

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Glassman called the Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen to order at 5:37PM on Thursday, February 27, 2014. The meeting was held in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices located at 933 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT. In attendance was Mary Glassman, First Selectmen as well as the following Board of Selectmen members: Lisa Heavner, Nancy Haase, Cheryl Cook, Michael Paine and Sean Askham. Also in attendance were Rick Bazzano, IT Manager, Jeff Shea, Town Engineer, Richard Sawitzke, Engineer, Mickey Lecours-Beck, Colleen O'Connor, Tax Collector, David Gardner, Assessor, Sean Kimball, Deputy Director of Administrative Services, Joseph Mancini, Director of Finance, Chief Peter Ingvertsen, Police Department and Thomas Roy, Public Works

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

No one spoke in public audience.

OVERVIEW OF BUDGET

Ms. Glassman thanked Sean Kimball for doing a wonderful job as interim Finance Director with working with the staff and preparing the budget. Ms. Glassman introduced the new Finance Director, Joe Mancini, who will start on March 17, 2014.

Ms. Glassman gave an overview of the budget and thanked the entire staff for all their hard work and dedication. She also stated that the Town owes a deep amount of gratitude to the Town staff and Board of Education for working with the Town to consolidate insurance carriers under one vendor. This consolidation resulted in significant savings in this year's budget and saved our taxpayers money.

Ms. Glassman noted that the Town's Grand List has grown for the first time since 2010. This is a result of our streamlining our land use process. A lot of the studies that the Town has done has allowed new development and new zoning regulations. The increase in the Grand List of 0.599% will bring in approximately \$500,000 in new tax revenue coming on line next year. This does not take into account the development that came on line later than the assessment period and also several new projects that are still in the pipeline. Ms. Glassman thanked David Gardner in assessing these new projects.

Ms. Glassman stated that going into this new budget, that the Town has assurances from The Hartford that they are committing to another year of predictable tax revenue and will not make any changes until the next fiscal year. The Town will count on this revenue source for one more year while we

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work to bring on line a lot of new revenue sources. Ms. Glassman noted that at the Economic Development Commission meeting earlier today, the new revenue the Town is bringing on line is approximately \$800,000 and The Hartford brings in approximately \$1,200,000. She added that the efforts to replace that funding is really matching up nicely and hopes that, with the additional Hartford development, the Town will be ahead.

Ms. Glassman commented that on the change to the new health care provider, it will save the Town and the Board of Education approximately \$500,000 next year. She noted that it will actually save the Town more because the Town's plan increases were about \$600,000. The Town is actually going to be saving \$500,000 on the budget. Had the Town and Board of Education not switched carriers, our budget today would have been \$100,000 higher than it is presented before you.

Ms. Glassman requested from the Board of Finance not to raise taxes for this year. The Board of Finance has plugged in numbers of 1.5% increases for both the Town and the Board of Education. Ms. Glassman explained that the Board of Finance sets the assumptions on the collection rate, debt level and the amount of length of the bonding for capital projects and also the contingency. In addressing this increase and the collection rate, the Board of Finance felt that a 1.5% increase would probably allow the Town not to raise taxes. Some members of the Board of Finance want to lower taxes and some want to keep them frozen.

Ms. Glassman recommended a 1.57% budget increase. She noted that as we go through the budget, the department heads submitted a budget increase totaling 3.9% over last year's budget. Ms. Glassman noted that passing a 3.9% budget increase is very unlikely and they need to look at how this can be lowered.

Ms. Glassman stated that if the Town was to budget for the obligated increases, the Town would have to budget an additional \$565,534 over last year's budget or a 3.08% increase. As a result, the Board of Selectmen have worked with the department heads over the last few months to cut the budget increase by \$428,913 which would bring the budget increase down to a 1.57% increase, which is stated in the letter from Ms. Glassman to the department heads.

Ms. Glassman noted that the budgets will be reviewed in this meeting and the departments heads will present what they feel is important for the Board of Selectmen to fund in their budgets. She added that she feels it is important for the Board to hear the recommendations from the department heads and then make some difficult choices.

Ms. Glassman explained that all contractual increases and obligations have been met in this budget, including additional costs for salt supplies. She stated that technology initiatives are on the agenda as well as an additional front line library services with staff reductions to switch resources to the front line rather than administrative services. She noted that the Town did look for vacancies and there are a several anticipated patrol officer positions that will become vacant and the budget does include not filling one of the vacancies.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Rick Bazzano, IT Manager, explained that the technology budget on a whole is flat and there is not a big increase. He stated that most of the activity is going to be based in CIP. The fiber optic rollout is something that IT appropriated some funding for last year to stretch fiber down Hopmeadow Street to connect Town Hall, Eno Memorial, Public Library and the Water Pollution Control. This is to bring in efficient operations for phone and data systems which have an impending impact on the Capital Improvement project.

