

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
(to be approved at next BOS meeting)
COLUMBIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Tuesday, February 15, 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 and others.

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. **MINUTES: 2/1/11 Regular Meeting Minutes and 2/8/11 Special Meeting Minutes:** R. Szegda MOVED to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of 2/1/11 with the following amendment:
 - Page 1, Item 4.1 line 9 states: "examines the since we have to be conscious of energy conservation" and it should state: "examines this since we have to be conscious of energy conservation" MOTION CARRIED 5:0. R. Szegda MOVED to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of 2/8/11 with the following amendments:
 - Page 2, paragraph 3, line 4 states: "increased a bit as well as state DMD fees" and it should state: "increased a bit as well as state DMV fees"
 - Page 3, paragraph 4 states: "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" and it should state: "J. Luiz and the BOS reviewed the Columbia Volunteer Fire Department (CVFD) budget. R. Stearns recused herself from the discussion on the CVFD budget, because of her position at the Fire Department" MOTION CARRIED 5:0.
3. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** W. O'Brien questioned the proposed changes to the original motion for the February 28, 2011 Town Meeting regarding the "Pay-As-You-Throw" (PAYT) trash program. He stated that he did not understand why changes have been made to the motion so close to the scheduled date of the town meeting. J. Luiz explained that when the motion was presented to the Town Attorney for review before publishing the Legal Notice, Town Attorney Henry Beck felt as though the suggested modifications to the motion were necessary in consideration of a Town Ordinance and Freedom of Information laws. J. Luiz explained that H. Beck believes that ordinance 21-4 mandates that only the BOS

can establish transfer station procedures and fees. W. O'Brien asked J. Luiz if H. Beck explained why he felt that the ordinance superseded Section 2.4 of the Town Charter, which provides that "A Town Meeting shall be required for approval for any matter the Board of Selectmen deems of sufficient importance." J. Luiz stated that H. Beck feels that the language in Section 2.4 of the Town Charter does not overcome other language in the Charter that speaks to the Board of Selectmen having the authority to create, change and do away with ordinances. W. O'Brien said that he did not agree. R. Szegda expressed that he feels that a town meeting is the ultimate decision-maker and stated that the BOS should agree to abide by the vote made at the town meeting. No one disagreed that the BOS should abide by the vote at the January 28, 2011. R. Szegda MOVED that the BOS abide by the decision of the 2/28/11 Town Meeting regarding the will of the people with respect to the PAYT trash program. Discussion followed. MOTION CARRIED 5:0.

4. OLD BUSINESS:

4.1 Recommendation of Solid Waste/Recycling Advisory Commission (SWRAC):

SWRAC Chair Kris Earle presented a summary of the SWRAC's recommendation regarding PAYT to the BOS. She discussed the following four recommendations with the BOS:

- (1) Make the PAYT trash program permanent.
- (2) Bag revenues will go into a special account to pay Transfer Station expenses only.
- (3) Reduce the bag prices by 25%.
- (4) Reduce permit costs to \$1 per car (up to 4 cars). Permits would be valid for 2 years.

K. Earle reviewed the results of the trial PAYT program. She announced that the recycling rate increased from 27% to 40% and that municipal solid waste has decreased by 54%. She stated that hauling and tipping fees have been reduced by 49%. K. Earle stated that four months of savings totaled \$13,493, which would be an approximate annual savings of \$40,479. She explained that the orange bags sold very well, and that complaints to retailers have decreased drastically. Lastly K. Earle explained that the bag quality has been upgraded, plastic (grocery) bags are accepted, styrofoam acceptance is forthcoming and an enclosed swap area is forthcoming. R. Szegda stated that he has found that the PAYT program has provided a large incentive for him to recycle however he feels that many residents are opposed to this program. He stated that he would like the program to continue and become permanent, but suggested reducing the cost of bags by half. He explained that if bag costs are reduced by half, people will be able to continue to use the program and the town can perform an ongoing assessment with the reduced bag prices. He stated that if the cost reduction appears to be too much, then the BOS can increase the bag prices in the future. K. Earle explained that SWRAC feels that reducing the prices further than the proposed reduction of 25% would result in transfer station users not having enough of an incentive to recycle at a high level. She also feels that if bag prices are reduced and then increased

