

**Town of Columbia**  
**Financial Planning and Allocation Commission**  
**Special Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, April 2, 2014 – 7 pm.**  
**Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room**  
**323 Route 87, Columbia, CT. 06237**

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

**Also Present:** First Selectman Carmen Vance, Town Administrator Jonathan Luiz, Superintendent Lol Fearon, Principal Alyssa Gwinnell, Finance Director Bev Ciurylo, Board of Education 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.

E. Sharpe acknowledged the resignation of Nancy Hammarstrom from the Financial Planning and Allocation Commission (FiPAC) and thanked her on behalf of the Commission for the time she served on FiPAC.

**3. Approval of Minutes:**

- 3.1 Approval of FiPAC March 26, 2014 Special Meeting Minutes:** J. Ortiz MOVED to approve the FiPAC Regular Meeting Minutes of March 26, 2014. J. Viens SECONDED the MOTION and it CARRIED 6:0.

**4. Old Business**

- 4.1 FY 2014-15 budget:** E. Sharpe asked J. Luiz if he has received any updates regarding Fire Department security and J. Luiz replied no.

L. Fearon discussed reductions for the proposed 2014-15 BOE budget. He explained that the BOE feels it would be feasible to reduce the proposed budget by \$317,953. L. Fearon stated that between one time expenditures (texts, equipment, grounds/bldgs, rep/maint), interns, and snowplowing services, a total of \$60,980 has been cut out of the proposed budget. He then explained that a tuition savings in the amount of \$14,274 was eliminated when three students enrolling at EO Smith were accepted into the Voag program instead. L. Fearon explained that \$4,725 was cut out of the Instructional Services/Conference line. He stated that the BOE has taken into consideration the agreement that E. Sharpe suggested at the previous meeting pertaining to funding for special ed services. L. Fearon said that the BOE is willing to reduce the special ed services by \$50,000 with the understanding that if this funding is needed in the future, the town will cover expenses up to \$50,000. Lastly, L. Fearon discussed Staff Reductions. He explained that the BOE has discussed cutting two full time teacher position and two full time paraprofessional positions in programs/classes that are declining in enrollment and that are not state mandated. He said that it has not yet been decided which areas of study the teacher/s and paraprofessional/s cuts will occur. Discussion followed.

R. Szegda asked if the Pre-K program will be cut. L. Fearon stated that has not yet been determined and that the BOE must discuss this. R. Szegda expressed his thoughts on the importance of the Pre-K program and would like to see that it is maintained. J. Viens asked if administrative cuts are an option. L. Fearon stated that he feels that at this time, it would be

very hard to meet state mandates and requirements with any less administrative staffing than they currently have. T. Shepard asked if there are any anticipated retirements to take place. L. Fearon said no. T. Shepard asked what the approximate salary range is for BOE staff. L. Fearon stated it ranges from approximately \$40,000-\$78,000.

Discussion regarding the Life Skills program took place and whether or not this could be offered as an after school program. L. Fearon stated that it is a possibility that some form of Life Skills could be offered as an after school program. A. Gwinnell stressed the popularity of this elective. Discussion followed.

C. Vance inquired about what research has been performed showing the importance of full time preschool and Kindergarten. L. Fearon stated that studies have shown that children who have attended a Pre-K program for at least two years have done better in school in the long run. Discussion followed.

Discussion ensued among FiPAC regarding the proposed BOE budget. E. Sharpe stated that he feels it is important to have reasoning behind the purpose of the percentage increase. He stated that at this time he is comfortable with the BOE 2.86% increase and is willing to additionally fund the BOE \$30,000.

R. Szegda MOVED to approve the BOE budget as presented (2.86% increase) with additional funding from the town in the amount of \$30,000, totaling \$351,995. J. Ortiz SECONDED the MOTION. Discussion followed. MOTION FAILED 3:0:3 with K. Peck, J. Viens and T. Shepard in opposition. T. Shepard MOVED to approve the BOE budget as presented (2.86% increase) with additional funding from the town in the amount of \$15,000, totaling \$336,955. MOTION CARRIED 5:0:1 with J. Viens abstaining.

Discussion took place regarding prepayment of bonds. J. Luiz stated that he and B. Ciurylo spoke with the town's financial advisor today and explained that if the town were to make a payment this year it would not be required to pay as much as originally thought. Discussion followed. FiPAC then discussed the Undesignated Fund Balance (UFB) and whether or not to fund from it.

E. Sharpe MOVED to remove bond pre-payments from the proposed FY '14-'15 budget and to utilize enough undesignated funds in order to have the FY '14-'15 Budget result in a 0% tax increase. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. **Next Meeting:** The next special meeting of FiPAC will be the Public Hearing on Wednesday, April 23, 2014 at 7 pm. The Public Hearing will be held in the H.W. Porter Cafetorium.
6. **Adjournment:** J. Ortiz MOVED to adjourn at 8:57 pm. and the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by Kimberly A. Bona.