

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
COLUMBIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

Tuesday, June 16, 2020 – 7:00 pm

**Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT**

Members Present via Remote Access: Steven M. Everett, First Selectman; Robert Hellstrom, Deputy Selectman; Judy Ortiz, Selectman; William O'Brien, Selectman; Lisa Napolitano

Also Present via Remote Access: Mark Walter, Town Administrator.

This is a web-based call, so we are operating under the following procedures: This session is being both video and audio-recorded. The Selectmen and staff will generally remain on mute except when speaking or voting and will generally be keeping video of themselves on throughout the meeting. If a member of the public creates an audio or video disruption, they may be manually ejected from the meeting upon recommendation of staff or the First Selectman.

CALL TO ORDER: S. Everett called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

1. **MOMENT OF SILENCE:** S. Everett asked for a moment of silence.
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Agenda as presented. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**
- 3.1 **BOS Regular Meeting Minutes for June 2, 2020.** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Minutes for the BOS Regular Meeting Minutes for June 2, 2020. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
4. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** Mary A. Roickle, 34 Erdoni Road explained that she had sent an email to PublicInput@columbiact.org in regards to the road safety issues that impact the areas of Erdoni Road (from Lake Road to Sadlon Road). M. Roickle stated that there are ongoing speeding and/or driver distraction problems and unsafe road shoulder conditions for pedestrians. M. Roickle would like the BOS to discuss and address these issues.
5. **OLD BUSINESS:**
- 5.1 **COVID-19 Municipal Procedural Updates.** M. Walter is recommending that the Town offices open to the public by appointment only on July 6th. M. Walter explained the procedures that the town is putting in place, which include installing plexiglass, hand sanitizer will be available to residents, and social distancing and masks will be required. M. Walter explained that many services can be done on-line or through the mail and we have the lockbox available outside of Yeomans Hall for residents.

The pavilion at Rec Park will be open for rentals on June 17th. At the beach, kayak rentals will resume and the bathrooms inside the Murphy House are still closed at the beach.

The Senior Center will be re-opening the transportation program on a very limited basis and once the medical car has arrived, we will start using the medical car.

The Library submitted their Phase 2 re-opening plan. The Library will be staffed 6 days a week with Saturday hours for the summer. In-house staffing at any one time, will remain limited. The Library's large main area will have limited

browsing during set and structured times and they are working on a schedule that would allow patrons into this browsing area for a few hours during differing days and times of day to accommodate various schedules. Stacks and children's area will be closed to the public, but materials can be retrieved for them. Public rest rooms will be closed. Browsing times to begin July 7, 2020.

W. O'Brien said that the ice cream truck vendor at the beach is not wearing a mask and asked that it be addressed. M. Walter stated he would look into this.

5.2 Discussion and Approval of Veterans Exemptions.

- a) Ordinance for Additional Exemption for Veterans.
- b) Ordinance for Property Tax Exemption for Gold Star Parents and Spouses.
- c) Ordinance for Tax Exemption on Motor Vehicles Equipped for Disabled Veterans.
- d) Ordinance for Increased Exemption For 100% Disabled Veterans.

S. Everett read the following MOTION and it CARRIED 4.0.1 with S. Everett Abstaining.

WHEREAS, the Board of Selectmen has previously recommended that the Town adopt certain ordinances expanding property tax exemptions and abatements for veterans; and

WHEREAS, the Town Charter would ordinarily require a special town meeting to adopt those ordinances; and

WHEREAS, in light of the current Declaration of Public Health and Civil Preparedness emergencies in the State of Connecticut and executive orders issued by Governor Lamont in conjunction with such declaration the holding of a town meeting would not be prudent; and

WHEREAS, Section 4 of Executive Order 7JJ issued by Governor Lamont on May 6, 2020 permits the Board of Selectmen, upon finding that taking such action in a timely manner serves an important public interest or to avoid financial loss, to take action to adopt or amend ordinances without complying with the Town Charter or any statutory requirement to hold a town meeting or referendum to approve such adoption or amendment; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Selectmen has determined that delaying the adoption of the proposed ordinances would potentially adversely impact the financial condition of certain veterans who may be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic or otherwise.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT:

RESOLVED: That, pursuant to the authority granted under Section 4 of Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7JJ, the Board of Selectmen does hereby adopt the ordinance entitled

- Ordinance for Additional Exemption for Veterans.
- Ordinance for Property Tax Exemption for Gold Star Parents and Spouses.

