

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
COLUMBIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Tuesday, November 20, 2012, 7 pm
Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT

Members Present: First Selectman Carmen Vance; Selectman Richard Szegda; Selectman Rob Hellstrom; Selectman Bob Bogue.

Also Present: Town Administrator Jonathan Luiz and others.

CALL TO ORDER: C. Vance called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm.

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. **MINUTES: 11/13/12 Special Meeting:** R. Szegda MOVED to approve the special meeting minutes of 11/13/12 as presented. MOTION CARRIED 4:0:0.
3. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** None.
4. **OLD BUSINESS:**
 - 4.1 **Library Renovation/Expansion:** C. Vance discussed two options for the BOS to consider regarding Library Renovation/Expansion. The first option is to use some of the existing grant funds to hire DRA Architects to produce a scaled back design of a renovated and expanded library and to send that design to referendum. The second option is to use existing grant funds to renovate the existing library. C. Vance invited Su Epstein and Noreen Steele to comment on the two options. R. Szegda said that the majority of the people he spoke with in town agreed that a bigger library is needed, but that the proposed price was too high in today's economic situation. R. Szegda said he supports having the architect re-design a less expensive building. R. Hellstrom said that he is concerned about determining the minimum size of an expanded library. R. Bogue said he is leaning towards the town using the existing grant money to renovate the existing library building. He said that he would more likely support a library expansion if it was filled with new technology and attached to the school. R. Szegda said that libraries are important pieces of any community and that it is important the town make sure that the library is adequate for the town. C. Vance asked S. Epstein to comment on the usage of the Saxton B. Little Free Library. S. Epstein said that library usage both in Columbia and nationally is up. Ann Dunnack said that there is no question that the town needs a library to change and enlarge, but that the townspeople spoke quite clearly that they do not want to spend a lot of money now. She said that she would like the town to take the existing grant money and refurbish the existing structure. She also said that the Library Building Committee did not take a look at everything the town has in terms of municipal and school buildings and did not take into consideration the needs of the whole town, not just the library. C. Vance said that there is a constant effort to look at the facilities that the town has. A. Dunnack said that groups all live in silos and do not sit down to discuss needs of the entire town. C. Vance said that the town already knows what it has and that the town has not operated in a vacuum about space and buildings. C. Vance said that the school facilities pose problems with respect to accessing the building due to security restrictions. N. Steele said that the library building itself is too small for the existing activities and that there is no building in town that would be suitable for a library. N. Steele urged the BOS to renovate and expand the existing library building while interest

rates are low and construction costs are low. N. Steele said that a library cannot be hooked to a school because the library must be open to everyone, not just school people. She said that the library is a learning institution for all. R. Szegda said that he would like the BOS to wait before a decision is made. He said that it would be helpful to the BOS to determine how much it would cost to redesign the library before the BOS makes a decision whether or not to choose its next steps on the library. C. Vance and R. Hellstrom agreed with R. Szegda. V. Englert asked whether or not local builders have been approached to see if they would provide a preliminary design of a building for free. R. Hellstrom said that the size of the projected expansion may not be something that a local builder could design for free. J. Luiz said that the Library Building Committee discussed design-build and did not approve of it due to the importance of having an architect involved. J. Luiz also said that the architect uses a professional estimator and that the estimated construction cost is used to determine the referendum dollar amount. V. Englert said that she shares R. Bogue's sentiments as expressed tonight. Jan Thibodeau said that the library is a great resource for technology. She said that people bring their new technology to the library for help with the new device/resource. Hank Stockwell spoke to the efficiency of how the staff and public use the library. He said that he would like the BOS to consider efficiency when moving forward. C. Shifrin said that the library has always been a source of pride to the community. He said that the real issue is today's economic environment because people do not want to spend millions of dollars on any project. He said that people will vote their pocketbooks, not whether or not they support the library. Janis Knight said that the last time the library was expanded there were no computers, so that today's library is a town treasure, especially for people looking to improve their financial lives. R. Szegda said that he thinks people in Columbia would vote for a renovation if the cost was a few million dollars. G. Littlefield of Pine Street said that he thinks a library needs to be a mix of books and technology.

