

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
COLUMBIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Tuesday, July 2, 2019 – 7 pm
Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT**

Members Present: First Selectman, Steven M. Everett; Deputy Selectman, Robert Hellstrom; Selectman, Lisa Napolitano; Selectman, William O'Brien; Selectman, Jeff Viens.

Also Present: Town Administrator, Mark Walter; Finance Director, Beverly Ciurylo; Tree Warden, Andy Andrews.

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

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Agenda for July 2, 2019. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**
 - 3.1 **Approval of BOS Regular Meeting Minutes for June 18, 2019.** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the BOS Regular Meeting Minutes for June 18, 2019. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
4. **OLD BUSINESS:** None.
5. **NEW BUSINESS:**
 - 5.1 **Tree Removal.** S. Everett explained that the Department of Public Works Director, George Murphy submitted a letter to the BOS requesting an increase of \$50,000 for hazardous tree removal. A. Andrews explained the severity of the trees affected by Gypsy Moths and the Emerald Ash Borer that are on Town property. S. Everett asked if these trees are just along the roadways that need attention. A. Andrews stated that yes, the trees are on Town-owned land. S. Everett stated that he would like to take a ride with A. Andrews to take a look firsthand of the damage. L. Napolitano stated that she met with the State Forester and it was explained to her that there is a six-year bell curve and we are in the first couple of years. S. Everett MOVED to table the 50,000 requests until next BOS Meeting on July 16, 2019. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
 - 5.2 **Capital Transfers and Setting of Town Meeting.** S. Everett MOVED to set a Town Meeting on July 16, 2019 at 6:45 pm in the Town Hall Conference Room for Capital Transfers. **CLAUSE 1:** To transfer \$10,000 from the 2018-2019 Contingency account (10-4800-900) to the Capital account titled Preliminary Design & Cost Estimate (20-6189-001) in order to cover the cost above the 2018-2019 budget as well as projected costs of engineering and design fees for Capital Projects. **CLAUSE 2:** To appropriate an additional \$10,000 from the General Fund as of July 1, 2019 to the Capital account titled DPW Capital Improvements-Buildings (20-6206-002) for projected costs above the 2019-2020 budget for completion of the Public Works Salt Shed. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

- 6. **COLUMBIA LAKE / DAM / BEACH:** None.
- 7. **APPOINTMENTS / RESIGNATIONS:** None.
- 8. **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:**
 - 8.1 **CIRMA Members' Equity Distribution.** M. Walter explained that CIRMA will be giving an members' equity distribution this year to the Town of Columbia for \$8,934.00.
 - 8.2 **Horace Porter School RFP's for Generator, Surveillance Cameras and Classroom Phone Systems.** M. Walter explained that all 3 RFPs have been issued.
 - 8.3 M. Walter explained that at the last FiPAC meeting they requested presentations from Open Space and Rec Department, and he asked if July 17th is a good time to have Open Space present. The BOS consensus is the July 17th date will work. M. Walter will confirm with FiPAC on the July 17th date.
- 9. **CORRESPONDENCE:**
 - 9.1 **Article in *The Chronicle* on Fireworks and Eaglet.**
 - 9.2 **Article in *The Chronicle* on Hop River State Park Trail.**
 - 9.3 **Moody's Investors Service Report.**
- 10. **BUDGET:**
 - 10.1 **Transfers:** S. Everett respective accounting for \$7,586.00. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

TRANSFER #/AMOUNT	FROM A/C# DESCRIPTION	TO A/C# DESCRIPTION
2019 #050 / \$704.00	10-4112-120 / Telephone	10-4112-230 / Electricity
2019 #051 / \$41.00	10-4417-240 / Fuel	10-4116-230 / Electricity
2019 #052 / \$57.00	10-4417-230 / Electricity	10-4117-230 / Electricity
2019 #053 / \$634.00	10-4260-230 / Electricity	10-4260-230 / Electricity
2019 #054 / \$55.00	10-4640-240 / Fuel	10-4640-230 / Electricity
2019 #55 / \$475.00	10-4410-600 / Repairs/Maint	10-4410-610 / Bldgs/Grounds/Rep/Maint
2019 #56 / \$100.00	10-4410-600 / Repairs/Maint	10-4410-710 / Prof. Development
2019 #57 / \$20.00	10-4250-540 / Community Outreach	10-4250-110 / Postage
2019 #58 / \$3,425.00	10-4112-040 / Group Insurance	10-4132-010 / Salaries-Assessor
2019 #59 / \$1,900.00	10-4112-040 / Group Insurance	10-4260-010 / Salaries-Sr. Center
2019 #60 / \$175.00	10-4520-130 / Legal Notice	10-4520-010 / Salaries-Inland/Wetlands

