

**Town of Columbia**  
**Financial Planning and Allocation Commission**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, September 16, 2015 – 7 pm**  
**Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room**  
**323 Route 87, Columbia, CT. 06237**

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

**Also Present:** First Selectman Carmen Vance; Superintendant Lol Fearon; Town Administrator Natasha Nau; Finance Director Bev Ciurylo; BOE Chairman Kerry Hoffman.

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**
  
- 3. Approval of Minutes**
  - 3.1 Approval of July 15, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes:** R. Szegda MOVED to approve the 7/15/15 minutes. J. Ortiz SECONDED the MOTION and it carried 7:0.
  
- 4. Correspondence**
  - 4.1 BOS 7/7/15 Regular Meeting Minutes**
  - 4.2 BOS 8/4/15 Regular Meeting Minutes**
  - 4.3 BOS 8/18/15 Regular Meeting Minutes**
  - 4.4 BOS 9/1/15 Regular Meeting Minutes**
  - 4.5 BOE 7/13/15 Regular Meeting Minutes**
  - 4.6 BOE 8/3/15 Regular Meeting Minutes**
  - 4.7 Fiscal Policy 8/12/15 Regular Meeting Minutes**
  
- 5. Old Business**
  - 5.1 BOE Budget Discussion:** Discussion took place regarding the upcoming FY 16-17 BOE budget. R. Szegda stated that he feels that the most important thing in any community is to provide a good education for children and that adequate funding from the town is necessary to achieve this. R. Szegda mentioned the decreasing student population and expressed that he would like to be sure that the children will get the best services possible for cost. L. Fearon distributed a 7 year enrollment/staffing history from FY 09-10 to FY 15-16. He discussed staffing reduction in addition to the student population decrease over the years. L. Fearon stated that the average class size has dropped from 18.2 students to 17.1 students. Discussion followed. L. Fearon stated that the BOE has saved money by combining transportation for special ed students as well as contracting high deductible health care plans/benefits. Discussion ensued regarding other saving options that are being considered. R. Szegda commented on the improvement in test scores and commended the BOE on this. M. Morrison stated that she is very happy with the test scores as well. L. Fearon stated that the Connecticut Mastery Testing (CMT) will be replaced with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). He explained that there will be a presentation on SBAC at the BOE meeting on October 6, 2015. The meeting begins at 7:30 pm and he invited the BOS and FiPAC to attend. Discussion regarding per pupil expenditures took place. L. Fearon stated that at this time he feels as though the cost is approximately \$17,000 and anticipates it to remain in this cost range.

C. Vance asked that when pupil comparisons are done, do the guidance counselors attempt studies pertaining to what students do once they graduate (i.e. attending college, job status, etc). C. Vance feels that a successful elementary school prepares its students well prior to them entering high school. She feels that students should be prepared to apply to colleges, etc. and have an idea of what their future goals are once they enter into high school. Discussion followed.

T. Shepard asked about the BOE 5 year plan. L. Fearon discussed a co-teaching model at primary grade levels that has been integrated. He stated that this model consists of re-assigning staff to create smaller learning group sizes. L. Fearon explained that the BOE is looking into combining more technology into current programs. Discussion followed.

J. Viens asked what the percentage is of students who are eligible for free or reduced lunch costs. L. Fearon stated less than 11%. J. Viens asked why the number of Administrators, Technicians and Secretaries has not significantly decreased when the student enrollment has. L. Fearon explained that the BOE is required to have annual evaluations done which are very time consuming and are state mandated. J. Viens requested a copy of the evaluation program requirements. L. Fearon said he will provide a copy to him.

K. Peck stated that she would like to see more substantial changes made that will cut costs as well as be effective for the education of the children. She explained that she would like more of a long range plan in effect versus just preparing for the upcoming year. L. Fearon stated that the BOE plans on addressing a long range plan this year.

