

Town of Columbia
Financial Planning and Allocation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 16, 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; Kelley Peck; Todd Shepard; Dean Toepfer.

Also Present: First Selectman Carmen Vance; Superintendent Lol Fearon; Town Administrator Natasha Nau; Finance Director Bev Ciurylo; Principal Alyssa Gwinnell; BOE Chairman Christopher Lent; BOE member Linette Dooley; BOE member James Chakulski; Director of Student Services Mary Kate Farley; Tom Currier; *The Chronicle* Reporter Kimberly Wetzell.

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. **Approval of Minutes:**
 - 3.1 **Approval of February 17, 2016 FiPAC Meeting Minutes:** J. Ortiz MOVED to approve the FiPAC minutes of February 17, 2016. D. Toepfer SECONDED and MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1 with R. Szegda abstaining.
4. **Correspondence:**
 - 4.1 **BOS 2/16/16 Regular Meeting Minutes**
 - 4.2 **BOS 2/23/16 Special Meeting Minutes**
 - 4.3 **BOS 3/1/16 Regular Meeting Minutes**
 - 4.4 **BOE 2/22/16 Special Meeting Minutes**
 - 4.5 **Fiscal Policy Board 2/10/16 Regular Meeting Minutes**

E. Sharpe stated that he has received non-lapsing account information from the BOE and he will get this information to FiPAC.

5. **Fiscal Year 2016-2017 budget presentations by the BOE & BOS:**

L. Fearon presented the proposed FY 2016-2017 BOE budget to FiPAC. He explained that the BOE is requesting \$12,715,797, which is a net increase of \$793,331 or 6.65%. He discussed PK-8 and high school costs, explaining that there is an increase of \$812,035 for high school costs between last year and this year. He stated that the high school budget is up by approximately 20%. L. Fearon explained that Columbia is a high performing district. The focus is on rigorous programs that meet or exceed needs of all students and explained that they are actively planning for the future. He explained that they are making efforts to keep classroom sizes down. L. Fearon stated that the BOE has begun to utilize REAP grants for equipment updates. L. Fearon pointed out the three main areas of increase as follows: high school tuition cost (\$137,054), unanticipated special education cost (\$473,000) and anticipated grade 9 special ed costs (\$218,000). In addition to these increases he spoke about Certified Salary increases (\$43,669), Unemployment Comp (\$21,600) and Pupil Transportation (\$160,610). L. Fearon explained that the BOE is proposing to reduce non-certified staff by two positions and to reassign a grade 5 position to a primary grade.

L. Fearon discussed the following budget decreases: Employee Benefits (\$33,180), Professional Services (\$22,744), Copier Rentals (\$16,825), Heating Oil and Diesel (\$43,380), Software (\$13,800).

L. Fearon spoke about 2016-2017 enrollment and stated projected tuition costs are as follows:

- Magnet Programs (Tuition K-12 consists of 48 pupils)
- Magnet Programs (Non-Tuition consists of 5 pupils)

He stated that the total Magnet Tuition Costs equates to \$216,000.

L. Fearon spoke about Capital Projects. He stated that all HVAC is now computer controlled so there is greater control over the climate. Over past 4 years, there has been a 4% decrease in energy reduction. He explained that window replacement is needed – cannot open some windows because they are too large and broken valences need replacement. He stated that there are floors that need replacement as well. L. Fearon stated that the BOE is requesting a covered trash/recycling area with storage area. This will provide protection from the weather to the dumpsters as well as store athletic equipment. L. Fearon explained that the cafeteria bleachers need to be replaced. They are a safety hazard when individuals must climb them in order to reach stored equipment. L. Fearon stated that some playground equipment requires repair.

N. Nau presented the proposed FY 2016-2017 BOS budget to FiPAC. She explained that the BOS is requesting a 2.01% Operating increase (which equates to \$72,750) from last year for a total of \$3,687,550. The debt has been reduced by 3.85% from last year (or \$7,250). N. Nau stated that the proposed Capital increase is 7.58% increase (or \$87,730). The category of “Other” is projected to increase by 23.57% or \$24,971; this includes Contingency, the Dog Fund, Internal Service. N. Nau stated that the total proposed increase between the BOE and the Town is 5.72%.

