

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Glassman called the Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen to order at 5:30PM Thursday, February 28, 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 Selectman as well as the following Board of Selectmen members: Lisa Heavner, Nancy Haase, Cheryl Cook, Michael Paine and Sean Askham. Also in attendance were Gerry Toner, Recreation Director, Carolyn Keily, Town Clerk, Hiram Peck, Planning Director, and Sean Kimball, Interim Director of Finance

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

Mr. Donald Reger wanted to voice his opinion about the Planning Department and that he has worked with them on a regular basis and noted that they provide essential support to the Conservation Commission on which he serves. Mr. Reger stated that they perform their job with extreme frugality.

OVERVIEW OF BUDGET

There was nothing to report.

DISCUSS:

CULTURE, PARKS & RECREATION

Mr. Gerry Toner reviewed the power point presentation to the Board members. He stated that the mission statement of his department is to provide quality leisure opportunities to the residents of Simsbury. It is recognized that the programs and services provided by this department contribute to the quality of life of this community and take a part in Simsbury's health, welfare, attractiveness and economic vitality.

Mr. Toner stated that the department has three major functions with the largest being park and facility maintenance which operates primarily out of the general fund portion of the budget. Currently, Culture, Parks & Recreation is responsible for the maintenance of 450 acres of parks, over 2200 acres of open space, the ongoing maintenance of 40 athletic fields and facilities, including the fields of the Board of Education which are partially funded by the Board of Education. The facilities include the Simsbury Farms Recreation Complex, Performing Arts Center and the Farmington Valley Greenway.

Mr. Toner noted that staffing has been reduced over the past 25 years from ten full time maintainers to seven. Two of those positions are funded by the Board of Education in recognition of the requirement of taking care of their athletic fields. Open Space and Greenway maintenance over the past ten years have added extra man hours and maintenance expense, which is reflected in the budget.

Mr. Toner stated that the department offers over 750 recreation programs throughout the year that are funded through the Special Revenue Fund. Currently, there is a data base on our on line registration system of over 7,000 families and individuals that participate in our programs. These participants also receive regular updates and utilize the system for program registration. Grants and programs generated over \$389,000 in revenues last year.

Mr. Toner added that Simsbury Farms Golf Course and the golf maintenance pro shop, which is responsible for the maintenance and operations of the Simsbury Farms Golf Course, had over 37,000 rounds of play last year, which is at their five year average. Renovations are almost complete and with a new restaurant/concession agreement, Mr. Toner hopes it will bring in additional revenue.

Mr. Toner reviewed the subject of reduced cost for operations for Simsbury Farms. He stated that the electrical cost is down about 8% lower, based on the actual use. The heating is remaining level, even with taking on an additional 1,200 feet in the new building space and higher fuel costs.

Mr. Toner remarked that vending revenue includes both the golf course and the pool and believes that to accurately reflect the golf operations, it needs to be split apart from the pool. He noted that they are working more closely with the vendors.

Ms. Haase questioned the fees for camps and swimming lessons and wanted to know if there will be increases and if they are reflected in the budget. Mr. Toner discussed the camp program and noted that the fees are staying somewhat level even with a minimum wage increase. They are looking to restructure the camps on how they are scheduled by trying to make them one week instead of two.

Mr. Toner explained a slide showing a year to year comparison of the last five years of the general fund which shows the costs for administration, Memorial Pool staffing level, park and open space maintenance and the Memorial Field maintenance.

Mr. Toner reviewed the vehicle replacement schedule and noted that there is a need to keep the equipment current to keep repair costs down. He reviewed the slide which illustrates the requested replacement equipment.

Mr. Toner explained that the Apple Barn was only available for non-profit groups. He stated that his department gets a lot of inquiries from other groups to use this facility. He believes that there should be a change to allow these groups in or to shut the facility down from October to April to save on heating costs. However, he stated that his staff feels that there is more potential to keep it open all year round and allow other groups to use the facility.

TOWN CLERK

Carolyn Keily requested support from the Board for her budget. She put into perspective her budget compared to the Town budget this current year. Ms. Keily stated that the total Town budget is about \$96 million dollars. The expenses for the Town Clerk's office do not even meet a quarter of a percent. Ms. Keily stated that if there is an increase in her budget, it is very small. She also noted that for the revenue taken in by her office, there were three and a half times the expenditures.

Ms. Keily remarked that her department's mission is to receive, maintain and provide access to all kinds of records that collectively preserve the written history of Simsbury. In order to maintain these records and provide them to the public, we do need funding.

Ms. Keily would like to get E-recording to the Town Clerk office for land recording. The law currently requires receiving original records either by mail or person. E-recording is new to Connecticut and there are only a hand full of towns that are actually doing this and they get their records electronically.