E. Sharpe asked about Education Cost Sharing (ECS). L. Fearon explained that smaller districts are being looked at to collaborate. E. Sharpe expressed concern with the technology aspect. L. Fearon explained that the use of I-pads has been discontinued because they weren't sufficient learning tools. He stated that a curriculum plan is being worked on to evaluate the level of skills the children are required to obtain and what technology would be feasible for this, as well as for staff use. Discussion followed.

Discussion regarding special ed took place. L. Fearon stated that this year there are (3) three new out of district special needs children, as well as a (1) one current special needs student that requires residential placement. He explained that the BOE has no control of this. The placement and cost of this child is determined by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). L. Fearon explained that the BOE has approximately \$120,000 budgeted currently but the placement cost will be approximately \$238,000. He stated that (2) two of the other special needs children will require one on one paraprofessional work which will add approximately an additional \$75,000. Overall, he is anticipating an estimated shortfall of \$195,000. L. Fearon stated that a budget freeze has been put into place and he hopes to have a better idea of an overall projection thru June 2016 by October. K. Peck asked why this would not be considered more of a medical expense versus an educational expense seeing that the child in residential care would require more physical/speech therapy instead of mathematics, spelling, etc. Maybe put R.Szegda's response to this question???? Discussion followed. K. Peck asked if it would be possible to break out the budget so it consisted of a regular budget and a special needs budget. L. Fearon stated no, but

explained that a non-lapsing reoccurring fund could be created. He explained that this would consist of a joint understanding between the tri-boards that this fund would be used for designated purposes only, such as special ed. L. Fearon stated that this would not affect the MBR, where as funding from the regular budget will. Discussion followed.

**5.2 2014-15 Year End Closing:** Bev and N. Nau discussed the FY14-15 year end closing and the town's approximate \$500,000 surplus with FiPAC. There are still a few adjustments (including tonight's transfers) before the numbers are final. B. Ciurylo stated that approximately \$10,753 is being returned to town from BOE.

**5.3 Budget Process Review:** A draft 2016-2017 budget calendar was provided. N. Nau inquired if FIPAC still wished to have a list of large dollar amount projects prior to when they typically receive the line item budget requests from each department. Discussion ensued. N.Nau will provide the list to FIPAC at their November 18, 2015 meeting.

**6. New Business**

**6.1 New Legislation:** N. Nau spoke to FiPAC about the new legislation, specifically about the changes in MBR and the upcoming 2.5% expenditure cap that will take effect in FY 2018..

**6.2 Transfers:** E. Sharpe MOVED to approve the following transfers:

AMOUNT/TRANSFER #	FROM A/C #, DESCRIPTION	TO A/C #, DESCRIPTION
\$1,759 / 2015-066	10-4410-011, Salaries – DPW Overtime	10-4410-240, DPW Fuel
\$2,087 / 2015/070	10-4112-040, Group Insurance	10-4520-010, Salaries

J. Ortiz SECONDED the MOTION and it CARRIED 7:0.

R. Szegda MOVED to approve the following transfer:

AMOUNT/TRANSFER #	FROM A/C #, DESCRIPTION	TO A/C #, DESCRIPTION
\$1,350 / 2016-001	10-4112-040, Group Insurance	10-4250-420, Grants and Subsidies

J. Ortiz SECONDED the MOTION and it CARRIED 7:0.

J. Ortiz MOVED to approve the following transfer:

AMOUNT/TRANSFER #	FROM A/C #, DESCRIPTION	TO A/C #, DESCRIPTION
\$1,598/2016-002	10-4800-900, Contingency	10-4112-500, Prof/Tech

J. Vien SECONDED the MOTION and it CARRIED 7:0.

**7. Audience of Citizens:** None.

**8. Next Meeting:** The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 21, 2015 at 7pm.

**9. Adjournment:** E. Sharpe MOVED to adjourn at 8:32 pm. and the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by Kimberly A. Bona.