

**TOWN OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING
SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA
FINANCIAL PLANNING AND ALLOCATION COMMISSION
Wednesday, April 24, 2024 – 7:00 PM
Yeoman’s Hall
(This is an in-person only meeting)
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT. 06237**

CALL TO ORDER

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025 BUDGET:

- 2.1 Presentations of the proposed budget by representatives of the Board of Education and the Board of Selectmen.
- 2.2 Opportunity for any elector or qualified voter to be heard regarding the recommended appropriations.

3. ADJOURNMENT OF THE PUBLIC HEARING.

4. RECESS.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- 5.1 Financial Planning and Allocation Commission Special Meeting with Budget Workshop Minutes, Wednesday, April 17, 2024.

6. CORRESPONDENCE:

- 6.1 BOS Regular Meeting 4/16/24.
- 6.2 BOE Draft Special Meeting Minutes for 4/16/24.

1. OLD BUSINESS:

2. NEW BUSINESS:

- 2.1 FiPAC Discussion on Public Hearing.
- 2.2 Modification of the proposed FY 24-25 budget, as FiPAC deems advisable.
- 2.3 Motion to move the proposed FY 24-25 budget to the Annual Town Meeting.

3. NEXT MEETING:

- 3.1 Tuesday, May 14, 2024 – Annual Town Meeting at 7:00 PM in Yeomans Hall, Columbia, CT. This meeting is an in-person meeting with No Zoom accessibility. FiPAC members should plan on meeting after the Town Meeting to discuss any possible budget revision and setting the mill rate.

4. ADJOURNMENT.

**TOWN OF COLUMBIA
FINANCIAL PLANNING AND ALLOCATION COMMISSION (FiPAC)
with BUDGET WORKSHOP
MINUTES**

**Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 7:00 pm
Town Hall Conference Room and Zoom Virtual Meeting
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT. 06237**

Members Present: Jeff Viens, Chairman; Judi Jordan, Vice Chairman; Stephen Cooke, Art Rowbotham, James Chakulski, Kelley Peck, Richard Szegda.

Also Present: Mark Walter, Town Administrator; Beverly Ciurylo, Finance Director; Barbara Wilson, Superintendent; Christine Sposito, BOE Vice Chairman; Paul Zator, BOE; Stephania Dawiczuk, BOE; Leah Osborn, BOE; Judy Ortiz, BOS Deputy First Selectman; Steven Everett, First Selectman.

Also Present Remotely: Kara Levenduski, Horace Porter School Principal.

1. **RULES OF CONDUCT FOR HYBRID VIRTUAL MEETING:** J. Viens read the rules of conduct for a hybrid virtual meeting..

2. **CALL TO ORDER:** J. Viens called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

J. Viens MOVED to Adjust the Agenda to Move Audience of Citizens to after the Approval of the Minutes. K. Peck SECONDED the MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 7.0.

4. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** C. Sposito asked if there was an opportunity for the BOE members to speak later in the meeting.

K. Peck MOVED to MOVE the Audience of Citizens to after the discussion of the budget. J. Chakulski SECONDED the MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 7.0.

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

5.1 **FiPAC Special Meeting with Budget Workshop Minutes for April 3, 2024.**

J. Jordan MOVED to APPROVE the FIPAC Special Meeting with Budget Workshop Minutes for April 3, 2024. K. Peck SECONDED the MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 7.0.

6. **NEW BUSINESS:**

6.1 **Appoint King, King & Associates as the Town Auditors for the 2023-2024 Town Audit.** K. Peck MOVED to Appoint King, King & Associations as the Town Auditors for the 2023-2024 Town Audit. J. Jordan SECONDED the MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 7.0.

7. DISCUSSION ON FY 24/25 BUDGET WORKSHOP and Possible Motions.

B. Wilson said at the Special Board of Education meeting on April 16th the BOE voted to reduce their budget by \$299,929. The Town Appropriation budget increase from last year (originally \$694,000 or a 5.1% increase) is now an increase of \$395,004 or 2.90% increase.

R. Szegda asked what the specific cuts were from the BOE budget. B. Wilson said that without getting into too much detail, the majority of the cuts come from salary and benefits. R. Szegda asked what positions were cut. B. Wilson said she is not comfortable with specifying the position because it involves people, and she needs to inform the staff first. She said that about 3.5 positions are involved. Discussion ensued regarding staffing and class sizes.

