

**Board of Finance
TOWN OF SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, November 29, 2022, at 5:30 P.M.
In Person Meeting /Simsbury Community Media Live Stream**

PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Amy Meriwether, Director of Finance; Maria Capriola, Town Manager; Susan Salina, Chair of Board of Education; Wendy Mackstutis, First Selectman; Amber Abbuhl, Deputy First Selectman; Heather Goetz, Selectman; Eric Wellman, Selectman; Matt Curtis, Superintendent of Schools; Tom Roy, Director of Public Works; Adam Kessler, Deputy Town Engineer; Jason Casey, Director of Infrastructure & Technology, and Jeff Wyszynski, Tecton Architects

1. Call to Order - Establish Quorum

Ms. Heavner called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Opening Remarks:

Ms. Heavner opened the meeting with an overview of the purpose of the Public for Projects going to Referendum and added that there will not be an increase in property tax as they will be funded by grants, savings, or previously approved dollars. She said the increased spending being requested resulted from the unusual nature of current economic times and involve costs related to the pandemic, inflation, and the expenditure of Federal and State grant dollars.

Ms. Heavner noted the proposed Supplementation Appropriations totaled \$6,223,109.12. She added that the reason they are going to referendum is because of a requirement by State Law and their Town's Charter and added that without appropriations public officials cannot spend. Ms. Heavner went into details on the process and provided more information on the Charter and the reason the requests are going to referendum stating it is an unusual situation.

Ms. Heavner added that after hearing from citizens in this meeting the Board of Finance will vote to send Latimer Lane to referendum, approve appropriation language for grant funded town projects for referendum, and approve a supplemental appropriation for the Simsbury High School Bleacher project overage, funded with project savings in the Simsbury High School Air Conditioning project.

Ms. Heavner gave an overview of the money required for each project, their proposed funding method, and the reason for the increase, reiterating that there will be no increase to property tax to the citizens of the town.

Mr. Wyszynski presented on the Latimer Lane project and spoke about the various project alternatives. He mentioned that the revised budget with the three proposed alternatives totaled \$39,054,253, and without alternatives totaled \$38,559,380. Mr. Wyszynski provided

information on the reason for project alternatives and outlined details on what is involved in each option and the reasons for recommending them.

Ms. Capriola spoke about the various grant money saying they have obtained and received nearly \$4M in unanticipated grant revenue. She reviewed each project, their associated grants, and the amount requiring appropriation by referendum.

3. Public Hearing on Latimer Lane Elementary School Renovation Project and State and Federal Grant Funded Infrastructure Projects Then Close the Public Hearing

Mr. Steven 12 Lincoln Lane, spoke about Latimer Lane project and said he agreed with all the proposed, needed renovations.

Ms. Joan Coe, 26 Whitcomb Dr., spoke about Latimer Lane project and suggested it should be placed on hold since there are no guarantees there will be no more overruns. She said a pause in the project for a year will give the Board of Education time to reconfigure the usable space, receive a cost analysis on the reduction of students through redistricting and continue to give the students a quality education. She added that she has not received information on the overhead costs associated with the project that will add to future budgets.

Ms. Maddie McDonald, 4th grade at Latimer Lane School, spoke about the value of the project and the benefits of outdoor learning spaces / classrooms.

Ms. Leslie Coswig, 14 Lincoln Ln., spoke in support of the Latimer Lane project costs, and said it is a long-term investment in their school, their students, and their community.

Ms. Joan Coe, 26 Whitcomb Dr., spoke about the Infrastructure Appropriation saying it is another project with open-ended costs that should not be approved for referendum vote. She said the Town should not approve the project without knowing the operating costs that will encumber the taxpayers.

MOTION: Ms. Schofield made a motion, effective November 29, 2022, to close the Public Hearing. Mr. Helfand seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Heavner addressed the cost overruns question stating that appropriations are caps on spending, and they are not able to spend more than what is approved. She reviewed the process if spending more was needed.

Ms. Schofield asked about the sidewalk project at Firetown Road in relation to the scope, and Mr. Roy elaborated on the design details stating it's not finalized yet, but they are working collaboratively with the golf course and the residence. He addressed a question on the type of sidewalk and said they will be looking to install concrete due to longevity as they received an additional grant.