again, residents are going to be upset. Laurie Rogers stated that if bag costs are reduced by 50% then profit from bag sales will cover the transfer station sticker cost and that is all. R. Szegda stated that he is concerned that if the prices are not reduced by 50% then the town's people are going to reject the program. Diane Duva explained that one of the purposes for the bags is to make people think before they throw away trash. She stated that she feels keeping the bag price where it is currently at is a good idea because if trash costs rise, then funding from bag sales will pay for this cost, not tax money. She suggested that bags are priced according to SWRAC's recommendation of 25%. Discussion followed. C. Vance explained that SWRAC has researched the issue of PAYT for months, and feels that it will be a lot easier to now reduce the costs by only 25% instead of reducing the bag costs by 50% and then increasing them again if need be. W. O'Brien stated that he feels the bags are overpriced. D. Duva and K. Earle stated that the bag prices are in line with the bag prices in Lebanon and other towns with PAYT. R. Hellstrom expressed that he feels it is important to save money for the town on transfer station expenses and feels that it is a positive thing for the bag sales to generate some revenue. He feels that reducing the bag price by 25% is fair, and stated that the numbers presented by K. Earle speak for themselves. D. Duva pointed out that the town saved \$13,493 in hauling and tipping costs over a four month period and stated the savings would not currently be in the general fund if the PAYT trial program had not been implemented. She expressed that the \$13,493 in savings proves the PAYT program saves the Town money. Russ Haddad feels that a reduction of 25% is acceptable, but that a 50% reduction diminishes the importance of the program. W. O'Brien asked what the importance of presenting a bag price at the town meeting is. C. Vance explained it is important because the public wants to know what exactly it will be voting on. W. O'Brien stated he does not feel that the bag price should be part of the motion. Discussion followed. R. Szegda MOVED that if the PAYT program is approved at the 2/28/11 Town Meeting that bag prices be reduced by 50%. K. Earle expressed that SWRAC will not support the suggested 50% decrease. Discussion followed. MOTION FAILED 2:3:0 with R. Szegda and W. O'Brien in favor and C. Vance, R. Stearns and R. Hellstrom opposing.

R. Stearns requested more information about the \$28,000 net revenue amount that the SWRAC said was generated over the course of the first four months of the PAYT program. J. Luiz that the total revenue was approximately \$37,500 and that expenses were approximately \$9,500. Nelson Petrone stated that he feels that recycling tonnage should be included in these figures as well. N. Petrone expressed that he would rather pay more in property taxes than in bag fees because he would be able to deduct property taxes and cannot deduct bag fees. Nikki Keldsen stated she is in favor of the PAYT program. She mentioned if and how this may affect the mill rate if the PAYT program does not pass. The SWRAC said that it plans to address the issues raised by N. Petrone and N. Keldsen.

4.2 Establishment of Town Meeting: C. Vance MOVED that a Special Town Meeting be held on Monday, February 28, 2011 at 7:00 pm in the Horace W. Porter Cafetorium for the following purpose: To recommend that the BOS implements the following recommendations of the Solid Waste Recycling Advisory Committee: (1) That the Pay-As-You-Throw bag program be made permanent; (2) That the price of bags be reduced; (3) That the price of Transfer Station permits be reduced; and (4) That bag sale revenues be placed into a special revenue account and be spent only on transfer station related expenses. Discussion followed. W. O'Brien requested clarification on the additional parts of the motion since originally discussed in April 2010. J. Luiz explained that H. Beck made the additional recommendations for higher levels of specificity to avoid any FOI issues. Discussion followed. MOTION PASSED 3:2:0 with C. Vance, R. Hellstrom and R. Stearns in favor. R. Szegda and W. O'Brien opposed due to their concerns over the motion being too specific with respect to the details of the SRAC's recommendation.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 2011 & 2012 Memorandum of Agreement with WinCOG for Planner

Services: J. Luiz explained that WinCOG now charges an additional 25% to those towns that receive services directly from the COG, which includes Columbia. He explained that the 25% is an overhead cost that will be tacked on to what the town pays for the Town Planner. He clarified that the 25% increase does not represent a wage increase for the Town Planner. R. Szegda MOVED to authorize the First Selectman to enter into the memorandum agreement as provided by J. Luiz between the Town of Columbia and the Windham Region Council of Governments (WinCOG). MOTION CARRIED 5:0.

