

Town of Columbia
Financial Planning and Allocation Commission
Special Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 23, 2016 - 7 pm
Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT. 06237

Members Present: Chairman Earnest Sharpe; Vice-Chairman Jeff Viens; Judy Ortiz; Richard Szegda; Todd Shepard; Kelley Peck; Dean Toepfer.

Also Present: First Selectman Carmen Vance; Superintendent Lol Fearon; Town Administrator Natasha Nau; Principal Alyssa Gwinnell; Finance Director Bev Ciurylo.

1. **Call to Order:** E. Sharpe called the meeting to order at 7 pm.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. **FiPAC Budget Discussion (continued): BOE:** L. Fearon spoke about excess cost reimbursement and explained that any reimbursement will go into the town's General Fund.

E. Sharpe asked for an explanation on the difference between co-curricular activities, after school activities, and student activities and the salaries associated with each of these. L. Fearon stated that co-curricular activities are based on curriculum, after school programs are clubs and activities that take place after school, and student activities are sports, etc. He explained that those who teach curriculum activities, oversee afterschool programs, and coach (refs, etc) student activities/sports are paid for their services. E. Sharpe asked how many hours are spent on curriculum. L. Fearon stated that depends on what is being worked on. He explained that all of the curriculum hours are reviewed and approved by the principal then by himself. C. Vance asked if it has been proposed to make the children pay for afterschool programs (clubs, not athletics) seeing as the town must pay for them to be run. L. Fearon stated that afterschool program provides extracurricular activities and feels that it makes the school unique and would like to maintain things as they are. A. Gwinnell stated that even with the amount they currently pay it is still hard to find people to run these programs and feels that if they only used volunteers, it would be even harder to find individuals to help run these programs. Discussion followed.

E. Sharpe asked what the repair/maintenance for District Technology is and whether or not this is a necessity. L. Fearon will check and bring back to FiPAC next week.

Discussion took place regarding special education tuition and service costs. M. Kate Farley stated she based this year's budget allocation on what was needed last year. However, it turns out that it will not be needed next year. It was put in the budget not knowing if they would be needed for sure. E. Sharpe stated that the tuition deficit is approximately \$450,000 and L. Fearon confirmed this.

J. Viens asked if any teachers are scheduled for retirement. L. Fearon stated no, however retirement packages were offered as incentives but no employee has taken advantage of that to date.

Discussion ensued regarding the proposed Capital Budget for the BOE and the town. K. Peck stated that due to the fiscal crisis the state is facing, it is important that FiPAC be as conservative as possible with this budget in order to protect the town. She expressed concern with facilities in town not being utilized to full capacity yet the town is paying for costs. Discussion regarding the purchase of a new playscape took place. K. Peck feels that the town should hold off on this. She would like to see the existing playscape assessed and if it is deemed unsafe, then it should be removed for the time being. N. Nau stated that the insurance company has inspected the playscape at Rec Park and has deemed it unsafe/not in compliance. K. Peck and E. Sharpe questioned whether building a fund balance for Open Space is appropriate at this time. N. Nau recommended revisiting using a floating line of credit/bond as an alternative to saving cash annually; T. Sheppard concurred with this idea. Discussion regarding the purchase of a Senior Van ensued; K. Peck and E. Sharpe recommended excluding this capital expense as well as the operating expenses from the budget. E. Sharpe stated that although the after school programs are indeed good programs, they are not required. Also, while recognizing the importance of preschool, it is not mandated and expressed concern with the town funding the program at this time. R. Szegda feels that it is a huge plus for Columbia to have a preschool program and would be opposed to removing this. K. Peck agrees with E. Sharpe regarding his opinion on preschool.

E. Sharpe asked FiPAC to review the proposed Capital Budget and be prepared for discussion and decision at the next meeting.

4. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 30, 2016 at 7 pm.
5. **Adjournment:** T. Shepard MOVED to ADJOURN at 10:02 pm. and the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by Kimberly A. Bona