

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Regular Budget Workshop Meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 8:06 a.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. Present were: First Selectwoman Lisa Heavner; Board members Michael Paine, Sean Askham, Cheryl Cook, Elaine Lang and Christopher Kelly. Others in attendance included: Thomas Cooke, Director of Administrative Services; Sean Kimball, Director of Finance/Treasurer; Melissa Appleby, Deputy Director of Administrative Services; Tom Roy, Director of Public Works; Mickey Le-Cours-Beck; Director of Social Services; Lisa Karim, Library Director; Jeff Shea, Director of Engineering; Rick Bazzano, Director of Technology; Police Chief Ingvertsen, Police Captain Nicholas Boulter; Lieutenant Fred Sifodaskaiskis; James Rabbitt, Director of Planning and Development; Burke LeClair, Board of Education; Anthony Piazza, Superintendent of Water Pollution Control.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC AUDIENCE.**

There was no public audience at this time.

**OVERVIEW OF BUDGET**

Ms. Heavner said this is an unsettling time in our State. We probably won't have actual figures from the Governor until about October. We will have some appropriation numbers at the end of April that will help guide us.

Ms. Heaver thanked all the Departments Heads for keeping their budgets as flat as possible. She said the biggest driver of this budget is salaries and benefits.

- **Social Services**

Ms. Heavner said the Social Services budget went up .2%. Ms. LeCours-Beck said their budget is essentially flat with the Dial-a-Ride program is going up 2%. Ms. LeCours-Beck said there was savings in salary due to a position not being filled.

Ms. LeCours-Beck gave a list of their services and how their money is spent.

There was some discussion on needing more staff if the Center/Community Center is enlarged, but Ms. LeCours-Beck doesn't think more staff will be necessary. There was also some discussion on the Dial-a-Ride program and its future.

- **Library**

Ms. Heavner said there was an error in the budget book under Library. She said there was an elimination of a part-time Librarian, but it should be the part-time Circulation Assistant. This would actually be an \$8,000 savings. Mr. Kimball explained where the error is and said the actual numbers are all correct in the budget book.

Ms. Karim said their theme this year is “Real People, Real Dollars, Real Value”. She said the Library attendance has increase by 35%. She said the Library serves as a formal and informal gathering place seeing the number of visitors climb to over 375,000 in FY16. She shared a few human interest stories as well.

Ms. Karim said they hope to expand the Library’s presence beyond its physical location to increase access to the Library services all throughout the community.

She said their budget increased 1.5% due primarily to negotiated salary increases, equipment maintenance, and contractual services. There are two additional hours per week for part-time reference librarians who were added to help meet the goals established by the Library Board of Trustees’ Strategic Plan. The budget decreased in the part-time Library Administration line due to the currently vacant part-time Circulation Assistant.

- **Information Technology**

Ms. Heavner said the Technology budget decreased 12.9% due to the unfilled full time computer position. Increases resulted from negotiated salaries and contractual services due to the elimination of the full-time position. She said their goal is to implement cyber security.

Mr. Bazzano said there are only two full time employees in the Technology Department. He said they oversee the daily operations of the municipality and continue to research and implement technologies that provide costs and administrative efficiencies.

Mr. Bazzano went through some of their accomplishments and said they are a very busy department. He went through trends and key issues and their goals and objectives.

There was some discussion on cyber security. Mr. Bazzano said they are not in a bad position right now. He said a lot has to do with employee awareness and how to handle any possible situations.

- **Culture, Parks and Recreation**

Ms. Heavner said Culture, Parks and Recreation went up 1.8% due to negotiated salaries and increased use of Town assets, including maintenance of the Betty Hudson property. Savings have been realized in capital equipment purchases due to the golf surcharge implemented in FY15 generating approximately \$42,000 per year and from a new hire at a reduced salary.

Mr. Toner said they provide quality leisure opportunities which contribute to the needs and interests of the community. They contribute to Simsbury’s outstanding quality of life.

Mr. Toner said the department is responsible for the maintenance of all parks, fields, trails, the Simsbury Farms Recreational Complex and Golf Course, and for mowing the bike trails. They also host or assist with community events and develop programs to meet the needs of all residents. He said with over one third of Simsbury’s land designated as open space, the Department will be evaluating maintenance and accessibility issues. They are trying to be more pro-active on open space.

He went through the highlights and accomplishments of that Department. He went through some inventory figures. He gave the Board a per capita cost analysis showing expenses for other towns in the State. Mr. Toner said they are discussing how to make people aware of what is available at Simsbury Farms.

- **Public Safety**

Ms. Heavner said the Police Department budget increased 3.7% due to negotiated salary increases and the addition of one dispatch officer for \$57,495. She said savings were found by eliminating a part-time Police Clerk position. There were also some transferred items.