- Ordinance for Tax Exemption on Motor Vehicles Equipped for Disabled Veterans.
- Ordinance for Increased Exemption For 100% Disabled Veterans.

5.3 Charter Revision Committee Member Recommendations. S. Everett explained that we have several volunteers for the Charter Revision Committee, and we are looking for more recommendations. S. Everett asked if we have a requirement for each party. Currently, the volunteers we have would result in not having enough members from each party. M. Walter explained that there can be a maximum of 5 of one party. S. Everett asked if there were any other recommendations and L. Napolitano stated she would like to be on the committee.

5.4 Authorization of the agreement between the Town of Columbia and USS Vineyard Solar LLC. M. Walter explained that this was brought to us months back and the BOS voted to support USS Vineyard Solar, LLC to install a 20-acre solar farm. M. Walter explained that this is still a competitive process that must go through CTDEEP and if approved it would still need to go through Planning and Zoning. The agreement with USS Vineyard Solar LLC would provide payment in lieu of taxes of \$5,000 a year. S. Everett MOVED to Approve and Authorize the execution of the agreement for payment in lieu of taxes between the Town of Columbia and USS Vineyard Solar LLC. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

6.1 Approval of the Recommended Contractor for the Rec Park Guardrails.

S. Everett explained that the Rec Park improvements are going along well. We recently put out a request for proposal for the installation of guardrails that would separate the road and the walkway at Rec Park. George Murphy, Public Works Director recommended that Atlas Residential and Commercial Services be awarded the contract. Even though Riverhead Building's submittal quote came in at \$231.00 lower than Atlas Residential and Commercial Services, G. Murphy recommends Atlas Residential and Commercial Services because we have used them on other fencing work with good results. S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Recommended Contractor, Atlas Residential and Commercial Services LLC for \$21,244.50 for the supply and installation of guardrails at Rec Park. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

6.2 Authorization for the use of the Town Green and Gazebo. S. Everett explained that the Congregation Church has requested to use the Town Green near the gazebo so they can use the electrical outlet to set up a speaker to hold their Sunday services. L. Napolitano thought it was a good idea. J. Ortiz asked how many can attend. M. Walter explained that on June 17th will go up to groups of 50. S. Everett MOVED to Approve temporarily during the pandemic the Congregational Church's request to hold outdoor services on Sunday mornings on the green. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

6.3 Discussion of Request for Rally Protocol on Town Property. S. Everett stated that Tiffany Anderson has written to the Town and has asked to organize and hold a rally on the Town Green. S. Everett asked Tiffany to explain her request to the BOS.

T. Anderson has requested to hold the "Togetherness Rally" in support of the black community this Saturday June 20th from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm, to be held on the Town Green with a rain date of June 27th. She stated that parking might be at the Horace Porter or Saxton B. Little Library. She has reached out to the Columbia Resident Trooper and Troop K for collaboration and safety measures but had not heard back from them yet. She stated this is a peaceful demonstration

as a show of support for the black community, raising awareness of continued systemic racism. The message will be one of unity and collaboration to evoke needed actions and reforms. She said that social distance requirements will be mandatory for participation. Participants will be directed to properly dispose of any waste such as gloves, masks, water bottles etc. She said that methods of communication and information regarding the event would be using social media platforms, such as emails, Facebook, Instagram, and Nextdoor app. She said she will be the point of contact. She said she would be reaching out to other towns that have had successful and peaceful demonstrations.

S. Everett explained he supports the request. J. Ortiz asked about controlling crowds. T. Anderson stated that her understanding is that the regulations for crowds for this purpose are larger than 50 and she said she would look more into that. M. Walter explained that he would be talking with Troop K tomorrow and will get back to Tiffany. W. O'Brien supports the rally as long as the proper precautions are taken. R. Hellstrom is in support. L. Napolitano said she appreciates that T. Anderson stated that it will be peaceful and that they will be picking up after themselves.

Ingrid Wood, Rte 87 asked how many people will be attending and will there be bathrooms. T. Anderson responded that it is her understanding that maximum for such an event is 100 and would have to double check and that she can make sure she includes that there will be no bathrooms available in the communications about the rally.

