

TOWN OF SIMSBURY - BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES REGULAR MEETING - JANUARY 9, 2012

CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 7:00PM, Monday, January 9th, 2012, in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. Present were: First Selectmen Mary Glassman; Board Members: Nancy Haase, Moira Wertheimer, John Hampton, Lisa Heavner and Sean Askham. Other attendees included: Tom Cooke, Director Administrative Services and David Gardner, Assessor.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Glassman welcomed everyone and introduced Mr. Gardner, Assessor.

PRESENTATION- Revaluation Update

Mr. Gardner said the revaluation field work is currently underway and that representatives from Quality Valuation Services, LLC have already measured 278 houses, to date. Mr. Gardner said letters, providing advance notice, will be sent prior to field work being completed. Mr. Gardner explained that the representative will need to look at both the interior and exterior of each property and then will look at the home relative to recent comparable sales. Mr. Gardner said the object of the revaluation is to equalize real estate assessments. He explained that after this revaluation, some tax payers will have to pay more, some less and some, the same amount. Mr. Gardner explained the appeals process if there is a question about the revaluation of one's property. Ms. Glassman said that the new values will be set July 1, 2013 for the taxes. She then asked Mr. Gardner about how lower sales prices in a neighborhood will effect a valuation and also asked about more details regarding the appeals process. Mr. Gardner said they will be investigating sales and make sure they are, in fact, comparable, and those will have an impact on the revaluation. As for the new formal appeals process, he said it will begin November/December 2012 and the Board of Assessor Appeals will be March/April 2013. Ms. Glassman noted how these time frames are strict and cannot be missed. Mr. Gardner said when dates are set, the public will be notified. Ms. Glassman then asked Mr. Gardner about how some people will assume, as home values have decreased, there will be an automatic decrease in taxes. Mr. Gardner explained that while residential values have decreased, the property tax is a budget balanced tax, so it does not necessarily mean that people's taxes will decline, as the mill rate could go up. He said it is too early to know on anyone's individual home. Mr. Hampton asked that a copy of the revaluation information package be sent to the Senior Center, so seniors are aware that someone will be coming to their home.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

Robert Kalechman, 971 Hopmeadow Street, addressed the Board and expressed his disappointment with the lack of audience during a revaluation time. He wanted to let the

audience know that “taxes are laid in abeyance”. He congratulated the Board and Mr. Sawitzke, Town Engineer, on the recent grant for the improvement of the Town Center in the amount of \$350,000. Mr. Kalechman said that with this money, it might be time to put the electric and telephone lines underground, as it will have to be done at some point. Mr. Kalechman then said that when he attended the Public Safety Subcommittee meeting in December, he commented that Social Services should not be cutting personnel. He said that when he brought this up at the meeting, there was a big deal made of that and quite a bit of discussion, and he feels what happened was not accurately reflected in the minutes of the meeting. He also said that he could not check the minutes versus the cable broadcast because there were technical difficulties, so he could not view the meeting. Mr. Kalechman said the minutes were not accurate and the video is unavailable. Mr. Kalechman then said, with regards to the appointment of Deputy First Selectmen, he thinks it should be voted to amend the Charter to elect the Deputy First Selectmen by the highest amount of votes. Ms. Glassman thanked Mr. Kalechman and said she will pass along the comments to SCTV, but let him know that they are not within the purview of the Town.

Jeff Tindall, 47 Owens Brook Boulevard, Chairman of Simsbury Democratic Town Committee, asked the Board to table the Agenda Item of “Republican nominations to various boards and commissions” to a later date. Mr. Tindall explained how both parties usually send these nominations together at the same time, but since there was a procedural issue on the Democrats’ side, they have not been able to vote on it as a Town Committee.

Sue Bednarczyk, 119 E. Weatogue Street, said she was addressing the Board regarding a land use issue. Ms. Bednarczyk said that years ago there was the approval of two office buildings in the south end of town (one near the Pool Barn and the other across the street). One of those was changed to be apartments and now at the Pool Barn property, they are considering putting up a gas station, under the new PAD Zoning Regulation. Ms. Bednarczyk said that office was the best use in that location, not a gas station. She said the home owners are getting together to unite in opposition. She said the Republicans are not preserving the character of the Town. Ms. Bednarczyk presented a draft of her sign, that she plans to put up near the future site of the gas station, which read “This gas station has been brought to you by Simsbury Republicans, this is the best we can do.” Ms. Glassman said that the public will be able to attend the meeting when that application is presented.

Ms. Heavner clarified, in response to Mr. Kalechman’s statements, that no one in Social Services has been fired.

