

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY – BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – JANUARY 11, 2021**

“Approved”

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CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 6:00 p.m. on ZOOM due to COVID-19. Present were: First Selectman Eric Wellman; Deputy First Selectman Sean Askham; board members Jackie Battos, Mike Paine, Wendy Mackstutis and Chris Peterson. Others in attendance included Town Manager Maria E. Capriola; Deputy Town Manager Melissa Appleby; Finance Director Amy Meriwether; Attorney Robert DeCrescenzo, Director of Social Services Kristen Formanek, Town Engineer Jeff Shea, Simsbury SPIRIT Council Members Nicole Kodak, Cheryl Cook and Tenesha Grant, and other interested parties.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

- Email written comments to ebutler@simsbury-ct.gov by 12 P.M. on Monday January 11, 2021 to be read into the record;
- Email tfitzgerald@simsbury-ct.gov by 12 P.M. on Monday January 11, 2021, to register to address the Board of Selectmen on ZOOM

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

Mr. Wellman read an email from Rick Bush who stated his support for the Simsbury SPIRIT Council and how proud he is that Simsbury is pushing to be more inclusive.

Mr. Wellman read an email from Joan Coe, who spoke about her findings on a Police Department report she obtained through a FOIA request. Ms. Coe also mentioned a sign at the PAC.

PRESENTATIONS

a) SPIRIT Council Presentation

Ms. Formanek gave a brief overview of the SPIRIT Council and their duties before having members from the SPIRIT Council present. Ms. Kodak, Ms. Cook and Ms. Grant presented on what the SPIRIT Council has done since its inception as an official Town Committee. The group presented on the different duties of the sub-committees. The group also stated that one purpose of tonight's presentation was to get the word and mission of SPIRIT out to the public. They wanted to make sure that the group and Town were on the same page about the partnership between SPIRIT and Town.

Board members engaged in a discussion with the members of the SPIRIT Council.

AMENDMENT TO AGENDA

Mr. Wellman asked for a motion to amend the agenda by moving item A under Appointments and Resignations, Appointment of Tenesha Grant to the Police Commission. Mr. Askham moved, Ms. Battos seconded and all were in favor to amend the agenda order.

a) Appointment of Tenesha Grant to the Police Commission

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Ms. Mackstutis moved to effective January 11, 2021, to appoint Tenesha Grant (D) as a regular member to the Police Commission, with a term expiring on January 1, 2025. Mr. Askham seconded. All were in favor.

FIRST SELECTMAN’S REPORT

Mr. Wellman, First Selectman, reviewed his First Selectman’s Report.

TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT

Ms. Capriola, Town Manager, reviewed her Town Manager’s Report.

SELECTMEN ACTION

a) SPIRIT Social Media Request (Twitter)

Ms. Battos made a motion, effective January 11, 2021, to approve the creation of a Simsbury SPIRIT Council Twitter account to be used by the Committee to publicize their efforts, of which Town staff will have oversight.. Ms. Mackstutis seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

b) Contract Amendment – Connecticut Recreational Trail Grant - Multi-use Trail to Curtiss & Pattison Parks

Ms. Capriola gave background about the grant and contract. Town Engineer Jeff Shea gave an overview of the project and how this amendment is helpful to the Town.

Mr. Askham made a motion, Move, effective January 11, 2021, to authorize Maria E. Capriola, Town Manager, to execute the contract amendment from the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) for the Connecticut Trails Program grant for a multi-use trail.

Further move to authorize the Town Manager to execute any and all documents related to this grant award. Mr. Paine seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

c) Designation of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Officer

Mr. Wellman said this item is due to Mr. Tom Hazel being promoted from Code Compliance Officer to Assistant Town Planner. In his prior role as Code Compliance Officer he was designated as the assistant conservation and inland wetlands officer.

