

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
(to be approved at next BOS meeting)
COLUMBIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Tuesday, February 8, 2011- 7:00 pm.
Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT. 06237

Selectmen Present: First Selectman Carmen Vance. Selectmen Richard Szegda, Rebecca Stearns, Robert Hellstrom and William O'Brien.

Also Present: Town Administrator Jonathan Luiz.

CALL TO ORDER: C. Vance called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. **OLD BUSINESS**
3. **NEW BUSINESS**
- 3.1 **BUDGET WORKSHOP:** J. Luiz discussed an overview of the FY '11-'12 Operating Budget with the BOS. He explained that mill rate projections will be determined on the state budget figures that are expected to be released from the governor on Wednesday, February 16, 2011. He explained that currently the Board of Selectmen's Operating Budget consists of an increase of 2.6%. J. Luiz distributed the BOS employee salary schedule and said that he has assumed that all employees will receive a two percent raise, since that is what union employees are in line to receive.

J. Luiz reviewed the Executive and Administrative Services Department and discussed increases. He stated that the group insurance line item has an increase that is significantly lower than was originally anticipated. He pointed out that the fuel line item has increased a bit due to the cost of fuel. J. Luiz explained that contracted services shows a slight increase due to the fact that the copier/printer in the Administration Office is utilized by other Town departments. For example, the Senior Center newsletter, "The GEM" is printed off the copier/printer. J. Luiz stated that the professional dues line item, which includes dues to COST, CCM and WINCOG has gone up a bit due to WINCOG fees increasing.

J. Luiz discussed the proposed increase for the Town Attorney fees in the Judicial / Legal department. He reviewed a spreadsheet that breaks down fees that the Town has paid for legal representation in Fiscal Year 2010-2011. Discussion followed.

J. Luiz reviewed the Registrar of Voters increase with the BOS. He explained that the significant increase in General Supplies is due to the need to purchase more ballots and election voting machine maintenance.

J. Luiz explained that the budget for the Town Treasurer has been eliminated. He stated that the costs for the Treasurer will be included in the Finance budget going forward because the Treasurer is part of the Finance Department.

J. Luiz discussed the 4% increase in the Assessment Department. He explained that the increase is partially due to GIS services provided by WINCOG as well as the transportation line item. He stated that transportation line item has increased because it is a revaluation year and that Assessor will be traveling more.

J. Luiz explained that the Tax Collector will be including return envelopes when mailing out tax bills, which has not been done in previous years. This consists of a small increase in General Supplies. He also stated that the software fee has increased a bit as well as state DMD fees.

J. Luiz stated that the increase in the Public Records Department, Professional Improvements line item is required to send the two Assistants to the Town Clerk to Town Clerk School. J. Luiz did explain that the Town Clerk asked for an increase in staff hours. At this point in the budget process, J. Luiz did not increase any hours for any department in a manner that would result in a dollar increase due to the fact that the mill rate determination is still unknown.

J. Luiz discussed the Financial Planning and Audit budget and stated that the Town is responsible for paying for the audits conducted in the Finance Department and for the Saxton B. Little Free Library.

J. Luiz explained that the salary line item in the Finance Department shows an increase due to the fact that the Treasurer has been added to the Finance Department's budget.

J. Luiz discussed the increase in the Social Services salaries line item. He explained that the proposed increase is so the Meals-On-Wheels driver will be earning an hourly rate that is equal to the Kitchen Aide/Site Server. The rate actually earned by the driver in the past was higher than what was approved of in the budget. The adjustment in the FY11-12 budget will rectify that long-standing problem.

J. Luiz explained that the grant to NECASA has decreased due to population comparisons with other towns. Therefore, there is a decrease in the Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Grant line item to NECASSA.

J. Luiz discussed the Elderly Services (Commission on Aging) budget. He explained that the McSweeney Center no longer is the only facility nearby that offers a dental clinic. Generations in Willimantic has a newly renovated clinic. Furthermore, McSweeney's building is in a very poor state, with mold being an issue. Based on his discussions with Commission on Aging Chair Phyllis Starkel, J. Luiz suggested that the town eliminate donations to the McSweeney Center,

and instead encourage Willimantic/Windham seniors to visit the Beckish Senior Center. Members of the BOS concurred. C. Vance will be sending a letter to the McSweeney Center welcoming their seniors to visit the Beckish Senior Center anytime.

J. Luiz explained that since the Administrative Secretary to the Director of Senior Services position has been eliminated, those funds in the salary line item will be designated for a Senior Center Floater when needed. He stated that the Senior Center budget has been reduced overall, with the exception being the fuel and electricity line items, which increased considerably.

J. Luiz discussed two service options that AHM provided. One proposal consisted of a 10 hour work week for an Elementary School Student Support Services Counselor, while the other proposal consisted of a 16 hour work week for the counselor. R. Szegda explained that a 10 hour work week would consist of one day of service as well as attending meetings, and that a 16 hour work week would be 2 days of service. C. Vance asked why it is necessary to bring in an outside counselor to the school when the school currently has one on staff. R. Szegda explained that it is not the schools current social worker's responsibility to handle the types of issues that the Student Support Services Counselor would. He explained that the Juvenile Review Board (JRB) has proven to make positive differences in the lives of youths in town. J. Luiz stated that AHM would like to know what the BOS' intentions are in regards to the future relationship with AHM. R. Stearns stated that AHM has been waiting a long time for a commitment from Columbia regarding the counseling services that have been provided. R. Szegda stated he would like to speak with Francine Coss regarding this matter as well. He will speak with F. Coss and discuss her opinion at the next BOS meeting. Discussion followed. This item will be discussed at the next BOS meeting scheduled for Tuesday, February 15, 2011.

J. Luiz and the BOS reviewed the Columbia Volunteer Fire Department (CVFD) budget. All BOS members, with the exception of R. Stearns, stated they did not think it was necessary for the cistern to be put in at Island Woods because of the dry hydrant that will be put in spring of 2011. R. Stearns recused herself from the discussion on the CVFD budget, because of her position at the Fire Department.

4. **ADJOURNMENT:** MOTION to ADJOURN CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. The meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 15, 2011 at 7:00 pm.