FIRST SELECTMAN’S REPORT

Ms. Glassman said they continue to move forward with Emergency Response Operation and thanked everyone for their participation in the December Public Safety Subcommittee meeting. Ms. Glassman said they have recently received the Governor’s Two-Storm Panel report. She said the Public Safety Subcommittee will be holding another meeting on January 19th, where there will be a review of the debris removal

process. Ms. Glassman said she is happy to report that our debris removal process is complete and we have done everything in our power to be eligible for the FEMA Reimbursement (75% reimbursement), which is extremely important with a total cost of approximately \$3.5MM. Ms. Glassman said, that by going out to bid, as opposed to using a State Contract, we saved the Town \$6MM. Ms. Glassman reported that no non-union staff received overtime, although they are currently calculating the number of extra hours that were put in. She said that she knows, for example, that Mr. Roy worked in excess of 200 hours during the storm for not one penny more. She said that Board of Selectmen and staff also put in hundreds of hours on everyone's own time.

SELECTMEN ACTION

a) Approve Tax Refunds

Ms. Glassman said this refund totals \$9,436.36.

Mr. Hampton moved to approve the tax refunds. The motion was seconded by Ms. Heavner and was unanimously passed.

b) Accept a financial donation from Garrity Asphalt Reclaiming, Inc. in the amount of \$5,000 for the Keep Simsbury Warm Program; a financial donation from Tower Energy in the form of six (6) certificates for 100 gallons of oil each for the Keep Simsbury Warm Program and Accept a financial donation from Fitzgerald's Foods in the form of gift cards in the amount of \$20.00 each for total donation of \$600.00

Mr. Askham made a motion to approve the financial donation from Garrity Asphalt Reclaiming, Inc. in the amount of \$5,000. The motion was seconded by Ms. Haase and was unanimously passed, with one abstention (Ms. Glassman).

Mr. Hampton made a motion to approve the financial donation from Tower Energy in the form of six (6) certificates for 100 gallons of oil each for the Keep Simsbury Warm Program and the financial donation from Fitzgerald's Foods in the form of gift cards in the amount of \$20.00 each for total donation of \$600.00. The motion was seconded by Ms. Wertheimer and was unanimously passed.

c) Process for appointment of Deputy First Selectmen and possible recommendation

Ms. Glassman said the Charter is silent with regards to appointing a Deputy First Selectmen. Ms. Glassman reviewed the following options:

- 1) Allow the First Selectmen to appoint the Deputy First Selectmen
- 2) State the Deputy shall be in the same party as the First Selectmen
- 3) The Deputy shall be the Selectmen receiving the highest number of votes

Ms. Glassman started the discussion saying she does not have a preference and is comfortable with following any of the three (3) listed above. She opened it up to the Board for discussion. Ms. Wertheimer started by saying she recommend they forward these options to the Charter Revision Commission, in order to get an outside opinion. Mr. Askham said he agrees and thinks the Charter Revision Commission could consult with other towns to add to the recommendation list. Ms. Heavner supported those

comments. Ms. Haase said it will be good to bring this to the public's attention, so they can become more aware of this and comment on how they would like to see it resolved.

Mr. Askham made a motion to refer these options, as stated above, to the Charter Revision Committee. The motion was seconded by Ms. Heavner and was unanimously passed.

d) Announcement of the \$350,000 STEAP Grant

Ms. Glassman thanked Rich Sawitzke for his work in getting this \$350,000 grant, saying that only 12 towns in the State received funding, so it was very competitive. Ms. Glassman said the proposed improvements include: installing pedestrian bump-outs on Hopmeadow Street (near Station Street), drainage adjustments for Riverside Road to reduce road flooding, repair expansion joints on Drake Hill Bridge and an improved river access point on Riverside Road.

Ms. Glassman said there will be some component of a Town Match, which Mr. Sawitzke had indicated would be less than \$50,000.

e) Approve a resolution for an Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) as requested by Chief of Police Ingvertsen

Ms. Glassman said this allows for a reimbursement for the Emergency Management Director, offsetting costs for the fire district.

Ms. Haase made a motion to approve a resolution for an Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) and read it into the record:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Selectmen may enter into with and deliver to the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection including the Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security any and all documents which it deems necessary or appropriate; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that Mary A. Glassman, as First Selectman of the Board of Selectmen, is authorized and directed to execute and deliver any and all documents on behalf of the Board of Selectmen and to do and perform all acts and things which he/she deems to be necessary or appropriate to carry out the terms of such documents. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hampton and was unanimously passed.

f) 2012-2013 Budget Process - Timeframe

Ms. Glassman outlined the budget calendar, saying important dates for the public are May 1, 2012 - Annual Town Meeting for considering the Budget and May 15, 2012 - the Automatic referendum held on the Annual Town Budget.

