

From: Susan Mazurski March 3, 2010 1:58:45 PM
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Cc:

TOWN OF SIMSBURY – BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 11, 2010

A. Call to Order

A Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 6:31 pm in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. Present were: First Selectman Mary Glassman; Board members Moria Wertheimer, Tom Herlihy, John Hampton, Lisa Heavner and Robert Hensley. Others in attendance included: Bonnie Therrien, Kevin Kane and Colleen O'Connor and other interested parties.

B. Pledge of Allegiance – Everyone stood for the pledge of allegiance.

C. Public Audience – Robert Kalechman of 971 Hopmeadow Street asked for no increase in spending in the next two years and do not balance the budget on the employees' backs. He reminded the Selectmen that the unions have binding arbitration. The Town receiving grants from other governments means it is still taxpayers' money. He feels the Town needs to do more with mass transportation and not bike paths. There are grant requests on tonight's agenda that the Selectmen do not have any information on. The taxpayers' money is being wasted on the Performing Arts Center. He wanted to know what the \$10,000 grant was spent on for the Performing Arts Center.

Mike Rinaldi of 32 Pinnacle Mountain Road asked to receive information on the Performing Arts Center as to how much money the Town has received as income and the cost of overhead and management costs. He also asked if Simsbury Farms produces any profit and if so, has this profit paid for any capital expenses. On the Town Farm Dairy, he said that there is a group of citizens who have a new proposal to grow food and some of these people are the same people who were involved with the dairy farm. Now they want to have a school for pre-schoolers to high school students. He wanted to know what they will produce and what will happen with the food. He said the Town should not be involved with this type of venture.

Selectman Herlihy requested that all Board members be copied on e-mails to Mr. Rinaldi.

Budget – 2010 to 2011 – 1st Selectman Glassman did an overview of the assumptions going into next year's budget which are not positive at all. She referred to the lack of growth in the Grand List; State budget problems; pension obligations; a 10% increase in health insurance; and the cost of budgeting for post employment benefits. The challenge will be delivering the same level of services without a tax increase. She also reviewed the schedule for budget adoption. Finance Director Kane reviewed in detail the financial spreadsheet.

Selectman Wertheimer asked Mr. Kane to e-mail to all of the Council members the mill rate formula that Mr. Kane put together last year. 1st Selectman Glassman asked that this also be placed on the Town's web site.

Mr. Kane felt that the Board of Finance, next Tuesday, will set a tax rate they would like to see from the Town and the Board of Education. He feels it will be a 0 to a 1.24% increase for the tax rate.

Selectman Heavner asked Mr. Kane what the average value of a home is and Mr. Kane replied \$250,000. How much more in taxes would someone who owns this type of home pay in taxes if the tax increase went into effect? He said \$150-\$170 per year and mentioned that a 1/10 of a mill is worth about \$250,000-\$260,000, up or down.

Selectman Herlihy said that the Town's tax collection rate of 98% is phenomenal. He asked what affect unemployment is having on collecting taxes. Tax Collector O'Connor replied that through November of 2009, there was a collection rate of 99.4%, which is higher than last year, but the January, 2010 collection rate will tell more.

Selectman Herlihy asked if the Insurance/Pension Committee is having the Town's broker look at costs from other carriers for all insurance plans. Mr. Kane said yes and Lindberg and Ripple is the broker. Mr. Herlihy also asked if the Town ever underfunds their Pension liability. Mr. Kane said no, the Town has always funded what is required.

1st Selectman Glassman said that this presentation is also very valuable for the citizens, to let them know what is ahead for the budget process.

A motion was made by Selectman Hampton; seconded by Selectman Hensley to adjourn the Special Meeting at 7:01 pm. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary A. Glassman