

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**COLUMBIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
**Tuesday, September 1, 2020 – 7:00 pm**  
**Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room**  
**323 Route 87, Columbia, CT**

**Members Present via Remote Access:** Steven M. Everett, First Selectman; Robert Hellstrom, Deputy Selectman; Judy Ortiz, Selectman; William O'Brien, Selectman; Lisa Napolitano, Selectman.

**Also Present via Remote Access:** Mark Walter, Town Administrator; Su Epstein, Saxton B. Little Library Director; Beth Lunt.

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

1. **MOMENT OF SILENCE:** S. Everett asked for a moment of silence.
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Agenda. MOTION CARRIED 4.0. W. O'Brien was unavailable.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**
  - 3.1 **BOS Regular Meeting Minutes August 18, 2020.** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the BOS Regular Meeting Minutes for August 18, 2020. MOTION CARRIED 3.0. R. Hellstrom Abstained and W. O'Brien was unavailable.
4. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** None.
5. **OLD BUSINESS:**

**Charter Review Committee.** M. Walter explained that we have eight volunteers to serve on the Charter Review Committee with Henry Beck, Jr. as a non-voting member that can give the review committee legal advice if needed. L. Napolitano asked about J. Viens and K. Peck serving on the Charter Review Committee. M. Walter stated that we checked with the Town's legal counsel and they cannot serve on the committee because they serve on FiPAC. S. Everett made the following MOTION; be it resolved by the Columbia Board of Selectmen, that in accordance with Section 7-188 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Town of Columbia hereby initiates the process of charter revision by a two-thirds vote of all of its members. S. Everett amended his MOTION to invite Henry Beck Jr. as a non-voting member. MOTION CARRIED 3.0, with Lisa N. and J. Ortiz Abstaining.

Appointed to the Charter Revision Commission:

- Judy Ortiz (D)
- Kate Haakonsen (D)
- Rick Nassiff (D)
- Lisa Napolitano (R)
- Mark Desrosiers (R)
- Norbert Blain (R)
- Paul Ramsey (U)
- Arthur Rowbotham (U)

**6. NEW BUSINESS:**

**6.1 Mark Walter, Department of Emergency Management Services (DEMHS) Regional designated Proxy.** M. Walter stated every year we have a meeting with the Department of Emergency Management Services and in the past years S. Everett has authorized M. Walter to represent the CEO at the meeting. S. Everett MOVED to Approve Mark Walter as the DEMHS Regional designated Proxy. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

**6.2 Burn Permit for Transfer Station Brush Pile.** S. Everett stated we have a sizable brush pile after the storm at the Transfer Station. M. Lester notified S. Everett that the brush pile is not too large for a burn. If we don't burn the brush, Willi Waste will have to haul out the brush at a cost. S. Everett stated that we can have four burns a year and the CVFD will use it as training. W. Everett MOVED to Approve the Town of Columbia apply for a burn permit from the State of CT DEEP. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

**7. COLUMBIA LAKE / DAM / BEACH:**

**7.1 Application to Replace Dock and Seawall for Mr. and Mrs. Baumert, 3 Webster Lane.** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the application to replace a dock and seawall for Mr. and Mrs. Baumert as described here. MOTION CARRIED 4.0.

**7.2 Application to Replace and Repair Dock and Seawall for Penny Walsh, 132D Route 87.** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the replacement and repair dock and seawall for Penny Walsh at 132 D Route 87 as described here. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

**7.3 Application for Construction of a Structure on or Over Columbia Lake Hallarin Family Irrevocable Trust, 132 A, Route 87 (Co-Mi-Mo Lane), Columbia, CT.** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the application for the Hallarin Family at 132 A Route 87 (Co-Mi-Mo Lane) as described here. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

**8. APPOINTMENTS / RESIGNATIONS:**

**8.1 Recommendation for DPW Director.** S. Everett explained that after an extensive search for the DPW Director, they felt that Beth Lunt was the best candidate and is pleased to introduce her to the BOS. B. Lunt addressed the BOS. She said she has a degree in civil and environmental engineering and has worked in the consulting field for eight years. She has been the DPW Director for the Town of East Haddam for nine years. M. Walter stated that he has worked with Beth and he feels that Beth will be a good fit. L. Napolitano asked B. Lunt if she has worked with construction contractors. B. Lunt stated that she has worked directly with contractors and has performed construction oversight and design on many construction projects including culvert designs and reconstruction. M. Walter stated that we have an offer that is within budget. S. Everett MOVED that we finalize the offer with Beth Lunt as the new Public Works Director. S. Everett Amended his Motion to state that we finalize the offer and hire Beth should she choose to take the position. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

**8.2 Resignation of Ernest Starkel from the Zoning Board.** S. Everett MOVED to Accept the resignation of Ernest Starkel from the Zoning Board as of 9/1/20. MOTION CARRIED 4:1:0 with S. Everett, R. Hellstrom, J. Ortiz in favor and W. O'Brien opposed. R. Hellstrom stated that the BOS should send Ernie Starkel a letter of appreciation for all his years of services.

