Town of Simsbury
Board of Finance
Regular Meeting Minutes - Amended July 21, 2026
June 16, 2026

Present:
Members in attendance: Lisa Heavner, Regina Pynn, Art Wallace, Mike Doyle, and Bert Helfand.

Others in attendance included: Kelsey Chamberlain, Deputy Finance Director; Marc Nelson, Town Manager; Wendy Mackstutis, First Selectman; Diana Yeisley, Selectman; Tom Tyburski, Director of Culture, Parks, and Recreation; Karin Stewart, Chief (SVAA); Russell Regenauer, EMT (SVAA); Brian Clancy, President (SVAA); and Chris Kelly, Vice President (SVAA).

Call to Order:
Ms. Heavner called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m.in the Main Meeting Room in the Simsbury Town Hall.

Pledge of Allegiance:
Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Helfand made a motion to amend the agenda to add item (c) for a supplemental appropriation in the amount of $10,000 for the purchase of a hot water heater for the Simsbury Farms Golf Clubhouse. Ms. Pynn seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Audience:
None

Presentation: Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance Association:
Ms. Heavner said that Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance Association (SVAA) reached out during the budget process to request a presentation to the Board of Finance on their financial and service model.

Ms. Stewart walked through the financial model for SVAA. She said that the rates are set by the State of CT, and reviewed the 2025 rates for different types of transports. The rates dictate the amounts that SVAA can bill to Medicaid, Medicare, and private insurance. Ms. Stewart reviewed a sample breakdown of rates, which typically results in an amount that is uncollectable. Members asked about the breakdown of the transports between Medicare, Medicaid, private pay, and uninsured. SVAA indicated that just over half are either private pay or uninsured.

Mr. Wallace asked about how actual costs compare with the billable rates; Mr. Regenauer noted that the Town and SVAA came together around the staffing of the second ambulance because the costs associated with this unit are fully not covered by additional calls. He said that the established rates do not cover "preparedness," which is what the Town is interested in.

Ms. Stewart reviewed historical 911 dispatches, noting how variable the call volume is and therefore how difficult it is to predict. Ms. Heavner asked what SVAA's level of reserves is. Mr. Regenauer said that the operating budget is approximately $1.6 million and the reserves are around $50,000. He said the want to build this up to about $300,000 which would be 20-25% of the operating expenses.

Mr. Regenauer reviewed SVAA's revenue forecasting methodology, which uses factors such as dispatch

volume growth rate, SVAA response rate, percentage of calls transported, percentage of billing allowed and collected, expense growth rate, and revenue growth rate. For 2026, SVAA is projecting 1,850 transports, which could be 100 higher or lower depending on the deviation.

Mr. Wallace noted that SVAA has fixed costs and a variable revenue source. Mr. Regenauer confirmed and also noted that SVAA has very little control over the revenue source. Mr. Wallace asked if any of the costs could become more variable; Mr. Regenauer said that approximately 80% of the costs are wages. Ms. Stewart said there are 22 employees, six of which are full-time and the rest are per diem. Discussion ensued regarding the staffing model and the costs related to staffing regardless of call volume.

Ms. Heavner asked about projected increases in personnel costs. Mr. Regenauer said that this reflects a need to remain competitive in the market. He said that SVAA essentially commits to running one and a half ambulances per day, and that is a sunk cost in terms of labor. Mr. Wallace noted that SVAA covers about 80 percent of its expenses with its revenue, even though it only collects 50 percent of what it bills. Mr. Regenauer said that if SVAA could collect on everything that they are permitted to by the state, they would be in a position of making a profit. Mr. Doyle noted that SVAA only gets paid if they have a transport, even if they treat someone. Ms. Stewart said that Medicare treats them like a transport service, and that only recently have they been able to bill for a "treat in place." However, it is difficult to enforce payment on those types of calls. Ms. Heavner asked if Social Services could assist with those types of calls. Mr. Nelson said they could if residents call Social Services. Ms. Stewart said they are notified and help after the fact.

Mr. Nelson said that there is no billing for the idle time that an ambulance may spend at a hospital, as well as the time to travel back to town. He said we are starting to pay more attention to "release time," mutual aid time, and other relevant data points.

Mr. Regenauer returned to the forecasting model, noting that revenue is project at $1.3 million for 2026. A reduction in call volume can significantly reduce revenues. Mr. Regenauer noted that one of the things they needed to talk about is how SVAA could work with the Town, given that variances in call volume and revenue cannot be known ahead of time. He noted that when revenues were above budget, they are able to build liquidity, but when revenues come in below budget, they may need some help. Ms. Heavner asked Mr. Nelson if one of the things the Town could consider is a prefunded loan to help with cash flow variances, if legally permissible. Mr. Regenauer said that they can also address cash flow issues through a bank loan. Ms. Heavner asked about SVAA's fundraising levels. Mr. Regenauer said that SVAA received its last COVID relief funding in 2025 for payroll retention.

