

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY – BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - MARCH 22, 2021**

“Draft”

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CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 6:00 p.m. on ZOOM due to COVID-19. Present were: First Selectman Eric Wellman; Deputy First Selectman Sean Askham; Board members Wendy Mackstutis, Jackie Battos, and Chris Peterson. Others in attendance included: Town Manager Maria E. Capriola; Deputy Town Manager Melissa Appleby; Finance Director Amy Meriwether; Director of Parks and Recreation Tom Tyburski; Town Engineer Jeff Shea; Public Works Director Tom Roy; Library Director Lisa Karim; Planning and Community Development Director Mike Glidden; Representative from the Trust for Public Lands, Honor Lawler; and Town Assessor Francine Beland. Also in attendance were Board of Finance members Linda Schofield, Derek Peterson, Arthur House, and Robert Pomeroy.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Askham made a motion to amend the agenda to start with the Autism Awareness Proclamation followed by a public audience and also to amend the agenda to include three public works' job descriptions as item "e" under Selectmen Action. Ms. Battos seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

PRESENTATION

a. Proclamation for Autism Awareness Month

Mr. Jack Knall and Ms. Robin Batchelder both spoke regarding autism awareness. Mr. Wellman declared April 2021 World Autism Month and April 2, 2021 World Autism Awareness Day. Mr. Askham made a motion effective March 22, 2021 to issue a Proclamation in support of Autism Awareness Month. Ms. Mackstutis seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

- Email written comments to ebutler@simsbury-ct.gov by 12 P.M. on Monday March 8, 2021, to be read into the records; or
- Email fitzgerald@simsbury-ct.gov by 12:00 P.M. on Monday, March 8, 2021, to register to address the Board of Selectmen through ZOOM

Mr. Wellman read a comment from Kirstin Morrow who expressed her concern and dismay over the use of language, tone and intent in the Zoning Commission's last meeting on March 12th.

Mr. Wellman read a comment from Todd Diamond regarding his opposition to HB 1024.

Mr. Wellman read a comment from Justin Crane thanking the Zoning Commission for their bipartisan opposition to HB 1024.

Mr. Wellman read a comment from Joan Coe wherein she stated that the Town has an opportunity to reduce expenditures in the budget so the taxpayers can realize the pot of gold with lower taxes and a reduced mill rate. She also discussed the impact the of Covid pandemic on society as a whole and Simsbury and questioned where these issues are being addressed in the budget. She states that the facility study should have been a priority and discusses her thoughts on the Meadowood Acquisition.

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Mr. Wellman read a comment from Sara Batchelder regarding the Zoning Commission’s decision to oppose the state legislation regarding increasing affordable housing in Simsbury and others across the state.

Mr. Wellman read a comment from Tammy Woychowski stating her support of the Zoning Commission’s decision to not support any overreach by the state of CT to change local zoning laws.

Mr. Wellman read a comment from Cynthia Kiesewetter congratulating the Zoning Commission for their bipartisan opposition to HB 1024.

Mr. Wellman read a comment from Heather Goetz, a member of the Simsbury Library Board of Trustees, who encouraged the Board to support the library’s budget request for \$8,100 for children’s reference material.

Mr. Wellman read a comment from Nicholas Criscitelli citing his disappointment with the conduct of the Zoning Commission during the March 12th special meeting regarding SB 1024.

Mr. Wellman read a comment from Susan Van Kleef expressing her disappointment in language and comments made during the special meeting to discuss SB 1024 on March 12th.

Mr. Wellman read a comment from Ellen Naughton regarding her opinions about the March 12th meeting regarding SB1024, citing their cavalier use and apparent acceptance of racist attitudes and language during the meeting.

Mr. Wellman read a comment from Diana Yeisley regarding her opinions on the March 12th Zoning Commission Special Meeting, stating she feels their behavior and language were inexcusable.

Mr. Wellman read a comment from April and Michael Smith stating they do not approve of low income housing being built wherever the state decides.