Chief Ingvertsen said his operating budget went down \$7,000. They also found ways to purchase equipment through different means and different programs that are available to them.

Chief said the increases are from salaries and negotiated contracts. They are also asking for one more dispatcher. This budget took a long time to put together. They are always trying to build respect with the community and he gave some examples.

Lieutenant Sifodaskaiskis explained why they need a 7<sup>th</sup> police dispatcher. He said the dispatchers are the first public safety responder. They are the ones who have to gather all the information needed to make sure the current information is given to whoever needs it. They explain CPR, how to stop bleeding, how to deliver babies, etc.

Lieutenant Sifodaskaiskis said the dispatchers have already received 1306 calls from 7/1/16 to 2/13/17. They not only get the calls, but they have to route the correct staff to the calls. They also have people walk into the Police Department to ask questions along with many, many other functions.

Lieutenant Sifodaskaiskis said he did a survey of dispatchers in surrounding towns. With this 7<sup>th</sup> dispatcher they will be able to have 2 dispatchers for the 7-3 and 3-11 shifts. They will still have one dispatcher for the midnight shift. The cost for this additional dispatcher is \$56,335.

Therefore, the average increase per taxpayer per year is .017 cents per day. This will allow Simsbury to have the very best service possible.

The Board feels this is a high priority as we must provide the best public service to the community.

Captain Boulter gave the Board a year in review. He said accidents have gone down about 25%; burglaries are down about 42%, etc. They have used Narcan to save five lives. They have worked hard to create trust and confidence in Simsbury. They have a lot of programs that involve the community, like “Shop with a Cop”, “Heroes and Hounds”, etc. as well.

Captain Boulter said this budget will help the Police Department grown and maintain the highest standards for the residents. They also continue in training for different issues that may come up, like people with mental disabilities, children’s issues, etc.

Chief Ingvertsen said he would wish for a part-timer back. The cost for 12 hrs./wk. would be about \$13,000 or \$21,000 for their full hours.

- **Engineering**

Ms. Heavner said the Engineering budget is being increased by 19.3% due to negotiated salaries, the hiring of a new Project Engineer in FY 17 and transferring the cost of GIS from the capital budget to the Engineering budget.

Mr. Shea said they provide professional infrastructure and building design, project management, planning services to effectively sustain and improve the current quality of life for residents and businesses.

Mr. Shea said the increase of 19.3% which is mostly for the project engineer, which was budgeted mid-point of last year. He is an outstanding candidate and his salary should match this. The other increase is for the GIS system support, which was taken out of capital.

Mr. Shea went through their accomplishments and projects they manage. They also support other departments and have worked a lot on the Eno project and the Streetscape project.

Mr. Shea said there are a lot of new projects they will be taking on for the next year, like the Senior/Community Center Project and technical reviews on major applications.

There was some discussion on the GIS system. Mr. Shea said the web hosting is \$5,500 and they have a general data fund of \$5,000 in their budget also.

- **Planning & Community Development**

Ms. Heavner said the Planning & Community Development budget increased by 3.1% due to negotiated salaries, staff training and certifications. She said there is a shortage of building inspectors and she has reached out to the Farmington Valley to see if anyone was interested in sharing a position, but this hasn't worked out yet. Therefore, their budget increased due to additional hours for the building inspector from a part-time to a full-time position.

Mr. Rabbitt said their mission is to engage the Town's residents and provide professional guidance and coordination in a manner which allows them to envision and plan for a desirable and livable Town and to implement and maintain that vision through the implementation of astute use of land controls including form-based development while allocating resources thereby ensuring a high quality of life for all Simsbury generations.

Mr. Rabbitt said his department also provides staff support to a number of elected and appointed Boards and Commissions. They process applications for building permits, process applications for the subdivision of land, and code amendments, applications for construction projects in the historic preservation area and the center district. They also enforce all zoning regulations and many other regulations.

Mr. Rabbitt said they will continue to plan for Simsbury's future in residential and non-residential development. He is asking that Mr. Glidden be allowed to become accredited in the American institute of Certified Planners.

There was some discussion on the POCD and upcoming developments near Simsbury. Mr. Rabbitt said they are trying to be strategic in their approach and therefore asking for additional money. They are trying to make Simsbury an attractive community so more businesses will want to come.

- **Public Works & Water Pollution Control**

Ms. Heavner said the Public Works budget recommended a decrease by 3.1% due to policy changes and maintaining the current conditions of the roads, instead of improving the overall quality of the roads. Excess fund balances in the Town Aid Road Fund is proposed for use or salt purchase and road and drainage supplies.

Mr. Roy said Public Works is really highway, buildings and grounds, water pollution control, and the landfill, which is operated through consultant services. However, water pollution control is funded 100% by user fees.