**9. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:**

- 9.1 Community Service Social Worker.** M. Walter stated that Katie Wilts has accepted our offer for the Community Service Social workers position. M. Walter thanked J. Ortiz, B. Derring and S. Everett for their help. M. Walter said that Katie has nine years' experience working with the Town of Glastonbury and has experience working in social work in NYC. She will be part-time, two days a week for a total of 16 hours a week.
- 9.2 Columbia Lake Drawdown on October 15, 2020.** M. Walter wanted to notify the BOS that this year the lake draw-down is on October 15<sup>th</sup>.
- 9.3 Rec Park Update.** M. Walter said that the pickle ball court and basketball court are in the final stages of completion. Asphalt is done and final coating and netting, hoops and fencing will be completed soon and will be done by the end of September. M. Walter explained that today he and Andy Andrews, Steven Everett, Marc Volza, and Paula Stahl went over the guard rail layout to protect walkers around the parking lot and installation will be by the end of October. Specs are being put together for a new well that will provide irrigation for Rec Park and for the girls' softball field. The new girls' softball field grass was burnt because the drainage was so good, but with the irrigation this will correct this. The new playground addition has been added, but not complete yet.
- 9.4 Wood Storage Shed at the Saxton B. Little Library.** M. Walter explained that this coming winter the libraries pop-up tent will not survive the rain and snow and the wooden shed that the library would like to purchase will be set up for drop off and pick up. S. Everett wanted to know if all these books be placed in the foyer area far enough away from the staff. S. Epstein explained that they can't keep it inside because there is not enough space, not staying out overnight and set times for people to pick up. They are looking for essentially a roofed structure. Another issue is that there is no contact pickup because some Seniors do not want direct contact. And the cleaning process would be costly and time consuming. And state has requirements for the drop off and pick up for the State Library inter-library loan program. Su Epstein explained that this is the cheapest, best plan that they have come up with.
- 9.5 July Collections 20/21 vs 19/20 Deferral Program Impact.** M. Walter asked Carol Price the Tax Collector to provide information on how we are doing this year as opposed to last year at this time for tax collection with our deferment program due October 1<sup>st</sup>. M. Walter stated that in 2019 at this time we collected \$7,711,000 and same time 2020 we collected 6,501,000. The collection rate is 53% collection rate to 43%. The difference is down 1.2M, largely due to the deferment program. Carol Price is confident that after October 1<sup>st</sup> we will be in much better shape when everything comes in. M. Walter said that he will make another update in the October BOS meeting.
- 9.6 EOC After Action Review.** M. Walter explained that he had a meeting with Steven Everett; the Resident State Trooper; Jerry James, Emergency Management Director; Andy Andrews, acting DPW Director; and Stephen Postemsky, CVFD Fire Chief for Emergency Operations Center (EOC) after action review on how everything went in the last storm. They came out with several action items that included making sure we have enough MRE's and water. Potable water and charging stations went well. In next budget season we will be looking to add a generator for the senior center for a warming and cooling center instead of the school. S. Everett said he was pleased with town personnel's response to the storm, but he is concerned with the communication with Eversource. He is also concerned and would like to make sure that we have

an updated list of who may need help with emergency services for life sustaining oxygen, batteries for devices, and ensuring that people who need to get to dialysis can get access. M. Walter stated that he will ask the new social worker to help with putting together the necessary requirements to help residents in need during an emergency.

**10. CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

**11. BUDGET:**

**11.1 Transfers.** None.

**11.2 Refunds:** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Refunds totaling \$909.17 for those listed in the refund transaction page.

AMOUNT	FROM	TO
\$21.00	TOWN OF COLUMBIA	COLEMAN MAUREEN E
\$34.17	TOWN OF COLUMBIA	COUGHLAN MARTHA A
\$36.37	TOWN OF COLUMBIA	DOUCETTE DONALD P
\$55.44	TOWN OF COLUMBIA	DURIAN EDWARD F
\$272.42	TOWN OF COLUMBIA	FONTAINE LEO M
\$25.67	TOWN OF COLUMBIA	PANCOSOFAR ERNEST L
\$8.56	TOWN OF COLUMBIA	POSTEMSKY STEPHEN M
\$10.03	TOWN OF COLUMBIA	PUCKETT OLIVIA G
\$407.25	TOWN OF COLUMBIA	TOYOTA LEASE TRUST
\$11.87	TOWN OF COLUMBIA	WADE LORI R
\$26.39	TOWN OF COLUMBIA	WILLIAMSON JAMES, JR

MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

**12. APPROVE PAYMENT OF BILLS:** R. Hellstrom MOVED to Approve the Payment of Bills totaling \$52,785.42. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

**13. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** None.

**14. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:** L. Napolitano has asked if the Registrars could come to a BOS meeting and explain about the upcoming elections. S. Everett said that he will ask them to join us on the next meeting and also said that the Town Clerk's office should attend as well. M. Walter stated that he would like to get the BOS back into one room and open it to the public remotely.

**15. 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 8:01 PM and invited Mark Walter to join the Executive Session. MOTION CARRIED 5.0. S. Everett stated that Executive Session ended at 8:03PM and the BOS meeting resumed.

**15.1 Personnel.** No Action Taken.

**16. ADJOURNMENT:** S. Everett MOVED to Adjourn the meeting at 8:06 PM. MOTION CARRIED 4.0 (R. Hellstrom was unavailable).

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie