

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Regular Meeting

February 22, 2023

Ms. Susan Salina called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. in the Board of Education conference room.

Roll Call:

Members present: Mmes. Tara Willerup, Lydia Tedone and Jen Batchelar. Messrs. Jeff Tindall, Todd Burrick and Brian Watson.

Members absent: Mmes. Susan Salina and Sharon Thomas.

Also present: Superintendent Matt Curtis, Assistant Superintendent Sue Homrok-Lemke, Assistant Superintendent Neil Sullivan, Director of Finance Amy Meriwether, Director of Infrastructure & Technology Jason Casey, BOE Student Representative Grace Myers and Recording Secretary Katie Wilde.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

Mark Scully, Chairman of the Sustainability Committee, recommended that the town and the BOE hire and share a sustainability coordinator position. He suggested that this position could seek out grants for energy efficiency and renewals, centralize energy billing and address food waste in the schools.

Public Audience

COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS

Grace Myers, noted the SHS students who received recognition from CAS and CIAC. She stated that the girls' basketball and hockey teams are playing in the conference finals. The Battle of the Bands, a student council run event, will be held on Friday.

Communications

Ms. Tedone reported on her attendance at the NSBA Equity Symposium in Washington D.C., as well as meetings with CT legislators at the federal level. She reported on last week's state legislative forum held for BOE members, superintendents and legislative members. Ms. Tedone noted that there is a hearing at the capital on House Bill 5003 concerning education funding. The CAFE Day on the Hill will be March 8. Mr. Curtis pointed out that H.B. 5003 addresses cost sharing, excess cost, tuition and brings improvements to local district funding.

Mr. Sullivan reported that the state is extending free school meals. The program will begin again on March 1.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Approval of Minutes of January 24, 2023 Meeting

Mr. Burrick: MOVE to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2023 meeting.

Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved. Mr. Watson, Ms. Tedone and Ms. Willerup abstained.

Approval of
Minutes of
January 24,
2023

<p>B. Approval of Minutes of February 4, 2023 Workshop</p> <p>Ms. Willerup: MOVE to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2023 workshop.</p> <p>Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.</p>	<p>Approval of Minutes of February 4, 2023 Workshop</p>
<p>C. Personnel</p> <p>Ms. Willerup: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the retirements of Laurel Urda effective February 28, 2023 and Linda Pirek effective June 30, 2023 with personal appreciation for all of the students they touched.</p> <p>Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved.</p>	<p>Personnel</p>
<p>D. Approval of Gift from the American Legion</p> <p>Ms. Tedone: MOVE that the proposed gift of \$2,000 from the Tomalonis Hall American Legion Post 84 Inc. be approved.</p> <p>Ms. Willerup: Seconded. So moved.</p>	<p>Approval of Gift from the American Legion</p>
<p>E. Approval of Gift from Tootin' Hills School PTO</p> <p>Mr. Watson: MOVE that the proposed gift of \$6,116 from the Tootin' Hills PTO be approved.</p> <p>Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.</p>	<p>Approval of Gift from Tootin' Hills School PTO</p>
<p>F. Adoption of Six Year Capital Improvement Plan</p> <p>Mr. Curtis stated that once approved, the six year capital improvement plan will be forwarded to the town for further consideration. Mr. Casey reviewed the items in year one of the plan. This includes \$500,000 toward modular classrooms at Tariffville School, and \$250,000 for district network infrastructure improvements. Mr. Casey noted some of the projects in later years of the plan, stating that plumbing and pavement are areas that will need to be addressed.</p> <p>Mr. Curtis noted the discussion at the budget workshop regarding Squadron Line School. The project has been taken off of the plan as it can't move forward with the BOF debt service plan. If a renovation or build new of Squadron Line can't be done, then other projects at Squadron Line would need to come onto the plan.</p> <p>Mr. Burrick: MOVE that the Board of Education Six Year Capital Improvement Plan for the period 2024-2029 be adopted.</p> <p>Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved.</p>	<p>Adoption of 6 Year CIP</p>
<p><u>INFORMATION AND REPORTS</u></p>	
<p>A. 2023-24 Superintendent's Budget</p>	<p>2023-24 Superintendent's Budget</p>