- 10.2 **Refunds:** None.
11. **APPROVE PAYMENT OF BILLS:** S. Everett MOVED to Authorize the payment of bills consisting of \$214,280.41 for a total payment 18/19 Emergency and 18/19 Regular, 2019-20 Emergency and 19/20 Regular that consists of Library Grant Payment 1 of 4, Credit Card and Paychex. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
12. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** A. Dunnack,103 Lake Rd. asked how much does it cost to have a town meeting? M. Walter stated that the cost is associated with the legal notice and depends on the word length. A. Dunnack stated that G. Murphy made it very clear that the trees were an ongoing problem and that the budget is too low for the tree removal.
13. **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:** L. Napolitano asked for the schedule of chemicals that are being used at Rec Park and would like the information to be available to the public. M. Walter stated he will get L. Napolitano the information she requested.
14. **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 Statues Section 1-200(6)(A).** S. Everett MOVED to go into Executive Session at 7:49 pm with Mark Walter, Town Administrator for real estate and pending litigation. MOTION CARRIED 5.0. S. Everett MOVED to end the Executive Session with no action taken at 8:08 pm. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
15. **ADJOURNMENT:** S. Everett MOVED to ADJOURN the meeting at 8:09 pm. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully Submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
COLUMBIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN
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323 Route 87, Columbia, CT

Members Present: First Selectman, Steven M. Everett; Deputy Selectman, Robert Hellstrom; Selectman, Lisa Napolitano; Selectman, William O'Brien; Selectman, Jeff Viens.

Also Present: Town Administrator, Mark Walter.

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

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** S. Everett added to the Agenda under New Business 5.1- Waive Permit Fees for Crumbling Foundations. S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Agenda as revised for June 18, 2019. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**
 - 3.1 **Approval of BOS Regular Meeting Minutes for June 4, 2019.** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the BOS Regular Meeting Minutes for June 4, 2019. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
4. **OLD BUSINESS:**
 - 4.1 **Town Administrator's authorization to sign all proposals and agreements for Town's retirement plan services.** S. Everett MOVED to approve Steven Everett, First Selectman or Mark Walter, Town Administrator in Steven Everett's absence be able to sign all proposals and agreements with MML Investor Services, LLC and Great-West Financial and Empower Retirement regarding the transfer of the town's retirement plan services to Empower Retirement. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
 - 4.2 **Security Project at Horace W. Porter School.** S. Everett explained that part of the school's 19/20 budget included an anticipated Security Grant for \$57,000. The school did not receive the grant. Maria Geryk, Superintendent and BOE Chair, Christopher Lent are seeking guidance from the BOS regarding how best to proceed with these necessary safety upgrades. S. Everett stated that he did a walk through to look at the security cameras and noted that the cameras are old or broken and will need to be replaced. L. Napolitano asked if there was anything that will not be funded in this round. S. Everett explained that two items from the security upgrade had already been purchased, which included the Repeater for the radio communication and the visitor management system. S. Everett explained that the \$16,000 for the upgrade to the classroom phone systems will not be spent this year. He explained that the RFP for the security cameras will have a no guarantee work bid to see how much it will actually cost before any work is done and will include a request from the bidding firms for alternative options which may change the overall cost of the project. J. Viens stated he would like to see the purchase

agreements. W. O'Brien asked why this is being brought to the BOS if it has already approved in the budget from the BOE and FiPAC. S. Everett explained that M. Geryk wanted to be transparent about the grant and was looking for guidance on how best to proceed. The consensus was that the BOE is in charge of their budget and that they should proceed as they see best.

4.3 Update on Road at Rec Park. S. Everett stated that Eversource has asked us to keep a certain distance from the powerline which will result in having to cut off part of the proposed road in Rec Park. This will mean that we will have to move the basketball court.

