

**Town of Simsbury Board of Finance
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, May 16, 2017 at 5:45PM
Simsbury Town Offices – Main Meeting Room
933 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, Connecticut**

PRESENT: Robert Pomeroy, Jeff Blumenthal, Derek Peterson, Kevin Prell, and Moira Wertheimer.

ABSENT: Linda Schofield.

ALSO PRESENT: Finance Director Sean Kimball, First Selectman Lisa Heavner, Director of Administrative Services Tom Cooke, Deputy Director of Administrative Services Melissa Appleby, Selectmen Sean Askham, Cheryl Cook, Elaine Lang, Mike Reagan, Simsbury Schools Business Manager Burke LaClair, Superintendent of Schools Matt Curtis, Board of Education Chairman Tara Donohue Willerup, Simsbury Public Schools Director of Personnel Neil Sullivan, Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Services Susan Homrok-Lemke, Police Chief Peter Ingvertsen, Police Captain Nicholas Boulter and other interested parties.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Robert Pomeroy called the meeting to order at 5:45PM.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – APRIL 18, 2017 REGULAR MEETING & MAY 2, 2017 SPECIAL MEETING:

MOTION: Ms. Wertheimer, Mr. Blumenthal second, to approve the April 18, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes and the May 2, 2017 Special Meeting Minutes; unanimously approved.

4. OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING ON FY18 OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGETS:

Joan Coe of 26 Whitcomb Drive urged the Board to eliminate the Senior Center project and proposed Phase III at Henry James Middle School (HJMS) from the Capital Budget. She encouraged the Board to continue to review capital projects for safety or maintenance and approve projects only for need.

Marie Eckey, having noted that she has lived in Simsbury for 35 years, opposed any type of budget increase.

Robert Kalechman, of 971 Hopmeadow Street, opposed a tax increase and objected to the recent cut to the Police Department's budget.

John Hampton, of 9 Knoll Lane, noting that he was Simsbury's State Representative, shared recent events occurring at the state level surrounding the state budget. He noted that he is making sure that Simsbury's concerns are known at the State Capital, notably the ECS funding. With respect to timelines, Mr. Hampton noted that he is pushing for a final resolution of the state's budget by the Legislature's expected date of adjournment, June 7, 2017.

Mark Orenstein, of 82 Old Meadow Plain Road, noted that he currently serves on the Aging and Disability Commission, the Technology Task Force, the Library Board of Trustees, and the

Board of Directors for SCTV. Mr. Orenstein indicated that while he has been working for six years on the needed improvements at the Senior Center, he is opposed to including that project along with the work at HJMS in this year's capital budget.

Lauren Miller, noting that she has resided in town for more than thirty years and serves as a Library Board of Trustee, reminded this Board that the library is more than a repository of books. She noted that it is the center of civility and learning within the community and urged the Board to keep this in mind during budget considerations.

Nancy Bugbee, of 37 Fox Den Road, noted that she has resided in town since 1954 and opined that libraries should be the last place where there are sweeping budget cuts.

David Moore, of 18 Bob White Way, noting that he is the Vice Chairman of the Economic Development Commission, the Vice Chairman of the Democratic Town Committee, and the Chairman of the Board of Ethics but noting that he was speaking individually, predicted that interest rates are going to rise effecting the overall net cost in delaying bonding of capital projects.

Tolly Zonenberg, of 5 Fox Den Road, noting that she is President of the Friends of the Simsbury Public Library, explained that she moved to town because of services in the community with the library being one of those.

MOTION: Ms. Wertheimer, Mr. Blumenthal second, to close the Public Hearing; unanimously approved.

6. FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT & STATE BUDGET UPDATE:

It was noted that the indication coming from the state level is that what will probably be adopted will not be better than what was expected. The Board agreed that it may likely be worse. Each board member shared their opinions on the most appropriate steps going forward with the FY18 budget. The Board discussed taking the two large capital projects, Eno Hall and HJMS, out of consideration for this year.

It was noted that these problems at the state level are not likely a one or two year problem but will instead continue for years.

7. FY18 BUDGET DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION:

A loss of \$4M in revenue and how it would affect the proposed operating budgets was reviewed. Mr. Kimball reviewed different iterations of the budget through his Excel "Simplified Mill Rate Calculator – FY18". He included one with an assumed mill rate increase of 3.56% through a \$200K cut in Board of Selectmen's budget and an \$800K cut in the Board of Education's budget. Plugging in \$2M under Contingency for Teachers Pension and using the entire \$1.5M of the Assigned Fund Balance (The Hartford) under this scenario would bring the mill rate down below 40.

The continued uncertainties with the governor's budget were discussed including the car tax mill rate cap as well as the ECS grant money.

The Board then also reviewed a scenario wherein \$4M was plugged in under Contingency for Teachers Pension, still using the entire \$1.5M of the Assigned Fund Balance (The Hartford), but removing the allocation for debt service/capital (+\$900K) given a situation where there is a

delay this year in the Eno Hall renovations and HJMS, providing for a 5.5% increase in the mill rate, or 40.39 and reserves at 11.8%.

8. FY18 CAPITAL BUDGET RESOLUTIONS:

Discussion ensued around the possibility to consider reducing the two budgets by another combined \$500K and possibly bring the reserves down to 11.5%, or another \$300K.

First Selectman Lisa Heavner reported that the Board of Selectmen will review and consider a proposal to delay the bulk of the Senior Center by two years thereby reducing the FY18 budget by another \$200K. She noted that she had also asked Town Engineer Jeff Shea to consult with each department head as to whether there are additional items in capital that can be reduced and/or delayed. Ms. Heavner indicated that she will review the operating budget, too, with her full board.

Both Ms. Heavner and Simsbury Public Schools Superintendent Matt Curtis were requested to review whether there is anything additionally within their operating budgets that could be reduced.

9. DISCUSSION ON FUTURE MEETINGS:

Noting that the Budget needs to be filed with the Town Clerk during regular business hours on Friday, May 26, 2017, the Board discussed holding a Special Meeting next week. It was noted that this Board will hold a Special Meeting on Tuesday, May 23, 2017 at 5:45PM in the Board of Education Conference Room.

Just prior to adjourning, Carl Meyer of 7 Deep Wood Road, quickly addressed the Board, imploring them to not request an additional \$500K cut from the Board of Education.

10. ADJOURN:

MOTION: Ms. Wertheimer, Mr. Blumenthal second, to adjourn at 7:12PM; unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

**Pamela A. Colombie
Commission Clerk**