Mr. Curtis stated that the proposed 2023-24 budget is the culmination of many people's efforts and is grounded in the BOE strategic plan. He reviewed the budget development process. Mr. Curtis discussed the budget themes and priorities. These include meeting increased contractual obligations. He noted the recently adopted SEA contract is affected by the current market. Adjustments for market driven increases in operation costs due to inflation. Addressing enrollment increases driving staffing needs. Special education tuition and transportation. Facilities and maintenance needs. The utilization of non-lapsing funds to offset prior grant funded positions. Offsetting new staffing needs within the budget.

Mr. Curtis presented his proposed 2023-24 budget of \$82,386,678, an increase of \$5,255,859, representing a 6.95% increase over the current year. He addressed his proposed budget related to fixed costs. Fixed costs alone amount to a 6.75% budget increase.

Mr. Curtis addressed per pupil expenditure. He stated this is an audited number and provided comparisons to other districts. He noted that Simsbury's ranking is now more favorable, and we do well with all of our programs compared to the state average.

Mr. Curtis addressed enrollment, noting the projected increase next year of 145 students. He stated that in the past the district was able to offset decreased enrollment with a reduction in positions. Mr. Curtis discussed out of district student placements, stating that there are currently more than 40 outplaced students. He noted that the need continues to increase as does the cost. Mr. Curtis reviewed achievement data points and discussed return on investment.

Mr. Curtis presented the main budget drivers. He stated that contractual obligations equate to a 3.91% increase, just over \$3 million. The addition of 2 certified FTE is needed to address increased enrollment. The addition of 2 certified special education teachers is needed to address caseload size. A \$19,057 increase in non-certified staff is needed for extra hours of coverage during the school day.

Mr. Curtis reviewed market driven increases in the areas of transportation, utilities, supplies/textbooks/services and software/technology. These increases total 0.63% or \$482,929. Mr. Curtis noted that these are not improvement initiatives, rather dollars needed to run the business today.

Mr. Curtis reviewed prior year deficits in the areas of special education, facilities maintenance and legal fees. These amount to \$656,118 or 0.85%. Mr. Curtis reviewed the reductions to the budget which include a non-lapsing phase in of \$354,700 (0.46%) and the reallocation of current staff/staffing reductions of \$475,380 (0.62%). These reductions are necessary to reach 6.95%.

Mr. Curtis noted the significant increase in health insurance of \$1,355,858 or 1.76%. He stated that this is a more significant increase than in prior years. Mr. Curtis provided a summary of the main drivers of the budget.

In response to Ms. Willerup, Mr. Curtis confirmed that no new buses are included in the budget. Mr. Tindall asked if bus purchases would be delayed by one year. Mr. Casey responded yes, but that some of our buses are 12 years old and the plan is to replace them at 10 years. Mr. Tindall pointed out the 10 year average of BOE budget

increases is 1.74% and we have a lower per pupil expenditure cost than the state average. He stated that with the increase in enrollment and inflation we are reaching a perfect storm.

Ms. Tedone commended the staff for reducing the 9.35% budget presented at the workshop to 6.95%. She stated that other districts are in the same situation. Mr. Curtis noted that Simsbury is unique with the increase enrollment which is a compounding factor. Mr. Burrick stated that the reduction from 9.35% to 6.95% was well thought out and responsible.

Mr. Watson asked if the Latimer Lane School project has any effect on the budget. Mr. Curtis responded no, that the bonding for that project is within the BOF debt policy. Ms. Meriwether noted that the operating budget doesn't include debt. All debt is held by the town.

B. Quarterly Budget Analysis

Ms. Meriwether stated there are no significant changes from quarter 1 to quarter 2. Special Education and outplacement transportation could go over budget. She stated she will provide information on how to address the deficit in the next few weeks.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Willerup: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Ms. Tedone: Seconded. So moved.

Jennifer Batchelar
Secretary

Katie Wilde
Recording Secretary

Quarterly Budget
Analysis

Public Audience

Adjournment