

## **CALL TO ORDER**

The Board of Selectmen Special Meeting was called to order at 5:31 P.M. on ZOOM due to COVID-19. Present were: First Selectman Eric Wellman; Board members Sean Askham, Jackie Battos, Wendy Mackstutis Michael Paine and Chris Peterson. Others in attendance included Town Manager Maria E. Capriola; Deputy Town Manager Melissa Appleby; Director of Culture, Parks and Recreation Tom Tyburski; Director of Public Works Tom Roy; Library Director Lisa Karim; Director of Finance/Treasurer Amy Meriwether; Board of Education Chair Susan Salina; Board of Education member Jeff Tindall; Parks Superintendent Orlando Casiano; Police Chief Nicholas Boulter; Town Engineer Jeff Shea; Police Commissioner Mike Long; Board of Education member Sharon Thomas; and other interested parties.

## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **PUBLIC AUDIENCE**

- **Email written comments to [ebutler@simsbury-ct.gov](mailto:ebutler@simsbury-ct.gov) by 10:00 AM on Wednesday, March 10, 2021 to be read into the record;**
- **Email [tfitzgerald@simsbury-ct.gov](mailto:tfitzgerald@simsbury-ct.gov) by 10:00 AM on Wednesday, March 10, 2021 to register to address the Board of Selectmen live through Zoom.**

Mr. Wellman read a letter from Helen Peterson who voiced her support of the Meadowood acquisition. Susan Masino spoke about her support of the purchase of Meadowood for its historical value. Lisa Gray spoke about the agency grant application submitted for the board’s consideration from the non-profit organization A Promise To Jordan. Dave Bush spoke in support of the Park and Rec. budget submission and the Meadowood acquisition. Morgan Hilyard, Executive Director of the Simsbury Chamber of Commerce, spoke about tourism in town, the value of the visitor center, and the various events the Chamber works on to draw tourism to Simsbury.

Mr. Wellman stated the one agenda item is to continue the work on the proposed FY22 budget.

## **OVERVIEW OF BUDGET**

### **a) Capital, CNR and Debt Service**

- Pension.

Ms. Meriwether gave an overview of the slide and highlighted the impact on the General Fund, the mill rate and the median home based on the various scenarios. A discussion followed on recommendations, with the understanding that the BOF will have the ultimate decision. The consensus was to recommend the updated mortality tables with the 20-year amortization which would have no impact on the mill rate. The BOF can have further conversations to see if they want to take more aggressive action on this.

- Operating Budget.

Ms. Meriwether made some updates to the figures based off the decisions that were made in the last meeting around the operating budget. This was a starting point and she welcomed updates and adjustments from the board. Mr. Peterson opened a conversation around using caution to what’s been agreed to with some of the outside organizations and the effects it will have in the future. Ms. Askham agreed and said he will be asking for more statistics as SPIRIT develops and this will help determine if they are making a difference, improving,

and enacting change. Mr. Wellman voiced that his opinion was to keep the SPIRIT council funding at the level that has been discussed and to keep all outside agency funding requests at the same level as the current year. Mr. Wellman opened up a discussion around the police officer addition, and the cost associated with this.

Following the discussion, Mr. Askham made a motion to add the police officer to the operating budget in the amount of \$142,342. Mr. Paine seconded the motion. Mr. Askham, Mr. Paine, and Ms. Battos were in favor; Mr. Wellman, Mr. Peterson, and Ms. Mackstutis were opposed. The motion failed 3-3.

Ms. Mackstutis questioned the “registrar increase to keep the budget flat” number of \$25,000, and Mr. Askham said it was a suggestion to be proactive and set money aside into a fund designated for registrar/voting needs and he was in agreement to remove it. Further discussion followed on what line items to add and remove from the spreadsheet and concluded with a serious of votes as follows:

Mr. Askham moved to add the SPIRIT Council, for \$22,000, to the operating budget. Ms. Battos seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Askham moved to add the Parks and Rec. Professional Development, for \$2,500, to the operating budget. Mr. Wellman seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Askham moved to add the Police De-escalation Training, for \$8,612, to the operating budget. Ms. Battos seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Askham moved to add the Library Materials, for \$8,000, to the operating budget. Ms. Battos seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Peterson moved to add the Parks and Rec. Maintenance Technician, for \$96,982, to the operating budget. Mr. Wellman seconded the motion. Mr. Peterson, Mr. Wellman, Ms. Mackstutis, and Mr. Paine were in favor; Mr. Askham and Ms. Battos were opposed. The motion passed 4-2.

Ms. Mackstutis summarized the numbers with result of the votes; \$55 median home impact incorporating everything approved, the 20-year amortization period, the mortality tables, and the current estimate for debt service of 6.76%. Mr. Askham agreed and said what goes out in the mailer is a 3.35% increase to the Town budget. Mr. Wellman suggested that the median increase is included also.

- Capital Wrap-up (Tab 27)

Mr. Askham opened the conversation around the CIP with the guidance received from the Board of Finance to keep the debt service below 8%. He mentioned the intent of the discussion is to see how they can make the Latimer Lane project work while keeping the debt service below the 8% debt service line in the years to come. Ms. Meriwether reviewed a spreadsheet showing recommended projects to be included this year and those to be revised in future years. Mr. Askham explained that these projects to be revisited are still very important, still active, but no longer holds a place on the six-year plan. They may come back on a future CIP.

Mr. Peterson gave some feedback to incorporate the future plans into a visual so they can see the wholistic plans and get a sense of everything upcoming. A discussion followed on the projects, the scope of the work, the priorities and the cost estimates. Consideration was taken into looking at the out years as well as the upcoming CIP year.

Mr. Wellman said they are just showing one way that the model can mathematically work by doing Latimer in the next couple of years and are not committing to a plan for the next 6 years. Mr. Askham agreed and said they are not held accountable for future years. Ms. Meriwether reviewed the highlighted items that were changed or updated to fit within the guidelines including the town hall renovation moved out a year. She noted that several projects will be bonded in two parts so that the funding will be spread out. Meadowood is being presented as half funded with bonds and half cash. Mr. Askham suggested the board needs to come to consensus on both the projects and the recommendation on how to fund them. A discussion followed on funding, the proposed change in strategy, and then a vote was put forward on the Meadowood project.

Mr. Askham made a motion to include the Meadowood acquisition at \$2.5M on the CIP with a recommendation for half bonds, half cash to be determined in conjunction with the BOF. Mr. Wellman seconded the motion. It was discussed. Mr. Askham, Mr. Wellman, Mr. Peterson, Ms. Mackstutis, and Mr. Paine were in favor; Ms. Battos was opposed. The motion passed 5-1.

- CNR Wrap-up (Tab 26)
- Cash-to-capital for ongoing and routine capital needs
- Possible use of a portion of capital reserve to fund some capital expenditures
- Debt Service (Tab 21)

Ms. Capriola reviewed the CNR Breakdown. She indicated that anything listed under “Additional Cash” affects the mill rate; police vehicles, traffic calming and clubhouse repairs, totaling approximately \$110,000. This is equivalent to .045 mills which is less than \$10 a year, or about 83 cents a month. Questions and discussions followed. Ms. Mackstutis asked if there was any Capital Reserve capacity for the police simulator for \$65,000 so as to take advantage of the \$30,000 savings if purchased in 2021. The consensus was to include it and to have a conversation with the BOF.

Ms. Battos asked if the traffic calming could go under Town Aid Road and Mr. Roy said that the priorities for use of Town Aid Road have been identified in the current CNR plan. She also asked if the clubhouse repairs could go under the golf equipment fund and Ms. Capriola said this special revenue fund is for equipment only. Ms. Battos asked if these items could be covered by the Reserve and Ms. Capriola said the more that is taken out of reserve, the less they will have available in future years when debt service is higher.

Further discussions and questions followed to understand options and see where savings can be achieved. Ms. Mackstutis and Mr. Peterson were in agreement that the public should receive more communication around the decisions being made, and Mr. Askham encouraged people to engage more in the process. Ms. Battos asked about using the possible federal money from the American Rescue Plan to alleviate some of the costs and Ms. Capriola said that it could not be used towards tax relief or to apply toward pension obligations. She said it could be used to offset lost revenue due to the pandemic, but more information will follow on this.

