



TOWN OF COLUMBIA

Fiscal Policy Board Minutes

March 11, 2020, 8:30 a.m.

Horace W. Porter School Conference Room

1. Call to Order - The meeting was called to order at: 8:35 a.m.
Attendees: Mark Walter, Beverly Ciurylo, Ernie Sharpe, Maria Geryk
Absent: Christopher Lent, Steven Everett
Other: Judy Ortiz,
2. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes Feb. 12, 2020 - E. Sharpe MOVED, M. Geryk SECONDED to approve the minutes of 2/12/2020. CARRIES 3:0. M. Walter abstained.
3. Correspondence – No correspondence was received.
4. Old Business
 - A) BOE Nonlapsing Account - Language
 - B) Empower Retirement - Employees on Town side are requesting additional information as they feel the new carrier is costing more. They are generally not pleased with the transition. Fees which AXA withdrew have been restored by Empower. The cost of the plan raised .08% by Empower. There are benefits offered by Empower which were not included from AXA such as there are no fees if employees leave and take funds with them. BOE employees have not expressed concerns.

M. Walters thanked Bev for all her efforts during this transition and the entire committee also thanked Bev for all of her efforts during this process. Bev contributed an extensive amount of work. Her efforts were commended and acknowledged.
5. New Business
 - A) Legislative Updates

M. Walter shared information concerning the insurance consortium for special education. He explained Towns are reimbursed when costs exceed approximately 4.5% of the district cost to education a student. The proposal is to set aside money funded by the state to reduce spikes in Town costs when costly special education placements are recommended. Mark is not sure this will move forward. The state will fund the pool to start.

Bev explained excess costs reported and updated in the Spring and Fall. Funds are based on an estimate of costs. Reimbursement is based on actual costs. Towns can receive reductions in the amount reimbursed based on the prior year's reporting.

Mark - will this impact MBR?

Bev - I don't think so. It doesn't have to do with MBR. Instead of the Town receiving funds, money will be put into a pool. Municipalities will contribute to the pool.

School and State Finance Project – Mark attended a presentation by the Commissioner of Education. He distributed handouts to board members.

B) Other Business

2020-2021 Budget - Bev said the Commission on Aging presented information at the Board of Selectman's meeting requesting funding for the medical car for seniors be included the budget. The BOS had previously removed the car.

Bill O'Brien voted to add \$50,000-\$30,000 into the capital budget for a car and \$20,000 added to elderly services to cover possibly a 3rd driver/phone. The motion passed 3:1 and was opposed by Steven Everett.

The Aging commission felt volunteer drivers wouldn't work out well.

Mark said they are looking at ways to reduce the cost of vehicle and also investigating if the current drivers can handle an additional vehicle.

Maria said at this moment the Board of Education projects a .39% increase which is an increase of \$40,000. The increase is primarily tied to health insurance and IT costs. The district received notification of a few retirements which helped reduce the budget. If retirements hadn't occurred, the cost increase would've been approximately \$300,000.

The BOE approved the budget and capital which was \$184,000.

She noted tuition lines have decreased.

Bev noted there is a FiPAC meeting at 7:00 next wed night 3/18. Both the BOE and BOS will provide budget presentations.

MBR- Maria and Bev spoke with Kevin Chambers at the State Department of Education to gain information on how MBR is calculated. The State reports we are \$600,000 over

MBR for this year. They choose the highest student population reduction year to calculate the rate. This high student number calculation will be dropped in future years.

Ernie has requested a five-year history of the number of magnet students as he feels this may be what increased the student population for the targeted year

Maria noted CAFE stressed it as "MBR", minimal budget requirement.

Corona Virus - Mark will be participating in a State conference call this afternoon and an Eastern Highland Health teleconference of Friday. Eastern Highland Health has recommended eliminating events of over 100 people

Maria has been receiving daily guidance and updates from the State Department of Education and Eastern Highland Health. Activities involving 100 people or more will be cancelled. There will be no out of state field trips. The BOE and administrators are preparing information that could be sent home to families if schools are closed. At this time, we won't remotely hold school due to information received from the State Department of Education. If we are closed, we will have to make up the days, but all information is changing quickly. She reported cleaning routines are in place, as are bus cleaning.

6. Adjournment meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:38 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brenda Morey, Clerk