PRESENTATIONS

b. Aquarion Water- Irrigation Restrictions

Mr. George Logan presented regarding Aquarion’s water conservation program. He stated that due to the pandemic, Aquarion delayed implementation of the restrictions on watering/irrigation systems in Simsbury. An implementation date of April 1st is anticipated and Aquarion will conduct a print, digital and in-person education campaign. Generally speaking, people will be limited to lawn/turf watering twice a week.

FIRST SELECTMAN’S REPORT

Mr. Wellman, First Selectman, reviewed his First Selectman’s Report.

TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT

Ms. Capriola, Town Manager, reviewed her Town Manager’s Report.

SELECTMEN ACTION

a) Donation from Hartford Federal Credit Union

Mr. Askham made a motion, effective March 22, 2021, to accept a donation from Hartford Federal Credit Union in the amount of \$2,000 for the purpose of supporting Simsbury Community and Social Services Department's Food Programs. Ms. Battos seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

b) Tax Refund Requests

Mr. Askham made a motion, effective March 22, 2021, to approve the presented tax refunds in the amount of \$3,796.90, and to authorize Town Manager, Maria E. Capriola to execute the tax refunds. Ms. Mackstutis seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

c) Appointment of Pullman & Comley as Bond Counsel

Mr. Askham made a motion, effective March 22, 2021 to appoint the firm of Pullman & Comley, as bond counsel for the Town of Simsbury through December 6, 2021, with the understanding that staff has the option to conduct an RFQ for bond counsel in the future. Further move to authorize Town Manager, Maria E. Capriola to execute the engagement letter once completed. Mr. Peterson seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

d) Proposed Revisions to Debt Management Policy

Mr. Wellman stated that the proposed revisions to the policy stem from the budget that was put forth. The six-year capital plan put forth will put the Town's overall debt service ceiling around 8% in certain years compared to the approximately 7% where it is now in order to accommodate the Latimer Lane renovation project.

Ms. Mackstutis asked if there was language that could be added to state that the 8% is not the norm. Ms. Meriwether stated that when they updated the policy they added the language that the Board of Finance will set the rate during the budget season. Mr. Pomeroy stated that the last thing they want to do is have to ask for forgiveness if they exceed the policy, he stated that this is a range and not a resetting to eight from seven. He stated their target is still seven percent, not eight, but it will allow for large projects that will almost by necessity create stress on that limit.

Mr. Askham made a motion, effective March 22, 2021, to approve the proposed revisions to the Debt Management Policy as presented. Ms. Mackstutis seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

e) Proposed Revisions to Senior Mechanic, Truck Driver/Mechanic and Truck Driver Job Descriptions

Mr. Roy stated that the current job descriptions are very dated and this is updating those, there is no change in pay rates.

Mr. Askham made a motion, effective March 22, 2021 to revise the Senior Mechanic, Truck Driver/Mechanic and the Truck Driver job descriptions as presents. Ms. Battos seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

e. FY 21/22 Budget Discussion

Mr. Wellman stated that the Board of Finance has asked them to try to reduce their operating budget by \$100,000 to \$150,000. He stated that one item that was highlighted was increasing their assumptions around building permit revenue, increasing that number by \$125,000. He stated he personally felt comfortable with that recommendation. Mr. Askham stated he too agreed with it and that they often focus a lot on the expenditure side and that was a good suggestion on the revenue side.

Mr. Pomeroy stated that he wanted to clarify that while the Board of Finance indicated that the Board of Selectmen could make amendments to revenues in their request, the specific request was to look for items of expense that they might also be willing to reduce. He stated he doesn't think the Board of Finance expected this to be fully done by raising the permit revenue.

Mr. Wellman stated that their budget calls for an increase in legal expenses by \$25,000, he stated he would be comfortable with keeping that number flat.

Ms. Mackstutis stated she would like to revisit taking the \$110,000 out of capital reserves. Ms. Capriola stated the downside with that is that it would mean we've officially stripped away all of our excess cash capacity for smaller capital purchases. Mr. Peterson stated that he did not feel that this is actually a reduction of expenses as explained by Mr. Pomeroy.

Ms. Schofield suggested reducing some of the salary lines in recognition that there are vacancies that go unfilled. The Board further discussed looking at departments' vacancy rates as well as the requested Culture, Parks and Recreation technician position and playscapes funding.