#### **b) FY 21/22 Budget Discussion and Adoption**

The meeting continued with budget motions as follows:

Mr. Askham made a motion, effective March 10, 2021 to approve the Board of Selectmen 2021-2022 Operating Budget in the amount of **\$24,887,734**, to include the following changes from the Town Manager’s Proposed Budget:

- \$36,383 – Decrease for Pension
- \$96,982 – Increase for Parks Technician Position
- \$22,000 – Increase for SPIRIT Council

\$2,000 – Increase for Meals on Wheels  
\$2,500 – Increase for Parks Professional Development  
\$8,000 – Increase for Library materials  
\$55,603 – Increase for temporary Assessor position  
\$8,612 – Increase for Police de-escalation training

Mr. Wellman seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Askham made a motion, effective March 10, 2021 to approve the Water Pollution Control 2021-2022 Operating Budget in the amount of **\$5,374,005** (including Avon & Granby CWF share). Mr. Paine seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Askham made a motion, effective March 10, 2021 to approve the Residential Property 2021-2022 Operating Budget in the amount of **\$48,522**. S. Battos seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Askham made a motion, effective March 10, 2021 to approve the Simsbury Parks and Recreation Fund 2021-2022 Operating Budget in the amount of **\$2,159,666**. Ms. Battos seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Askham made a motion, effective March 10, 2021 to approve the Debt Service 2021-2022 Operating Budget in the amount of **\$6,270,881**. Ms. Battos seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Askham made a motion, effective March 10, 2021 to approve the Capital and Non-Recurring Plan for 2021-2022 in the amount of **\$1,868,758** including:

\$416,250 to be funded by the General Fund via the Five-Year Payback Method  
\$449,008 to be funded by the General Fund  
\$51,200 to be funded by Federal or State Grants  
\$373,500 to be funded by the Town Aid Road Fund  
\$95,000 to be funded by the Sewer Use Fund  
\$379,000 to be funded by the Capital Reserve Fund  
\$25,000 to be funded by Anticipated Trade-In Value  
\$27,000 from Project Savings  
\$12,800 from the Dial-A-Ride Fund  
\$40,000 from the Golf Equipment Fund

Ms. Battos seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Askham made a motion, effective March 10, 2021 to add the following new projects to the Capital Improvement Plan for 2021-2022 in accordance with Charter Section 803(b):

Meadowood Acquisition	\$2,515,860
North End Sidewalk Construction	\$810,000
Sewer Lining	\$600,000
Berm Improvements	\$3,250,000

Mr. Peterson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Askham made a motion, effective March 10, 2021 to approve the Capital Improvement Program to include the following projects in 2020-2021, with total funding of **\$48,123,266** for 2021-2022:

Recommended Funding

Meadowood Acquisition	\$2,515,860	Bonds/Cash
Performing Arts Center Parking & Accessibility Improvements	\$700,000	Bonds/Grants
Highway Pavement Management	\$1,205,000	Bonds/Cash/Grants
Sidewalk Reconstruction	\$200,000	Bonds
North End Sidewalk Construction	\$810,000	Grants
Sewer Lining	\$600,000	Sewer Use Fund
Berm Improvements	\$3,250,000	Sewer Use Fund/Grants
Woodland St/Hopmeadow St Sewer Upgrade	\$1,200,000	Sewer Assessment Fund
District Security Improvements	\$250,000	Bonds
SHS Stadium Bleachers/Press Box Replacement	\$600,000	Bonds
Latimer Lane Renovation	\$36,792,406	Bonds/Grants

Mr. Wellman seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Askham made a motion, effective March 10, 2021 to refer the following capital projects to the Planning Commission in accordance with CGS Section §8-24:

Meadowood Acquisition  
Performing Arts Center Parking & Accessibility Improvements  
Highway Pavement Management  
Sidewalk Reconstruction  
North End Sidewalk Construction  
Sewer Lining  
Berm Improvements  
Woodland St/Hopmeadow St Sewer Upgrade  
District Security Improvements  
SHS Stadium Bleachers/Press Box Replacement  
Latimer Lane Renovation

Mr. Paine seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Appleby confirmed the Debt Service numbers was slightly off on the documents and would need to be redone. Mr. Askham made a motion to retract the approval for the Debt Service FY2121-2122 that was previously approved. Mr. Wellman seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Askham made a motion, effective March 10, 2021 to approve the Debt Service 2021-2022 Operating Budget in the amount of **\$6,549,357**. Ms. Battos seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

## **ADJOURN**

Mr. Askham made a motion to adjourn at 9:12 p.m. Ms. Mackstutis seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Marion Lynott  
Commission Clerk