

TOWN OF COLUMBIA
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES
April 10, 2012

A Town Meeting of the electors and citizens qualified to vote in the Town Meeting of the Town of Columbia, Connecticut was held in the Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room on Tuesday, April 10, 2012 at 6:45 pm.

Present: First Selectman Carmen Vance; Selectman Richard Szegda; Selectman Bob Bogue; Selectman Rob Hellstrom; Selectman Bill O'Brien; Town Administrator Jonathan Luiz.

Moderator: Bob Baldwin
Clerk: Jonathan Luiz, Town Administrator
Citizens: Approximately 12 others were present in addition to the Selectmen.

The Special Town Meeting was called to order by C. Vance at 6:45 pm. C. Vance led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was then turned over to the Moderator.

B. Baldwin reviewed the legal notice covering this Special Town Meeting and explained the rules for voting and speaking at this Special Town Meeting.

CLAUSE 1: Approval of a cooperative agreement with the Town of Bolton for the formation and operation of a committee to purchase employee health benefits pursuant to Connecticut Public Act 10-174.

C. Vance MOVED to approve a cooperative agreement with the Town of Bolton for the formation and operation of a committee to purchase employee health benefits pursuant to Connecticut Public Act 10-174. R. Szegda SECONDED the motion.

B. Baldwin read the motion again and opened up the floor for discussion. C. Vance said that Columbia has worked with Bolton for a long time on this deal, and that it has already been approved by the Town of Bolton, the Bolton Board of Education, and the Columbia Board of Education. C. Vance said that she believes the agreement would save Columbia money. Jill Zorn of 81 West Street expressed concern with the Town of Columbia making a decision on the Columbia/Bolton agreement without having information about the State Comptroller's insurance plan. J. Zorn also said that she was concerned with Columbia entering into a multi-year deal with Bolton, which has "worse health benefits." J. Zorn inquired as to who would administer the plan in Columbia and how Columbia would handle a bad experience year. J. Luiz responded to J. Zorn's questions. He said that the deal with Bolton would be a minimum of 2 years if Columbia chooses to leave after the first year. J. Luiz said that Bolton is nearly identical to Columbia in that the towns do not have police departments and fire departments. J. Luiz said that the State Comptroller has provided no financial information on the State plan and that the state plan design would be different from the current plan design Columbia has with Anthem. J. Luiz explained that the State Plan would penalize Columbia for leaving after the first, second and/or third years of the State Plan, and that the State Plan would entice "healthier" communities to join the first year so that less healthy communities would be added in the following years. Ronald Theriault announced himself as the Town of Columbia's insurance broker. R. Theriault said that the State's Plan would require that the Town of

Columbia leave Anthem and use United as an insurance carrier. Discussion ensued between R. Theriault, C. Vance and J. Luiz about the difficulties the Town of Columbia would face from the Board of Education unions if/when the Board of Education switched insurance coverage from Anthem to United. W. O'Brien said that he would not vote in the favor of the motion without first having information from the State Comptroller on the price of the State's plan. R. Szegda asked J. Luiz if the State Comptroller has placed a deadline on when Columbia will get financial information on the State plan. J. Luiz said that Columbia has repeatedly asked the State Comptroller's office for financial figures and has received no response. R. Szegda asked J. Luiz if he would be surprised if the State Comptroller announced that Columbia save more money under the State Plan versus the Bolton/Columbia proposal. J. Luiz answered that he would not be surprised if the State Plan would be less expensive the first year, but more expensive in the following years, since the State Plan wants to entice healthy municipalities to join in the first year of the State Plan's existence. R. Theriault said that of the 32 Connecticut government clients that his company represents only 1 has received financial information from the State Comptroller's office, and that the particular client had decided against joining the State Plan. B. Bogue asked what the maximum loss to Columbia would be during a year with a horrible claims experience. R. Theriault said that the stop loss insurance for Columbia would activate once 125% of budgeted claims have been incurred. J. Zorn said that there is a lot of information about the State Comptroller's plan that the Town of Columbia does not have, and that Columbia should look into a meeting that the State Comptroller's Office will have with Windham in the very near future on the subject of the State Plan. R. Szegda said it would help Columbia very much to receive financial information from the State Comptroller, but the problem is that the State has been very slow to provide such information. R. Szegda said that the Bolton/Columbia plan has already identified savings for the next budget year, and that the Bolton/Columbia plan would not require the town to leave Anthem and that Columbia could withdraw after only spending two years in the Columbia/Bolton plan. B. Bogue questioned the penalty for early withdrawal from the Bolton/Columbia plan. J. Luiz clarified that the Bolton/Columbia plan does not assign an early withdrawal penalty, but that the State Plan would assign an early withdrawal penalty. R. Theriault spoke of the State Plan needing a "critical mass" of lives to be a valid option, and that the State ultimately wants to plan all state employees under this State Plan along with non-profits.

B. Baldwin heard no further discussion and read the motion aloud. B. Baldwin called for a vote on the motion. Five voters were in favor of the motion. Six voters were in opposition to the motion. The motion failed. The meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by J. Luiz