



TOWN OF COLUMBIA

Fiscal Policy Board

June 21, 2017

Horace W. Porter School Conference Room

8:30 am

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

Others Present: Judy Ortiz-FiPAC member, Christopher Lent-Board of Education Chairperson

1. Call to Order – Chairperson B. Ciurylo called the meeting to order at 8:38 a.m.
2. Approve Regular Meeting Minutes of March 8, 2017 – C. Vance MOVED, L. Fearon SECONDED to approve the minutes of March 8, 2017 as presented. MOTION CARRIES 5:0
3. Correspondence – B. Ciurylo handed out an article: “Massive Headache Continues” from the June issue of Connecticut Town & City, online magazine.
4. Old Business:
 - A. Town Long Range Planning Update – M. Walter reported that he and L. Fearon are wrapping up final quotes with plans and drawings on projects involving renovations of the old fire house, public works garage and school parking lot with Jacunski Humes Architects. Also, a contract for the solar project for the BOE is being finalized. M. Walter also mentioned that the Long Range Planning committee will meet soon.
5. New Business:
 - A. 2016/2017 Year End Projections – B. Ciurylo reviewed year end projections for both the Town and the BOE. Postings for June and final invoicing are still pending. B. Ciurylo is anticipating surplus from Town revenues as well as underspending of Town expenditures. Also, it is anticipated that the BOE will also end up with a surplus. The Hot Lunch program is doing well and could end up with a small or no supplement from the BOE. C. Vance asked what changes have occurred regarding the Hot Lunch Program. L. Fearon and B. Ciurylo reported that more students are buying plus with the change in

personnel, careful spending and the Breakfast program, the Hot Lunch program is doing better than a few years ago.

E. Sharpe requested an estimate for the BOE's end of year projections. B. Ciurylo anticipates \$50,000 will remain at the close of the fiscal year. L. Fearon said the BOE may request a portion of the balance be appropriated to the non-lapsing account.

- B. CRCOG HR Portal and Electronic Data Management System (EDS) – B. Ciurylo and M. Walter have attended meetings to pilot the HR Portal with CRCOG. M. Walter reported that state funds are available to expand the HR Portal to EDS for all employee files and the funds would result in discounted costs for the portal. The school already has 2 programs to organize and track staff information and the Town has file cabinets set up in the Admin office and the Finance Department. Costs to move to EDS were more than what the Town wanted and it also involved more work; such as, scanning files, components not part of standard portal are extra and interacting with Paychex system. L. Fearon and M. Walter agreed not to pursue the EDS option.

L. Fearon has platforms to track employee information through the state website.

- C. Oberlander Property Purchase – The BOS approved the final purchase agreement 6/20/2017. The family will complete the final probate actions and the property is to be surveyed prior to closing.

Open Space would like other committees to assist in deciding how to manage the property. C. Vance used the Szegda property as an example. E. Sharpe asked if there are plans for the Wellswood property. M. Walter reported that the property may be set up as a trust for a public forest. M. Walter reported that the Trust for Public Land and Open Space will be checking to see if there is interest by other property owners to join in the Town forest plan. The Trust group will be donating legal and negotiating efforts. They will also advise where to get funding; however, state and federal Funds are not likely.

E. Sharpe asked how the Oberlander property can be accessed. M. Walter reported that there is an abandoned road owned by the Town of Columbia. E. Sharpe also asked if alternatives have been considered such as no property tax if the Wellswood land isn't developed. Should this be considered when properties are being considered for town purchase? C. Vance said the Town can buy the development rights without the state.

- D. Possible responses to the grade 4 sections for 17/18 – L. Fearon noted comments received from 4th grade parents during the budget season. Parents have voiced concerns with the BOE and administration as well. Kindergarten class sizes were originally estimated between 37-38 students but are over 45 students. The BOE looked within the budget and restructuring occurred to include a third kindergarten section. At the time the budget passed there were 3 kindergarten sections and 2- 4th grade sections.

The focus of the discussion from parents at the last BOE meeting is that the students entering 4th grade has behavioral issues which they feel would be difficult to address with 23-24 students in each group. The 4th grade needs will be addressed due to changes in staffing which comes with a decrease in salaries. For example, there was a retirement in special education which will allow some of the savings from the staffing

change to be shifted to regular education savings. The changes in staffing salaries will allow the BOE to stay within budget for the 2017/2018 school year.

L. Fearon also mentioned that parents provided thoughtful emails regarding their concerns for the 17/18 Grade 4 class and attended two BOE meetings. They mentioned student needs and what they observed. The combinations within the groupings don't seem to be working well. Smaller class sized would alleviate the issues.

E. State Budget Legislative Update – M. Walter distributed the CCM report regarding legislative updates. There is no update on the State budget. The budget failed and didn't pass in the House or Senate. There has been no word on teacher pensions.

L. Fearon said superintendents were told not to expect anything until August. Teacher pensions may be transitioned into the budget.

6. Finance Department – B. Ciurylo that the Finance Department is starting to work on the year end and is getting ready for the Town Audit. No date has been set for the preliminary audit or the full audit in the fall. She will be contacting the auditors to set that up.

7. Audience – no comments were received.

M. Walter said there are new procedures being implemented concerning purchase orders and guidance will be provided to staff. He is modifying the bidding policy to \$1,000 to \$10,000 for 2 verbal quotes, \$10,000 to \$20,000 for 3 written quotes. This change is to add more flexibility.

8. Adjournment – E. Sharpe MOVED, C. Vance SECONDED to adjourn the meeting at 9:33 a.m.
MOTION CARRIES 5:0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brenda Morey, Clerk