

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY – BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – BUDGET WORKSHOP  
MARCH 12, 2022**

**“ D r a f t ”**

Page | 1

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Regular Meeting - Budget Workshop of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 9:00 a.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices and on Zoom. Present were: First Selectman Wendy Mackstutis; Deputy First Selectman Amber Abbuhl; Selectmen Heather Goetz, Eric Wellman, Chris Peterson and Sean Askham. Others in attendance included: Town Manager Maria E. Capriola; Deputy Town Manager Melissa Appleby; Library Director Lisa Karim; Public Works Director/Town Engineer Tom Roy; Police Chief Nicholas Boulter; Parks and Recreation Director Tom Tyburski; Community and Social Services Director Kristen Formanek; WPCA Superintendent Tony Piazza (via Zoom); Director of Finance/Treasurer Amy Meriwether; Jason Casey from the Board of Education (via Zoom).

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC AUDIENCE**

- **written comments emailed to [townmanager@simsbury-ct.gov](mailto:townmanager@simsbury-ct.gov) by 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 12, 2022 will be read into the record**

Ms. Mackstutis read a letter from Morgan Hillard, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce about the increase in tourism, events, the visitor's center and producing a new visitor's guide. They would like to increase the hours at the visitor's center and collaborate with different non-profit organizations. They are a leader in the community and benefit the local economy.

David Bush, Chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission, asked that the Board fund irrigation at the Golf Course before they lose active revenue streams. The Golf Course is a great draw for the Town and this really needs to be done to maintain it.

**OVERVIEW OF BUDGET**

- **Community Service**
  - **Library (Tab 17)**

Ms. Karim, Library Director, spoke about the proposed budget for FY 2022/23. They are asking for a 3.8% increase mostly due to salaries and contractual increases. She said their areas of focus include increase in card holders, material circulation, outreach on social media, programs, etc.

Ms. Karim said there are increase in gas, electric, equipment maintenance and data bases, etc. Their CNR budget includes replacing public PC's at the Library, which is part of a 4-year plan.

There was discussion on programs, introducing a hybrid option, what they were doing during COVID, uses for the ARPA funding, etc.

TOWN OF SIMSBURY – BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – BUDGET WORKSHOP  
MARCH 12, 2022

“ D r a f t ”

Page | 2

- **Culture, Parks and Recreation (Tab 24)**

Mr. Tyburski said this is Simsbury Farms 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and they would be asking for money for celebrating with some events. He said the Farms is truly a gem in our community and gave some history on the Farms.

Mr. Tyburski said there are 20.11 full time employees at the Farms. They are focusing on increasing the diversity of programs and increasing awareness of parks and trails, etc. They maintain fencing and the trees on the trails and the parks.

Mr. Tyburski said their budget drivers are due to the increase in minimum wage, agricultural supplies, gas, diesel, contractual pricing increases, etc. They want to replace 50% of rental skates, most of which go back to 1999.

Mr. Tyburski reviewed the CNR projects for Parks and Recreation. He said they want to dredge Town Forest Park to improve the depth and water clarity and decrease weed growth. They want to replace the plaster in the Simsbury Farms wading pool, make other playground improvements, etc. He said the clubhouse roof also needs to be replaced. The Weatogue Park softball field backstop needs to be replaced and park entrance signs need to be replaced. He is also looking for a golf course dump truck as the one they have is a 2006 with over 160,000 miles on it. He would also like a turf sprayer. He also spoke to the irrigation system and dam repair. Mr. Tyburski said they want to construct a pickleball court at Tariffville Park.

Mr. Tyburski also spoke about possible grant matches for the Performing Arts Center and Rotary Park restrooms. He also spoke about the pollinator-friendly initiative as the Town wants to become a model community in the movement for pollinators.

- **Public Works**

- **Engineering (Tab 14)**

Mr. Roy went through his proposed FY22/23 budget. He is asking for an increase of 4.8% without labor and an overall increase of 2.9% excluding Engineering. He has 44.06 full time employees. He said there are increases in utilities, fuel and supplies. WPCA expenses are supported by user fees.

Mr. Roy said they are focusing on implementing and rolling out a Town-wide facilities master plan. He spoke about the sidewalk rehab program, traffic calming and intersection improvements, the HVAC system, Scout Hall, and improvements at the Community Farm.

- **Highway (Tab 15)**

Mr. Roy said the Highway Department is very active and said there are changes in supply prices and availability. There are also changes in availability of fleet vehicles and equipment. They are working on drainage improvements, etc.

- **Building and Grounds**

Mr. Roy said they are working on improving the HVAC systems, improvements at Community Farm, a new food distribution center for Social Services, the Eno entrance and parking lot, Town Hall parking lot, etc.

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY – BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – BUDGET WORKSHOP  
MARCH 12, 2022**

**“ D r a f t ”**

**Page | 3**

- **WPCA (Tab 22)**

Mr. Roy said the WPCA meets permit requirements and protects water quality in the Farmington River. There was some discussion on a number of retirements within the next few years.

Mr. Piazza spoke about repairs through lining of the sewer system in Tariffville, HVAC controls replacements at WPCA, replacing an outdated building management system, roof safety railings, which would alarm staff and vendors to work safely on the roof when servicing rooftop equipment.

- **Engineering**

Mr. Roy said they are working on the design and repairs of the Flower Bridge, the gateway entrance signs, Tariffville to Bloomfield trail, the bridge at Firetown Road and Barndoor Hills, etc. They support the Board of Education on the Latimer Lane project, Town Hall improvements, ADA improvements, the parking lots, etc.

