

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY – BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES- MARCH 8, 2021
“ D r a f t ”**

Page | 1

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, Chris Peterson and Mike Paine. 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; Public Works Director Tom Roy; Library Director Lisa Karim; Police Chief Nick Boulter; Deputy Police Chief Chris Davis; Town Engineer Jeff Shea; Parks Supervisor Orlando Casiano; Planning and Community Development Director Mike Glidden; Social Services Director Kristen Formanek; Town Clerk Ericka Butler; and other interested parties.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

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 tfitzgerald@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 an e-mail from Mark McGrath, who spoke about the Simsbury Library request for \$8,000 to restore its material account to the 2008 funding levels and the request for \$5760 for its technology replacement plan. He feels both of these requests should be approved.

Mr. Wellman read an email from Marianne O’Neil, Chairperson of the Simsbury Library Board of Trustees, who also supports the two request from the Library. She said while our population has increased, the materials remain the same old materials. She feels the Library provides an excellent service to the community and, therefore, these requests should be approved.

Mr. Askham read an email from Anne Erickson, who also urged support for the \$8,000 and \$5,760 request so the Library can remain dominant, fundamental and vital part of Simsbury. The Library has become a center for digital learning during this COVID crisis.

Mr. Wellman read an email from April and Michael Smith who spoke about homes increasing slightly in value but not recouping since the drop in 2008. They are not union workers and have not received raises in 20 years. They want to know why union employees get raises each year, while the rest of employees are suffering from a global pandemic.

Mr. Askham read an email from Amber Abbuhl, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Library, who is also in support of the Library budget requests. She feels the funding is essential to keep the books and current digital content current and to keep current with employment application software. She urged the Board to approve these requests.

Mr. Wellman read an email from Joan Coe, who spoke about the Board being elected to represent the people’s voice. She also spoke about the Town Manager’s office, the Police Department’s investigations increase and

the mil rate and grand list. She doesn't think there should be an increase in the Spirit Council. She also spoke about vacant building, violence, development challenges, and other issues.

Mr. Askham read an email from Heather Goetz, member of the Library Board of Trustees, who spoke about approving the requests from the Library. She said the \$8100 would help support our schools curricula and invest in our children. She also said that the residents rely on technology for employment and business needs. Both requests should be approved.

Gerry Toner spoke to the Board about this unprecedented time. He said the Board should accept the donation from the Friends of Simsbury Farms for the lighting at the basketball courts. He also spoke about a position in Parks and Recreation for a maintenance tech, which is very important to maintain the parks for safety. He also feels that staff training and development is very important and this budget item should be considered also.

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) Tax Refund Requests

Mr. Askham made a motion, effective March 8, 2021, to approve the presented tax refunds in the amount of \$6,157.48, and to authorize Town Manager, Maria E. Capriola to execute the tax refunds. Mr. Paine seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

b) Proposed Friends of Simsbury Farms Donation and Supplemental Appropriation Request

Mr. Wellman said the Friends of Simsbury Farms are donating \$36,000 for lighting at the basketball courts. We would then take \$13,000 out of the capital reserve so this project can be completed this year.

Mr. Peterson made a motion, effective March 8, 2021, to accept a donation, in the amount of \$36,000 from the Friends of Simsbury Farms to be used for the construction of outdoor basketball court lighting at Simsbury Farms. Further move, to approve a supplemental budget appropriation of up to \$13,000 from the Capital Reserve Fund for the construction of outdoor basketball lighting at Simsbury Farms. Mr. Askham seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

c) Simsbury Farms Golf Professional Services Agreement

Mr. Wellman said this Professional Services Agreement would allow us to continue with the same Professional. An RFQ process was conducted; only one was received. This Professional has been a great asset to Simsbury Farms.

Ms. Mackstutis made a motion, effective March 8, 2021, to authorize the Town Manager to execute the proposed agreement for the Simsbury Farms Golf Course Pro Shop with John Verrengia. Mr. Askham seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

d) Letter of Support for Farmington Valley Health District Proposed FY 21/22 Budget

Mr. Wellman said the health district is an example of regional collaboration, the this letter would be sent in support of the FY21/22 budget.

Ms. Battos made a motion, effective March 8, 2021, to authorize the Town Manager’s office to send a letter of support to the Farmington Valley Health District regarding their proposed FY 21/22 budget with our thanks. Mr. Paine seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

e) FY 21/22 Budget Discussion and Adoption

There was a lot of discussion about the FY 21/22 Budget with the Board of Finance guidance of 1.5%. There would need to be service reductions to meet this guidance.

There was discussion on Outside Agency Funds, including Gifts of Love, Promise to Jordan, STCV and Chamber of Commerce. There was also discussion on Meal-on-Wheels funding. Mr. Wellman noted that this budget is challenging as all of these agencies do incredible work.

Ms. Capriola went through the service restoration priorities, including a parks facilities maintenance technician, Parks Department professional development, and increased funding for Library materials.

There was discussion on service improvement priorities including de-escalation training for the Police Department, the SPIRIT Council, etc.

There was also discussion on Pension and OPEB interest rate assumption options.

Mr. Askham noted that the Police Commission wanted to add 4 officers as we have a low officer per capita ratio at this time. We need 42 officers and only have 39 at this time.

After further discussion, there was no motion at this time.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

a) Resignation of Gina Morgan from the Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission

Ms. Mackstutis made a motion, effective retroactively to February 28, 2021, to accept the resignation of Gina Morgan (D) as a regular member of the Culture, Parks, and Recreation Commission with our thanks. Mr. Paine seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

a) February 28, 2021 Regular Meeting

There were no changes to the Regular Meeting minutes of February 28, 2021, and, therefore, the minutes were adopted.

b) March 2, 2021 Special Meeting

There were no changes to the Special Meeting minutes of March 2, 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.
- b) **Aquarion Water Watch March 2021 Newsletter “Preparing Your Irrigation System for Our Twice Weekly Schedule”** – there was no discussion at this time.
- c) **Letter from T. Kirk, re: MIRA FY21/22 Tipping Fees dated February 26, 2021** – Ms. Battos asked about the MIRA impact on the tip fees being \$14 more.
Mr. Roy said the Town is preparing to ship waste out of state and we do have a get out clause in the contract. We need to look at all provisions and maybe do our own RFP, however, there is no good option at this time.

ADJOURN

Mr. Askham made a motion to adjourn at 9:10 p.m. Ms. Battos seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathi Radocchio
Clerk