6. COLUMBIA LAKE / DAM / BEACH

7. APPOINTMENTS / RESIGNATIONS

7.1 Letter from Judy Senkbeil: C. Vance MOVED to accept the recommendation from the Conservation and Agricultural Commission that Chandra Chowanec be removed from the Conservation and Agricultural Commission due to consistent absenteeism. MOTION CARRIED 5:0.

7.2 Appointment of Carol Ann Jaswinski to Lake Management Advisory Committee: This ITEM has been TABLED until the next meeting.

7.3 Resignation of Robert Fowler as Senior Center Food Operator: R. Stearns MOVED to accept the resignation of Robert Fowler as Senior Center Food Operator. MOTION CARRIED 5:0. J. Luiz will be sending R. Fowler a letter acknowledging his resignation.

8. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT: J. Luiz stated that the Governor's budget is schedule to be released on 2/16/11, and that he has been busy finishing up the town budget. He stated that he, Fiscal Manager Bev Ciurylo, Superintendent Francine Coss and other Finance staff will be conducting

interviews on 2/18/11 with the Finance Software companies that submitted proposals in response to the Request for Proposals for Accounting Software. J. Luiz explained that the new server should be installed soon. He informed the BOS that the town has been using Everbridge quite a bit. J. Luiz stated that he has also been working on completing insurance paperwork with CIRMA.

9. CORRESPONDENCE

9.1 Email from J. Fasi to J. Luiz

9.2 Article published in The Chronicle on 2/1/11

9.3 Letter from N. Bellantoni to J. Luiz

9.4 Letter from R. Scarpino to C. Vance

9.5 Letter from J. Ferrara to BOS: The BOS recognized J. Luiz and the letter from J. Ferrara expressing gratitude on behalf of the Westbrook Charter Commission for the time J. Luiz took to meet with him regarding the Commission.

10. BUDGET

10.1 Refunds: R. Stearns MOVED to approve the following refunds:

TO	FROM	AMOUNT
Wells Fargo Real Estate Tax Service	Town of Columbia	\$70.66
Maureen Ossowski	Town of Columbia	\$3.34
Peterson Trust	Town of Columbia	\$400.05

MOTION CARRIED 5:0.

10.2 Transfers: R. Szegda MOVED to approve the following transfer:

AMOUNT	FROM A/C #	DESCRIPTION	TO A/C #	DESCRIPTION
\$1,300	10-4800-900	Contingency	10-4410-630	Rental

MOTION CARRIED 5:0.

C. Vance MOVED to approve following transfers:

AMOUNT	FROM A/C #	DESCRIPTION	TO A/C #	DESCRIPTION
\$105	10-4130-300	General Supplies	10-4130-550	Misc. Services
\$286.50	10-4130-300	General Supplies	10-4130-515	Contracted Services

MOTION CARRIED 5:0.

