

From: Susan Mazurski February 24, 2009 12:25:48 PM
Subject: Board of Selectmen Minutes 02/03/2009 BUDGET WORKSHOP
APPROVED
To: SimsburyCT_SelectMin
Cc:

TOWN OF SIMSBURY
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
BUDGET WORKSHOP MINUTES
FEBRUARY 3, 2009

CALL TO ORDER

The Budget Workshop was called to order at 6:35 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. Present were: First Selectman Mary Glassman; Board members Robert Hensley, Moira Wertheimer, Richard Hogan, John Hampton and Michael Long attended later. Others in attendance included Kevin Kane, Brandon Robertson, Hiram peck, Sue Bullock, Gail Ryan, Gerry Toner, Sarah Floroski, Rich Correia, John Loomis, Rich Wagner, Howard Beach, Emil Dahlquist and other interested parties.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

Peter Stempien said he has been on the Zoning Board of Appeals for 25 years and has volunteered for 30 years for Simsbury. He said this is one of the hardest parts of our lives with taxes. He feels the seniors are taxed too high. His daughters, who live in other states, own houses that are twice as much as his house, but pay less taxes.

Mr. Stempien feels some notices that are placed in the newspapers could possibly be eliminated and just put on the website. He said E. Granby explains where the taxes are on their tax bills so people don't get so upset about the increases. The Zoning Board of Appeals should also stop sending so many notices to abutting property owners. Maybe that burden should be placed on the property owner instead of the Town.

Sarah Floroski, Main Street Partnership gave a slide show showing the Town's return on their investment. She explained the different grants that they apply for and receive and what they are spent on. There are a lot of companies that donate a lot of time to help Simsbury. Ms. Floroski said they are a nationally recognized organization. They also won five Connecticut Main Street awards.

Ms. Floroski said they have hired someone to take them through a website initiative involving their grant money. The Board of Selectmen, other Commissions and businesses will be invited to join their brainstorming meeting about the website. They are also working on programs for the Town.

Mr. Wagner said they are trying to do something with their property now that their auto business has closed. He feels that Main Street Partnership is needed to help businesses, and he supports them.

Rich Wagner says that Main Street Partnership is what makes a great Main Street in this Town.

There were many other business owners who spoke about the importance of Main Street Partnership and how they are devoted to the Town of Simsbury. There were also letters submitted, as attached.

Ms. Floroski said they are asking The Hartford to host the Business Appreciation Breakfast and have three economists coming. They will update the Board with the date as soon as they have that information.

Ms. Floroski said they have 89 business members, 31 resident members and many other organizations and clubs that are members of the Main Street Partnership.

Tab 4:

Hiram Peck spoke about Land Use. He said he took a hard look at where the money goes. They have been very diligent this year in keeping costs down. They cut almost 5% from their budget, and they did cut Metro Hartford Alliance.

Mr. Peck said they have no control over their advertising costs as they have to do what is required of them. He also noted that there were some seminars that were required last year that will not be necessary this year.

Tab 6:

Mr. Peck said that there would be a decrease in conferences and education and well as dues and subscriptions. He said there are three pending grants at this time. He will know more detail in March. He will provide the Board with schedules of the Zoning plan update.

Ms. Wertheimer suggested that Land Use Commission meetings might be coordinated and placed in one building to save energy. Mr. Peck feels that if there are less meetings they would accomplish more. He will look into

this and get back to the Board.

Mr. Peck said there are 2-3 sizable projects in the pipeline, but do not show on this budget. He does feel there is still enough activity for three full time staff members.

Tab 11:

Sue Bullock said the Library reduced their budget by 5% as requested by the Board. They reduced part-time salaries to 53 hours/week. Also, reference materials were cut \$11,000 and they will no longer send overdue notices to residents. They will send e-mails and then just bills for the overdue books.

Ms. Bullock said they also got rid of 6,000 downloadable videos requested as now is not the time for that. They also reduced building and grounds maintenance and supplies by \$3,400. However, she would still like to see tree planting.

Ms. Bullock also handed out pictures and their annual report for Board review. There was some discussion of attendants at different sections of the Library and different projects they provide.

There was also some discussion on the lighting being left on at the Library after it is closed and how to use the Library for different meetings, etc.

Tab 10

Mr. Toner gave the Board his revenue breakdown and read their Mission Statement. He said they maintain 1800 acres of parks, open space and school grounds. Under Simsbury Farms Complex is the maintenance of recreational buildings, grounds maintenance, Memorial Pool, Apple Barn meeting room, parks, athletic fields and playgrounds, etc.

Mr. Toner said the golf course has four full time employees with five part-time employees and two seasonal employees. The course had 39,000 rounds seasonally, which is down, but consistent with other towns.

Mr. Toner said he made a 5% cut without personnel and energy. He also cut back on agricultural supplies. They also re-bid the credit card vendor and made out with a better price.

Mr. Toner asked about having a revolving bank account and was told to discuss it with Mr. Kane.

Mr. Toner mentioned the capital improvement plan. He said the

architectural study was approved last year for the Simsbury Farms improvements and it was overseen by Public Building Committee. It was a very worthwhile process with good input. The Board will receive the report as soon as it is received from the Public Building Committee.

Mr. Toner said the Restaurant alcohol permit will be going to Zoning on Monday.

Mr. Kane handed out the CNR budget. There was some discussion on the Simsbury Farms repairs, which included the main building, Apple Barn and skating rink.

Mr. Toner said that there was no golf course equipment replaced last year and it is vital to the operation. He said the utility vehicle goes around the course carrying different tools and the one they have now is 20-25 years old.

Mr. Toner said the trap rake is a conditioning machine. The one they use now is made of mixed parts. A greens mower is also a vital piece of equipment.

There was some discussion on the pool deck. It is 35 years old and should be redone when the main building is done. No one can fall through the cracks. It is sealed every year.

There was a fees increase report given to the Board. Mr. Toner said the Complex Committee did approve the increased fees. Mr. Toner thinks this should increase their revenues. Ms. Glassman asked him to look at the different programs again and see if they are diversified enough.

Mr. Kane handed out the CIP. Ms. Glassman said this would be discussed at the meeting tomorrow night.

Mr. Hampton asked for a scope of service for Main Street Partnership.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hampton made motion to adjourn at 9:50 p.m. Mr. Long seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary A. Glassman
First Selectman