Mr. Askham made a motion, effective March 22, 2021 to recommend to the Board of Finance an increase to the Building permit revenues for FY 21/22 of \$125,000, bringing the total budgeted building permit revenues to \$800,000 and also to reduce the recommended expenditure on legal counsel by \$25,000 effectively keeping it flat from the previous year. Ms. Battos seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Ms. Mackstutis made a motion to take the \$110,000 and change the funding source from the general fund to the capital reserve fund. Ms. Battos seconded the motion. The motion failed with Mr. Wellman, Mr. Askham and Mr. Peterson opposed.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

a) Resignation of Susan Krinsky from the Aging and Disability Commission

Mr. Askham made a motion, effective retroactively to February 12, 2021, to accept the resignation of Susan Krinsky as an alternate member of the Aging and Disability Commission with our thanks. Ms. Mackstutis seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Askham made a motion, effective March 22, 2021, to appoint Deborah Glass as an alternate member of the Aging and Disability Commission with a term ending January 1, 2022. Ms. Mackstutis seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

b) Reappointment of Cheryl Cook to the Housing Authority

Mr. Askham made a motion, effective March 22, 2021, to reappoint Cheryl Cook as a regular member of the Housing Authority with a term expiring April 1, 2026. Mr. Peterson seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

c) Resignations from Various Boards, Committees and Commissions

Mr. Peterson made a motion, retroactive to March 8, 2021, to accept the resignation of Gerard H. Wetjen as a regular member of the Culture, Parks & Recreation Commission. Ms. Battos seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Askham made a motion, effective March 31, 2021, to accept the resignation of Cheri Calnan as a regular member of the Clean Energy Task Force & Sustainability Team. Ms. Battos seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Askham made a motion, retroactive to November 18, 2020, to accept the resignation of Mary Turner as a regular member of the Sustainability Team. Ms. Mackstutis seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Askham made a motion, retroactive to March 12, 2021, to accept the resignation of Chris Kelly as a regular member of Community for Care. Mr. Peterson seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Askham made a motion, retroactive to March 8, 2021, to accept the resignation of Katie S. Martin as a regular member and Chair of the Zoning Board of Appeals. Ms. Battos seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

a. Special Meeting of March 2, 2021

There were no changes to the Special Meeting minutes of March 2, 2021, and, therefore, the minutes were adopted.

b. Regular Meeting of March 6, 2021

There were no changes to the Regular Meeting minutes of March 6, 2021, and, therefore, the minutes were adopted.

c. Regular Meeting of March 8, 2021

There were no changes to the Regular Meeting minutes of March 8, 2021, and, therefore, the minutes were adopted.

d. Special Meeting of March 10, 2021

There were no changes to the Special Meeting minutes of March 10, 2021, and, therefore, the minutes were adopted.

LIAISON AND SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. **Personnel** – no report at this time.
2. **Finance** – no report at this time.
3. **Welfare** – no report at this time.
4. **Public Safety** – no report at this time.
5. **Board of Education** – no report at this time.

COMMUNICATIONS

- a. **2019- 2020 Town of Simsbury Annual Report-** no discussion at this time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a. **Executive Session per CGS §1-200(6)(D): Discussion of potential purchase of Meadowood property.**

Mr. Askham made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to CGS §1-200(6)(E), at 7:59 p.m. and to included Attorney Robert DeCrescenzo; Town Manager Maria E. Capriola; Deputy Town Manager Melissa Appleby; First Selectman Eric Wellman; Deputy First Selectman Sean Askham; Board members Wendy Mackstutis, Jackie Battos, and Chris Peterson; Finance Director Amy Meriwether; Director of Parks and Recreation Tom Tyburski; Planning and Community Development Director Mike Glidden; Town Engineer Jeff Shea; Representative from the Trust for Public Land, Honor Lawler; Town Assessor Francine Beland; Appraiser Pat Wellspeak; Board of Finance members Linda Schofield, Derek Peterson, Arthur House, and Robert Pomeroy.

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

ADJOURN

Mr. Askham made a motion to adjourn the executive session at 8:26 p.m. Ms. Battos seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Askham made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:26 p.m. Ms. Battos seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Taylor

Clerk