

Town of Columbia
Financial Planning and Allocation Commission
Special Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 26, 2014 – 7 pm.
Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT. 06237

Members Present: Chairman Earnest Sharpe, Judy Ortiz, Nancy Hammarstrom, Kelley Peck, Jeff Viens, Todd Shepard, Richard Szegda.

Also Present: First Selectman Carmen Vance, Town Administrator Jonathan Luiz (arrived at 7:15 pm), Superintendent Lol Fearon, Principal Alyssa Gwinnell, Finance Director Bev Ciurylo, BOE Chair Kerry Hoffman, members of the BOE and citizens.

1. **Call to Order:** E. Sharpe called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. **Approval of Minutes:**
- 3.1 **Approval of FiPAC March 19, 2014 Regular Meeting Minutes:** J. Ortiz MOVED to approve the FiPAC Regular Meeting Minutes of March 19, 2014. R. Szegda SECONDED the MOTION and it CARRIED 7:0.
4. **Old Business**
- 4.1 **FY 2014-15 budget:** FiPAC discussed the proposed FY '14-'15 Capital, BOS and BOE budgets. E. Sharpe asked J. Luiz about reducing the town's Contingency fund by \$13,000. J. Luiz stated the BOS should be able to manage with this reduction. E. Sharpe asked J. Luiz if he had received specific details regarding the proposed security improvements at the Columbia Volunteer Fire Department (CVFD). J. Luiz explained that the CVFD has expressed a general need for a security system that records video, but he has not received any detailed information on this request. E. Sharpe stated that he is a bit hesitant to approve this funding request without specifications from the CVFD. Discussion followed. The Commission concurred with E. Sharpe. K. Peck MOVED to reduce the BOS Contingency fund by \$13,000, and to reduce the grant to the CVFD by \$14,000 in consideration of not having specific reasons to make security improvements. J. Viens SECONDED the MOTION and it CARRIED 7:0.

J. Viens asked about the requested budget for two trucks in the Public Works budget. J. Luiz stated that the trucks that are to be replaced are for the Public Works Director and the Facilities Manager. He explained that the funding for these replacements cannot be delayed due to the poor conditions of both vehicles. Discussion followed. J. Viens suggested that the town contract services for snow plowing and reduce DPW staffing. J. Luiz stated he does not feel this would be a wise option given the town's obligation to maintain town roads.

L. Fearon spoke to FiPAC regarding the decline in student enrollment over the past five years. He said that although there has been a reduction in enrollment there has also been a reduction in school staff. He stated that he feels that the BOE's proposed budget request is needed in order to meet the needs of the school. L. Fearon stated that the sustainability of the school district is the biggest concern BOE has. Discussion followed. L. Fearon addressed the spending history that E. Sharpe produced and expressed concern about at last week's FiPAC

meeting. Discussion regarding pre-school ensued. L. Fearon stated that the expanded pre-school program is not mandated by state, but he feels if Porter did not offer an expanded Pre-K program, it may cause parents to enroll children to magnet schools for both Pre-K and beyond. He stated that the BOE's long range plan is to make Columbia's school system cost-effective and attractive to families. R. Szegda said that he is a very strong supporter of Pre-K and feels that providing children with the attention they need early on prevents issues in the future. E. Sharpe stated that he is not against the mandatory pre-school program at all, but he does not support the non-mandatory pre-school program because other institutions provide the service and because of cost considerations. J. Viens stated that Pre-K services are provided elsewhere at no cost so therefore he does not support expanding Columbia's pre-school program beyond what is mandated by the state. Discussion followed.

K. Peck asked if after school programs may be funded by the town's Rec budget. L. Fearon stated that it is a possibility, but most likely would be provided with a cost to participants. N. Hammarstrom asked how many clubs, etc. are offered via the after school programs. A. Gwinnell stated between approximately 40-60 different programs. J. Luiz said that a town-run after school program might cost considerably more than if the school ran the program.

E. Sharpe stated that he feels the school has budgeted too much for high school special education spending. He said that the line item in the BOE budget containing those costs could probably be reduced by \$50,000, especially in consideration of the fact that the BOE could always ask the Town for more money during the Fiscal Year. Discussion followed.

E. Sharpe MOVED to reduce the BOE's initially proposed budget increase of \$661,955 by \$340,000. J. Viens SECONDED. The MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1 with R. Szegda abstaining.

Discussion regarding the pre-payment of bonds ensued. The Commission agreed not to act on this matter until next week since the town is awaiting more information by the State.

5. New Business

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

AMOUNT	FROM A/C #	TO A/C #
\$7,290	Contingency, 10-4800-900	Repairs/Maint, 10-4410-600

N. Hammarstrom SECONDED the MOTION and it CARRIED 7:0.

6. Next Meeting: The next special FiPAC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 2, 2014 at 7 pm.

7. Adjournment: J. Ortiz MOVED to adjourn at 9:21 pm. and the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by Kimberly A. Bona.