Mr. Bazzano stated that the rollout money is due, in part, because of the Nutmeg Network/CEN network that is available statewide. There is a fiber optic backbone that municipalities weren't able to jump on until earlier this year. The initiatives for the Nutmeg Network is that towns can talk to each other and, for the future for each town, you have to position yourself where the technology is going to go and that is regional town to town sharing.

Ms. Glassman noted that eight towns are connected to the Nutmeg Network state wide. Simsbury has been very active in organizing and lobbying for this at the Capital and, as a result, there are 92 additional towns that will be given grants to connect to the Nutmeg Network and Simsbury is one of those 92. Ms. Glassman thanked Rick for his efforts enabling Simsbury to get the grant money otherwise the Town would have had to fund it. Mr. Bazzano added that Simsbury is scheduled to be put on the Nutmeg Network in the next few months if the state is holding to their schedule.

Mr. Bazzano presented slides that illustrate what technologies could do for the Town of Simsbury from sharing technology resources to procurement processing across the state and town to town. It was also noted that technology is going to change in five years so the Nutmeg Network is something the Town needs to deal with closely.

Mr. Bazzano explained the Fiber Optic slides showing funding and the four phases:

- Phase I - Hopmeadow project has already been funded and this project is being started.
- Phase II - is the Nutmeg Network/CEN benefits IT going to the high school and also getting all the equipment needed to support us for the Nutmeg Network at a cost of \$69,000. There is some possible grant funding that the Town is going to get from the State to support this phase.
- Phase III - for \$12,000 to connect Director of Public Works to the school district and supporting him with some engineering services to get that up and running with the hardware. IT is also going to share a fiber optic point from the Public Works yard to the corner of Stratton Brook and Farms Village Road, where the Board of Education has already strung their fiber.
- Phase IV - is in the planning stages and there have been problems at Simsbury Farms in trying to get cable up to the main building.

Mr. Bazzano stated that for the fiber optic piece it is going to be at a cost of \$81,580.

Mr. Bazzano explained that for the network storage and recovery, they are being overwhelmed within the last six months with the Town Clerk and Police Department vendors. He noted that they are imaging everything and putting them back on our network. In order to recover some of these processes, IT needs additional storage and a little more security in our backup strategy, which needs to be vastly increased. With a new network storage and recovery, all the data will be stored automatically instead of manually. The cost for this is \$52,000 for the Town Clerk and Police Department and \$38,000 for the backup and recovery. Mr. Bazzano noted that for the Capital Improvement project it is a \$90,000 cost. He also stated that the server and network replacements are over ten years old and the equipment and software that it is running on is outdated. The cost of this is \$62,000 going to the Capital Improvement project.

Mr. Bazzano noted that the Mobil Data Terminals (MDTs) as well as the cameras inside the police cruisers are approximately seven to eight years old and need to be updated as part of the PSDN network, which is part of Nutmeg Network and this will be sending more information out to the cars. The Police department is also requesting 35 Tasers

Chief Ingvertsen stated that Tasers have become standard equipment for police departments and that the Town of Simsbury is only one of two departments in the state that does not have them.

Mr. Bazzano reviewed slides that illustrate how their “tickets” have greatly increased even with sharing services with Canton. He stated that they are looking for additional man power to assist their department at a cost of \$50,000 for a full time position. Mr. Bazzano also noted that the IT department also supports the Board of Education. It was noted that there has not been a staffing change since 1999, even though the workload has increased substantially.

Ms. Glassman noted that this position is funded in the budget presented.

Ms. Heavner stated that if this position is not filled, the fiber optic rollout cannot be completed and the Town will not realize the savings down the line. This position is an investment for long term savings for the Town.

Mr. Bazzano reviewed two slides for consultations for possible introduction of \$50,000 into a Capital Improvement project to assist IT town wide and also to incorporate part of the sharing Simsbury has with the regional municipalities in the Board of Education that already exists. This would be to assist and strategize what we can do for the next three years. The second consultation piece is on the GIS web based system. The engineering department is stating a \$75,000 cost to allow further refining.

ENGINEERING

Mr. Jeff Shea explained what the Engineering department is responsible for:

- Project planning
- Administration support services both for infrastructure that Engineering controls as well as Public Works controls.

- These services are also provided for other departments that come to Engineering for assistance, including the Board of Education.

