4,250 increase in conferences and education due to increased tuition costs for POSTC academy, \$10,000 decrease in dispatch overtime; \$7,194 increase in police contractual services due to two promotional testing processes. Chief Boulter said that although they are authorized for 38 officers, they consistently have had six officers on leave, staffing levels have continued to be a challenge.

Lieutenant Sheehan reported on the following CNR projects: \$141,000 for replacement of three explorers, includes new interior equipment (prisoner system), and the purchase of two supervisor cruisers (Tahoes) \$110,000 (Private Duty Fund).

Lieutenant Sifodaskalakakis reported on the following CNR projects: \$55,000 for mobile data terminal replacements (private duty fund), funding will provide for computers and mounts, which are at end of life, soft body armor replacement for \$21,000, of which 50% is anticipated to be funded through a grant, it would be the replacement of 21 vests, needs to be replaced every 5 years. CNR projects also include \$19,000 for a AFIS machine replacement, which would be the replacement of the digital fingerprint system used for all non-criminal digital fingerprints, the current machine is beyond its life expectancy.

The police administration staffing was discussed.

The presentation from outside agencies was moved up in the agenda by consensus.

Discussion

- **Outside Agency Funding Requests**

Heather Flannery, Assistant Director of Interval House, State of Connecticut's largest domestic violence prevention agency which offers 24/7 hotline assistance, support groups, etc, spoke about services provided. In

2019 Interval House assisted 20 Simsbury residents. Last year, received \$500 in support, this year they are requesting an additional \$1,000.

Ferg Jansen, 3 Foxden, West Simsbury, spoke on behalf of the Board of Directors from SCTV, they are requesting an additional \$5,000 in support. Mr. Jansen stated that the service they provide is important to all the people who can't get out and go to the meetings.

The various outside agency funding requests for Community and Social Services are as follows: VNA request \$40,000, No. Central Mental Health Board requests \$1,650, McLean Meals on Wheels requests \$5,000, and Hartford Interval House requests \$1500.

The various outside agency funding requests for BOS/Community Services: No. Central EMS Council requests \$22,359, SCTV requests \$10,000, Farmington River Watershed requests \$5,248, Greater Hartford Transit District requests \$3,762, and the Chamber of Commerce requests \$9,000.

The outside agency funding request for Economic Development was from Main Street Partnership, who requested \$50,000.

The Board invited Jason Casey up to discuss BOE capital.

Jason Casey discussed the Board of Education capital projects. He said the two major projects are the SHS stadium bleachers and press box, estimated at \$850,000. The goal is to make it ADA compliant and improve safety/spectator experience. The server replacement request is for \$410,000 to replace VDI servers, the goal is 18 servers to host 1100 virtual desktops and 40 virtual servers, upgrade all virtual desktops to Windows 10. They are also requesting \$190,000 to replace core network switches that all network traffic runs through, and \$56,000 to replace the offsite backup system as currently all data and backups are stored in the SHS server room.

By consensus, the Board tabled the rest of the agenda. Ms. Capriola said they would try to tackle the wrap up on Monday and finish up on Wednesday evening.

ADJOURN

Mr. Askham made a motion to adjourn at 4:49 p.m. Ms. Mackstutis seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Taylor
Clerk