- 4.2 Minimum Budget Requirement:** C. Vance reviewed the materials presented in the BOS packet, including an email correspondence between Brian Mahoney and J. Luiz and several MBR-related documents provided at BOS meetings. C. Vance said that the MBR issue, including the outstanding penalty had been discussed in detail at several BOS meetings and at a Fiscal Policy meeting with her and R. Szegda present. C. Vance explained that she invited FiPAC Chair Ernie Sharpe to explain the MBR, including the penalty. E. Sharpe passed out a handout he prepared on the subject of the MBR. E. Sharpe discussed the MBR issue at length, including why FiPAC advised the BOS not to provide the Board of Education with an additional appropriation in Fiscal Year 2011-2012. E. Sharpe spoke to the large surplus of funds that the BOE had available for spending during the '11-'12 Fiscal Year. He explained that he publically discussed the MBR issue at public budget meetings and that the issue was discussed at length at FiPAC meetings and at length during Fiscal Policy meetings. R. Szegda thanked E. Sharpe for his information and said he is very comfortable with the information that has been supplied and that he is very comfortable with all of the decisions that have been made thus far by everyone. Members of the BOS expressed agreement that it was in the town's best interest to not make an additional appropriation to the BOS during Fiscal Year '11-'12. C. Vance spoke to the appeal of the MBR penalty to be levied in Fiscal Year '12-'13. She said that the appeal is not an objection to the MBR law itself, but rather an appeal with respect to one particular fiscal year. E. Sharpe said that the town has already received preliminary notice from the state that the FY 12-13 municipal appropriation from the Columbia Municipal Government to the Columbia School District is sufficient with respect to the MBR. E. Sharpe said that FiPAC tries to work within the law to ensure MBR compliance, but that the law dealing with the MBR has changed after the

budget is already established by FiPAC and approved by the town. Each of the BOS members expressed agreement that it is in the best interest of the town to appeal the MBR penalty assessed in consideration of the '11-'12 Fiscal Year.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

6. COLUMBIA LAKE / DAM / BEACH.

- 6.1 Application for Constructing Structures on or over the Lake by the J. & A. Cobb:** C. Vance MOVED to approve the application for constructing structures on or over the Lake by J. & A. Cobb contingent upon the recommendations provided by the Lake Management Advisory Committee (LMAC). MOTION CARRIED 4:0.

7. APPOINTMENTS / RESIGNATIONS

- 8. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:** J. Luiz discussed IT issues that town employees have faced due to work being done on the server. He said that the main focus of the IT staff is to rectify problems. He said that once problems are rectified, that a re-examination of IT services would take place.

9. CORRESPONDENCE

- 9.1 Letter to residents of Sleepy Hollow, Collins, Lakewood, and Webster Lanes**

10. BUDGET

- 10.1 Refunds:** No refunds.

- 11. APPROVE PAYMENT OF BILLS:** R. Szegda MOVED to approve the payment of emergency bills in the amount of \$50. MOTION CARRIED 4:0. B. Bogue MOVED to approve the payment of regular bills in the amount of \$24,354.56. MOTION CARRIED 4:0.

12. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- 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); Personnel pursuant to CT State Statutes Section 1-200(6)(A);** C. Vance MOVED to enter into Executive Session to discuss real estate with Ann Dunnack and Jonathan Luiz present. MOTION CARRIED 4-0. The BOS exited out of Executive Session at 8:48 pm.

- 14. ADJOURNMENT:** C. Vance MOVED to adjourn at 8:48 pm and the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. The next regular meeting of the BOS is Tuesday, December 4, 2012 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Jonathan Luiz