Ms. Capriola spoke about the operating costs of the projects, and Mr. Curtis addressed the communications to the public on the referendum via email, a letter and a mailer to all residents. Ms. Capriola spoke about the questions on the referendum stating that the Bond Counsel is treating the additional amount as one question, with Latimer Lane being a separate question, two in total.

Ms. Meriwether confirmed there is sufficient funds in savings to not only fund this request, but to handle next year's budget requests.

4. Approve Capital Resolutions for Latimer Lane Elementary School Project and Infrastructure Grant for the Firetown Road Sidewalk, North End Sidewalk, and Tariffville-Bloomfield Multi-Use Trail and recommend to referendum

MOTION: Ms. Schofield made a motion, effective November 29, 2022, to approve Capital Resolutions for Latimer Lane Elementary School Project and Infrastructure Grant for the Firetown Road Sidewalk, North End Sidewalk, and Tariffville-Bloomfield Multi-Use Trail and recommend to referendum. Mr. Helfand seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried unanimously.

RESOLVED,

Upon motion duly made, seconded and adopted, the reading into the minutes of the full text of the resolutions set out below is waived, copies of the resolutions having been made available to those in attendance, and recorded in these records immediately preceding these minutes.

RESOLVED, That the Board of [Finance/Selectmen] recommends and approves the following:
CIP # General Purpose Projects (Non-Bonds)

- Renovation and Expansion of Latimer Lane School, (Capital Reserve Fund) \$2,261,837
- Various Multi-Use Trail and Sidewalk Projects comprised of: \$3,961,272.12
 - Bloomfield to Tariffville Multi-Use Trail (LOTICIP Grant (\$1,254,200))
 - North End Sidewalk Construction (LOTICIP Grant (\$913,072.12))
 - Firetown Road Sidewalk Construction (LOTICIP Grant (\$1,200,000) and
 - Community Connectivity Grant Program Grant (\$594,000))

RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING FROM THE CAPITAL RESERVE FUND THE AMOUNT OF \$2,261,837 FOR THE RENOVATION AND EXPANSION OF LATIMER LANE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

RESOLVED,

(a) That the Town of Simsbury appropriate from the Capital Reserve Fund the amount of TWO MILLION TWO HUNDRED SIXTY-ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED THIRTY-SEVEN DOLLARS (\$2,261,837) for the renovation and expansion of Latimer Lane Elementary school, including outdoor learning spaces. The appropriation may be spent for planning, design, architectural, engineering and other consultants' fees, equipment costs, construction costs, legal fees, net temporary interest and other financing costs, and other expenses related to the project

and its financing. The Board of Selectmen may determine the particulars and may reduce or modify the scope of the project, and the entire appropriation may be spent on the reduced or modified project.

(b) That, pursuant to Section 809 of the Town Charter, this Resolution be presented to a referendum vote under the following caption:

SHALL THE TOWN OF SIMSBURY APPROPRIATE \$2,261,837 FROM THE CAPITAL RESERVE FUND FOR THE RENOVATION AND EXPANSION OF LATIMER LANE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL?

RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING LOCAL TRANSPORTATION CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM GRANT FUNDS AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY GRANT FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$3,961,272.12 FOR MULTI-USE CONNECTIONS/TRAIL DEVELOPMENT AND SIDEWALK CONSTRUCTION AND IMPROVEMENTS RESOLVED,

(a) That the Town of Simsbury appropriate \$3,367,272.12 from Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP) grant funds and \$594,000 from Community Connectivity grant funds for an aggregate appropriation of THREE MILLION THREE HUNDRED SIXTY-ONE THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED SEVENTY-TWO AND 12/100 DOLLARS (\$3,961,272.12) for: (1) improvements to the Multi-Use Connections/Trails Development (Bloomfield to Tariffville), including for construction costs, land or easement acquisition and other expenses related to the project (\$1,254,200 from Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program grant funds); (2) the design and construction of sidewalks in the business district of the North End of the Town of Simsbury, including for construction costs, land or easement acquisition and other expenses related to the project (\$913,072.12 from Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program grant funds); and (3) the design and construction of sidewalks on Firetown Road, including for construction costs, materials, land or easement acquisition, demolition and removal of materials, and other expenses related to the project (\$1,200,000 from Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program grant funds and \$594,000 from Community Connectivity grant funds). The Board of Selectmen may determine the particulars and may reduce or modify the scope of the projects, and the entire appropriation may be spent on the reduced or modified projects.