Mr. Roy went through the key role of the Public Works Department. He said they are preparing for the impact of the State's new MS4 regulations.

Mr. Roy said they paved 12 miles of roadway, held three household Hazardous Waste Collections, acquired new shared equipment as part of a State grant, repaired/replaced 247 storm drains and many other accomplishments.

Mr. Roy said his staff is setting up for more events due to the increasing number of programs at the Senior Center and Library. Staff is also continuing to manage a number of capital improvements to the Public Works facility such as the truck wash, fire sprinklers, water line, new roof, upgraded electrical services and other issues.

Mr. Roy said they will continue to work to improve the management and tracking of all energy procurements as well and implement energy reduction programs and initiatives. They will coordinate with the Director of Planning and other departments to ensure timely land use approvals. They are on call 24 hours a day/365 days per year and they will always come when needed.

Mr. Piazza said they operate the Waste Water Collection Treatment Facility through the Connecticut DEEP Nitrogen Phosphorus Discharge permits. They are co-owners of the plant with Avon and Granby. They are solely funded by user rates and assessments.

Mr. Piazza said the Department is staffed by a Superintendent, and Assistant Superintendent, four Operators, two Maintainers, an Administrative Secretary, Truck Driver, and an Engineering Inspector.

Mr. Piazza said the staff will continue to work with the Town staff on development projects to ensure adequate capacity is available within the plant and collection system. They have a

Mr. Piazza said the Water Pollution Control budget increased by 3.0% due to negotiated salary increases, health insurance increases and other contractual increases. He said savings were found from user fees and do not impact the mil rate.

Mr. Piazza said the WPCA will be approving their budget at their meeting on Thursday, so their budget could possibly change. The Board can vote on their budget and then add the Water Pollution Control budget at their next regular meeting on March 13, 2017

Mr. Roy said they moved \$127,000 to town aid roads for treated salt. They are looking for anyway to reduce the cost of the salt for the Town. They are reducing their paving out of the operating budget also. The highway overtime is remaining flat, but the overall salaries are going up by 2.9%. The changing of street lights will create a big savings.

Ms. Heavner noted that she is very disappointed in the State's budget processing. A lot more discussion needed to be done on our budgets due to the Governor's budget.

There was some discussion on maintenance vs. paving of the roads. Also, road salt is a must have and not really negotiable for the budget process.

Ms. Lang made a motion to adjourn for a lunch break at 12:50 p.m. for 20 minutes. Mr. Paine seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

The meeting reconvened at 1:15 pm.

- **Registrar of Voters**

Ms. Heavner said the Registrar of Voters are governed by the Secretary of State’s office and by State statute. They are jointly responsible for the administration of State election laws.

Ms. Heavner said the Registrar of Voters budget was decreased by \$14,916 or 12.8% due to Board of Selectmen approved salary increases and not having to hold a Presidential election in November of 2017.

- **Finance**

Mr. Kimball said the mission of the Finance Department is to provide the highest level of fiscal integrity and department support through prudent policies, training, business practices within its procurement, payroll, accounting and reporting, accounts payable, tax collections and debit management.

Mr. Kimball said the Finance Department was awarded the GFOA Award for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 18<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. They closed FY16 with an increase to the general fund reserves, successfully meeting the goal of enabling the Board of Finance to assign \$1.5 million of fund balance to be used to offset the tax loss from the former Hartford Insurance property in FY18 and FY19. He went through their other accomplishments.

Mr. Kimball gave their goals for next year including Cybersecurity policies and procedures. He said the staffing level in the Finance Department continue to be a challenge as they have an ever-increasing work load while a position eliminated in FY14 has never been refilled.

Mr. Kimball said the Finance Department budget increased 8.4% due to anticipated and negotiated salary increases, the inclusion of the UConn IPP Intern and the addition of an asset control system as recommended by the Town’s auditors as part of the FY16 audit. The Board of Finance budget also reflects a decrease in the advertising budget due to Charter language changes to the budget notice requirements.

Mr. Kimball said they initially were going out to bid for the auditor services for this year, but the same firms responded and he did get a figure from Blume Shapiro yesterday.

Mr. Kimball said the mission of the Tax Department is to maintain the financial well-being of the Town through the efficient collection of taxes. Property taxes are the major source of revenue for the Town and do fund the quality services the residents depend on.

He said the Department collected taxes at a rate above 99%, with an increase of people paying online. They had a record collection on one day at over one million dollars, which were all online payments.

Mr. Kimball said the Tax Department budget increased by 2.7% due to negotiated salary increase and contractual increases for quality data processing.

- **Assessor**

Mr. Kimball said the Assessor’s office is responsible for discovering, listing, and valuing property and administering exemption and tax relief programs as required by applicable State and Federal law or local ordinances.