Mr. Regenauer presented a slide on Town funding which includes a need for assistance in the amount of approximately $360,000 2027-2028, approximately $200,000 in 2028-2029, and approximately $200,000 in 2029-2030 plus a contribution to an ambulance replacement. Discussion ensued regarding the break-even point for the second ambulance; Mr. Regenauer said we would need six or seven more transports per day. He also noted that the mutual calls out and mutual aid calls in last year were both approximately 250.

Mr. Wallace asked about the coverage ratio for staffing. Mr. Regenauer said that mutual aid is required for approximately 250 calls per year and that if we removed the second ambulance, that number would increase by approximately 700. He said a typical shift is twelve hours. In this industry, it would be difficult to deviate from that norm. Ms. Pynn asked how the Town and Board of Education benefit from SVAA's services. Ms. Stewart said SVAA provides standby services at the concerts, which is a paid service. Mr. Regenauer said they do offer classes for a small fee, and seeks grants when possible.

Ms. Stewart and Mr. Regenauer reviewed demographic data related to calls, as well as response time data. They noted that mutual aid represents 9 percent of call volume, and discussion ensued regarding the increased response time related to mutual aid calls.

Ms. Heavner requested a cost per capita. Mr. Kelly said that he is still working on finalizing his analysis, but that it ranges statewide from $2.35 to $85 per capita. He said Simsbury is at $6.53 per capita and referenced some surrounding towns' data points. He said he is finalizing the data and will share the research when completed.

Finance Director's Report (Pages 1-8):

Ms. Chamberlain said that there is nothing new regarding supplemental appropriations on the report, but that there will be supplemental appropriations on the agenda tonight.

Ms. Heavner asked about the federal funds that were recently applied for. Mr. Nelson said that we did apply for Congressionally Directed Spending for Eno Hall, the splash pad, and berm at WPCA. So far we have only heard back on the Eno request, which was denied.

Ms. Chamberlain said we are waiting to hear back on the CRCOG LOTCIP grant and DEEP grant, with notifications expected at the end of the summer or early fall.

In regards to savings initiatives, Ms. Chamberlain noted the bullet proof vest grant under the Police Department, which saved approximately $10,000. She said that Human Resources is now using Retiree First, which reduces monthly costs from $25,000 to $17,000.

Ms. Chamberlain said that the fraud risk assessment has been forwarded to department heads and relevant staff and that we are working on the implementation of the recommendations. Ms. Heavner requested a copy of the finalized policy.

Regarding the investments, Ms. Chamberlain said that we closed a CD in early June and have no open CDs currently. She said we will review new CDs in the new fiscal year.

In regards to revenues, Ms. Chamberlain directed the Board to page 4, noting that we received $340,000 for delinquent payments. Ms. Heavner asked how many years the delinquencies cover, and Mr. Nelson said staff would check on this.

In regards to expenditures, Ms. Chamberlain said we are projected to come in under budget by $1.47 million and that we do not anticipate major changes between now and the end of the fiscal year. Ms. Heavner noted that approximately $400,000 of the savings is related to debt service costs, and another portion is due to the vacancy factor.

Ms. Heavner asked if there is anything to report on health insurance. Mr. Nelson said there is nothing new to report. Ms. Heavner asked Mr. Nelson for a July quarterly update on Health.

Ms. Heavner asked for an update on the vehicle policy. Mr. Nelson said it is still in progress and that we are incorporating the Police Department's policy into this comprehensive policy.

Ms. Heavner asked about the Town's purchasing card (PCard) policy. Mr. Nelson said we have a strong policy. Ms. Chamberlain said that approximately 35-40 Town and Board of Education employees have a PCard. Ms. Heavner asked Mr. Nelson for a copy of the policy. Mr. Nelson noted that neither the Town

Manager nor the First Selectmen have Pcards.

Mr. Nelson requested the Board move up the agenda item on the supplemental appropriation of the hote water heater at Simsbury Farms.

Mr. Helfand made a motion to reorder the agenda and discuss agenda item (c) before the Vacancy Sub-Committee Update. Ms. Pynn seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

c) Supplemental Appropriation – Hot Water Heater for the Simsbury Farms Golf Clubhouse

Mr. Helfand made a motion to reorder the agenda and discuss agenda item (c) before the Vacancy Sub-Committee Update. Ms. Pynn seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

This item was discussed prior to the Vacancy Sub-Committee Update.