Stephania Dawiczuk, 25 Samuel Hill Rd. said as a parent and a citizen she feels that any cuts would affect all student age groups. She said COVID impacted the students and effected Math and English skills. She said she obtained mill rates from surrounding towns from 2021-2024. She said a lot of towns are higher and some are lower.

Discussion ensued about mill rates and how mill rates are determined.

B. Wilson said the BOE wants to work with FiPAC and hopes that next year, the BOE is involved much earlier in the process.

Leah Osborne, 48 Johnson Rd. is concerned that going forward there will be more kids coming into the school system and we are cutting back. She asks that we look ahead in planning and investing in the school every year.

K. Peck said she also would like to look forward. She said what she struggles with is the opaqueness in how the BOE reach budget conclusions. She said it might be worth investing a small amount in an expert who can come in and look at the budget to assess if somewhere there might be excess spending that the BOE could readjust or even economize more.

C. Sposito asked is it feasible throughout the year to collaborate meetings between the BOE and FiPAC.

J. Viens said that some FiPAC members met with Barbara recently and the intention is to grow that with different members of FiPAC meeting with B. Wilson. M. Walter said Fiscal Policy meets each month and this is an opportunity to discuss and collaborate with the BOE, BOS & FiPAC.

S. Everett said that he has to take into consideration everyone when making decisions on the budget including the elderly, of which many are on a fixed income, and they can't afford a large tax increase. S. Everett discussed that making cuts is painful and he thanked the BOE for the work that they do. He discussed looking forward to several large projects including the purification and HVAC system at the Horace Porter School, infrastructure projects to roads, culverts and bridges, and the possibility of a paid fire department.

Ashley Park, 307 Route 87 said class size is only one aspect having an impact on our children's education. Class sizes are growing and the needs of the students along with the COVID gap impact the education of our children. This is not going to change overnight.

K. Peck MOVED to Accept the Board of Education budget cut and Accept the proposed budget as presented to be moved to the Public Hearing. R. Szegda SECONDED the Budget. MOTION CARRIED 6.0.1 with J. Chakulski OPPOSED.

8. UPCOMING MEETINGS:

- 8.1 April 24, 2025 – Public Hearing on the Proposed FY 2024-2025 with Public Input and FiPAC Special Meeting to follow, Yeomans Hall at 7:00 pm.
- 8.2 May 14, 2024 – Annual Town Meeting with Budget Vote and FiPAC Special Meeting to follow, Yeomans Hall at 7:00 pm.

9. ADJOURNMENT: R. Szegda MOVED to ADJOURN at 7.44 PM. S. Cooke SECONDED the MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully Submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
COLUMBIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Tuesday, April 16, 2024
Immediately Following the Public Hearing at 6:30 pm
Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room & Virtual
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT

Members Present: Steven M. Everett, First Selectman; Judy Ortiz, Deputy First Selectman; Lisa Napolitano, Selectman.

Members Present Remotely: Christopher Lent, Selectman; William O'Brien, Selectman.

Also Present: Mark B. Walter, Town Administrator; Henry Beck, LMAC

CALL TO ORDER: S. Everett Called the meeting to order at 7:47 PM.

1. **RULES OF CONDUCT FOR HYBRID VIRTUAL MEETING:** S. Everett read the rules of conduct for hybrid virtual meeting. .
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was previously recited in the Public Hearing.
3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** S. Everett MOVED to APPROVE the Agenda as Presented. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**
 - 4.1 **BOS Regular Meeting Minutes for April 2, 2024.** S. Everett MOVED to APPROVE the Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting Minutes for April 2, 2024. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
5. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** None.
6. **OLD BUSINESS:**
 - 6.1 **Chapter 190 of the Code of Town Ordinances – Lake and Beach Use:**
 - **Article II Vessels on Columbia Lake.**
 - **Article III Safety Regulations on Columbia Lake.**
 - **Article IV Conduct at Town Beach.**

Discussion started with Article II Vessels on Columbia Lake. S. Everett said that we are clear on what Lake Management Advisory Commission (LMAC) put together for the proposed lake ordinance changes but is not comfortable moving forward with any kind of change in the horsepower that is allowed on the lake and will need further discussion. S. Everett said he is in favor of the suggestion from the Public Hearing regarding changing the language from vessel to motorboat when referring to a non-powered vessel that is longer than 26 feet.

M. Walter asked could anything over 26 feet come before the BOS for exemption. H. Beck said that is possible. The language could read any vessel over 26 feet must have BOS approval based on public safety and lake conservation.

There were no discussion for Article III or Article IV.

