

From: Susan Mazurski March 9, 2011 3:18:59 PM
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APPROVED
To: SimsburyCT_SelectMin
Cc:

TOWN OF SIMSBURY - BOARD OF SELECTMEN
BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 16, 2011

CALL TO ORDER

The Budget Workshop Meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 6:11 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, Kevin Kane, Gerard Toner and Tom Roy.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

DISCUSSION – Culture, Parks & Recreation

Ms. Glassman advised that tonight's areas of discussion will include Parks & Recreation and Public Works.

Gerry Toner, Director of Culture, Parks & Recreation spoke to the Board regarding the Culture, Parks and Recreation budget as submitted. He commented on the demands of maintaining open space and maintaining 35 athletic fields in the fall and spring. Some work has to be contracted out. The generosity of the youth/adult leagues has been helpful in his efforts to maintain these areas.

He also advised that Schultz Park has been overgrown in the past but he is trying to open it up with the help of a volunteer committee and do a better job of maintaining it. Mr. Hensley stated that perhaps the Beautification Committee could be of some assistance with maintenance and signage.

Signage is an important issue that needs to be addressed, there is no money in the budget for this at this time. Mr. Toner will investigate the feasibility of a path connecting Schultz Park and Memorial Park.

Mr. Toner commented on revenues of \$1,839,000; which entails general maintenance and maintenance of the golf course. Budget is increased by 1.4%. Moderate fee increases were approved so the budget can stay on a self-sustaining basis. There are some issues on fuel costs and salary increases, but the operating budget is intact. Equipment needs to be replaced as time goes on; the fleet is aging and replacements will be needed.

Ms. Glassman asked Mr. Toner to comment on the impact if some improvements could be moved up to this year. Mr. Toner responded the sooner the better; most improvements can be done in phases but this would allow the maintenance staff to have a plan. A particular issue, the drainage program that is now about 80% complete - if the remaining 20% could be completed that would be very helpful.

Mr. Hensley suggested that since we're going to invest capital in the structure at the Farms by bonding there could be some logic behind looking at doing this portion. It could prove to be foolish to wait until next year and take the chance that it could be deferred again. We should think this through and be smart about the dollars we are spending.

Ms. Glassman asked Mr. Toner to do a breakdown and list of priorities. He commented that he could have it ready for the next Budget Workshop meeting on February 17th.

Ms. Glassman noted that the Board of Finance will also be meeting on February 17th and the Board would not be able to attend that meeting but we will communicate through Kevin Kane that we will have some additional projects to be considered.

A discussion of the golf course then took place. Ms. Glassman acknowledged the presence of Gerry Wetjen and thanked him for his passionate advocacy for the Simsbury Farms Golf Course.

Mr. Wetjen offered his opinions on the course: the daily maintenance is great since Mike Wallace took over this 40 year old course. However, the greens are an issue. Bunkers and tee boxes need to be looked at; the more you do now the less you have to do later. He also commented on his thoughts on a \$1 surcharge that would go into a lock box - can only use this money to go back into the golf course - analysis that he did showed you would generate \$60-\$70 thousand dollars a year. He also noted that the number of players at the Farms is down 21% from our peak and the majority

is non resident. Something needs to be done because of the increased competition of 5 new golf courses in the area. Mr. Wetjen advised the Board that the CT Senior State Championship will be held this year at the Farms.

DISCUSSION – Public Works

Ms. Glassman introduced Tom Roy, Director of Public Works, and thanked him and his crew for digging us all out this winter. Public Works has had some reductions in their budget; elimination of a truck and truck wash.

Mr. Roy introduced Travis Cromack, a DPW truck driver who also participated in the Snow Plow Ride Along Program.

Mr. Roy explained that the Public Works staff, including Buildings and Grounds, is always on call, year round, including Civil preparedness issues. The DPW Budget is highly contingent since we don't know when it's going to snow next year or when a tree limb will fall. The storms this year were very intense but short lived. Next year will show some vehicle breakdown issues due to the heavy use this year.

In response to Ms. Glassman's question about what he would like to get back into his budget Mr. Roy replied the frontline snow plow truck; it should be back in budget as an annualized cost; \$130,000. These are the same trucks that we use for road maintenance and we do prep work for paving.

Ms. Glassman asked for Mr. Roy's comments on the new policy for the use of Eno Memorial Hall that has recently been put into place. Mr. Roy explained that his staff sets up for all events here in Town Hall, the Library and Eno. They've hit capacity and are trying to accommodate residents. A schedule has been set up: Monday to Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., closed on weekends. This has helped our budget and lowered our heating costs. He agreed with Ms. Glassman that some residents are finding it difficult to be turned down. We've tried to be accommodating where we can but we can't provide the services at the same cost that we used to do. While this has been difficult we have seen dollars coming back.

Mr. Roy also advised that he is working on a master reservation plan for the Town buildings to more efficiently hold meetings and eliminate all of the buildings being open if not necessary.

Mr. Hensley questioned the Eno Flag Pole. Mr. Sawitzke advised that currently there is a 20 foot pole that could possibly be moved to another location and a 40 foot pole, which would cost approximately \$4,000-\$5,000 to install would be put in its place. Mr. Sawitzke will update the Board

at the next Workshop meeting on February 17th.

Mr. Roy's second item to be put back into the budget is the truck wash at a cost of \$200,000. This item was in the CIP plan a couple of years ago and was removed due to fiscal restraints. Mr. Roy is of the opinion that this truck wash would be used by all Town departments and we could possibly do a regional approach with surrounding towns and charging for use.

Mr. Hampton asked for a status on Town rental properties. Mr. Roy responded that five out of the six are occupied; the unit at 60C Old Farms is currently being rehabbed for spring occupancy. Volunteers from the First Church are working on this unit.

Ms. Glassman announced that the Board would take a two minute break before hearing an overview on the meeting from Kevin Kane.

Mr. Kane gave an update on the six year CIP plan. After hearing Mr. Kane the Board again discussed the situation at the Simsbury Farms Golf Course.

Mr. Hensley moved that the Golf Course proposal in the amount of \$225,000 be added as a third project to the two original projects sent to the Board of Finance for approval. Mr. Hampton seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Ms. Glassman handed out copies of Gov. Malloy's budget proposals. They represent good news for Simsbury in terms of budgeting.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Mary A. Glassman
First Selectman