Ms. Keily also requested reinstating a part time position. At one time, this was a 17 hour a week position with two full time clerks. She would like this position to be four hours a week at a cost of approximately \$4,100. This position would help with records retention, land records, election ballots, Board and Commission appointments, complete and film of land records and to rearrange the town vault to introduce roller shelving.

Ms. Keily also reviewed items that have already been completed by her department.

PLANNING/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Hiram Peck noted that he is presenting the budget for several different departments. He also gave high reviews of the Building Department and its staff. He reviewed presentation slides to the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Peck listed some of the recent things that the department has been involved in:

- Recently submitted the draft code for The Hartford property.
- Phase I of the marketing study in 2013 for the draft of Weatogue that the commission funded last year
- Existing revisions to current design guidelines in 2013
- Complete historic survey

Mr. Peck noted that they are very busy and believes it will significantly increase based upon the applications the commissions have seen recently and the number of people that they are currently talking to about applications coming in the Spring.

Mr. Peck stated that they are working on The Hartford project very hard. They are also creating another village district zone with design guidelines in Weatogue.

Mr. Peck believes that the Phase I of the Marketing Implementation Plan for Strategic Economic Development to the Town being completed, that the Phase II of this project is critical to Phase I. Phase II would give us the tools to go out and market the type of companies the Town should try to pursue to come into Simsbury. Mr. Peck stated that the marketing materials to accomplish Phase II just need to be collected and that Simsbury Main Street Partnership has been very helpful with this.

Ms. Glassman noted that there have been a few departments that have budgeted for a video. Mr. Peck stated that SCTV stated that they could do a video for approximately \$2,500, which Ms. Glassman stated is already in the budget. The Board discussed doing one video for the Town.

Mr. Peck noted that the Town needs to do a rehabilitation of the existing regulations outside of the code regulations that have already been done. Ms. Glassman questioned the code regulations responsibility in that the Town hired a full time Zoning Enforcement Officer to take this away from Mr. Howard Beach, who is now a Planning Analyst. Ms. Glassman thinks it would be helpful to look at a piece of the zoning regulation with the Town attorney and then come back to the Zoning Commission to see how it is working.

Ms. Glassman reminded everyone that additional staff was given to Planning last year and asked if some of the work could be done in house. Mr. Peck stated that he did do some of the work himself and it took him nine months.

Mr. Peck stated that the number of inspections that are required have increased 5% to 15% due to the different regulations that are imposed on the Town by the State Building Code. It is important that the Town continue to maintain a business friendly attitude.

Ms. Glassman and Mr. Corriea thanked Mr. Beach for the excellent service he is giving to the Town and to every that deals with the Planning Department.

Mr. Peck reviewed the exhibit for the 2012 – 2013 fiscal year with the Board.

Mr. Peck stated that the Economic Development Commission has requested \$25,000 for the Master Plan for the Performing Art Center. The zoning regulation revisions are \$25,000 and the web-site construction that the Economic Development Commission has asked for is \$8,000.

Ms. Barnett stated that \$1,000 is for the set-up of a separate URL and to work with Virtual Town Hall to create the template for the EDC web-site which was stated in the letter to the Board of Selectmen a couple of weeks ago. The Board of Selectmen stated that they never received this letter. The \$8,000 that was requested was for continual maintenance of the web site, like a web master, to continually update materials.

Mr. Peck noted some of the items that were taken out of the budget that he would like to lobby for:

- money for contractual services for land use commission for regulations
- full funding of Simsbury Main Street Partnership at the \$50,000 level

Mr. Peck referenced one exhibit that lists items that could be removed from his budget.

Ms. Mielert commented on her concern with the relationship between the Town and Simsbury Main Street Partnership. The Board of Selectmen discussed the \$50,000 budget request for Simsbury Main Street Partnership.

Mr. Peck mentioned that the GIS system could be very helpful and would provide a lot of information that the Economic Development Commission is looking to get out to realtors, attorneys and title searchers. The system right now is not helpful to anyone on the outside. Ms. Glassman asked Mr. Peck to put together a GIS cost presentation for the Board of Selectmen to review.

Mr. Peck also requested funding to attend conferences for his staff as it is an important part for networking with other towns in the state.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Ms. Glassman stated that the Central Administration budget is the same. The salary increases have been funded and conferences and education have been reduced. She also noted that the same dues and subscriptions that the Town has had in the past, have been recommended. The Communications Specialist position, which was just recently filled, was budgeted for the same amount as last year.

Ms. Glassman noted that the labor costs for legal services were reduced because contracts have been settled except for the Police Contract.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Paine made a motion to adjourn the February 28, 2014 Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen Workshop at 7:30PM. The motion was seconded by Ms. Haase and was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Brigham
Clerk