S. Everett made the following MOTION:

Pursuant to Section 3.3(a)(1) of the Charter, the Board of Selectmen hereby adopts the proposed amended and restated ordinance entitled “Lake and Beach Use - Article II - Vessels on Columbia Lake” including Sections 190-2 through 190-9, inclusive, as presented with the following change: 190-6 paragraph H any motorboat exceeding 26 feet in length as listed on its original title is prohibited to launch on the lake. Motorboats exceeding the 26 feet limit prior to November 2, 2023 must possess a valid, posted exemption sticker per Section 190-6I, in addition any vessel over 26 feet must have Board of Selectmen approval based on public safety matters.

Pursuant to Section 3.3(a)(1) of the Charter, the Board of Selectmen hereby adopts the proposed amended and restated ordinance entitled “Lake and Beach Use – Article III - Safety Regulations on Columbia Lake” including Sections 190-11 through 190-17, inclusive, as presented.

Pursuant to Section 3.3(a)(1) of the Charter, the Board of Selectmen hereby adopted the proposed amended and restated ordinance entitled “Lake and Beach Use – Article IV - Conduct at Town Beach” including Sections 190-18 through 190-23, inclusive, as presented.

MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

- 6.2 Town Launch Gate Key Program.** S. Everett said that LMAC was tasked with finding out answers on the issuance of gate keys. S. Everett said that we are enhancing the camera availability at the beach and boat launch area.

S. Everett MOVED in the short term, on a temporary basis, LMAC advises the BOS to reinstate the Gate Key Program with the following changes to better enforce the Gate Key Inspection Regulations when a violation occurs:

- Eliminate the three-strike enforcement portion of the regulations, replacing it with the immediate forfeiture of one's gate key for a rolling 12-month period of time as ordered by the BOS.
- For a second offense, immediate forfeiture of the gate key with a potential for not having access to the lake for an indefinite period of time as determined by the BOS, with no less than a rolling 12-month period of time.

Recreational or other town employees as designated by the BOS will be required to record, monitor, and document camera footage of all launches on a daily basis.

MOTION CARRIED 4.1 with Chris Lent Opposed.

- 6.3 Charge for Subcommittee for the Columbia Road and Culvert Evaluations.** S. Everett explained the charge of this committee is to review and prioritize problem drainage issues in the town. Input with high level evaluation and creative solutions provided to the Town Engineer consultant for their consideration and the Director of Public Works review. Subcommittee members that have said they would serve are Bob Millerd, Mary Roickle, David Geissert, and Paul Kordonowy. S. Everett MOVED to Accept the charge for the subcommittee for the Columbia road and culvert evaluation and the members are accepted. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
- 7. NEW BUSINESS:**
- 7.1 2024 Boat Mooring Lottery.** All applicants for the boat moorings and kayak slips will receive a mooring. The kayak/canoe rack have nine applicants and there are only 8 slots. Richard Ranger is the only applicant that was not given a slot in the kayak/canoe rack.
- 7.2 Discussion Regarding Municipal Advisor Request for Proposal.** M. Walter said we put out a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Municipal Advisory Services. Bond Counsel provided the language for the RFP. M. Walter explained that if we get the grant for the Horace Porter School HVAC project, and the work needed on Pine Street and the other road/culverts projects we will need a Municipal Advisor to prepare to go out to bond. After reviewing the proposals, Phoenix Advisors and Munistat were similar in their costs and Unibank's approach cost by cost per million. Phoenix and Munistat had mostly Connecticut clients and Unibank had mostly Massachusetts. M. Walter's recommendation is to bring both Phoenix Advisors and Munistat for an interview.
- 7.3 Authorize and Appropriate ARPA funds for the Beach Paver Walkway Repairs and Closeout for Town Hall HVAC Project.** S. Everett MOVED to APPROVE the Proposed Closeout of the Presented American Relief Funds Project as of 4/10/2024 by Allocating Additional Funding from Available American Relief Funds. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
- 7.4 Discussion and Approval for the Republican Town Committee to hold two flag sales at the Transfer Station on May 27th and September 2nd.** S. Everett MOVED to APPROVE the Republican Town Committee to hold two flag sales at the Transfer Station on May 27th and September 2nd. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
- 7.5 Discussion to support flag display to honor those killed on 9/11. Women worked for veterans affairs in Marlborough and is now retired. From Portland thru Columbia put up American flags for first responders who were killed on 9/11.** S. Everett MOVED to APPROVE the Donation of \$800.00 towards purchasing 425 flags that would be displayed on Route 66 from September 7th through September 14th each year honoring First Responders who were killed on 9/11. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
- 8. COLUMBIA LAKE / DAM / BEACH:** None.
- 9. APPOINTMENTS / RESIGNATIONS:** None.
- 10. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:** None.
- 11. CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

12. **BUDGET:**
 - 12.1 **Transfers:** S. Everett MOVED to APPROVE the TRANSFERS Totaling \$619.00 as presented. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
 - 12.2 **Refunds:** None.