The other areas of service are:

- Land use and wetland applications
- Support the records management relative to filing Mylar
- Monitoring performance bonds
- Special services of items that come up
- Applying for grants and administering grants
- Environmental monitoring

Mr. Shea stated that they do this with one full-time position and one part-time position. The budget presented is relatively flat with only a few changes. The full time salary has been reduced, with the retirement of Mr. Sawitzke. The part-time administrative position has been reduced from 32 hours to 29 and we have accommodated additional consulting services for transitioning. The Town has provided an additional \$6,000 for Mr. Sawitzke to assist on special projects as required.

Mr. Shea noted that the Engineering department is coming in just under last year's approved budget at about 28%. He anticipates going forward the following projects:

- The Senior Community Center
- Squadron Line School boiler replacement
- Squadron Line and Henry James Middle School office re-modification projects. These will be moving forward in the coming months.

On the private development side, Mr. Shea noted that there are some major projects to administer such as Big Y, East Point apartments and Carson Way. The Engineering department is seeing the work load increase and they hope they can manage with the current resources or they may have to rely on consulting sources. Mr. Shea stated that the Town may try to charge back some of the monitoring that may be required on the larger projects, back to the developer.

Mr. Sawitzke stated that the trail on Owens Brook to Firetown is in the last stages. He noted that there are still funds remaining to do improvements on the Greenway. Engineering will be talking to the State regarding West Street for the paving rehab. Two other projects coming up are the adjustment to elevation of Riverside Road and Drake Hill Road Bridge deck rehab.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Mickey Lecours-Beck reviewed her budget with the Board and noted the following:

- Dial-a-Ride increased 2% at a cost of \$2,211
- Postage requested is for \$200 more
- Bulk mail permit for the Senior Center is \$172

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- The Aging Disability Commission is going to be funded with donations instead of \$1,500 budget item

Ms. Lecours-Beck stated that their revenue savings initiatives are to request the seniors picking up their Communicator at the Senior Center to save on postage. Social Services is also selling Dial-a-Ride passes at \$25 a year. Social Services will raise about \$6,000, however, some people cannot afford the \$25 so Social Services will sell it for \$10.

Ms. Lecours-Beck reminded the Board that Social Services is purchasing a new Dial-a-Ride vehicle using donated funds.

Ms. Lecours-Beck noted in her handout that there is a rise of 34% in food assistance due to several of their programs:

- bread day
- cheese day
- mobile food share and
- the food closet.

Ms. Lecours-Beck added that Social Services had a banner year for donations for a total of \$137,000 and almost \$120,000 was given out for rental assistance, car repairs, electric and oil. She also stated that additional funds are received from the Salvation Army and Hospital Bed Funds. Social Services also applied for and received six grants.

TAX

Ms. Colleen O'Connor noted that more people are paying their taxes on line this year. To date, there have been 4,600 on line payments. Currently, there is approximately 26,000 tax bills mailed out and Ms. O'Connor stated that she will be including a flyer to encourage people to pay online and to go paperless. If taxpayers register on line, they will get a reminder notice when their tax bill is due.

Ms. O'Connor stated that the Board of Finance has always set the collection rate at 98%, however, the collection rate has always been above 99%. She also noted that a full time position has been replaced by two part time positions.

ASSESSOR

Mr. David Gardner commented that the Grand List maintenance consists of 500-600 transfers in a year and a couple thousand adjusts, which are mostly motor vehicle. The fiscal year ended June 30, 2013. He stated that they received a considerable amount of elderly applications. Besides himself, the Assessor's office has two additional employees. Mr. Gardner stated that the budget change is in personnel, with the budget being just about the same. He has requested \$635 for a Commissions Clerk.

Mr. Gardner stated that the appeals have not yet started. For the tax appeals, most have been settled.

CNR

Mr. Shea explained that CNR is Capital Non-recurring Projects which are projects that are more of a one-time expenditure and not a large project that is going to be recurring. These projects have been in the \$50,000 to \$200,000 range traditionally. These projects are requested from various departments. The Finance department and the Board of Selectmen office have looked at these projects.

Mr. Shea stated that the handout summarizes all the projects that they have received from the various departments both funded and un-funded. He stated that his department tried to prioritize the projects and tried to work within the cap of \$460,250 in coming up with these projects. These projects are paid forward over five years, so the actual charges to the budget are lumped in the current year 2015.

Ms. Glassman noted that these are not usually charged back to the departments but to the general budget. She also stated that the amount that goes into CNR is set by the Board of Finance and the Town must work within that number.

