

From: Susan Mazurski March 3, 2010 2:08:10 PM
Subject: Board of Selectmen Minutes 01/26/2010 BUDGET WORKSHOP
APPROVED
To: SimsburyCT_SelectMin
Cc:

TOWN OF SIMSBURY - BOARD OF SELECTMEN
BUDGET WORKSHOP
January 26, 2010

CALL TO ORDER

The Budget Workshop was called to order at 4:12 pm. In attendance were First Selectman Mary Glassman; and Selectmen Lisa Heavner and Robert Hensley. Selectman Tom Herlihy arrived at 5:06 pm.

Hiram Peck, Director of Community, Planning and Development, gave out a handout/booklet on what his office has been working on and what goals he hopes to achieve next year. The booklet is to show items that have been started and projects that need to be finished. Mr. Peck said there is lots of planning going on now, so when the recession ends, the Town is ready to move quickly. He went over the new Historic District, the Work Program Progress, the Route 10 CROCOG study, which encompasses most of the entire road, updated the Selectmen on the zoning regulations (which is ready for a Public Hearing) and discussed the Grand List growth.

First Selectman Glassman explained that there is no quorum of the Selectmen but she had checked with the Freedom of Information Commission and those in attendances could meet as long as there were no decisions made during the meeting. She explained the budget issues and dilemmas that are facing the Town at this time. She said that the Board of Finance gave direction to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education for a spending increase cap of 1.33%, but the Selectmen may decide to go lower. She explained that Mr. Peck's budget was the largest increase of all of the Departments and the question becomes how much of the request relates to core services. If the decision is to keep all of the staff on, then there is no need for consultants, or the decision could be to layoff some of the staff, and keep the consultants. She asked Mr. Peck to prioritize the request for consultants and make sure the costs are correct. Mr. Peck said it is imperative that the Town finds ways to grow the Grand List.

Mr. Peck said that his priorities would be to have a consultant to finish

the Town Center Code and the Design Review Guidelines. The cost for this is \$40,000. First Selectman Glassman said that perhaps this could be paid out of this year's budget. Mr. Peck also made a strong request for continued training for him and his staff.

Selectman Heavner said that all things being equal, his comments make a lot of sense, but it is important that as housing and building grows, that we look at the Town's cost for maintenance, education and services, as all of those cost money. Mr. Peck said they do look at this when doing plan review.

Mr. Peck said that the Plan of Development will be moving to a Public Hearing and that the Planning Commission did vote to move it forward.

Selectman Hensley said that planning is a thankless job and he hopes that everyone continues the energy that encompassed the charette, and the Town needs to finish this process.

Richard Sawitzke, Town Engineer, explained that his office supports 16 capital projects and 14 grants. He described the future goals for the Geographic Information System and explained the

CRCOG Regional Project. CRCOG just finished an aerial topography and a regional topo map. His office's work is based on whatever capital projects are approved in each budget.

Selectman Hensley asked about the status of the gateway signs. Mr. Sawitzke may be able to start installation in late March depending on the weather. Selectman Hensley asked whether it was cheaper to retrofit or demo the Simsbury Farms building then build new. Mr. Sawitzke said that the basic building is good and the buildings around the Farms are new, so they are all inter-related. First Selectman Glassman asked about the greenway. Mr. Sawitzke said that he would coordinate this with the road pavement.

Richard Sawitzke, Regional Health District, said that the Health District rate will remain the same for another year. The District will look at where the State may head with their contribution to regional health districts. They will be challenged in the future due to decreasing revenues.

Chief Peter Ingvertsen, Police, told the Selectmen that his Department runs 24 hours, 7 days a week and his staff also acts on behalf of other Departments, such as Social Services and Zoning. His Department does participate in regional programs. They handled 27,000 incidents in the last year. There are changes coming with new mandates in the juvenile law which

will be implemented over the next two years. This will mean more staffing to interact with a new group of juveniles, 16 and 17 year olds. The budget he presented to the First Selectman is the lowest he has ever presented and the only thing he is looking for is one Sergeant to move to a Lieutenant's position, but keep the Sergeant position. He also must replace the communication tower, as it is no longer structurally sound. They are going to be applying for a \$200,000 grant to construct a new tower.

First Selectman Glassman asked if the Chief had looked for private vendors to construct the tower. Tom Roy, Director of Public Works, said he had but no one is out there who is interested, as the area is already saturated. The grant will be submitted this week.

First Selectman Glassman thanked the Chief for such a low budget, but asked if he can get to a zero increase. The Chief said he would have to look at contractual items.

She also asked if he could wait on replacing one of the police vehicles for another year. The Police Chief felt they could and he will look at this. He did say that the Police Department took in \$84,000 in revenue this year with the tickets, extra duty, etc. He will also list what functions may be lost if the budget is down to zero.