(b) That, pursuant to Section 809 of the Town Charter, this Resolution be presented to a referendum vote under the following caption:

SHALL THE TOWN OF SIMSBURY APPROPRIATE \$3,961,272.12 OF LOCAL TRANSPORTATION CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM GRANT FUNDS AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY GRANT FUNDS FOR MULTI-USE CONNECTIONS/TRAIL DEVELOPMENT AND SIDEWALK CONSTRUCTION AND IMPROVEMENTS?

5. Amend Motions Adopted July 19, 2022 and August 16, 2022 Regarding Various Sidewalk and Multi-Use Path Infrastructure Appropriations to Reflect Revised Costs and to Make Subject to Referendum Vote

Ms. Meriwether said that they are over the 3% cumulative supplemental appropriation allowance permitted by the Charter as Ms. Heavner explained earlier, and they need to go back to referendum for these projects. She stated their approach is to amend previous approved supplemental appropriations to be subject to referendum approval. Ms. Heavner said they are anticipating more grants coming into the town so they need to create more capacity.

MOTION: Ms. Schofield made the following motions, effective November 29, 2022:

- That the Resolution of the Board of Finance regarding the Firetown Road Sidewalk Construction project adopted August 16, 2022 under agenda item #5 be amended to read as follows:

That the Board of Finance approves, subject to referendum vote, the appropriation of a LOTCIP grant in the amount of \$1,200,000 and a Community Connectivity Grant Program grant in the amount of \$594,000, for the aggregate grant appropriation of \$1,794,000, for the Firetown Road Sidewalk Construction project.

- That the Resolution of the Board of Finance regarding the North End Sidewalk Construction project adopted August 16, 2022 under agenda item #6 be amended to read as follows:

That the Board of Finance approves, subject to referendum vote, the appropriation of LOTCIP grants in the amount of \$913,072.12, in addition to a prior appropriation of \$810,000 for the aggregate grant appropriation of \$1,723,072.12, for the North End Sidewalk Construction project.

- That the Resolution of the Board of Finance regarding the Tariffville-Bloomfield Multi-Use Path project adopted July 19, 2022 under agenda item #6 be amended to read as follows:

that the Board of Finance approves, subject to referendum vote, the appropriation of LOCIP grants in the amount of \$1,254,200, in addition to a prior appropriation of \$1,020,000 for the aggregate grant appropriation of \$2,274,200, for the Tariffville-Bloomfield Multi-Use Path project.

Mr. Helfand seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried unanimously.

6. Reallocation of Funds from Simsbury High School Air Conditioning Project to the Simsbury High School Bleacher Project

Mr. Casey spoke about this project stating bids for the Simsbury High School (SHS) bleacher project have come in over budget, and the project is at risk of not starting as planned this fall. He said during the FY 21/22 budget process, \$600,000 was appropriated for the replacement of the bleachers. After design work, site surveys, and other administrative fees, the remaining balance is \$535,000. Bids for the work came in significantly higher due to aluminum cost increases, fuel

cost increases, and overall inflation. The lowest bid is \$880,000, which is \$345,000 over budget. He said an option is to reallocate \$345,000 of the SHS air conditioning funds to the SHS bleacher project will allow completion of the work on the original timeline and will remediate the noted code and safety issues detailed in the attachment. Expediting this change will allow demolition to occur in late November, and construction to begin in the spring of 2023.

Mr. Casey answered questions from the board and said the bleachers are not up to code which makes them dangerous and the largest safety concern within the district.

Mr. Curtis and Mr. Casey addressed question on timing from the board and confirmed there are no concerns about cost overruns as the prices are locked in. Mr. Curtis and Mr. Casey addressed other questing from the board on scope, timing, project prioritizing, and funding.

Ms. Capriola said the bleachers have far exceeded their useful life, believes this project should be prioritized and agrees that it is a sensible reallocation of funds between high school projects.

Ms. Mackstutis and Ms. Salina said their board's vote was unanimous to proceed with the bleacher project.

MOTION: Ms. Schofield made a motion, effective November 29, 2022, to increase the appropriation for the Simsbury High School bleacher project by \$345,000, funded by a capital project transfer from savings from the Simsbury High School air conditioning project. Mr. Helfand seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried unanimously.

7. Adjourn

MOTION: Mr. Helfand made a motion, effective November 15, 2022, to adjourn the meeting at 7:06 P.M. Ms. Schofield seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Marion Lynott
Commission Clerk