4.4 Review and act upon the agreement for sale and purchase of real estate regarding the strip of land owned by the Town that extends from the present cul de sac at the end of Tunxis Dr. W. O'Brien MOVED to authorize the First Selectman to sign the sale and purchase agreement in 4.4 and set a Town Meeting for July 16, 2019 at 7:00 pm. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

RESOLVED: That the Town enter into the Agreement for Sale and Purchase of Real Estate reviewed by the Selectman at this meeting whereby the Town will sell the strip of land it owns at the cul-de-sac end of Tunxis Drive to Alison and Glen Nicholes, which Agreement was prepared by Town Council and previously reviewed and signed by the Nicholes; and that the First Selectman is hereby authorized to date such Agreement today, sign it on behalf of the Town and deliver a copy to the Nicholes.

RESOLVED: That the Town Administrator is requested and authorized to present the proposed sale of the Town's land at the end of Tunxis Drive in accordance with the Agreement referenced in the prior resolution to the Town's Planning and Zoning Commission for review and appropriate action with a request that the Planning and Zoning Commission do so at its meeting on June 24, 2019.

RESOLVED: That the Board of Selectman call for a Special Town Meeting for 7:00 pm on July 16, 2019 for the purposes of taking action under Town Charter Section 2.4(e) upon the proposed sale of land to the Nicholes referenced in the previous resolutions in accordance with the Legal Notice that has been presented to this meeting for this purpose.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

5.1 Waive Permit Fees for Crumbling Foundations. M. Walter explained that most of the surrounding towns have made these waivers for residents who have had issues with crumbling foundations. S. Everett MOVED to Approve waiving the permit fees that fall within the guidelines within this paragraph. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

Notwithstanding, the Town Administrator is authorized to waive all town fees related to building permits for work on crumbling foundations which, based upon the judgment of the Town Administrator, are casually related to a reaction to Pyrrhotite or related reasons rather than improper workmanship. Said waiver may include fees for electrical, plumbing or similar fees at the discretion of the building official.

Any such waiver shall only apply to work related to the direct replacement of the existing foundation. Upon waiver of any such fee, the Town Administrator shall notify the homeowner in writing that such fee has been waived, including an itemization of all fees waived.

6. COLUMBIA LAKE / DAM / BEACH:

6.1 DEEP Recommendation to Protect Eaglet. S. Everett explained that we have received a letter from DEEP recommending no fireworks to protect the young eaglet in the nest. He stated that the Town will be sending out a letter from the First Selectman and the DEEP letter to residents around the lake next week.

7. APPOINTMENTS / RESIGNATIONS:

7.1 Appointment of Joan G. Levine, Columbia Recreation Area Gate Keeper. S. Everett MOVED to appoint Joan G. Levine, as the Columbia Recreation Area Gate Keeper. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

8. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:

8.1 Dam Inspection Report. M. Walter explained this is the latest Dam Inspection Report. We have tried to change the classification of the dam but have been denied, but we will try to appeal.

9. CORRESPONDENCE:

9.1 Monthly State Trooper Report.

10. BUDGET:

10.1 Transfers: S. Everett MOVED to Authorize Transfers \$7,807.00 to the departments listed contained therein.

TRANSFER #/AMOUNT	FROM A/C# DESCRIPTION	TO A/C# DESCRIPTION
2019 #045 / \$3,035.00	10-4113-515 / Contracted Services	10-4113-500 / Professional Tech (\$2,400)
		10-4113-811 / Mach/Equip < \$5,000 (\$635.00)
2019 #046 / \$750.00	10-4410-500 / Professional/Tech	10-4410-300 / Supplies
2019 #047 / \$2,500.00	10-4410-600 / Repairs & Maintenance	10-4410-610 / Bldgs/Grounds Rep/Maint
2019 #048 / \$1,500.00	10-4136-120 / Telephone	10-4610-500 / Professional/Tech
2019 #049 / \$22.00	10-4420-500 / Professional/Tech	10-4420-630 / Rental

MOTION CARRIED 5.0

10.2 Refunds: None.

11. APPROVE PAYMENT OF BILLS: S. Everett MOVED to Authorize the payment of bills consisting of \$169,183.64 for a total payment 18/19 Regular. MOTION CARRIED 5.0. S. Everett MOVED to Authorize the 2018-2019 Emergency, 2018-2019 Regular, Credit Card and Paychex totaling 72,735.02 on the stated attachments. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