S. Everett stated that he received an email requesting a statement from the Town of Columbia about the Black Lives Matter movement and to include a statement on the Town Green sign board. S. Everett read the following statement: "The Town of Columbia is an inclusive community that does not condone discrimination or intolerance of any kind. We stand in support of all groups and organizations that seek and deserve racial justice and respect for all." S. Everett explained that we will post on the sign board the following "We Grieve Together" and asked for support from the BOS. All BOS members unanimously gave their support. M. Walter explained that Brandon Flad had sent the email for this request and he stated it was a very well written letter.

- 6.4 Recommendation letter for Bald Eagle protection.** S. Everett stated we have two new eaglets this year and we will again ask residents to not set off fireworks. He added that fireworks are illegal. S. Everett MOVED to Approve sending out of another letter this year from CTDEEP and from BOS informing about the eaglets and asking residents to refrain from use of fireworks. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

- 7. COLUMBIA LAKE / DAM / BEACH.** None.

8. APPOINTMENTS / RESIGNATIONS:

- 8.1 Appointment of Christine Sposito to the Board of Education.** S. Everett read the letter of recommendation from Tom Currier, Chairman of the Democratic Town Committee. C. Sposito stated she has attended BOE meetings for a couple of years and has been interested in serving for the BOE. W. O'Brien MOVED to Appoint Christine Sposito to the Board of Education. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

9. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:

- 9.1 Municipal Coronavirus Relief Fund.** M. Walter updated the BOS on the COVID 19 reimbursement from both State and Federal. He stated that the Town

is scheduled to get \$39,000 for reimbursement for monies spent relating to COVID-19 expenses for the Board of Education, Town, Fire Department, and the Library. We will receive 75% from FEMA and 25% from State.

- 9.2 CIRMA Members' Equity Distribution.** M. Walter explained that CIRMA has voted to distribute equity distributions to participating Towns, but he has not received a dollar amount yet.

M. Walter added that the Columbia Lake Association will be holding a boat parade Saturday, July 4th at 4:00 PM. The theme for this year's parade is "Unsung Heroes".

10. CORRESPONDENCE:

- 10.1 State Police Monthly Report for May 2020.**

- 10.2 AHM Press Release: \$1,500 donation to Columbia from the Hero's Lawn sign campaign.**

11. BUDGET:

- 11.1 Transfers.** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Transfers presented from the respective accounts to the receiving accounts as listed on the transfer forms.

TRANSFER #/AMOUNT	FROM A/C# DESCRIPTION	TO A/C# DESCRIPTION
2020-036/\$5.00	10-4112-460/Commercial Insurance	10-4112-240/Fuel
2020-038/ \$5,000.00	10-4800-900/Contingency	10-4112-300/General Supplies
2020-039/\$58.00	10-4133-770/Transportation	10-4133-770/Professional/Tech
2020-040/\$210.00	10-4135-520/Printing	10-4135-110/Postage
2020-040/\$53.00		10-4135-130/Legal Notices
2020-041/\$50.00	10-4260-230/Electricity	10-4260-240/Fuel
2020-042/\$140.00	10-4310-500/Professional/Tech	10-4310-600/Repairs/Maintenance
2020-043/\$3,000.00	10-4410-011/Salaries-DPW OT	10-4410-600/Repairs/Maintenance
2020-044/\$2,000.00	10-4520-130/Legal Notices 10-4520-500/Professional Tech	10-4520-010/Salaries-Inlands/Wetlands
2020-045/\$1,500.00	10-4112-040/Group Insurance	10-4670-010/Salaries-Recreation

MOTION CARRIEMOTION CARRIED 5.0.

- 11.2 Refunds:** S. Everett MOVED to Refund \$181.70.

AMOUNT	FROM	TO
\$181.70	Town of Columbia	VW Credit Leasing LTD

MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

- 12. APPROVE PAYMENT OF BILLS:** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the bills totaling \$248,360.48 consisting of 2019-2020 Emergency, 2019-2020 Regular, Bond '01 Payment, Credit Card and Paychex. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

- 13. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** Christine Sposito of 62 Double Day asked are there any plans for the playground to be open. M. Walter stated that playgrounds will be open on June 17th

14. **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:** L. Napolitano stated that in driving through Hebron there was a rally and she noticed that the State Police were in the middle of the rally and gave her thanks to the troopers.
15. **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 Statutes Section 1-200(6)(A). None.**
16. **ADJOURNMENT:** S. Everett MOVED to Adjourn at 7:56 pm. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully Submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie