

SIMSBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
March 21, 2023
BOE Conference Room
6:30 p.m.
AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- III. PUBLIC AUDIENCE
- IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS
- V. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS
 - A. Approval of Minutes of February 22, 2023 Meeting EXHIBIT I
 - B. Approval of Minutes of February 28, 2023 Meeting EXHIBIT II
 - C. Personnel EXHIBIT III
 - D. Approval of Lexy Adams World Language Scholarship EXHIBIT IV
 - E. Approval of Gertrude Banks Scholarship EXHIBIT V
 - F. Adoption of Revised 2023-24 School Budget EXHIBIT VI
- VI. PUBLIC AUDIENCE
- VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

It is anticipated that the Board of Education will enter Executive Session to discuss a legal matter.
- VIII. FUTURE BUSINESS
 - A. Next Board Meeting, Tuesday, March 28, 2023,
Tootin' Hills School

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**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 CABE 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

B. Approval of Minutes of February 4, 2023 Workshop

Ms. Willerup: MOVE to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2023 workshop.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

Approval of Minutes of February 4, 2023 Workshop

C. Personnel

Personnel

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.

Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved.

D. Approval of Gift from the American Legion

Approval of Gift from the American Legion

Ms. Tedone: MOVE that the proposed gift of \$2,000 from the Tomalonis Hall American Legion Post 84 Inc. be approved.

Ms. Willerup: Seconded. So moved.

E. Approval of Gift from Tootin' Hills School PTO

Approval of Gift from Tootin' Hills School PTO

Mr. Watson: MOVE that the proposed gift of \$6,116 from the Tootin' Hills PTO be approved.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

F. Adoption of Six Year Capital Improvement Plan

Adoption of 6 Year CIP

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.

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.

Mr. Burrick: MOVE that the Board of Education Six Year Capital Improvement Plan for the period 2024-2029 be adopted.

Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. 2023-24 Superintendent's Budget

2023-24 Superintendent's Budget

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

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Special Meeting

February 28, 2023

Ms. Susan Salina called the virtual meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call:

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

Members absent: Ms. Sharon Thomas.

Also present: Superintendent Matt Curtis, Assistant Superintendent Sue Homrok-Lemke, Assistant Superintendent Neil Sullivan, Director of Finance Amy Meriwether and Recording Secretary Katie Wilde.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Adoption of 2023-24 School Budget

Ms. Salina asked about delaying the purchase of buses. Mr. Curtis responded that the buses we have now are up to standards and the only concern is the expense if a larger repair was required on one of the older buses. Mr. Tindall questioned what would happen if one of the older buses broke down and there is a lead time to purchase a new bus. Mr. Sullivan explained that the school district owns 29 buses, but Salter's owns their own buses as well. We would have the option to lease a bus from Salter's if needed.

Ms. Salina noted the board has gone thoroughly through the budget and she stated she is impressed with the reduction from 9.35% to 6.95% resulting from the budget workshop. She stated that inflation and increased enrollment have created a unique situation. Ms. Salina pointed out this is the largest budget increase in the 16 years she has been a board member, and in each budget cycle careful and thoughtful decisions have been made.

Mr. Burrick: MOVE that the Board of Education adopt the 2023-24 Public School budget in the amount of \$82,386,678 which represents an increase of \$5,255,859 or 6.95%.

Ms. Tedone: Seconded. So moved.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Willerup: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 6:37 p.m.

Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved.

Jennifer Batchelar
Secretary

Katie Wilde
Recording Secretary

Adoption of
2023-24 School
Budget

Adjournment

MEMORANDUM TO: Members of the Board of Education
FROM: Matthew T. Curtis
DATE: March 21, 2023
RE: Personnel Recommendations

I. Resignations

Valerie Podolski

Experience 1 year
Assignment Music Teacher, Latimer Lane
Effective March 1, 2023

Kori Haven

Experience 18 years
Assignment Elementary Teacher, Latimer Lane
Effective June 30, 2023

BOARD MOTION:

“MOVE that the Board of Education accept the resignations of Valerie Podolski effective March 1, 2023 and Kori Haven effective June 30, 2023.”

