

TOWN OF COLUMBIA  
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING  
JUNE 14, 2016

A Special Town Meeting of the electors and citizens qualified to vote in the Town of Columbia, Connecticut was held in Yeoman's Hall, 323 Route 87, Columbia, CT on Tuesday, June 14, 2016 at 7:00 p.m..

Present were First Selectman Carmen Vance, Finance Director Beverly Ciurylo, Superintendent Laurence (Lol) Fearon and Board of Education Chairman Christopher Lent.

MODERATOR: Mark Vining  
TOWN CLERK: Robin M. Kenefick  
CITIZENS: 15+/ Present

The meeting was opened by First Selectman Carmen Vance at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. The meeting was turned over to the Moderator who read the legal notice and explained the procedures and who may vote at this meeting.

CLAUSE 1: Motion was made by Carmen Vance.

“I move to approve the Supplemental Appropriation Request from the Columbia Board of Education in the amount of \$400,000 for FY 2015-2016 from the Town of Columbia's General Fund.”

The motion was seconded by Christopher Lent. The Moderator opened the floor for discussion. Carmen Vance spoke first. She stated that in early 2000, there was a lot of discussion between Financial Planning and Allocation Commission (FiPAC) and the Board of Education (BOE) including funding in the area of special education. The BOE never knew who was coming in, so we would plan in advance to request additional funds and if not spent, they would be added to the general fund. The BOE would budget only for or as close to the actual number of students there were. A gentleman's agreement was made that if the BOE needed more funding, the town would provide those additional funds as needed from the general fund. This is the first year that the BOE has come to the Town requesting extra dollars. Carmen Vance relinquished the floor to Superintendent Lol Fearon. He stated that between August 2015 and November 2015, nine new students at the high school level registered through Columbia, seven of them with special needs. The budget was built on the number of students currently enrolled in special ed at that time, so there was no room for any additional students coming in. The BOE had made a commitment over the years to create a budget on actual students and this was a very unusual year with so many students coming in. In December 2015, the BOE was running a deficit of close to

\$600,000 and a school district can't run a deficit. We started a freeze on discretionary spending and utilized other funds, including grant monies, to help offset part of the deficit, which is now at \$385,000. The \$400,000 would cover this deficit and we would be able to finish the school year in the black, as we have to according to statute.

The floor was opened to the citizens for discussion. Carol Wiggins, 96 Route 6, spoke in favor of this request. No other discussion took place.

The Moderator re-read the motion. A voice vote was taken on the motion.

YES: Unanimous NO: 0. The motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin M. Kenefick  
Columbia Town Clerk