Mr. Shea reviewed the projects that they are looking for funding:

- Plow truck, which is on the normal replacement cycle of 14 years
- Compactor is a piece of equipment used by the Public Works Department to pack asphalt and soil. Currently, they have a single unit and are asking for a second unit so they can be more efficient in terms of construction and pot hole patching at a cost of \$5,250
- Community Farm improvement requested by the farm. Ms. Glassman stated that the Community Farm buildings are Town owned buildings and are maintained and used by the Community Farm who takes care of all the maintenance.
- Police patrol vehicles in the replacement program of three new vehicles.
- Golf course maintenance equipment requested by the Park Department of three pieces of equipment at a cost of \$75,000
- Park maintenance equipment for a 3-ton pick-up truck that is replacing the existing truck. We are deferring the small riding mower to the future. The value is \$88,000
- Facility maintenance equipment submitted by the Library consisting of a larger vacuum, spot remover and snow blower for light snow accumulation. The replacement of carpet may be a future capital project.

Mr. Shea stated the following deferrals:

- Town building security audit which is a study on how the Town can improve the security in the building which may involve the re-location of offices. This was submitted by Public Works

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- Immediate entry submitted by the Police department with the purchase of lock boxes to improve security to gain entry to private homes in case of an emergency instead of breaking into the home.
- Purchase of two semi-permanent radar signs for the Police department for \$7,000
- Dewey Farm clean-up which is a demolition of the house.
- 2017 revaluation which was funded under transfers over three years

CIP

Mr. Shea noted that they have worked closely with Mr. Kimball in the Finance department because of the cap on bonding at 7%.

Mr. Shea reviewed the Capital Improvement projects for 2015:

- Ethel Walker Parcel C acquisition. This has been in the works and the closing is imminent in fiscal year 2015.
- Tariffville connection river route. This consists of two projects, the design of the Tariffville piece and the construction of the loop trail adjacent to Ironhorse Boulevard on the Baker property at a cost of \$175,000 (\$35,000 for the Tariffville piece and \$125,000 for construction of the loop trail). There is an additional funding for the construction for the Tariffville project on Route 17 and we anticipate some grant money for this.
- Simsbury Farms golf course improvement project to #1 and #10 fairway, the driving range and three of the greens #2, #5 and #14. This also includes dredging the pond which is the source of irrigation water and it is getting silted in. Also, some irrigation improvements are included in this project. This is a five year project.
- Bridge improvements for \$115,000 in the first year. This is general maintenance work that is required on some of the bridges and culverts in town.
- Highway pavement program to repave and improve roadways. Funded over three years at \$2.5 million.
- Technology Project at a cost of \$600,000 for the first year. This includes the GIS data management technology piece which requires a lot of hardware.
- Alternate energy efficient projects. Several different requests for funding from various departments. All involve reducing operating cost through energy efficiency. Some examples are new energy controls at Eno Memorial; the Highway garage is planning on converting from full propane to natural gas; an electric car for the fleet with a charging station at Town Hall; and a new valve at the Library as well as blinds for solar control.
- Water Pollution Control projects:
 - Hazel Meadow control upgrade to get feedback to the plant for things such as high water alarms.
 - Longview pump station relocation to serve additional homes from 12 to 45
 - Sewer main expenses over the next fiscal year, however, some have not had a public hearing yet.

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- In-line grinder and screen replacement. This will produce cost savings through reduced maintenance.

Mr. Kimball reviewed handouts on how the financing will work on the proposed projects. He noted that the guidelines are not to issue debt over 10 years, with 10 year bonds being the cap, and not letting the debt service number exceed 7% of the total operating budget.

Mr. Kimball noted that PFM ran an analysis for the Town and gave a presentation which PFM will continue to update as the Town makes changes to the capital plan.

Ms. Glassman reviewed the Board of Education projects that are being recommended but have not received any detail on them yet:

- District Network Infrastructure for \$150,000. This is Phase I of two additional phases
- Henry James renovation has been moved to fiscal year 2017 at \$8,900,000.
- Henry James security Phase I project for \$775,000 and Phase II, which is interior hallway improvement for \$280,000.
- Turf field for \$250,000 for fiscal year 2015
- Tennis Court replacement has been pushed out
- The Squadron Line main office project for \$500,000
- Window replacement, climate control and the Central School roof replacement for next fiscal year.
- Latimer Lane renovation is pushed out to fiscal year 2018 for \$6,800,000.
- Tariffville School field reconstruction is also fiscal year 2018
- Paine Boat House roof replacement for \$75,000. This project has some technical problems in that the Town does not own the building and there is a question as to whether the Town can put a new roof on a building that is not town owned.

POSSIBLE ACTION/DISCUSSION

Ms. Heavner and other Board members would like to see the cost of the new additions as well as the analysis from Mr. Shea on the cost benefits of the solar.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Cook made a motion to adjourn the February 27, 2014 Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen Budget Workshop at 8:28PM. The motion was seconded by Ms. Haase and was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Brigham
Clerk