Mr. Tyburski said that the clubhouse was built in 2002 and that the original equipment is still there. He said there was discoloration in the water, and some leaking from the hot water heater. He said it is inspected annually, so this is a recent problem and it is just at the end of its useful life. Mr. Tyburski said that the original quotes came in between $33,000-$48,000 but we learned that the existing unit is larger than we need. We received four quotes under $10,000 for a unit that is sized for our needs. Mr. Tyburski said that we hope to get the work done this week. Ms. Heavner said there is plenty of money in the Simsbury Farms reserve to cover this.

Mr. Doyle made a motion, effective June 16, 2026 to approve a supplemental appropriation in the amount of up to $10,000 for the purchase of a new hot water heating system at the Simsbury Farms Golf Clubhouse to be funded with fund balance from the Simsbury Farms special revenue fund. Ms. Pynn seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Vacancy Sub-Committee Update:

Ms. Heavner said that she shared a letter from Sarah Nielsen of the Main Street Partnership regarding a history of how this group was started and what they are working on. Ms. Heavner asked Mr. Nelson to share information regarding the scope of the problem of these vacancies, and potential tax revenue at risk. Mr. Nelson said that the committee is likely to issue a report with actionable items in the next couple of months. He said three goals of the group are to: identify spaces for adaptive reuse; identify what programs or incentives could assist in development or expansion; and review permit processes for potential improvements. He said the committee meets every couple of weeks and is researching what other towns are doing as well.

Mr. Nelson said that our total commercial properties make up $230 million of assessed value, which represents $7.7 million in potential tax revenue. He said that 10-20 properties are vacant, and we can expect some properties could drop in value by 50 percent. Even the occupied properties are less stable in terms of occupancy. He said we are analyzing the use of these properties through their income and expense statements. Mr. Nelson said that we do not want to assume a wide scale risk to commercial properties in the next revaluation, but that certain properties are at a certain level of risk; this is what we are trying to quantify in terms of risk level. He said that this figure is probably 5-7% of the $7.7 million.

Mr. Nelson said that that we are planning to go out to bid for the revaluation company and that the recommendation will likely be to have one company for commercial and one for everything else. Mr. Nelson

indicated they would reach out to the Board of Finance to assist with the selection of the company to ensure there are a lot of eyes on this since it is a very important selection. Discussion ensued regarding improvements to the revaluation process and consistency with national standards.

Mr. Nelson said that we expect a larger number of appeals to the Board of Assessment appeals during the next revaluation. He said one member of the Board of Selectmen suggested having any appeals over $1 million not be heard by the BAA, and have the property owners go straight to the appellate court instead. Ms. Pynn spoke to her experience on the BAA, sharing that the BAA and Town Assessor have always collaborated on how to best support the Town. She said that oftentimes, the larger property owners intend to take it to court and therefore treat the BAA as just a necessary step in the process. She said the BAA needs better data in their decision making, and determination should be made as to whether spending more time on these complex cases actually saves the town money. Mr. Nelson said that the full Board of Selectmen needs to weigh in on a potential policy on this. Ms. Pynn said that open communication with the BAA on this topic would be welcome.

Ms. Pynn inquired about why the commercial properties being discussed did not include industrial space. Mr. Nelson said it is because it is a smaller subset and does not have a big impact across the entire grand list. Ms. Heavner noted that commercial vacancy is currently seeing a bigger problem than industrial. Ms. Pynn noted she has an industrial background and there is a lot of innovation in this field that could be helpful. Mr. Nelson noted he will include the industrial data.

Ms. Pynn noted that boards have received feedback that the development created within town has created transportation. Is transportation review within the scope of the sub-committee? Nelson stated it is not within the Main Street Partnership's scope of work but should be reviewed internally.

Mr. Helfand inquired if there were any specific business sectors that have a demand for commercial space. Mr. Nelson said he believes it would be healthcare due to competition and services demand.

Ms. Heavner noted that we would keep the "Vacancy Sub-Committee Update" as a standing agenda item going forward.

Agenda Items:

d) Supplemental Appropriation – AARP Community Challenge Flagship Grant (Page 9)

The Board discussed a request to approve a supplemental appropriation in the amount of $14,000 for the purchase of Mobi Mats to improve accessibility at various Town facilities. The funding for the purchase is provided through an AARP Community Challenge Grant, and any unspent grant funds at the end of Fiscal Year 2026 will be carried forward into Fiscal Year 2027.

Ms. Yeisley provided background on the grant application process and explained that the need for Mobi Mats was identified to improve accessibility for residents with mobility challenges. The mats will allow individuals using wheelchairs, walkers, and other mobility devices to access areas that may otherwise be difficult to navigate, including fields and event spaces. It was noted that the mats are portable, will not remain permanently installed, and will be deployed and removed after each event.

The mats will be owned by the Town and coordinated for use among various facilities. Members noted the importance of establishing appropriate procedures for deployment, transportation, storage, and staff training to ensure safe use. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Heavner inquired about the lifespan of the mats. Ms. Yeisley noted the lifespan to be approximately 25 years or more and confirmed that the grant funding includes related costs such as delivery and associated equipment.

Ms. Pynn made a motion, effective June 16, 2026 to approve a fiscal year 2026 budget supplemental appropriation in the amount of $14,000 for the purchase of Mobi Mats to improve access to various town facilities and to approve a supplemental appropriation for fiscal year 2027 budget for the expenditure of the remaining dollars from the original $14,000 that is unspent in fiscal year 2026. Mr. Helfand seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

e) Capital Planning Discussion for July

The Board discussed capital planning priorities, long-term funding strategies, and the structure and presentation of the Town's capital budget.

Ms. Heavner noted this is not a discussion about capital budgeting but rather what topics they would like to discuss at their July meeting.

Mr. Nelson lead the discussion by stating the there needs to be a clear prioritization framework for capital projects. Another item that is important to the team is the guidance that the Board of Finance has still in place regarding the debt limit of $5M per year or $10M bi-annually. He understood this to be temporary guidance to smooth debt and would like guidance on when and if this restriction will be lifted. Lastly, the status of the Squadron Line project.

Mr. Nelson discussed the need for clarity related to the cash component for capital planning during the budget process. He noted that the cash for capital has been coming from year-end savings from surpluses. He has concerns that as the town budgets more tightly, the surplus will continue to decline and use of cash will be diminished. He would like to see the cash competent shifted into the operating budget prior to the diminishment of the surpluses. He will leave this to the Boards to drive the discussion on this issue and not something he plans to bring to the table in July as it is not a priority of management. Ms. Heavner requested for the next budget cycle they discuss having a "cash for capital" line item in the budget which will provide a target balance for management to utilize during the budget process. She also would like to see a contribution to cash for capital as there is a dip in debt service.

Ms. Heavner noted it would be helpful to review the capital projects submission sheets and make sure they are completed consistently and all information is being provided. Ms. Pynn underlined the importance of having a consistently presented template. Mr. Nelson noted that was also helpful for the public.

Ms. Heavner requested an updated budget model for the July meeting showing the impact of the Squadron Line project the same year as the revaluation. She stated if we could get the model in advance of the next meeting, that would be great.

Discussion ensued regarding debt service, upcoming capital needs, prioritization between the Town and Board of Education projects and major long-term projects. Mr. Wallace noted that we need some plausible combinations of what we think that prioritization looks like and play it against a couple of different scenarios of how we fund it.

Ms. Heaver noted that the Squadron Line project is a 20-year commitment and there are competing

priorities that we are aware of including roof replacements, major equipment etc. Ms. Heavner has requested a 20-year plan for major capital. Mr. Wallace added it needs to be a plausible scenario and comprehensive.

Review of Minutes:

f) May 19, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes (Pages 10-28)

Mr. Helfand made a motion, effective June 16, 2026, to approve the minutes of the May 19, 2026 Regular Meeting. There was no formal second to the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Communications:

g) Fixed Asset Disposition Policy (Pages 29-34)

Ms. Heavner said that they had requested a copy of the capital asset disposition policy. She said for the public that this policy does not include the disposition of real property or open space it is for fixed assets such as vehicles or equipment. She said this is their way of ensuring public assets are disposed through a process that protects public value.

Ms. Heavner would like a disclaimer included in the policy that this policy does not include disposition related to town owned land or open space. Mr. Nelson said he will add this to the policy. She would also like language added related to grant funded assets and technology disposals and data destruction. Mr. Doyle noted that the technology task force has already completed a policy for technology disposals and data destruction. Ms. Heavner would like this reference added to the policy.

h) Assessment Taxable and Exemptions State Reports: M-13 & M13a (Pages 35-42)

Ms. Heavner noted these reports are filed annually with (Office of Policy & Management) OPM that summarizes the grand list by category. She specifically noted the commercial and industrial rates as it related to their earlier conversation.

i) Simsbury Performing Arts Center Band Shell Expansion Project Update (Pages 43-61)

Mr. Wallace inquired about the value of the contingency in the amount $184,555. There are change orders included in the submitted materials and he wasn't sure if those should be subtracted. Mr. Nelson said he will have Tom Roy send an email to the Board of Finance clarifying the amount of contingency to be left over as well as the completion timeline.

j) Board of Education Tecton Presentation (Pages 62-74)

Ms. Heavner noted this is the first look of the potential Squadron Line project and they wanted to make sure all information is out there as early as possible.

Adjourn:

Mr. Wallace made a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of Finance at 8:25 p.m. Ms. Pynn seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Appleby
Budget Director