

ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING  
MAY 24, 2016  
TOWN OF COLUMBIA

The Annual Budget Meeting of the electors and citizens qualified to vote in the Town Meeting of the Town of Columbia, Connecticut, was held in Yeomans Hall on Tuesday, May 24, 2016 at 7:00 pm.

Present were Board of Selectmen members First Selectman Carmen Vance, Selectman Steven Everett, Selectman Rob Hellstrom and Selectman William O'Brien, Board of Education members present included Christopher Lent (Chairman), Linette Dooley, Lisa Napolitano, and Katherine Tolsdorf. Members of the Financial Planning & Allocation Commission (FiPAC) in attendance were Earnest Sharpe (Chairperson), Judith Ortiz, Kelley Peck, Richard Szegda, Todd Shepard, Dean Toepfer and Jeff Viens. School Superintendent Laurence Fearon and Finance Director Beverly Ciurylo were also in attendance.

MODERATOR: Robert Baldwin  
CLERK: Robin M. Kenefick  
CITIZENS: 50 + Present

The meeting was called to order by First Selectman Carmen Vance. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. The meeting was turned over to the Moderator who read the legal notice and explained who has the right to vote at this meeting per the Town Charter and that the vote would be by secret ballot. The Moderator asked if there was a Motion. Carmen Vance made the following motion:

“I move to approve the proposed Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Annual Budget, Board of Selectmen and Board of Education, that was presented at the FiPAC Budget Public Hearing on April 27, 2016.”

The motion was seconded by Richard Szegda. The Moderator re-read the motion and opened the floor to discussion.

Carmen Vance, First Selectman, spoke first. Looking at the first page of the proposed budget gives you a good summary of what we are asking for. She stated this was a good budget as it maintains the services we have and it addresses some capital needs. It was a difficult year to prepare this budget with the State making so many cuts and she applauded Beverly Ciurylo, Finance Director, for the tremendous amount of work that went into this budget. She urged support of this budget.

Richard Szegda spoke on behalf of FiPAC. He stated that this was a difficult budget process and many difficult decisions had to be made. He thanked Lol Fearon, the Board of Education and the Board of Selectmen for their effort and compromises. This is a good budget and he urged everyone to approve it.

The Moderator turned the floor over to the audience for questions and comments. Paul Kubala, 37 Lake Road, questioned several areas where cuts could be made. Beverly Ciurylo addressed those areas; education cost sharing was reduced, public school transportation funding has been cut for 2016-2017. She said there was no rhyme or reason to the cuts, but that they are hitting all areas. Things could change again; there is nothing we can do.

Patricia Lanza, 41 Laurel Lane, asked if a contingency plan was in place if we should pass this budget and there are further reductions from the state. Earnest Sharpe, FiPAC Chairman, responded that there is no firm plan but deferring funding and placing the monies in the General Fund gives the Town more options and more flexibility. The Town can operate with this budget if spending is reduced.

No more questions were raised and no more comments were made. The Moderator re-read the motion. A paper ballot vote was taken on the motion to accept the Annual Town Budget for the Fiscal Year 2016-2017 as so proposed.

The results of the paper ballot vote were announced by the Moderator as follows:

YES: 45      NO: 6  
(Vote consisted of qualified voters)

The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin M. Kenefick  
Town Clerk