10.3 Fiscal Year 2011-2012 Budget Workshop: J. Luiz and H.W. Porter Facilities Manager Mike Sylvester reviewed the proposed Capital Budget for the BOE. M. Sylvester explained that funds for H.W. Porter Window Replacements will be used to repair windows as needed until new windows are purchased. He discussed roof repair and replacement and explained that \$15,000 has been allocated for this and will be used for repairing leaks in the roof, and other damages that may occur in the event of more snow storms. M. Sylvester discussed the \$25,000 for parking lot repair and improvements and stated that a major issue is drainage. He explained there is an area in the parking lot where water is pooling and not draining and that when this freezes, it is very slippery and dangerous for those walking in the parking lot. Nelson Petrone pointed out that this is a worker's

compensation concern also. M. Sylvester discussed the proposed \$11,300 for white boards at the middle school. He explained that there are currently both chalkboards and whiteboards in the middle school and that they are proposing to replace all the chalkboards with whiteboards. M. Sylvester explained that the HWP gym floor needs to be refinished and that \$15,000 has been allocated for that project and that the “A wing” floor needs refinishing as well. He stated the “A wing” floor was installed approximately 10 years ago and is made of epoxy therefore, they cannot use regular wax. Discussion followed.

J. Luiz and Public Works Director George Murphy discussed the Capital Budget for town projects with the BOS. G. Murphy explained that the FY 11-12 Budget Proposal calls for \$9,500 to be allocated in FY 11-12 to the “Rec Area Improvement” Capital Account to make immediate improvements at the Beach area. Improvements would include substantial re-grading of the beach area, removing the trees located on the beach itself, and purchasing a special wheelchair that would be made available to handicapped patrons on a sign-up basis. G. Murphy discussed Public Works equipment and explained that the department is in need of new equipment including a new backhoe, and that \$110,000 has been designated for those equipment purchases. G. Murphy stated that improvements are needed at the transfer station swap area which has \$5,000 designated for a swap area project. G. Murphy explained that current capital funds in the building improvement funding would account for the HVAC unit that was installed in the Land Use Department, and that new funding would provide new carpeting in Town buildings, refinishing the wood floor in Yeomans Hall and replacing the baseboards in Yeomans Hall. Discussion followed.

The BOS thanked G. Murphy and the Public Works Department for a job well done this winter on the roads in town.

Discussion ensued regarding Andover Hebron Marlborough Youth Services (AHM). R. Szegda stated that he spoke with F. Coss regarding whether or not the school needs additional hours for social worker services. He explained that F. Coss does not feel as though the school needs more than one day per week of services as they are currently receiving from AHM’s Case Manager. He stated that he did speak with AHM Director Joel Rosenberg who explained that if Columbia does not feel the need for this service more than one day per week, but would like to contract with AHM on a full-time basis, then the funds could be used for other services such as mental health programs, etc. R. Szegda informed the BOS that J. Rosenberg would like an indication from the BOS regarding whether or not the BOS intends to become full time members of AHM sometime in the near future. R. Szegda asked for a consensus from the BOS. C. Vance said that she does not feel that this board should commit a future board to that kind of decision. R. Szegda explained that he told J. Rosenberg that the present BOS cannot committing any future BOS to joining AHM, but the present BOS can offering an indication of the town’s commitment to fully join AHM in the future. R. Szegda reviewed the history of Columbia and AHM. Discussion followed. R.

Stearns stated that she is in support of Columbia becoming a full time member of AHM in the future. R. Hellstrom concurred. W. O'Brien stated he feels AHM is important and is very impressed with what he has seen so far of AHM and also in favor. C. Vance stated that while she supports Columbia's involvement in the Juvenile Review Board program through AHM, she does not support the Town joining AHM as a full-time member because such membership is very expensive and in her opinion will result in duplication of services. C. Vance explained that the local school district already provides a lot of services for youth in Columbia. C. Vance mentioned that the cost of fully joining AHM would likely be more than \$100,000 per year.

11. APPROVE PAYMENT OF BILLS: R. Szegda MOVED to approve the Emergency Bills in the amount of \$912.34. MOTION CARRIED 5:0. C. Vance MOVED to approve the Payment of Bills in the amount of \$61,929.05. MOTION CARRIED 5:0.

12. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS: None.

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

13.1 Real estate pursuant to CT State Statutes Section 1-200(6)(D); Pending Litigation pursuant to CT State Statutes Section 1-200(6)(B)

14. ADJOURNMENT: MOTION to ADJOURN CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. The meeting adjourned at 10:12 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 22, 2011 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Kimberly A. Bona