

Town of Columbia
Financial Planning and Allocation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 15, 2016 - 7 pm
Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT. 06237

Members Present: Chairman Earnest Sharpe; Vice Chairman Jeffrey Viens; Judy Ortiz; Richard Szegda; Todd Shepard; Dean Toepfer.

Also Present: Finance Director Bev Ciurylo; Open Space Chairman Chris Tolsdorf; Kathy Tolsdorf.

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 FiPAC May 24, 2016 Special Meeting Minutes:** T. Shepard MOVED to approve the FiPAC May 24, 2016 Special Meeting Minutes. J. Viens SECONDED then MOTION and it CARRIED 6:0.
4. **Correspondence:**
 - 4.1 **BOS Special Meeting Minutes of 5/19/16**
5. **Old Business:**
 - 5.1 **2016-17 Budget Follow-up**
 - **Health Insurance:** B. Ciurylo received figures today. She stated that the percentage increase is approximately 8.4%. She explained that the BOE has budgeted 8% and the town budgeted 10% for next year. She will work out the details and update FiPAC when this is completed.
 - **Open Space: (See below)**
 - **State Budget:** Bev said that there have not been any updates on state budget. As soon as she receives information from CCM, she will let FiPAC know.

D. Toepfer asked about the recent press release regarding motor vehicle tax bills. B. Ciurylo explained that precautions have been taken with hopes to eliminate negative impacts in town. However, if an issue arises, residents are to contact the Assessor. The press release states that data in the old DMV system was compiled from customers over decades and could have old addresses never changed by someone who moved or incorrect information given when registering a vehicle. DMV has collected registration information for decades in a variety of inconsistent ways. There will be some cases where people receive tax bills from the wrong town. It is important that if anyone receives a tax bill from the wrong town, they contact the town that issued the bill as soon as possible so that the bill can be forwarded to the correct town. Officials advised residents that if they received a tax bill from a municipality in which they did not reside or in which they did not have a vehicle (both as of October 1, 2015), they need to contact their assessor to request a transfer to the correct town or city of residency as of October 1, 2015.

D. Toepfer asked about the revenue numbers in the approved FY 16-17 budget. Discussion followed.

Open Space discussion took place. R. Szegda stated that he does not feel he did a good job explaining why he supports Open Space at the Public Hearing and wished to clarify. He explained that when he served on the BOS, approximately \$50,000 was set aside annually for Open Space. That is why there is approximately \$250,000 in the Open Space account now. He stated that if the town makes a decision to purchase a piece of property, there are three ways to fund the purchase: 1) put money aside as it has been done in past years; 2) take it from the town's fund balance or, 3) to borrow it. R. Szegda explained that he is not pushing Open Space, but he personally thinks it is good for a town to have it and would rather not borrow the money to avoid incurring interest. E. Sharpe asked how the BOS handled the purchase of Open Space when he served. R. Szegda stated they relied on Open Space to provide information such as property, cost, etc. prior to making a decision on whether or not it should go to town meeting for a vote.

T. Shepard does not feel that it makes sense to put money aside for this when we are unsure of what the majority of townspeople want. He stated that he thinks of Open Space similar to the Library Project. Once it is favored by a large percentage of residents it will come to fruition. He feels that setting money aside now would be like "putting the money before the horse." J. Ortiz feels that it should be up to the town's people to make the decision as well. E. Sharpe states that Open Space did a good job researching and gathering information on the properties as FiPAC requested. However, he does not know if residents are aware of how much open space would cost the town, regardless of whether or not they support it. T. Shepard and J. Viens feel that if Open Space wants to purchase a parcel it should be sent to Town Meeting for approval, then to FiPAC to figure out how to go about the purchase. T. Shepard would like to see a map showing where the town is now in terms of Open Space percentage, and where we "should be." E. Sharpe stated he believes the town is over 8%. E. Sharpe asked how to determine when the town has enough open space. C. Tolsdorf explained that 20% is the approximate goal he believes but would have to confirm that percentage. He stated that the state average of open space is 10-11%. C. Tolsdorf stated that the Open Space Committee "knows we are done when the town tells us we are done." Our job is to identify parcels that are worth purchasing and to go after them when they become available. Discussion followed. C. Tolsdorf explained that the state requires money to be on hand before applying for the grant now. This was not always the process. He explained that we must show "good faith" by showing the money is available and ready to be spent. Discussion followed. E. Sharpe stated that he feels that the town must find what is ideal for Columbia. J. Viens feels it is best to go "piece by piece" when making Open Space purchases so people know what exactly the town is purchasing. i.e. cost, purpose, location, etc. C. Tolsdorf stated that Open Space has no way of knowing when a property will become available, therefore it is hard to say how much money is needed and what the time frame is. This is why the pre-funding is important.

D. Toepfer expressed that he did not know why the BOS approved the Open Space allocation and then did not support it. R. Szegda stated that R. Bogue did show support for the Open Space during the budget process. Discussion followed.

6. New Business:

6.1 Non-Lapsing Education Account: J. Viens asked about the proposed Memorandum of Agreement from the BOE regarding the non-lapsing account. He feels that the BOE should consult with FiPAC before making expenditures and that FiPAC should have some oversight on this account. Discussion followed. E. Sharpe discussed provisions pertaining to the non-lapsing accounts that other towns (Simsbury, Stafford, Stamford, Waterbury) abide by. He explained that the Boards of Finance in these towns are involved and oversee expenditures, etc. Discussion followed. E. Sharpe asked FiPAC to think about what they feel would be appropriate guidelines for a non-lapsing account in Columbia and be prepared to discuss at the next meeting. L. Fearon will be at the next meeting to discuss this.

6.2 Transfers: J. Ortiz MOVED the following transfers:

TRANSFER # / AMOUNT	FROM A/C #, DESCRIPTION	TO A/C #, DESCRIPTION
2016-044 / \$2,600	10-4130-016, ROV Election Workers	10-4130-010, ROV Salaries
2016-044 / \$1,000	10-4130-016, ROV Prof/Tech	10-4130-300, ROV General Supplies
2016-044 / \$200	10-4130-016, ROV Prof/Tech	10-4130-770, ROV Transportation
2016-050 / \$2,004	10-4136-010, Finance Salaries	10-4520-010 IWWC Salaries
2016-051 / \$10,000	10-4136-010, Finance Salaries	10-4510-010 PZC Salaries
2016-052 / \$8,520	10-4800-900, Contingency	10-4510-010, PZA Salaries

D. Toepfer SECONDED the MOTION and it CARRIED 6:0.

7. Audience of Citizens: D. Toepfer suggested addressing “Audience of Citizens” at the beginning of the meeting instead of at the end. FiPAC concurred. This change will be reflected on future meeting agendas.

8. Next Meeting –The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 20, 2016 at 7 pm.

9. Adjournment: T. Shepard MOVED to ADJOURN at 8:08 pm and the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by Kimberly A. Bona