



**TOWN OF COLUMBIA**

**Fiscal Policy Board**

**Minutes**

**November 13, 2019**

**Horace W. Porter School Conference Room**

1. Call to Order - The meeting was called to order at 8:35 a.m.  
Attendees: Bev Ciurylo, Finance Director; Steven Everett, First Selectman; Maria Geryk, Superintendent; Ernie Sharpe, FiPAC Chairman; Mark Walter, Town Administrator; Chris Lent, BOE Chairperson; Judy Ortiz
2. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes of June 12, 2019 - S. Everett moved, seconded by M. Geryk. Motion Carries 6:0.
3. Correspondence
  - A) Notes of September 12<sup>th</sup>, Non Meeting – Notes were reviewed.
4. Old Business:
  - A) Update on CIGNA - Bev reports transitioning to Cigna is going well with minor questions. The November invoice should include all changes. People have noted Anthem may've paid a bit more towards claims.
  - B) Update on Empower Transition – Bev – The enrollment educational meetings with all staff who are interested in enrolling have been scheduled. A slightly higher rate of return has recently been negotiated. There will be wire fees and fees for certain files that the Town will pay. A transfer may be necessary and estimated costs are between \$1,000 to several thousand. These costs will be shared between the Town and School. On the BOE side, each person needs to complete and sign a form to transfer information – which is delaying processing for a few weeks.

Maria noted BOE staff can continue to maintain their funds with Axa but there would not be any matching contribution. Staff can then start funding Empower if they choose to do so (with matching boe contributions). Weekly phone conferences with the Empower representative are ongoing.

Beverly said most of the questions have come through from previous employees.

If employees choose to move their funds later they will incur a cost.

The anticipated Empower start dates are January 20th for boe and Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup> for Town.

M. Walter - Savings of up to 2% for staff.

Bev – computer access will need to be necessary for staff to transfer funds.

Maria – any changes have been assured this will not affect staff. This has been a lot for Bev in particular.

C) Update on IT Assessment - Bev – Town side is starting next week. School side is well underway. The Town will be updating spam guards and emails.

Judy – asked if there have been any issues?

Bev – yes but no personal data was breached. A fishing issue was addressed quickly and resolved.

Maria – Greg Bugbee will be presenting to the BOE in December. We created a governance group with administration and members of the staff. Greg has been working with researching various apps, making sure they're secure and financially and educationally beneficial. Greg is invaluable. He interacts and explains things well and has been very helpful.

## 5. New Business

A) Tri-Board Meeting – A date of December 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00, Town Hall Conference Room was chosen as the kick off meeting for the budget process. Any major issues or changes should be presented. Capital to be reviewed or any big operating changes. The meeting lasts generally ½ hour to 45 min.

B) Update on Certified Staff Contract Negotiations – Chris reported an agreement was reached with certified staff. The CTA and BOE signed to ratify the agreement. A stipend review

committee has been created to review the stipends and job descriptions and the amounts paid for stipends. By Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>, membership in the group will be identified. A recommendation in March is expected for action and will be posted in town for 30 days.

Steven asked for a synopsis of the CTA contract.

Chris said we reached an agreement of less than a 3% increase per year which is around or below the state average. (8.99% over 3 years). We also added one additional student day and coordinated professional development. Insurance in the agreement includes premium cost sharing and a wellness agreement which would allow for a 1% decrease if preventative medicine is pursued. Some language was also cleaned up and USARA language added.

Mark – did the new law come up concerning fmla which requires employees pay into the funding.

Chris and Maria – no that didn't come up.

Maria - we were able to reach agreement without mediation. In 2016 the contract was mediated which entails legal costs.

C) Update on High School Negotiations - Maria has met with Region 19 and Bolton a number of times. Region 19 voted the contract, Bolton is meeting tomorrow. Information will be brought to the BOE in December.

The Contracts are in place for 10 years.

Steve inquired about tuition costs which seem to go up between 1-4%. What is the history?

Chris said the contracts are equal or consistent to the NE region index ... under 4%. Special education costs have been identified more explicitly. Legal language for indemnification for Columbia has been included if either high school failed or found to be at fault then they are responsible for paying fees.

Maria added the high schools will hold responsibility for compensatory and legal fees which they had not in the past.

Bev – anticipated tuition cost is currently between \$12,000 and \$14,000 per year per student.

Chris – contract goes into effect in July 2021 thru 2030.

D) BOE Electricity Costs - Bev – provided a draft outlining energy costs between Jan. 2018 and Jan. 2019. As the year progressed (starting 7/19) a savings of \$2200 per month occurred. Green Skies invoice is \$750. We are seeing some savings. The loan is for 4 years.

Chris commented we're locked in to a kilowatt rate with Green Skies which assists with budgeting.

Judy asked for clarification – The loan isn't on the solar panels it's on the lights?

Steven responded after 20-25 years we own the panels. Have we received all Eversource rebates?

Bev – yes rebates have been received.

E) Audits - Bev – The Town and BOE audit was a few weeks ago and seems to have gone well. No additional information was requested. She expects to be filing by 12/31. Auditors will return for the ED001 audit. The Cirma audit will be tomorrow and is usually a quick audit.

F. Other

1.) Meeting dates for 2020-2021 – The Fiscal Policy Board will continue to meet on the second Wednesday of the Month at 8:30 a.m. C. Lent moved, E. Sharpe Seconded. Motion Carries 6:0.

The next meeting is scheduled for Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brenda Morey, Clerk