- 12. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** Paul Kubala of 37 Lake Rd. asked if there are any plans to do anything if fireworks are used this year. S. Everett explained that fireworks are illegal and to notify the State Trooper and if he is notified, he will notify the resident that fireworks are illegal.
- 13. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:** None.
- 14. 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).** S. Everett MOVED to enter into Executive Session at 7:40 pm for real estate with Mark Walter present. MOTION CARRIED 5.0. S. Everett MOVED to end the Executive Session with no action taken at 7:55 pm. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
- 15. ADJOURNMENT:** S. Everett MOVED to ADJOURN the meeting at 7:56 pm. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully Submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie



A bald eagle soars in the air near Columbia Lake on Wednesday. Roxanne Pandolfi | Staff



A bald eagle rests in a tree. Roxanne Pandolfi | Staff

Do not disturb

Another fireworks ban urged as eagle family welcomes a new baby

LISA MASSICOTTE
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

COLUMBIA — Images of our nation's emblem bird, complemented by extravagant fireworks displays, would seem to go hand-in-hand this time of year to instill patriotism in Americans.

In actuality, this is not the case — especially for nesting bald eagles — like the two bird parents now raising an eaglet at Columbia Lake.

"Fireworks and bald eagles, although they're both wonderful patriotic things, don't mix," state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Wildlife Biologist Brian Hess said.

To help ensure the survival of Columbia's eaglet, DEEP strongly recommended the town place a seasonal restriction on fireworks displays "on and near" Columbia Lake until July 15.

"Have a barbecue, enjoy yourself and, when it gets dark, use some sparklers," Hess recommended to those living near the lake.

"We have to learn to share our spaces with the wildlife."

This is the third season in a row in which a fireworks ban has been called for, something residents don't seem to have a problem following.

"We don't have a police force to enforce that, however, I believe that the citizens of Columbia have shown great respect for our ask to not display fireworks over the last few years," Columbia First Selectman Steven Everett said.

So far, wildlife biologists believe this eaglet is healthy.

It is visibly growing and active in the nest, according to Hess.

Last July, biologists determined the previous eaglet, hatched by

FIREWORKS BAN, Page 4

Co ce dis Bids

CLAIR
CHRONICLE

WINDH/ public and unease, find mine whet much the Community ect will ov will remain another mo

The Win ham Tov Council a the Windha Board

Finance d cussed t project d ing meetin Tuesday a Wednesda respectively

Last wee the buildi committ met to revie the project

Colliers ject Mana Ken Guye rent buildir \$13.98 mil

That's at over the \$1 established ect, accord

Windhan President a mittee co-

Best P Gulf Main A-1 Main Stop & Shell Mail

Footbridge to be inspected for needed re

CLAIRE GALVIN
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

The bridge underwent a rehabilitation project in

According to G underwent a reha

tern Connecticut State
sity, with a degree in
tion.
a stay at home Mom,
cused on raising her 4
en and was a strong and
advocate for Special
ation in Wethersfield.
igh their words and
ple, Abigail and Jack
ed in their children a
nment to community
ce.

igail was a longtime
ber and past Chairman
Library Board, a mem-
f the League of Womens
rs, a Capitol Tour guide
a volunteer with Con-
cut Public Television and
Wethersfield Beautifica-
Committee. Her favorite

Old Lyme.
A Celebration of Abigails
life will be held Saturday July
10, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. in St.
Patrick-St. Anthony Church,
285 Church Street Hartford.
The Farley-Sullivan Funeral
Home, Wethersfield has care
of the arrangements.
Should friends desire, con-
tributions may be made either
to Eastern Connecticut State
University ECSU Foundation
or to Autism Speaks, with the
notation Abigail Flynn Mem-
orial.

For further information,
or to extend condolences,
please visit [www.Farleysul-
livan.com](http://www.Farleysullivan.com).

an RQ-4 Global Hawk, was
downed in international air-
space, describing it as an
"unprovoked attack."
Previously, the U.S. mili-
tary alleged Iran had fired a
missile at another drone last
week that was responding to
the attack on two oil tank-

and Iran following President
Donald Trump's decision
to withdraw from Tehran's
nuclear deal a year ago.
Separately, Saudi Arabia
said today Yemen's Iranian-
allied Houthi rebels launched
a rocket targeting a desali-
nation plant in the king-

to pressure Europe for new
terms to the 2015 nuclear
deal.
In recent weeks, the U.S.
has sped an aircraft carrier
to the Mideast and deployed
additional troops alongside
the tens of thousands already

it shot down the drone way
when it entered Iranian air-
space near the Kouhmobarak
district in southern Iran's
Hormozgan province. Kouh-
mobarak is some 750 miles
southeast of Tehran and close
to the Strait of Hormuz.

Fireworks ban urged due to eaglet

Continued from Page 1

the same parents, died.
They suspected it died
from either disease or mal-
nutrition, but the cause was
uncertain.

These eagle parents, named
Bertha and Harry by DEEP
employees, began nesting in
Columbia in 2016.

Hess said, since the dis-
covery of their presence, one
chick in 2017 has successfull-
ly fledged — or flew — the
nest.

And that same juvenile may
return back to the lake around
2022-23 once it reaches sex-

ual maturity.
Through nest monitoring
this year, biologists observed
the mating pair incubating
eggs April 2 and an eaglet
was first sighted April 19,
according to Hess.

He expects the eaglet to
take its first flight around the
first or second week of July.

During this time period,
right before the eaglet is old
enough to fly, there is a high
sensitivity to loud noises and
disturbances.

"They're practicing flapping
their wings, they're jumping
in the nest and around from
branch to branch and they're

venturing closer and closer to
that edge of the nest to take
their first flight."

Loud noises can force the
eaglet to leave its nest too
early.

"They can get injured on
the way down or they can get
stuck on the ground unable
to fly and be susceptible to
predators," Hess said.

And Hess emphasized the
probability of the eaglet not
surviving the fall increases
significantly after sunset.

At night, its parents won't
be able to find it or coach it
back up to the nest, he said.

Earlier in the nesting stages,

during the incubation of the
eggs and when the chick is
between one and five weeks
of age, disturbance is also a
big risk because the parents
can be scared away from the
nest, according to Hess.

Hess said this makes the
young chick or eggs very
vulnerable to predators and
weather as their body tem-
perature is regulated by the
adult eagles.

In 2018, DEEP recorded
a record-breaking number
of 68 chicks hatched in the
state.

Follow Lisa Massicotte on
Twitter - @LMassicotteTC.

Bids for senior/community center due in July

Continued from Page 1

been worked out before tax-
payer approval.

"I'm just really upset
that this committee is say-
ing there's specs they didn't
really look at," White said.
"Two million dollars on a
\$14 million project is a big
percentage."

If an additional appropria-
tion is needed, it would be
the fourth time the public

allowed the town to expand
the project to include a gym-
nasium and pool.

Taxpayers previously
approved \$4,593,635 in two
referendums in 2017, bring-
ing the total appropriation to
\$14,593,635.

Gardner and DeVivo expect
competitive bids to come in,
which may lower the expect-
ed shortfall.

Windham Town Manager

Kramer Building, which may
help balance the budget.

"We're all trying to be as
fair as we can to the public,"
Rivers said. "But until we
get the bids we're really not
going to know what the fig-
ures are."

The project was put out to
bid Monday and bids are due
July 19.

"Unfortunately, these
things happen in projects,"
DeVivo said. "I know that the
community not happy but

the bids will come in low."

If an additional appropria-
tion is needed, it would
be approved by the finance
board, council and then the
taxpayers in a town meeting
or referendum later in the
year.

DeVivo said, if the addi-
tional appropriation is reject-
ed, architects would need to
redesign the building, poten-
tially setting the project back
a year.

Follow Claire Galvin on

Marilyn Cates Greenleaf



Marilyn loved traveling
and enjoyed many weekend
and summer vacations with
her family that invariably in-
cluded being near the ocean.
After retirement, Marilyn and
Ellsworth became snowbirds,
establishing homes in Zephyr-
rhills, FL and Storrs, CT, as
well as continuing to travel
throughout the world. She
moved to Columbia, CT in
2017 to live with her daugh-
ter Elaine and her husband
Tom.

Marilyn is survived by her
children, James Greenleaf
and his wife, Kathy of Sun-
river, OR; Elaine Burns and
her husband, Tom of Colum-
bia, CT; 5 grandchildren and
3 great-grandchildren. She is
also survived by her sister-
in-law, Emma Greenleaf, of
Coventry, CT. She was pre-
deceased by her parents and
her husband.