The demolition of The Hartford building and the loss of their taxes combined with new construction and newly-approved sites are roughly 1% less than the previous year. It appears that the October 1, 2017 grand list is likely to have recovered to its 2015 level.

Mr. Kimball said their increase is up 2.4% due to negotiated salary increases and contractual service increases for maintaining maps under GIS. The part-time line item increase is to pay for additional commission clerk hours for Board of Assessment Appeals meetings due to an anticipated increase in revaluation appeals.

There was some discussion on health insurance increases. Mr. Kimball said the advice was to maintain our internal service fund and reserve levels at an appropriate level. The balance could go down another \$700,000 - \$800,000. We are now going into a single defined contribution program. There is now a new line in the budget for the defined contribution plan as well.

- **General Government**
  - **First Selectwoman’s Office/Central Administration**

Ms. Heavner went through her budget and the changes that she made. She said budget increases reflect salary increases, cost associated with the transition of Town Manager, increase in legal fees due to anticipated complex development and union negotiations. She said savings were found by eliminating a part-time communications staff position and UPS pick-up charges. She also eliminated bottled water. She will continue to analyze service needs and adjustments. There are also a few changes in putting certain commissions under the First Selectmen’s budget now.

Ms. Heavner said with Connecticut’s State Government facing significant financial challenges, economic development remains at the forefront of priorities.

There was some discussion on contract negotiations, which has just started and therefore, that amount was best estimated.



Ms. Heavner recused herself for the discussion of the First Selectman’s stipend.

There was discussion on the stipend for the First Selectman’s stipend of approximately 15% of the Town Manager’s salary. It was decided that there should be “place holder” for this salary from between \$10,000 to \$22,000 range. At least half of this should be budgeted for. It was decided that \$5,000 would be placed in Central Administration for the half-year stipend. The duties are set forth in the Charter and the new Board of Selectmen would actually decide the amount of the stipend.

Ms. Heavner returned to the meeting.

Ms. Appleby said the Town Clerk’s office serves as the liaison between local government and the residents, making sure that information is easily accessible and reliably provided, all while delivering the highest quality of customer service.

Ms. Appleby went through the Departments accomplishments and key issues. She said property sales are steady resulting in a good amount of conveyance tax revenue for the Town.

Ms. Appleby said the Town Clerk’s budget decreased by 4.4% primarily due to the hiring of a new Town Clerk at a reduced salary.

- **CNR**

Mr. Shea went through the CNR projects that are being recommended, which total \$416,250. This includes the purchase of 3 patrol vehicles, the replacement of a 1984 utility vehicle and the replacement of a 1989 baseball infield conditioner, some Town Hall upgrades and improvements and some Public Works items.

- **CIP**

Ms. Heavner said the Capital Improvement Program fits the 6.7% Board of Finance guidelines. She is recommending a 15 year bonding on the Henry James Project.

Mr. Shea went through the 18 projects under Capital Improvements. There was some discussion on the Cyber threats and protection issues and on the proposed Senior/Community Center project and SCTV relocation. After discussion it was agreed to change the amount for the Senior/Community Center to \$5.8 million.

Mr. Shea said this is the second phase of the street light purchase project. This will include the Simsbury Farms Complex. Poles need to be replaced so lighting will be replaced as well. They will also look at the Iron Horse parking lots.

Mr. Shea noted that the Friends of the Library will be accepting donations and applying for grants for their projects.

Mr. LeClair spoke about the projects at Henry James Middle School. He said phases I & II are out to bid. He gave the Board a detailed sheet for Phase III and went through it. He said their budget remains at \$22,825,000.

Mr. Burke said this is a long term investment the really needs to be maintained. They will also be applying for grant money for this project. He said the Latimer Lane project and one other project were pushed out further.

There is a school construction reimbursement grant for Phase II in the final legislature process now. He said they would have to apply for a Phase III grant by June 30<sup>th</sup> at a rate of 35.71% of reimbursement.

Mr. Burke said the proposed project at Simsbury High School would include the complete reconstruction of six tennis courts. The final bid and design will be received within the next few months. The cost estimates are expected to decrease as the level of project design in increased and bid documents are released for competitive pricing contingent upon successful project funding through the CIP.

#### **POSSIBLE ACTION/DISCUSSION**

Ms. Heavner thanked all staff for coming in a low as they could on their budgets. Mr. Kimball said if the “wish list” is implemented the budget will be at 3.6%.

There will be a meeting on Tuesday night at the Library at 6 p.m. Mr. Kimball will have the motions ready to discuss and vote on at that time.

#### **ADJOURN**

Mr. Askham made a motion to adjourn at 4:07 p.m. Ms. Lang seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathi Radocchio, Clerk