13. **APPROVE PAYMENT OF BILLS:** S. Everett MOVED to APPROVE the Payment of Bills Totaling \$133,960.39, Consisting of 2023-2024 Emergency, 2023-2024 Regular, Credit Card, and Paychex. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

14. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** G. Stryker asked if we could have additional signage for fisherman that would state One Key, One Boat. This is to discourage a boater to sneak in behind someone who had a key to open the gate.

15. **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:** M. Walter thanked the Lions Club on such a great job with the new lighting for the Town Green sign and the new plantings around the gazebo.

16. **EXECUTIVE SESSION: Real estate per State Statutes Section 1-200(6)(D); Pending Litigation per State Statutes Section 1-200(6)(B); Personnel per State Statues Section 1-200(6)(A). S. Everett MOVED into Executive Session at 8:27 pm and invited M. Walter to attend. MOTION CARRIED 5.0. Executive Session ended at 8:41 pm.**
 - 16.1 **Legal:** S. Everett MOVED to Authorize Mark Walter, the Town Administrator to rent a dumpster for services. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

17. **ADJOURNMENT:** S. Everett MOVED to ADJOURN at 8:42 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie

BOARD OF EDUCATION
COLUMBIA, CONNECTICUT

Michael Maziarz, Chairperson
Stephania Dawiczuk
Lauren Haberman
Leah Osborn
Rachel Riendeau
Christine Sposito, V. Chair, Secy
Paul Zator
Barbara Wilson, Superintendent
Scott Leslie, Interim Asst. Superintendent

Special Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 16, 2024
Virtual via Zoom

Present: Paul Zator, Michael Maziarz, Christine Sposito, Leah Osborn, Stephania Dawiczuk, Rachel Riendeau, Lauren Haberman

Others Present: Barbara Wilson-Superintendent, Beverly Ciurylo-Finance Director, Kara Levenduski-Principal, Karen Caputo-Assistant Principal, Eileen Paulhus, Steven Piro, Kristen Bacon, Alexis Stolarun, Jesse Tremblay, Amanda White, Ashlee P., Angelo Trombino, Keri Costanzo, Kat MacDonald, Jennifer Andrews, Shawn Dousis, Rachel Koener, Cynthia Larsen, Michelle Shive

- I. Call to Order** - Chair, M. Maziarz called the special meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. and reviewed the rules of conduct for a virtual meeting.

RULES OF CONDUCT FOR HYBRID VIRTUAL MEETING: *This meeting will be held virtually. Board members and staff who are joining virtually will generally remain on mute except when speaking or voting and will generally be keeping video of themselves turned on throughout the meeting. If a member of the public creates an audio or video disruption, he/she/they may be manually ejected from the meeting upon recommendation of staff or the Board of Education Chairperson. Public comments during the meeting can be submitted through the "Chat" feature or wave your hand and request your microphone to be unmuted.*

II. Pledge of Allegiance

- III. Comments from the Audience** *(Please identify yourself by providing your name and address) Time allotted for public participation is twenty (20) minutes; time allotted for an individual speaker is three (3) minutes. Please identify yourself by providing your name and address. For public comments during this virtual meeting, please follow instructions above. During this portion it is the role of the board to listen, allow voice to members of the audience, and make notes. We will then use that information together with any additional gathered information to appropriately respond at a later time. We now open up for Audience of Citizens.*

No audience comments were received.

- IV. Executive Session for the Purpose of 2024-2025 Budget Discussion** - R. Riendeau MOVED, L. Osborn SECONDED to enter into executive session at 6:12 PM. MOTION CARRIES 6:0.

Board members returned to regular session at 7:14 PM.

- V. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding the [2024-2025 Draft Budget](#)** - L. Osborn MOVED, R. Riendeau SECONDED to approve a reduction to the 2024-2025 Budget of \$299,929. MOTION CARRIES 6:1. L. Haberman voted no.

- VI. Adjournment** - P. Zator MOVED, C. Sposito SECONDED to adjourn the meeting at 7:15. MOTION CARRIES 6:0.

Respectfully submitted,
Brenda Morey, Interim Clerk