

**Board of Finance
TOWN OF SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, March 22, 2022, at 5:45 P.M.
In Person Meeting/Simsbury Community Television Live Stream**

PRESENT:

Lisa Heavner, Arthur House, Derek Peterson, Mike Doyle, Robert Helfand and Linda Schofield

ALSO PRESENT:

Amy Meriwether, Director of Finance; Kelsey Chamberlain, Deputy Finance Director; Maria Capriola, Town Manager; Melissa Appleby, Deputy Town Manager; Nick Boulter, Chief of Police; Chris Davis, Deputy Chief of Police;; Francine Beland, Assessor; Tom Roy, Director of Public Works; Tom Tyburski, Director of Culture, Parks and Recreation; Brian Johnson, Golf Superintendent; Lisa Karim, Library Director; Kristen Formanek, Social Services Director; Wendy Mackstutis, First Selectman; Amber Abbuhl, Deputy First Selectman; Heather Goetz, Selectman; Chris Peterson, Selectman; Eric Wellman, Selectman, Sean Askham, Selectman (via phone); Jennifer Caulfield, Police Commission;

1. Call to Order - Establish Quorum

Mr. Heavner called the meeting to order at 5:45 P.M.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Presentation: Board of Selectmen 2022/2023 Budget

Ms. Mackstutis presented the Board of Selectman budget for 2022/2023 stating that the budget focused on keeping residents and businesses safe and investing and improving town assets. She noted that they came in with a flat mill rate which was primarily the result of the 3.72% grand list growth. The budget increase was \$1,547,433 or 6.39%, excluding operating transfers, cash for capital and debt service. The proposed budget includes the following service improvements: IT specialist, network engineering support, pollinator, accreditation specialist, 2 police officers, construction inspection services, Simsbury Farms 50th anniversary funding, professional development and operating costs for the Police service dog.

Ms. Mackstutis continued through her presentation reviewing the revenue assumptions that were utilized. Ms. Heavner had some follow up questions which were addressed by Ms. Capriola.

Discussion ensued around the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and projects being proposed to utilize the funding. Chief Boulter elaborated on the police service dog and associated expenses providing an overview of its role and the associated vehicle required.

Ms. Mackstutis reviewed the listing of proposed capital projects, debt service graph, next steps for the budget and important dates.

Ms. Meriwether reviewed the budget modeling worksheet and provided an overview of the debt service spike and its impact in the out years.

Ms. Schofield requested a five year look back on the insurance refunds account to see if this line item could be potentially increased.

Specific budgetary expenditures were discussed and Ms. Schofield inquired about potentially adding a vacancy rate to the finalized budget. Ms. Capriola made a vacancy rate recommendation of 1.5% - 2% of full-time salaries. This would yield savings of around \$150K. Ms. Heavner asked her to recommend where in the budget this could be placed as a line item as a negative number so it can be tracked.

Further discussion ensued on proposed budgetary expenditures which were answered by Town staff.

Ms. Heavner inquired about what is captured in the new line-item Cash for Capital and asked for recommendations on how to best utilize this money for the next meeting.

Ms. Meriwether talked through the Health Insurance Fund and how the reserves are expected to decrease from over 40% to 26% by the end of FY23 due to utilizing reserves to offset health insurance premium increases. Ms. Heavner inquired about the proposed approach and if the risk was reasonable. Ms. Capriola confirmed it was.

Ms. Heavner provided a summary of the Capital Non-Recurring numbers and discussion followed related to the reserves in the Town Aid Road fund. Ms. Heavner expressed her overall concern around the amount of reserves being held in the fund and whether the levels should be re-evaluated.

4. Adjourn

MOTION: Mr. Helfand made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 P.M. Ms. Schofield seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Marion Lynott
Commission Clerk