

From: Susan Mazurski March 9, 2011 3:17:16 PM
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APPROVED
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Cc:

TOWN OF SIMSBURY - BOARD OF SELECTMEN
BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 15, 2011

CALL TO ORDER

The Budget Workshop Meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 6:06 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. Present were: First Selectman Mary Glassman; Board members Moira Wertheimer, John Hampton, Lisa Heavner and Robert Hensley. Selectman Gerald Post was absent. Other interested parties in attendance were Thomas Cooke, Sean Kimball, Susan Bullock, Kevin Kane and Hiram Peck.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

DISCUSSION

Library

Ms. Glassman stated that the departments had submitted budgets in the amount of \$18,308,954 and this has been narrowed down to \$17,860,913. She also noted that the Town would not be back filling positions in the Library from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving Grant. Kevin Kane distributed a memo highlighting changes to the Library budget.

Ms. Glassman explained that she had asked department heads to come in with a 0% budget and the Library had significant increases making it difficult to get to 0%. Ms. Glassman asked Susan Bullock, Library Director to speak on behalf of the Library.

Ms. Bullock explained that one mission of the Library is to help the residents of the Town of Simsbury cope with change by providing services to aid them in looking for jobs in this tough economy. Last year's budget

cuts affected 5 positions, one of them a tech savvy person whose 28 hour a week position was funded from a grant. This year's budget is \$48,000 less than last year's.

Ms. Glassman reiterated that 60 hours per week of these positions were funded by a grant so now they must be added as new positions; Ms. Bullock claimed there must have been a misunderstanding. Ms. Wertheimer questioned if the 2009 positions were Town or grant funded. Mr. Kane explained that the grant was for 3 years but was being extended into a 4th year so the position was funded by the Hartford Foundation Grant and further that it was communicated to the Board that the grant was being extended into this fiscal year.

Ms. Bullock spoke about the impact of these budget cuts: there will be 60% fewer classes; less e-books and downloadables; a reduction of 60 staff hours per week; when breakdowns occur they won't be fixed; no teen clubs or book club support and the difficulty of covering for employees out on leave. In FY10 9% of the personnel were gone for the equivalent of two full time positions being out all year on leave and FY11 is looking worse with staff with a lot of longevity and an aging staff using more sick time.

Ms. Glassman asked Mr. Kane for a differential; he stated that full restoration, roughly \$100,000 in the Library alone, the entire budget % would be a roughly .80% increase.

Marianne O'Neill, Library Board Member, spoke in favor of adding the technology position and asked for the support of the Board. She is concerned for students, seniors and adults who will be affected by cuts to the budget.

Diane Madigan, Library Board Member, expressed concern about losing the Hartford Foundation Grant since that organization looks for towns to make longer term continuation of the positions. She feels that the Town would be less likely to get future grants.

Ms. Glassman stressed to all that we still have a Library but our goal this year was not to lay off any positions; and if the Board of Selectmen decide to add these positions we will need to have the taxpayers pay for them.

Ms. Bullock responded to Ms. Wertheimer's question of the collaboration with the Board of Education and the impact on reduced hours. The summer program covers over 3,000 children. They use shared materials but not staffing and cutting hours will depend on funding amounts.

In answer to Ms. Heavner's question about buying pools Ms. Bullock informed the Board that the Library participates in a State buying pool and pays 42%

on books. Ms. Heavner expressed her concern but reiterated that the Board has to balance what we want with what we can afford.

Jeff Blumenthal, Library Board Member, commented that labor contracts need to be renegotiated and that positions can't be moved around. He commented on the cost of paying 100% of sick leave for up to 6 months and he also commented on the hours of operation for the Library – the Simsbury Library is the only Library in the area that is open on Sunday.

Social Services

Mickey Lecours-Beck, Director of Social Services, addressed the Board regarding the Social Services budget. There is no increase this year; Dial A Ride came in at 0% and one bus was cut for an amount of \$11,000. She noted that evictions, requests for fuel assistance, requests for items on Bread Day and Cheese Day were up this year. Youth Services applied for and received \$25,000 in grants with a Town match of only \$8,000.

Kathy Marschall, Senior Center Director, advised the Board that there would be a Woodworking class added to the schedule of classes offered to the Seniors and the Senior VIP Pass has been very successful.

Land Use/Economic Development

Ms. Glassman advised the Board that there would be a reduction in consultant fees in this area.

Hiram Peck, Director of Planning and Development, advised that his staff is doing an incredible job expanding the Land Use services. They've been very effective in investing money and getting 4-5 times in added investment. He understands the rollbacks but would like to explore the requests. He would also like to have back the \$5,000 that was cut from EDC.

Ms. Glassman advised that nothing was reduced on Tourism.

Mr. Peck discussed GIS sharing among Town departments. The maps are very good and staff will be continuing to work with the consultants.

Mr. Deming, Chairman of the Economic Development Commission, commented that he would like to see \$450 reinstated for attendance at the Developer's Showcase. Also, \$650 for publicity and an article in a real estate publication. Finally, Metro Hartford Alliance membership would be third on the priority list at \$4,200.

Sarah Nielsen, Executive Director of the Simsbury Main Street Partnership spoke to the merits of investing in economic development and noted that

investments in the Main Street Partnership returned three times on the dollars invested.

Ms. Glassman recapped the department wish lists for the night.

Mr. Hampton made motion to adjourn at 7:40 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Hensley. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary A. Glassman
First Selectman