

**Simsbury Board of Finance  
TOWN OF SIMSBURY  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Tuesday, March 10, 2020 at 5:45 P.M.  
Simsbury Town Hall - Main Meeting Room  
933 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, Connecticut**

**PRESENT:** Lisa Heavner, Arthur House, Robert Pomeroy, Linda Schofield

**ALSO PRESENT:** Sean Askham, BOS; Jennifer Batchelar, BOE; Jackie Battos, BOS; Todd Burrick, BOE; Maria Capriola, Town Manager; Jason Casey, BOE Director of Systems Technology; Matthew Curtis, Superintendent of Schools; Representative John Hampton; Amy Meriwether, Director of Finance/Treasurer; Chris Peterson, BOS; Susan Salina, BOE; Kyra Sheehan, BOE Accountant; Neil Sullivan, BOE Director of Personnel; Lydia Tedone, BOE; Jeff Tindall, BOE; Sharon Thomas, BOE; Eric Wellman, First Selectman; Tara Willerup, BOE; Senator Kevin Witkos and other interested parties

**1. Call to Order - Establish Quorum**

Mr. Pomeroy called the meeting to order at 5:52 P.M.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. Presentation: State Budget Updates**

Representative Hampton and Senator Witkos provided updates on the State Budget. Representative Hampton began by noting that the Governor declared a public state of emergency today due to the Coronavirus and that the Legislature will be closed Thursday and Friday. He referenced handouts regarding the current budget status for the Town of Simsbury. He noted they are keeping an eye on Bill 5433, which could impact high-performing districts relative to special education. As requested, he provided a chart showing the last ten years of State aid and income taxes paid, and an update on tolls. Lastly, he added that the bonding package will be completed tomorrow and that they are watching any legislation that could do any harm to the economy and towns. Senator Witkos reported the dollars in the handouts can be counted on, noting the formula has not changed for the ECS. The LOTCIP and Town Aid Road will not be released until the Bond Commission meets at the end of the month. He reported Governor Lamont is focused on transit-oriented development projects, housing and infrastructure. He noted the budget will remain the same and that the Governor is looking at a \$34M revenue increase in this year's budget, much of which is attributable to the 10% corporate surcharge tax, an additional increase on vaping e-cigarettes and about \$7.5M anticipated from a captive reinsurance market. Further, he provided an update on the Coronavirus at the state level. Discussion and questions followed on the STEAP Grant, public transit, and Coronavirus preparations and issues as they relate to the Town.

**4. Presentation: Board of Education 2020/2021 Budget**

Mr. Curtis introduced BOE Accountant Kyra Sheehan and provided a slide presentation on the BOE 2020-21 Budget. He began by going through the budget development process from

November to this meeting. The BOE Budget is \$72,493,061, an increase of \$1,612,083 or 2.27%. Further, he noted factors impacting budget development, including enrollment shifting K-6, the guideline of 2.5% increase, Mill Rate under 40, program improvement, supporting strategic priorities/plan and a pension assumption rate of 6.5%. He noted the balancing of fiscal reality and a vision for continuous improvement. Per pupil expenditure in Simsbury versus area towns was provided, as well as enrollment projections prepared by Milone & MacBroom. A K-12 staffing and enrollment history chart was presented for 2008 to the present. He noted enrollment has stabilized and will remain stable for the next couple of years. Discussion followed regarding enrollment projections. Mr. Curtis noted a decline of 9.59 FTE over the last three budgets. Further, he noted student growth and success as compared to other districts. Questions and discussion followed on how success is measured, capstone requirements and the accountability index. He referenced the drivers of the budget including contractual obligations, program improvements, insurance and pension, and cost saving measures/operational efficiencies. He provided "Roll Forward" 2020-21 personnel drivers, including additions and reductions. Personnel budget themes including academic enhancements, student support and responsible reductions were referenced as well. He reported the projected and proposed use of the non-lapsing account, including a current non-lapsing balance of \$385,000, projected use of \$210,000 for 2019-20 to offset insurance costs and out-of-district placements, and proposed use of \$175,000 for 2020-21 to offset OPEB and pension costs. Lastly, Mr. Curtis noted the non-public school budget 2020-21 increase of 0.91% or \$4,951, totaling \$551,383. Discussion and questions followed. Ms. Sheehan took the board through her handout entitled, "Reserve for Un-Negotiated Contracts FY20 - FY21." Ms. Heavner asked that year-to-year comparisons be provided. Discussion and questions followed regarding the number of administrators relative to enrollment numbers, economies to be made, the growth in numbers of students with needs, shared services, and pensions. Ms. Heavner requested a comprehensive look at utility costs and Ms. Schofield asked for an individual report with class-by-class enrollment. Discussion on class sizes ensued. Mr. Pomeroy acknowledged and thanked the BOE for working hard to meet the guidance given.

Regarding BOE 20/21 capital projects, Mr. Curtis spoke about the significant priority of the Master Facilities Plan and introduced Jason Casey, who spoke about two projects for 2020-21, District Network Infrastructure (\$500,000) and SHS Stadium Bleachers and Press Box Replacement (\$850,000). Mr. Casey reported the district network infrastructure project is the replacement of the district's aging servers, which are now seven years old and require upgrading to Windows 10 as Windows 7 is no longer supported by Microsoft. The SHS stadium bleachers and press box project includes the replacement of the existing home side bleachers and press box which have exceeded their life expectancies. Replacement of the bleachers will also provide ADA compliancy. Questions and discussion followed about looking to other sources for funding the stadium project, safety, town server needs versus school server needs and economies of scale. Detail sheets on these capital projects were requested. Mr. Pomeroy noted two items need to be decided before the public hearing and referendum, including asking the BOE to put in the 6.5% pension plan and looking at the capital projects comprehensively.

At 7:35 P.M. there was a five-minute break. At 7:40 P.M. the meeting resumed.

## **5. Proposed Clean Water Bond Refunding**

Ms. Meriwether referenced her submission in the meeting packet, noting the Town's financial advisors reached out to them about this. The Town may be able to refinance the 2% Clean Water Fund loan to an estimated 0.85% rate, providing an estimated total savings of \$260,000. As the loan is shared with Granby and Avon, Simsbury's portion would be \$175,760, which would go into the Sewer Use Fund.

**MOTION:** Ms. Schofield made a motion to approve this refunding. Ms. Heavner seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **6. Finance Director's Report**

Ms. Meriwether referenced her Finance Director's Report, noting FIA is scheduled to present to the Town on March 23, 2020 to go over responses to the RFQ for record keeping services. Regarding the Town Aid Road Grant, she reported it will be one to two months before funding is received.

Mr. Pomeroy spoke about the need to discuss defined contribution and defined benefit pension plans and whether a formal action against defined benefit is in the purview of the BOF. Ms. Capriola noted the BOS is the ratifying body for all collective bargaining agreements and employee benefits. Discussion followed. Mr. Pomeroy asked that research be done on what the BOF can and cannot do regarding this issue and that it be on the agenda. Further discussion followed.

#### **7. Approval of Minutes - February 18, 2020**

**MOTION:** Ms. Schofield made a motion to approve the February 18, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. Ms. Heavner seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **8. Adjourn**

**MOTION:** Ms. Schofield, Mr. House second, to adjourn at 7:54 P.M.; unanimously approved

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Haberlin  
Commission Clerk