The family would like to
extend a special thanks to
Marilyn's team of caregiv-
ers from Hartford Home

COLUMBIA
COVENTRY
ZEPHYRHILLS, FL
Marilyn Cates Greenleaf,
of Columbia, formerly
Coventry, CT and Zephyr-
rhills, FL, passed peacefully
Monday, May 28, 2019,
the home of her daughter
Elaine and her husband, Tom
Burns. Marilyn was born on
April 28, 1930, to Louis and
Marilyn Cates of Rockland,
ME. She graduated from
Rockland High School in
1948.
On November 20, 1948,
Marilyn married Ellsworth
R. Greenleaf. She loved to

Meeting on trail to be held Tuesday

LISA MASSICOTTE
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

COLUMBIA/COVENTRY — A public meeting addressing new construction on the Hop River State Park Trail, including a bridge replacement, is slated for Tuesday.

The towns of Columbia and Coventry encourage residents to learn about state's preliminary plans for the Hop River trail at a public meeting at 6:30 p.m. in Yeomans Hall, 323 Jonathan Trumbull Highway/Route 87, Columbia.

Several developments are proposed to begin on the west side of Kings Road in

Coventry at the trail's current breaking point and improvements will continue east over the Hop River into Flanders Road in Columbia.

Improvements will also include the replacement of an old, dilapidated trestle bridge over the Hop River with a new, prefabricated pedestrian bridge.

Once completed, the trail will connect to the existing trail by the Willimantic River crossing and will become part of the East Coast Greenway's route, connecting Maine to Florida.

Follow Lisa Massicotte on Twitter - @LMassicotteTC.

66, ext. 3337 AFTER 5 P.M. ON FRIDAYS

06/22/2019

CREDIT OPINION

2 August 2018

 Rate this Research

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Columbia (Town of) CT

Update following removal of the negative outlook

Summary

The Town of Columbia (Aa2) has a modestly-sized and stable tax base which benefits from employment opportunities in the greater Hartford area. The town has a history of stable financial operations, with reserves outside the general fund, helping to mitigate moderate exposure to fiscal stress on the state level. Overall, debt burden and pension liabilities are low.

On August 3, 2018, Moody's affirmed the town's Aa2 rating and removed the negative outlook on the town's outstanding debt. The outlook was assigned on October 16, 2017, and reflected the State of Connecticut's then-ongoing budget impasse and the significant cuts to Columbia's state funding in the executive order that governed state spending during the impasse.

Credit strengths

- » Solid and stable tax base supported by access to employment opportunities in Hartford
- » A history of stable financial operations
- » Low fixed costs with manageable long-term liabilities

Credit challenges

- » Moderate exposure to declining state aid revenues

Rating outlook

Moody's typically does not assign outlooks to local government credits with this amount of debt outstanding.

Factors that could lead to an upgrade

- » Significant tax base expansion and enhancement of resident wealth and income
- » Continued operating surpluses with greater year-end allocations to general fund cash and unassigned fund balance

Factors that could lead to a downgrade

- » Structurally imbalanced budget resulting in deteriorated fund balance levels
- » Deterioration in tax base and wealth and income profile

» Further reductions in state funding

Key indicators

Exhibit 1

Columbia (Town of) CT	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Economy/Tax Base					
Total Full Value (\$000)	\$725,101	\$720,081	\$706,382	\$732,774	\$698,989
Population	5,476	5,472	5,460	5,456	5,456
Full Value Per Capita	\$132,414	\$131,594	\$129,374	\$134,306	\$128,114
Median Family Income (% of USMedian)	170.2%	163.3%	154.1%	152.3%	152.3%
Finances					
Operating Revenue (\$000)	\$17,283	\$17,523	\$18,123	\$17,980	\$17,663
Fund Balance (\$000)	\$2,829	\$3,004	\$3,698	\$3,573	\$3,794
Cash Balance (\$000)	\$6,357	\$4,834	\$4,103	\$3,775	\$4,815
Fund Balance as a % of Revenues	16.4%	17.1%	20.4%	19.9%	21.5%
Cash Balance as a % of Revenues	36.8%	27.6%	22.6%	21.0%	27.3%
Debt/Pensions					
Net Direct Debt (\$000)	\$1,785	\$1,504	\$999	\$799	\$614
3-Year Average of Moody's ANPL (\$000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Direct Debt / Full Value (%)	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Net Direct Debt / Operating Revenues (x)	0.1x	0.1x	0.1x	0.0x	0.0x
Moody's - adjusted Net Pension Liability (3-yr average) to Full Value (%)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Moody's - adjusted Net Pension Liability (3-yr average) to Revenues (x)	0.0x	0.0x	0.0x	0.0x	0.0x

Source: Moody's Investors Service; Town of Columbia audited financial statements

Profile

The Town of Columbia is located approximately 20 miles east of Hartford (B2 stable). The population was approximately 5,456 as of the 2016 American Community Survey.

