



# Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Board of Selectmen  
Parks and Recreation Special Revenue Fund Analysis Work Group  
Wednesday, September 30, 2020  
4:30 p.m.

## **SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES – Approved**

**Members Present:** Chris Peterson, Linda Schofield, Art House, Dave Bush, Gerry Wetjen

**Staff Present:** Maria Capriola, Town Manager; Melissa Appleby, Deputy Town Manager; Amy Meriwether, Finance Director; Tom Tyburski, Director of Culture, Parks and Recreation

The meeting was called to order at 4:35pm.

### **1) Public Audience**

None

### **2) Minutes of September 21, 2020**

The minutes of September 21, 2020 were approved by consensus.

### **3) Parks and Recreation Special Revenue Fund Analysis – Discussion and Review of Staff Recommendations**

Mr. Bush reviewed where the group left off after the last meeting, and opened the discussion up to the group for questions on the information provided by staff, and any thoughts on the three options for how to account for the parks and recreation expenses.

Ms. Schofield discussed the historical data that was provided by Ms. Meriwether. She noted that if the administrative salaries are removed from the fund, that fits into the general fund contribution amount that is currently budgeted to support the fund. She said she believes the issue is “flat revenues,” so before the group decides to move items out of the fund to the general fund, we should drill down and figure out what is going on with fees, attendance in programs, etc.

Mr. Wetjen noted that weather is a large factor when considering the performance of the fund. The weather can significantly impact revenues, and then the fixed costs still need to be covered. Ms. Schofield expressed her belief that the pools, ice rink, and camps should break even and that they should not be subsidized by the taxpayers. Mr. Tyburski indicated that the camps do generate revenue, and that the issue is that the administrative salaries, utilities, and other community use items are covered by the fund. He said that the department does not run programs that do not break even.

Mr. Bush noted that the taxpayers paid for the Simsbury Farms facilities, and that taxpayer money should continue to maintain them. He said that taxpayer money pays for the Library, even though not all taxpayers may use that facility.

Ms. Schofield said that she believes certain things in the parks and recreation fund are above and beyond standard services; she said that a lot of expense goes into the pools and ice rink and that only a small number of people use them. She said that capital expenses should be paid for by the taxpayers, but that we should poll the taxpayers to determine whether they want to subsidize the operating expenses. Mr. House agreed that user fees should cover operating expenses.

Ms. Capriola said that one of the recommendations from the staff report was to shift the utility costs from the special revenue fund to the general fund. She compared this to the Library and Senior Center, where the users are not asked to pay for electricity, restroom supplies, and other facilities costs; these items are covered by the general fund. Similarly, she noted that on the staffing side, the salaries for staff at the Library and Senior Center are covered by the general fund, whereas the parks and recreation program users are paying for the parks and recreation staff salaries.

Discussion ensued regarding how we can begin to absorb some of these costs in the general fund.

Mr. Peterson said that our town's parks and recreation services are one of the strongest threads in our community's tapestry. He said that these items need to be funded one way or another, no matter where the costs are accounted for. He said that the charge of this work group is to determine how we account for these expenses; not whether or not to provide certain services. Mr. Bush agreed, and directed the group to the recommendations section of the staff report.

Discussion ensued regarding the history of the fund, including how specific expenses were added to it over time.

#### **4) Next Steps**

Ms. Capriola said that staff can work on a few funding scenarios to demonstrate ways to close the general fund funding gap over the course of a few years. She also said that staff will put together a brief poll for the group to get a sense of where the members' thoughts are in regards to the three recommendations in the staff report. Discussion ensued regarding the management of the golf course; there was strong consensus from the group that this should not be contracted out.

#### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Melissa Appleby  
Deputy Town Manager