

Town of Columbia
Financial Planning and Allocation Commission
Special Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 10, 2013 7:00 pm.
Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT. 06237

Members Present: Chairman Earnest Sharpe, Vice-Chairman Mike Robertson, Judy Ortiz, Steve Everett, Nancy Hammarstrom, Pat Grabel, Al Smith.

Also Present: Town Administrator Jonathan Luiz, Superintendent Francine Coss, members of the BOE and others.

1. **Call to Order:** E. Sharpe called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. **Approval of Minutes – Special Meeting Minutes of 4/3/13:** This ITEM was TABLED.
4. **Old Business**
 - 4.1.1 **FY '13-'14 Budget Workshop:** L. Perrotti stated that FiPAC said at its last meeting that it would consider granting the BOE \$81,000 from the General Fund and that the BOE requests \$81,000 in additional funding to come from the Undesignated Fund Balance. E. Sharpe explained that his reference to the Undesignated Fund Balance at the last FiPAC meeting was made to remind FiPAC members that they have the option of utilizing the Undesignated Fund Balance to pay for any additional appropriations made to the BOE. He stated a vote will not take place until FiPAC hears what changes were made to the BOE budget. L. Perrotti-Verboven discussed the proposed cuts that the BOE produced at its last meeting. She said that cuts were made to the Professional Services, Salaries, Repairs/Maintenance, Tuition and Contracted Services line items. E. Sharpe and S. Everett requested details on these cuts. L. Perrotti-Verboven stated that \$19,000 was saved in EO Smith tuition costs. She explained that a correction was made to salaries because a paraprofessional was budgeted for a certified teacher salary, which resulted in a savings of \$3,000. L. Perrotti-Verboven stated that they will save \$2,500 in repairs/maintenance because the town will be fixing the playground fence. She explained that they cut staffing for an after school program which eliminated approximately \$9,000 out of a total savings of \$28,328 in the professional services line. She explained that the remaining savings comes from curriculum meetings, scheduling changes, etc. J. Ortiz asked how many students attend after school programs. L. Perrotti-Verboven stated that certain programs are full. J. Ortiz asked for clarification on how many students are in a “full” program. L. Perrotti-Verboven explained that it all depends on age

groups and what type of program it is. S. Everett asked if there are parental volunteers. L. Perrotti-Verboven stated that there are many volunteers that they are fortunate to have.

L. Perrotti-Verboven stated that the Powerschool Conference for next year was cut which was approximately \$22,000. She explained that this year's conference is already budgeted for therefore they are able to cut next year's funding. L. Perrotti-Verboven discussed reductions in salaries. She stated that adjustments were made in Physical Ed staffing and in life skills. Staff reductions were made which will result in a shift in salaries. F. Coss said between 18 and 20 students depending on grade level. F. Coss stated the overall salary reduction is \$6,372.32. L. Perrotti-Verboven stated that the last cut consists of a reduction of \$2,487.07 in contracted services.

N. Hammarstrom asked what the average class size is. F. Coss said between 18 and 20 students depending on the grade level.

S. Everett asked J. Luiz about FiPAC utilizing the Undesignated Fund Balance. J. Luiz stated that FiPAC has traditionally utilized the Undesignated Fund Balance (UFB) to offset one-time capital expenses. He said utilizing the UFB to fund the operating budget expenditures creates usually created the need to double fund certain operating expenses the next Fiscal Year.

E. Sharpe inquired about what he feels is a double counting of expenditures in the salary line and the professional services line. F. Coss disagreed with E. Sharpe's assertion of double counting in those lines. E. Sharpe said that he feels strongly that there are duplicate budget entries. Discussion ensued, with E. Sharpe stating that FiPAC has still not received a clear explanation from F. Coss on this issue.

A. Smith MOVED to approve the BOE budget, including an additional \$9,000 to fund the afterschool program. J. Ortiz SECONDED the MOTION. L. E. Sharpe passed out a spreadsheet that summarized the reductions FiPAC and the BOE have agreed to this budget season. E. Sharpe stated that the spreadsheet explains that the reductions made so far during this budget process have not hurt the children's education at all. Discussion followed.

MOTION PASSED 4:3:0 with A. Smith, J. Ortiz, S. Everett and N. Hammarstrom in favor and E. Sharpe, M. Robertson and P. Gabel opposing. The new BOE budget appropriation is set at \$11,249,000.

L. Perrotti-Verboven feels that since the school must be safe and well-protected and that the town and the BOE are responsible to see that this happens. She stated that she thinks any surplus monies in FY '12-'13, including tuition surplus should be spent to ensure security upgrades at the

school. She stated that she is asking for help to get these doors in. Discussion followed.

M. Robertson left at 8:32 pm.

E. Sharpe MOVED to increase the FY '13-'14 Capital budget by \$40,000 for the installment of new exterior doors. Consensus was reached among FiPAC members that \$49,000 would be utilized from the General Fund to offset the appropriations added into the budget tonight. L. Perrotti-Verboven stated that if this money is not needed then it will remain in the General Fund. S. Everett SECONDED the MOTION and it CARRIED 7:0.

5. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 24, 2013 at 7:00 pm in the HW Porter Cafetorium. This will be the Public Hearing on the proposed budgets.
6. **Adjournment:** J. Ortiz MOVED to ADJOURN at 8:45 pm and the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully Submitted by Kimberly A. Bona