Mr. Paine made a motion, effective January 11, 2021 to designate Thomas Hazel as the Conservation and Inland Wetlands Officer. This designation shall remain in effect until revised, rescinded or Mr. Hazel’s separation from service, whichever comes first. Ms. Battos seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

d) Tax Refund Requests

Mr. Askham made a motion, effective January 11, 2021 to approve the presented tax refunds in the amount of \$79,165.14, and to authorize Town Manager, Maria E. Capriola, to execute the tax refunds. Ms. Mackstutis seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

e) Acceptance of Municipal Coronavirus Relief Funds

Ms. Meriwether gave an update on COVID relief funds from the state. Simsbury is going to get \$181,000 based on a formula the State is using for distributing funds to all municipalities. Ms. Meriwether said there are certain areas that the funds can be used and gave potential ways the Town can use the funds. After a question from the Board Ms. Meriwether stated these funds are just for the Town, the BOE has received a separate distribution of funds.

Mr. Askham made a motion, effective January 11, 2021 to accept coronavirus relief funds from the State of CT in the amount of \$181,098. Ms. Battos seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

f) Proposed Final Tax Abatement Agreement for 632 (640) Hopmeadow Street

Mr. Wellman gave background information about this topic. This was originally brought to the Board of Selectmen in May of 2019. EBAD approached the Town for a tax abatement that would coincide with significant investment in their current campus on Hopmeadow Street which included an addition of a large number of high paying jobs. The previous Board of Selectmen that approved the agreement tasked the Town Manager and Town Attorney to negotiate a Tax Abatement Agreement, which is presented to the Board tonight. There was a deviation in the original May 2019 estimated amounts by EBAD that has a positive impact for the Town as more improvement was done than anticipated. Because of this difference in the actual vs. estimated staff wanted to bring this agreement back to the Board of Selectmen for reapproval.

The Board engaged in discussion with staff and the Town Attorney. There was a discussion on tax abatements being discussed in the past with flat rates vs. percentages and how the 2019 approval of percentages helped the town receive more value from this agreement than they would have if they agreed on a flat abatement amount. Discussion also centered around how this agreement had evolved in negotiations from the estimated 2019 one while still staying in the framework that was approved in 2019.

Mr. Askham made a motion, effective January 11, 2021 to approve the Tax Abatement Agreement for 632 (640) Hopmeadow Street and authorize Town Manager Maria E. Capriola to execute the agreement subject to final review and approval of the Agreement by the Town Attorney.

Based on actual investments made by EBAD, we are also seeking for the Board to confirm the final proposed net new tax schedule presented under financial impact. If the Board is in support of the proposed net new tax schedule dated January 2021, the following motion is in order:

Further move that Section 2.2 of the agreement be updated to reflect changes proposed in the net new tax schedule. Mr. Paine seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

b) Aging and Disability Commission Membership Updates

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Ms. Mackstutis made a motion, effective January 11, 2021, to move Susan J. Krinsky (R) from a regular member of the Aging and Disability Commission to an alternate member, with a term expiring January 1, 2022. Ms. Battos seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Ms. Battos made a motion, effective January 11, 2021, to move Cheryl Cook (R) from an alternate member of the Aging and Disability Commission to a regular member, with a term expiring January 1, 2023. Mr. Askham seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

c) Reappointment of Charles Houlihan to the Board of Ethics

Mr. Paine made a motion, effective January 11, 2021, to reappoint Charles Houlihan (D) as a regular member of the Board of Ethics, with a term expiring January 1, 2025. Mr. Peterson seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

d) Resignation of Elizabeth Burt from the Library Board of Trustees

Mr. Askham made a motion, retroactive to December 22, 2020, to accept the resignation of Elizabeth Burt (D) as a regular member of the Library Board of Trustees. Mr. Paine seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

a) Regular Meeting of December 14, 2020

Approved by consensus

LIAISON AND SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a) Personnel** – no report at this time.
- b) Finance** – no report at this time.
- c) Welfare** – no report at this time.
- d) Public Safety** – no report at this time.
- e) Board of Education** – no report at this time.

Mr. Wellman noted that after adjournment there would be a joint special meeting of the Board of Selectmen and Police Commission. It was discussed that a little break would be useful and that the meeting would start at 7:45pm.

ADJOURN

Mr. Askham made a motion to adjourn at 7:37p.m. Mr. Paine seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Fitzgerald
Management Specialist