N. Nau discussed notable Operating increases (>\$5,000 and 4%). N. Nau stated that there were many other increases and decreases that could be noted but do not meet both criteria. She stated that the town has requested an increase of 10% for healthcare because the cost is unknown at this time, which is the majority of the 5.77% increase in the Executive/Administrative Department. She explained that a large increase of 224.59% is proposed in Elderly Services for the operation of a senior transportation van. N. Nau stated that this increase includes salaries of the drivers and dispatcher/coordinator, fuel, supplies, etc. that will be associated with the van/transportation program. The purchase of the van is included in Capital. She spoke about the proposed increases for the Building Services and Land Use Department. She stated that the total 34.15% increase (26.35% in Building Services and 7.8% in Land Use) are for the Building Official contract as well as to cover cost of paying a Floater to assist in electronically scanning all files in the department so it will be able to operate electronically going forward through a permitting software to be purchased in 2017-2018. When the project is complete, the Building and Land Use Department staff will be able to access all street files they need in the field while doing inspections and the applicant will be able to check on the status of their permit from home; all will increase efficiency. N. Nau explained that an increase of 57.39% is reflected in the Recreation budget because the Rec Director has gone from Part Time to Full Time. There is no longer an Assistant to the Rec Director position to help offset this cost. A Recreation Floater will be utilized as needed (up to 10 hours per week). N. Nau explained that due to this being a Union negotiation year, \$13,000 (15.29%) has been allocated in Contingency. Negotiations have not begun yet.

N. Nau reviewed notable operating decreases (>\$5,000 and 4%). She stated that the Finance Department combined positions leading to a 17.09% decrease in the Department. N. Nau stated that the majority of the fuel (oil) savings via the new contract price are seen at the Senior Center which reflect most of the 7.13% decrease. N. Nau explained that the Lake Management Advisory Committee budget reflects a large decrease of 58.47%. She stated that this is because the Dr. Kortmann does feel that the Town needs to do the same invasive aquatic species studies at the Lake and Mono Pond next year. Maybe every couple or few years would be wise. There are no invasive species to be concerned about at this time.

N. Nau discussed new Capital appropriations. She stated that the wooden playscape at Rec Park needs replacement because it does not comply with required drop zones, etc. per the insurance company and the integrity of the structure is starting to fail being that it was installed around 1992 and is therefore over 20 years old. The proposed purchase price for the unit in FY 16-17 is \$100,000. The total cost of this project will be spread out in the Capital Budget over the next two years, with the installation cost being placed in FY 17-18. A keycard entry system for municipal buildings similar to what the school has is being proposed in the amount of \$20,000 for security purposes. N. Nau stressed the importance of a new telephone system. She explained that the current phone system is over 20 years old, and there are multiple issues with it. \$20,000 has been allocated to replace the phone system. N. Nau stated that \$11,800 has been included in the IT line. This is for a Codification of Ordinances, Charter and Planning and Zoning regulations as well as purchasing tablet and software for the Assessor's use with inspections as well as other computer related purchases. Currently, the Assessor has to sketch by hand while doing inspections and then enter it in when she returns to the office. A tablet will eliminate this. N. Nau would also like to implement the use of tablets in the Land Use Department for similar purposes in future years. N. Nau stated that \$20,000 has been requested for the purchase of a Senior Transportation van as discussed earlier. She noted that this is one third the total cost, assuming that we receive the 5310 grant. Also, N. Nau explained that a free energy audit was conducted at the Senior Center. An increase of \$20,000 has been requested to perform energy efficiency improvements at this facility, included but not limited to Variable Frequency Drive (VFD) installation and insulation improvements. N. Nau discussed costs for road resurfacing (\$230,400), \$13,000 of which is for line painting. Capital equipment replacements total \$82,000 for a used front end loader and a hopper for the sweeper. She stated that for the Building Improvements line item (\$280,000), the town is proposing to purchase a tension fabric salt shed, totaling \$300,000 but only half (\$175,000) has been allocated for FY 16-17. The other building improvements include \$45,000 for half of the total cost to put Aztec vinyl siding on Town Hall, \$15,000 to insulate the Chapel to reduce energy cost and \$25,000 for Meeting Place renovations. She mentioned \$200,000 has been proposed for Land Acquisition and \$25,000 has been allocated for new Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) bottles for the CVFD. There will be a second payment in 2017-2018. N. Nau stated that overall, a total Capital increase of 7.58% is being proposed.