He spoke about CNR projects which include intersection safety, developing long range plans complicated projects, traffic control and calming. They are also working on Community Farm Barn repairs.

Mr. Roy said they need to replace a 2011 Ford 350 building and grounds truck and a dump truck, plow and sander. They are looking to purchase a carpet cleaner for \$12,000 for all Town buildings, which will save the Town money in the long run. They are looking at replacing air volume control boxes to promote energy savings. The plow truck replacement is about \$210,000, which is one of 13 front line trucks. This replacement is for a 12 year old truck, which must be reliable.

Mr. Roy said their capital projects include sidewalk resurfacing and replacements, year 5 of a 20-year plan, Eno Memorial Hall entrance/ADA improvements and parking lot changes and repaving.

Mr. Roy spoke about Highway management projects, and said they are going to look into trying new techniques to keep road safe. There are municipal site and safety improvements at Town Hall. There is design work to do at Old Drake Hill Flower Bridge, which is a Town landmark.

Mr. Piazza said they need a primary clarifier in-depth evaluation for the WPCA. There are structural deficiencies found in the concrete. There was a discussion on this analysis and what it entails.

Mr. Roy noted that the Pine Hill meeting was very productive and the payback for the sewer system was raised from 10 to 15 years.

### **Public Safety**

- **Police (Tab 13)**
- **Dispatch, Animal Control**
- **Emergency Management**

Chief Boulter said their proposed budget shows a 5.21% increase and they have five separate budgets – Police Commission; Police; Dispatch; Animal Control; and Emergency Management. Chief Boulter said there are 53.36 full time employees.

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY – BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – BUDGET WORKSHOP  
MARCH 12, 2022**

**“ D r a f t ”**

**P a g e | 4**

They want to maintain current services and technology, equipment and State mandates. They need to replace firearms and fund the maintenance for the Public Safety radio system. They are trying to go through a promotional process due to retiring staff. Side arm replacements are about \$35,000 and he note that some of their side arms are over 10 years old.

Chief Boulter spoke about some of the budget highlights like the increase of \$168,620 in wages due negotiated steps and minimum wage increases, holiday pay, etc. He noted that there is a line item savings under dispatchers through long term purchases and adjustments to vendors/providers.

Chief Boulter said the CNR budget includes three police cruisers as there is not a great purchase package for replacement cruisers. They need to replace an administrative vehicle, which is about \$48,200; body worn cameras and car cameras are about \$54,512. They also want to purchase new mobile data terminals for about \$19,000.

Chief Boulter spoke about a \$70,000 staffing study, which provides consulting services that will conduct a comprehensive assessment of the Department staff levels across the divisions.

Chief Boulter spoke about service improvements including an accreditation specialist and a new officer. There are some recruitment concerns and discussion on overtime, and retirements. There was also discussion on a social worker and comfort dog.

**◦ Board of Education Capital Projects**

Mr. Casey spoke about the capital improvement plan for the Board of Education. He said there are plumbing improvements at Tootin’ Hills, electrical improvements at Central, roof replacement at Tariffville and Central, network improvements district wide, modular classroom replacements at Tariffville and climate control improvements district wide.

There was some discussion on replacing the modulars and possibly using ARPA funds for air conditioning at the schools.

**• CNR Wrap-up (FY 21/22) (Tab 27)**

Ms. Capriola spoke about the FY 2022/23 CNR Fund budget revenues. She went through the proposed revenue allocations in the tab 26 summary. She went through Capital and Debt Services and the use of cash. She said the utilization of cash capacity and capital revenues to fund current needs lessen potential debt burden in the future and helps to partially address the gap in existing needs versus funds available to pay for those needs.

**• Debt Service (Tab 21)**

Ms. Meriwether spoke about debt service for the next fiscal year. She spoke about the upcoming revaluation and how the value of homes should go up so therefore, taxes will go up. She said if you add cash for capital, that would result in a flat mill rate this year and a lower increase next year. After discussion, she said if all service improvements were done the mill rate would be 37.24 with a median impact of \$8,257.

**• Discussion, Capital Discussion**

**◦ Cash-to-capital contributions, smoothing future debt service impacts**

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY – BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – BUDGET WORKSHOP  
MARCH 12, 2022**

**“ D r a f t ”**

Page | 5

- **Possible Use of a portion of Capital reserve to fund some capital expenses**
- **Possible uses of ARPA Funds**

There was a lot of discussion on capital funding, possibly using a portion of the Capital reserves to fund some capital expenses, and possible ARPA uses, including a Police service/comfort dog, HVAC systems and Police vehicles.

Ms. Mackstutis said after the changes to ARPA funding she feels the revenue should go into the capital account and then take money from there for things like the HVAC system, Tariffville Park, the Police Department, Simsbury Farms, etc. There was also some discussion with Chairman of the Board of Finance, Lisa Heavner, about how to fund different projects. She also spoke about a possible increase in the pension contribution. She is hesitant on decreasing taxes and then increasing them next year.

There was also discussion on the ARPA funding list and how to prioritize the projects further.

There will be further discussions on the budget at the next Board of Selectmen meeting on Monday.

**ADJOURN**

Mr. Wellman made a motion to adjourn at 4:30 p.m. Mr. Askham seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathi Radocchio  
Clerk