Ms. Haase asked that the budget information be as detailed as possible, because the public will expect this to be scrutinized. Ms. Glassman said there will be more detail than in the past, as forms have been updated and procedures have changed to increase transparency.

g) Approval of amendments to 457(b) Retirement Plan documents

Mr. Cooke walked the Board through the changes that The Hartford recommended be implemented. Ms. Heavner recused herself, as her husband works for The Hartford. One change was an administrative change and the other was an addition made to allow certain retired public safety officers the opportunity to use the money in the 457

Plan to pay Health Insurance premiums pre-tax. Mr. Cooke said there is no cost to the Town with making this addition, and it is a positive improvement.

Mr. Hampton made a motion to approve the amendments to 457(b) Retirement Plan documents and read into resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Board has previously approved and adopted the Town of Simsbury 457 Plan ("Plan") to provide employees of the Town of Simsbury with retirement benefits.

RESOLVED, that the Board does hereby declare the intention of the Town of Simsbury to continue the Plan, but reserves the right to terminate or amend the Plan at any time.

RESOLVED, that the members of the Board are hereby jointly and severally authorized to take such actions and to execute such documents as they deem necessary or desirable in order to carry out the intent of the foregoing resolutions and require under the Plan to make the Plan fully effective in accordance with its terms and intent. The motion was seconded by Ms. Haase and was unanimously passed, with two abstentions (Ms. Heavner & Ms. Glassman).

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

a) Approve the appointment of Polly Maier (U) as a full member of the Board of Ethics effective January 9, 2012.

Ms. Glassman thanked Mr. Hampton and Mr. Hensley for their time in looking at interested parties and the time they spent on finding the right candidate for appointment. Mr. Hampton thanked Mr. Hensley for his work as well and then said Ms. Maier will make a great addition to the Board of Ethics as an attorney with a strong background in community service.

Mr. Hampton moved to approve the appointment of Polly Maier (U) as a full member of the Board of Ethics effective January 9, 2012. The motion was seconded by Ms. Haase and was unanimously passed.

b) Republican nominations to various boards and commissions

Ms. Glassman thanked Mr. Askham, as Chairman of the Republican Party, for getting his nominations in, but pursuant to the earlier request of Mr. Tindall, she respectfully asked that this be tabled until the next meeting, giving the Democratic Party time to move their nominations.

Mr. Askham made a motion to continue boards and commissions until the next Board of Selectmen meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Haase and was unanimously passed.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Ms. Haase made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of November 30, 2011 as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hampton and was unanimously passed with one abstention (Mr. Askham, as he was not on the Board at the time of the meeting).

Mr. Hampton made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of December 12, 2011 with the change presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Haase and was unanimously passed.

SELECTMEN LIAISON AND SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Personnel - none

Finance - none

Welfare - none

Public Safety - Mr. Hampton said the December 15th public meeting was very helpful and thanked the subcommittee members and Selectmen in attendance. Mr. Hampton announced the first Senior Tax Relief Meeting that was held, co-chaired by himself and Ms. Wertheimer, made up of five (5) individuals. Ms. Wertheimer said the upcoming meeting (Thursday at 6PM) will be a good one for the public to attend because the Town Attorney is walking through various tax relief information step-by-step. Ms. Glassman reminded them to keep a close eye on the Budget Calendar to avoid missing any deadlines.

Mr. Hampton also let everyone know the 2nd Annual Martin Luther King in Simsbury Observation will take place Monday, January 16th, 1PM at Eno Hall in partnership with Simsbury Free Library and Simsbury Public School Music Department.

Board of Education - none

Ms. Heavner thanked Mr. Hampton for organizing the Annual Martin Luther King in Simsbury. Ms. Heavner then announced on January 27th, there will be Senior Citizens Sports Night at the High School (Girls' Basketball). Following that, Ms. Heavner said, will be the announcement of West Side Story, which the senior citizens can attend for free with their VIP passes.

Additional scheduling and administrative matters were discussed briefly.

Ms. Haase wanted to thank Hiram Peck for his work on the recognition for the 2011 Implementation Award given to Simsbury by the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association. Lastly, Ms. Haase wanted to congratulate the Looney Family, of Simsbury, for having the first baby of the New Year in the region.

ADJOURN

At 8:12PM, Ms. Heavner made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Askham seconded the motion, which was unanimously passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary A. Glassman, First Selectman