

**Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Budget Message**  
**Board of Selectmen**  
**February 27, 2014**

To the Board of Selectmen and Taxpayers of Simsbury:

As we head into the Fiscal Year 2014-15 budget season, there is both good news and bad news to report:

**Town Economic Development Efforts**

First - The Town's economic development efforts – such as updated form based regulations and streamlined administrative support – have resulted in grand list growth for the first time in four years, since 2010. The Increases in the Town's real estate, personal property and motor vehicle totals has increased the taxable grand list by \$13,418,173 (a 0.599 percent increase) – bringing nearly \$500,000 new tax revenue to our Town next year.

Second – The Town's unique partnership with The Hartford Insurance Company is providing stability and opportunity. The Hartford has extended their commitment to the Town for next fiscal year as we work through exciting new form based regulations to help attract new economic development opportunities to our Town.

Third – Years of effort by the Town and the Board of Education to consolidate health care under one health care provider will save the Town and the Board of Education more than \$500,000. This joint effort between the Town and the Board of Education – with the support and cooperation of staff - will allow the Town to reduce the proposed Fiscal Year 2014-15 budget by nearly \$100,000.

**Town Tax Rate**

Unfortunately, these efforts including the Town's budget cuts and minimal budgets over the last six years have not been enough to freeze taxes in Simsbury. Given that the Town's budget is one-quarter of the total budget and that the Board of Finance sets the mill rate – I have asked the Board of Finance not to raise taxes this year. Freezing taxes in Simsbury will send a strong message to our residents and the business community that the Town is serious about keeping our residents and businesses from relocating. While budget expenditures are one piece of the mill rate, the Board of Finance will also have to consider the collection rate assumption, debt financing policies and appropriate levels of reserves. I believe a budget request of 1.57 percent will allow the Board of Finance to freeze the tax rate next fiscal year.

**Town Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Budget Requests**

The budget I will submit will show three options for the Town budget – all of which require difficult budget choices. The Board of Finance has asked that the BOS show three budgets: one that meets the town's needs; one with a 1% increase and one with a zero increase. The budget presented today requests a total \$18,634,752 which requires a 1.57% increase; a 1% increase; and 0.5% percent increase. All of the budget choices include reductions and require difficult choices.

## Department Head Requests

The Fiscal Year 2014-15 budget process began with Department Head requests to the First Selectman's office with an increase of \$716,000 which is a **3.90 percent increase** over last year's budget.

Included in the requested budget were contracted **salaries increases, pension, workers compensation and property insurance increases totaling \$565,534 – which is a 3.08 percent budget increase over last year's budget.**

## First Selectman Budget Request

**In order to present a budget to the Board of Selectmen in conjunction with the guidelines set by the Board of Finance, the First Selectman's recommended budget cuts the Department Head requests by \$428,913 bringing the total budget increase to 1.57 percent. During this process, many difficult choices were made.**

The budget as presented seeks to meet our core needs for Town services such as contractual increases, additional salt supplies for roads, technology initiatives and additional front line library services including efforts to bring innovation to Simsbury. At the same time, the Town has reduced administrative support staff and will not fill an anticipated patrol officer position.

The budget as presented is designed to meet the needs of the Town given difficult economic times and the need to hold taxes flat to retain and attract residents and businesses. The ultimate Town budget decision will be made by the Board of Selectmen, the Board of Finance and the taxpayers of Simsbury.

## Special Thanks to Town Staff

I would like to personally thank Acting Finance Director Sean Kimball for his extraordinary efforts in handling the Town's finances during this transition period. I would also like to thank all of the Town staff who work hard every day to serve the residents of Simsbury.

I look forward to working with Town officials and taxpayers to adopt a responsible budget that meets the needs of the Town of Simsbury.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary A. Glassman', written over a horizontal line.

Mary A. Glassman