

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY - BOARD OF SELECTMEN
BUDGET WORKSHOP - SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 25, 2013**

DRAFT

CALL TO ORDER

The Special Meeting - Budget Workshop of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Simsbury Town Offices. Present were: First Selectman Mary Glassman; Board members Nancy Haase, Moira Wertheimer, Lisa Heavner, Shannon Knall and Sean Askham. Others in attendance included Mary Ann Harris, Sean Kimball, Tom Cooke, Tom Roy, Colleen O'Connor, and other interested parties.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Glassman welcomed everyone and said this was the beginning of the budget process. She is looking forward to hearing from the public about budget issues.

Ms. Glassman said that tonight there will be a brief overview of the budget. Ms. Harris will go through changes and requests made.

Ms. Glassman said she is presenting her budget to the Board of Selectmen with a 0.5% increase. She said this is the 4th year she has kept expense levels below the 2008/09 budget. She does understand that taxpayers really can't pay more than they are already paying.

Ms. Glassman said there are also State budget concerns. The State already took out \$200,000 from the general fund revenues with a potential looming of a 6 million dollar loss if the car tax elimination passes.

Ms. Glassman said the budget did go up \$90,210 from last year and therefore the 0.5% increase. She also noted that we still have a triple A rating from Moody's due to a great conservative budget.

Ms. Glassman said the staff had some very creative ways of trying to save money as well. She thanked them for all their hard work. She also thanked Mary Ann Harris and her staff and all the Department Heads for their team effort in saving money.

Ms. Glassman went through a slide presentation on how the budget is formed. She said everyone is trying to provide good public health and safety, while maintaining our status of being one of the best towns in Connecticut.

Ms. Glassman said the Board of Selectmen budget is a small piece of the overall budget. She also went through some of the budget history. She said the budget information is also available on the Town website.

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Ms. Glassman said there are many cost saving efforts in Town as the staff is very good about obtaining different grants and funding for projects. There are many volunteers who help the Town in Committees and Commissions that work very hard also.

Ms. Glassman said the Town also switched the retiree health plan for cost savings. We also have an energy savings plan in place.

Ms. Glassman said the Board of Selectmen budget is now \$18,128,810. She said the next step is the beginning of the budget process tonight, tomorrow night and Thursday night. She said we have until March 27th, when this budget gets presented to the Board of Finance. Then there will be a Public Hearing on April 9th. Then the Board of Finance meets again on April 24th to review and make any changes. The budget then goes to referendum on May 14th.

OVERVIEW OF BUDGET

Mary Ann Harris gave the Board budget books. She said there is a table of contents for fiscal year 2014. The format is pretty much followed from last year. She said revenue and expenditures include the Board of Education. She said she first did the revenues. She said the property taxes would go up under the proposed estimate. The expenditures breakdown all of the departments.

Ms. Harris explained that the yellow worksheets tell what the actual fiscal year was for 2012; the budget of 2013; and what is estimated for 2013. The Town did settle three union contracts also.

Ms. Harris went through the budget booklet tab by tab explaining the challenges and differences in the budget that are being made.

Ms. Harris noted that all small departments are top-heavy with salaries. She said the Finance Department has some questions with advertisement issues. The Finance Department is moving accounts payable from weekly to bi-weekly paying for cost savings.

Ms. Harris said there is a large decrease in Planning and Development as they are making moves within the division and adding money to the Building Department. They added \$25,000 into the Building Department part-time account for an assistant building inspector and help with administrative assisting.

Ms. Harris said Public Works does a great job, always having big challenges to balance the needs of the residents while keeping within the budget. She will work further with Mr. Roy on this budget.

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Ms. Harris said the Highway Labor and Equipment budgets are the largest budgets. There were some adjustments in tree and contractual services. The Landfill account went down due to having signed a new contract with CRRA.

Ms. Harris said Mr. Toner in Culture, Parks & Recreation did find cost savings in water charges and electricity.

Ms. Harris said the Library is always a challenge. Mr. Cooke said there are changes in union contracts for part-time employees. Ms. Glassman said this is a win/win situation for the Library as they now have more flexibility with staffing.

Ms. Harris said employees benefits will go up about 5-1/2% for health insurance with Workman's Comp. going up about 8%.

Ms. Harris noted that Residential Properties account has been level funded this year.

Ms. Harris said the CNR account for fiscal year 2014 has all of the requests being prioritized. The police radios are coming out of the special revenue fund. She said there were some hard choices to be made in this account. She thinks the State is giving us \$360,000 for Town aid.

REVIEW OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN

Ms. Harris said there requests and this also shows sources of funding. She said they are looking for the renovation of the Henry James Middle School and Phase II of Ethel Walter (a grant was received for this).

Ms. Harris said if we get a grant in 2014, the center Charrette infrastructure could be one of the projects.

Ms. Harris went through the rest of the capital improvements. She said the Department Heads can now go online and work on their budgets. They all have access to the Finance Department system.

Ms. Glassman thanked Ms. Harris and her staff for this great job. She knows it takes a lot of time.

Ms. Glassman reminded everyone about the CIP budget meeting tomorrow night at 6 p.m. in the Library.

Mr. Sawitzke said they will be going through the CIP tomorrow night, but he went through the

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items for fiscal year 2014. He said all of the projects are out to the 6 year period including anticipated grants and funding sources.

Mr. Sawitzke said the emergency generator improvements is actually a carry-over from last year. He said they hope to get a grant to defray costs from the Charrette for center improvements.

Mr. Sawitzke said there are carry-overs from the prior years like the truck wash, improvements to the Town office building, tela-data improvements, the Town office building flat roof improvements and improvements at Eno Memorial Hall, etc.

Mr. Sawitzke said one of the important projects is the Farmington River stream-bank stabilization, which gets paid out of the sewer use funds.

Mr. Sawitzke said the main school project is a boiler at Squadron Line School.

Mr. Sawitzke said they added a project for the Senior Community Center for a design element. The Board will receive recommendations on this project.

Ms. Glassman noted that all of the budget information is on the Town website.

ADJOURN

Mr. Askham made a motion to adjourn the Special Meeting at 6:55 p.m. Ms. Wertheimer seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathi Radocchio
Clerk