N. Nau discussed the amount to be raised by property taxes. The Current Mill Rate is 27.13 and the Proposed Mill Rate is 30.77 equating to a Mill Rate increase of 3.64 (or 13.42%).

C. Vance stated that she feels the mill rate increase is too high and is unacceptable.

6. Audience of Citizens

7. **FiPAC Budget Discussion:** R. Szegda stated that he feels that both the BOE and the Town did great jobs with the budgets and would like to see some of the Undesignated Fund Balance (UFB) used to offset the increase because he does not think anything should be cut from either proposal. R. Szegda asked what the current undesignated fund balance is and what percentage of the total budget it comprises. N. Nau replied that the UFB will be about \$3,165,101 as of July 1, 2016 (without any additional payments to the BOE), which is about 17% of the total annual budget (Town and BOE Operating and Capital). R. Szegda stated that around 7 or 8% is typical so the Town's UFB is very healthy. E. Sharpe said must be careful because special ed cost will be ongoing for the next couple years so we must be mindful and not drain the UFB.

K. Peck asked what amount is refundable from the state. L. Fearon stated this is Excess Cost Sharing (ECS). L. Fearon stated it could be as high as 70% or as low as 50%. However, these monies will not be paid until *next* year. E. Sharpe asked L. Fearon to provide an estimated budget to FiPAC based on a 70% reimbursement from the state. L. Fearon will provide this information to FiPAC and B. Ciurylo will calculate estimates based on good (70%) and fair (50%) state reimbursements.

K. Peck asked if there is no increase in town operating and capital budgets but the BOE budget is accepted in full, what the difference in the mill rate increase would be. N. Nau said she could calculate that for FIPAC. Discussion followed.

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

TRANSFER # / AMOUNT	FROM A/C #, DESCRIPTION	TO A/C #, DESCRIPTION
2016-021 / \$3,700	10-4136-010, Finance Salaries	10-4640-010, Beach Services Salaries

J. Ortiz SECONDED and the MOTION CARRIED 6:0:1 with J. Viens OPPOSED.

J. Ortiz MOVED to approve the following transfer:

TRANSFER # / AMOUNT	FROM A/C #, DESCRIPTION	TO A/C #, DESCRIPTION
2016-022 / \$8,340	10-4136-010, Finance Salaries	10-4670-010, Rec Department Salaries

R. Szegda SECONDED the MOTION and it CARRIED 7:0.

T. Shepard MOVED to approve the following transfer:

TRANSFER # / AMOUNT	FROM A/C #, DESCRIPTION	TO A/C #, DESCRIPTION
2016-024 / \$1,189	10-4112-040, Admin Group Insurance	10-4112-460, Admin Commercial Insurance

E. Sharpe SECONDED the MOTION and it CARRIED 7:0.

J. Ortiz MOVED to approve the following transfer:

TRANSFER # / AMOUNT	FROM A/C #, DESCRIPTION	TO A/C #, DESCRIPTION
2016-026 / \$4,250	10-4112-040, Admin Group Insurance	10-4113-500, IT Prof/Tech

R. Szegda SECONDED the MOTION and it CARRIED 7:0.

9. Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held on March 23, 2016 at 7 pm.

10. Adjournment: J. Ortiz MOVED to adjourn at 8:54 pm. and the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by Kimberly A. Bona