Detailed credit considerations

Economy and Tax Base: Modestly-sized tax base with above average wealth

The town's modest, largely residential \$699 million tax base will likely remain stable going forward given ongoing redevelopment and close proximity to employment opportunities in the greater Hartford area. The town's equalized net grand list (ENGL) grew at a modest five-year average annual rate of 0.3% from 2013 to 2017. Town officials report that Columbia's tax base will continue modest growth due to increasing efforts to encourage commercial development alongside neighboring jurisdictions.

The town has an above average wealth and income profile, with full value per capita of \$128,114 and median family income equal to 152.3% of the U.S. median. Poverty is low, and unemployment is lower than the statewide rate.

Financial Operations and Reserves: Stable operations with strong reserves

The town's financial position is sound and will remain stable going forward, as management has achieved regular surpluses through conservative budgeting and has effectively counteracted cuts in state funding. Fiscal 2017 audited financials reflect an operating surplus of \$202,000 adding to available fund balance of \$3.8 million, or 21.5% of revenues. Additionally, management regularly transfers excess fund balance to its Capital Projects, and Capital Non-Recurring funds, which were approximately \$718,000 in fiscal 2017.

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Columbia faced modest exposure to fiscal stress at the state level due to a moderate reduction in its total statutory aid allocation in the 2018 budget year. Management reports that deficit mitigation measures taken during the year helped achieve an operating surplus of approximately \$470,000, driven primarily by strong property tax collection and conservative expenditure budgeting.

Fiscal 2019 budget decreased by 0.98% from fiscal 2018, primarily driven by anticipated decrease in special education expenditures due to students aging out or graduating. Additionally, to minimize the mill rate increase the town budgeted a fund balance appropriation of \$400,000, in line with prior year appropriations. The town's equalized mill rate is currently below the state average rate of 20%. The town's primary sources of revenues are property taxes at 74.2%, followed by state aid at 23.8%.

LIQUIDITY

The town's liquidity is expected to remain healthy in the near term. Fiscal 2017 ended with an Operating Fund net cash position of \$3.8 million, or a strong 27.3% of operating revenues, up from \$3.6 million, or 21% of operating revenues in fiscal 2016.

Debt and Pensions: Modest leverage with affordable fixed costs

The town's modest debt burden of 0.1% of full value is expected to remain stable, with no additional debt planned in the near term. The town maintains a rolling ten-year capital improvement plan, and expects to fund near-term capital expenses through budgeted appropriations and transfers to the Capital Projects Fund.

DEBT STRUCTURE

All of the town's debt is fixed rate with 100% of principal maturing by June 2021.

DEBT-RELATED DERIVATIVES

The town is not party to any interest rate swaps or derivative agreements.

PENSIONS AND OPEB

The town maintains a single-employer defined-contribution plan, and is administered and amended by the Town of Columbia. The town's contributions for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2017 totaled \$79,921 or 0.5% of expenditures. For teachers, the town participates in the State of Connecticut Teachers Retirement System (TRS). Employer contributions to the TRS are covered by on-behalf payments made by the state, which totaled \$985,000 in fiscal 2017.

The town funds annual OPEB expenses on a pay-go basis and in fiscal 2017, the town contributed \$25,500 toward OPEB expenses. The town's actuarially accrued OPEB liability as of the last measurement date on July 1, 2015 totaled \$568,600. Total fixed costs (including debt service, pensions, and OPEB) were a modest 1.6% of general fund expenditures in fiscal 2017.

Management and Governance

Town fiscal management is strong, as evidenced by a history of conservative budgeting, and proactive adjustments in response to municipal aid holdbacks during fiscal 2018.

Connecticut cities have an Institutional Framework score of Aa, which is high compared to the nation. Institutional Framework scores measure a sector's legal ability to increase revenues and decrease expenditures. Connecticut cities' major revenue source, property taxes, is not subject to any caps. Unpredictable revenue fluctuations tend to be minor, or under 5% annually. Across the sector, fixed and mandated costs are generally greater than 25% of expenditures. Connecticut has public sector unions and additional constraints, which limit the ability to cut expenditures. Unpredictable expenditure fluctuations tend to be minor, under 5% annually.

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