



TOWN OF COLUMBIA

Fiscal Policy Board

Minutes

February 8, 2017

Members Present: Bev Ciurylo-Finance Director, Ernie Sharpe-FiPAC Chairman, Carmen Vance-First Selectman, Mark Walter-Town Administrator, Lol Fearon- Superintendent, Christopher Lent-BOE Member

Others Present: Judy Ortiz-FiPAC Member

1. Call to Order – Chairperson B. Ciurylo called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m.
2. Approve Regular Meeting Minutes of January 11, 2017
C. Vance MOVED, E. Sharpe SECONDED to approve the minutes of Jan. 11, 2017. MOTION CARRIES 3:0. L. Fearon and M. Walter ABSTAINED.
3. Correspondence – B. Ciurylo reviewed correspondence.
 - a) Correspondence was received from the State concerning LOCIP funding. Current LOCIP entitlements that were frozen by the state are anticipated to be available again in March.
 - b) A letter was received from CIRMA indicating a rate increases for the Liability-Auto-Property (LAP) policy and the Workers Compensation (WC) Policy. The LAP will increase 3% and the WC will increase by 20%. The WC increase is due to an increase in worker compensation claims in the last few years.
 - c) Copy of the fuel contract with East River Energy showing the prices for oil and diesel for the school and town.
 - d) Online article from The CT Mirror regarding Governor Malloy's proposal to bill towns for the teachers' pensions.
4. Old Business:
 - A. Library Update – M. Walter reports there are a few more documents to be provided to the state but the project is winding down. Reimbursement requests for the STEAP grant and the State Library Grant need to be submitted.
 - B. 15/16 Town Audit - B. Ciurylo said the audit was filed 1/31/17. The audit was clean with no audit points. B. Ciurylo also mentioned that there will not be a proposed increased in auditors' fees for next year. E. Sharped mentioned that FIPAC has discussed going out to bid for a new audit firm The members discussed seeking cost proposals from other auditing firms.
 - C. Town Long Range Planning Update – M. Walter said options are under review due to anticipated reductions in funding from the State. Governor Malloy has also suggested towns

cover up to 1/3 of the cost for teachers' pensions. M. Walter also mentioned that he planned on setting up another meeting with the Town Long Range Planning Committee since there are some large capital projects coming.

- D. Fuel Costs for 17/18 – The fuel contract has been reviewed and a blended rate has been contracted to carry us through June of 2018. East River had looked at the school and town usage and reported that with the current winter, a good portion of the contracted oil and diesel would probably not be used. They proposed a blended rate. The town accepted and a new contract was signed as of the end of January.

5. New Business:

- A. Special Education Costs 2016/17 – L. Fearon met with the Director of Special Education to review costs. The department is currently seeing a slight surplus. Mrs. Wilson has worked diligently to ensure high school IEP services and costs are appropriate. A couple of transportation companies are currently being used for special education transportation to help reduce costs. At this time no deficit is anticipated.

- B. BOE Future Needs Committee – L. Fearon said the Future Needs Committee is looking into options for high school students since the current contracts expire in 2022. Any changes would need to be shared with our current school choices by 2021. Several options including, continuation of tuitioning students, regionalization and a single high school option are being reviewed. The committee is reviewing state laws, demographics and census data and cost implications. Communication with the community is key to the process.

C.Vance noted a disadvantage for regionalizing. Andover is a smaller town and part of the RHAM, Region District 8, which seems to have little say in voting in their regional district.

C. Lent said the BOE is focused on presenting a proposal with transparency of the process and good communication.

- C. 2017/18 Preschool – Porter PALS will offer a full day program in 2017-2018. Half day programs will also continue to be available. The change does not create additional expense to the town and is a potential cost savings. The full day Pre-K program will allow related services to be provided and additional support for students who may require it. The full day program could reduce the need to contract for additional services. Statistics indicate that 90% of the students who attended preschool in Columbia continue to attend Porter.

The full day program will make accreditation and eligibility for grants an option. A sliding scale for fees based on income would also make the program eligible for grants.

- 6. Finance Department – E. Sharpe suggested considering reducing the number of accounts which are encumbered for the Board of Education in an effort to reduce extra work and possible confusion when looking at the BOE expenditure report. Line items which are difficult to predict could be encumbered.

C.Vance said a \$600,000 or 13% reduction in State funding is included in the Town budget draft.

CIRMA insurance costs have increased by 20%. A few claims impacted the town and school Worker

Compensation insurance costs because of the small size of Columbia. Health insurance costs have increased 10.8%. She noted Columbia does have a sound fund balance.

7. Audience – no comments were received.

8. Adjournment - B. Ciurylo MOVED, C. Vance SECONDED to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brenda Morey,

Board Clerk