MTC:cdf

TO: Members of the Board of Education
FROM: Matthew T. Curtis, Superintendent of Schools
DATE: March 21, 2023
RE: The Lexy Adams Language Scholarship

The Board of Education approves all proposed scholarships available to Simsbury Public School students. Below are the guidelines for the Lexy Adams Language Scholarship. This has been reviewed by Steve Patrina, Simsbury High School Principal, Greg Stillman, Director of School Counseling, and central office administrators. We recommend the approval of this scholarship.

This scholarship will commemorate the life and interests of Lexy Adams who would have graduated in the Class of 2023 and was very interested in the study of languages.

AMOUNT: One scholarship in the amount of \$1,500 awarded to a graduating senior in the Class of 2023.

CRITERIA: A world language student in the Class of 2023 who is continuing on to college.

SELECTION: SHS Scholarship Committee

DISBURSEMENT: A check will be presented directly to the recipient on Awards Night by a SHS administrator.

CONTACT: David and Kim Adams
9 Gretel Lane
Simsbury, CT 06070
Phone: 860-651-5264 / 860-670-0151
Email address: David_X_Adams@yahoo.com

“MOVE that the Board of Education approve the Lexy Adams Language Scholarship, to be disbursed in 2023.”

MTC:da

TO: Members of the Board of Education
FROM: Matthew T. Curtis, Superintendent of Schools
DATE: March 21, 2023
RE: The Gertrude Banks Scholarship

The Board of Education approves all proposed scholarships available to Simsbury Public School students. Below are the guidelines for the Gertrude Banks Scholarship. This has been reviewed by Steve Patrina, Simsbury High School Principal, Greg Stillman, Director of School Counseling, and central office administrators. We recommend the approval of this scholarship.

This scholarship will honor Gertrude Bank's tireless dedication in support of the success of Open Choice students. Ms. Banks was the Open Choice Liaison for the Simsbury Public Schools and passed away on Friday, February 24, 2023, after a brief illness. She supported our students who are part of the Open Choice program across all seven schools, with a primary focus on those at the middle and high school. She provided academic and social support to students and families in a myriad of ways and became the "go to" person for many of our students.

AMOUNT: One scholarship in the amount of \$2,000 awarded to a graduating senior starting with the Class of 2023.

CRITERIA: A graduating Open Choice student, who has demonstrated growth in academics, moral character, and leadership, particularly in social justice /DEIB and is planning to attend college.

SELECTION: SHS Scholarship Committee

DISBURSEMENT: A check will be presented directly to the recipient on Awards Night by Robert Banks, husband and/or Angela Griffin her close friend/colleague

CONTACT: Michelle Henry
11 Farmview Ln., Granby, CT 06035
Phone: 860-392-9026
Email address:mhenry@simsburyschools.net

"MOVE that the Board of Education approve the Gertrude Banks Scholarship, to be disbursed starting in 2023."

MTC:da

TO: Members of the Board of Education

FROM: Matthew T. Curtis, Superintendent of Schools

DATE: March 21, 2023

RE: Adoption of Revised 2023-24 School Budget

Following the presentation of the Board of Education budget to the Board of Finance on March 7th, the Board of Finance requested that the Board of Education have further discussions regarding the submitted budget to determine if we can reduce our operating costs between \$750,000 and \$800,000, the equivalent of about a 1% reduction from the 6.95% adopted budget. The Board of Finance cited concerns over the recent town revaluation and the property tax stresses that many residents would face at the proposed budget level.

The adopted 6.95% budget addressed budget themes and priorities for 2023-24: Market-driven increases in contractual obligations and operational costs; responding to increased enrollment-driven staffing needs in both general education and special education; responding to various facility and maintenance needs; and offsetting new staffing needs by reallocating current funding resources. Below is a summary of the main drivers representing the fixed costs which have been impacted significantly by inflationary challenges and market adjustments.

Contractual Obligations	\$3,010,992	3.91%
Enrollment Driven Staffing	\$ 409,437	0.53%
Market Driven Increases	\$ 482,929	0.63%
Prior Year Deficits	\$ 656,118	0.85%
Insurance	\$1,625,465	2.11%
Offsets	\$ (829,080)	-1.08%
Total	\$5,355,861	6.95%

This evening the administration has prepared information for a budget-reduction discussion that addresses the request of the Board of Finance.

MTC:kdw