Selectman Hensley asked whether the Police have looked at regional approaches to police work. Chief Ingvertsen said they have looked at this many times and will continue to do so. They are already involved with many regional approaches. Right now he is discussing with other area Chiefs the possibility of purchasing uniforms on a regional basis and regional dispatch. The Farmington Valley towns did receive a federal grant to look at regionalizing dispatch.

Selectman Heavner asked what the turnaround is to look at regional efforts. The Chief said one year on average.

Selectman Herlihy asked if there were any retirements coming up. The Chief said possible two, but there is nothing definite.

Animal Control The Chief went over his Animal Control budget. Selectman Hensley asked where the dogs are housed. The Chief said in a local kennel that also provides vet service. He has also used the Town of Granby's pound if necessary.

Mickey Lecours-Beck, Director of Social Services and Kathleen Marschall, Senior Center Coordinator Social and Senior Services Both of them reviewed their budgets which showed a decrease. They also reviewed their handout which spelt out which programs they support with their staff. A discussion ensued on The Communicator newsletter and whether it may be done

by a private company who will sell ads. First Selectman Glassman asked that the staff look at options to have this go out monthly to the seniors.

First Selectman Glassman asked the staff to come up with ways to reduce Dial A Ride costs. She asked that the staff put together some options to reduce the costs and look at increasing fees also.

Ms. Lecours-Beck said that her program requests for service have become worst and there are more and more people who need assistance in Town. Selectman Herlihy said that it is important that citizens realize that everything is kept confidential, so they are not afraid to come and ask for help.

Ms. Lecours-Beck handed out an update on the usage for the Farmington Valley Teen Center. First Selectman Glassman said that she wishes there were more activities at the Teen Center like there used to be. Ms. Lecours-Beck mentioned that the Director is not paid. Selectman Heavner said that there needs to be better communication with the parents. First Selectman Glassman asked that the Teen Center be put on a future Youth Services agenda to look at options and way to make the Center better.

Ms. Lecours-Beck reviewed the youth services numbers. Selectman Heavner thinks that the Family Therapy component is very important, especially in this economy.

Selectman Hensley noticed that the Senior Center would be offering fencing and he asked why that program. Ms. Marschall said it was very good for balance and is an extension of Tai Chi, which has been very popular.

Selectman Heavner said that both Ms. LeCours-Beck and Ms. Marschall do a great job and they host one of the premier programs in the region.

First Selectman Glassman wants to make sure the design money for expanding Eno is in the budget, as this is of great importance. Selectman Hensley questioned whether the expansion was a #1 priority. Ms. LeCours-Beck said it is absolutely a priority, as they could offer so much more in programming. Selectman Heavner asked if whether moving SCTV would be a benefit. Ms. LeCours-Beck said that would be huge. There is a grant that would assist SCTV in moving, but she has no idea for how much and if they get it, the Town would still have to decide where to move them.

Ed LaMontagne, Chairperson of Aging and Disabilities, asked that the \$1500 for his Committee be left in the budget, as they use this to sponsor events during the year.

First Selectman Glassman asked if there was the same charge for lunch on Tuesdays vs. Wednesdays, as she feels the cost should be the same. Ms. Marschall said that the meals were different in size, so that is why they charge a different amount. Selectman Heavner asked how many were in attendance at the luncheons. Ms. Marschall said around 100.

Ed LaMontagne, Regional Mental Health Board He reviewed their request for a yearly donation, and explained how important their services are to the residents of Simsbury.

Tom Roy, Director of Public Works Mr. Roy reviewed his budget requests. Selectman Hensley asked whether Mr. Roy had received a lot of questions about the new snow removal materials. First Selectman Glassman said that to transition this new method of snow removal within one year is amazing and a testament to Mr. Roy. Mr. Roy said there were some questions early on, but they did put together a public relations campaign and there was information on the web site and in newspapers. His plow riding program has had a lot of interest, but because of the lack of snow, there are few that have been able to take part in the program.

Mr. Roy reviewed his handout and went over the custodian issues. He also reviewed the changes over at Eno with the use of his staff.

First Selectman Glassman asked for a report on the rental properties and how to best utilize the buildings.

Mr. Roy reviewed his initiative for going organic with grounds maintenance.

First Selectman Glassman asked for a price to redo the parking lot of Town Hall.

Selectman Hensley asked for a price to redo the Meeting Room and make it more attractive.

Mr. Roy wondered if he did not use all of his budget this year, if he needed more dollars next year, could this happen. First Selectman Glassman said yes, but the Board of Selectmen would have to approve this.

A motion was made by Selectman Hensley to adjourn at 6:32 pm; seconded by Selectman Heavner. It was unanimous to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary A. Glassman, First Selectman

