

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
COLUMBIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Tuesday, January 7, 2020 – 7 pm
Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT

Members Present: Steven M. Everett, First Selectman; Robert Hellstrom, Deputy Selectman; William O'Brien Selectman (arrived at 7:04); Lisa Napolitano, Selectman; Judy Ortiz, Selectman.

Also Present: Mark Walter, Town Administrator

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 January 7, 2020. MOTION CARRIED 4.0.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**
 - 3.1 **BOS Meeting Minutes for November 19, 2019.** S. Everett rescinded his motion. The November 19, 2019 Meeting Minutes were already approved on the December 18th BOS meeting.
 - 3.2 **BOS Special Meeting Minutes for December 18, 2019.** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Minutes for December 18, 2019. MOTION CARRIED 4.0.
4. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** Paul Kubala, 37 Lake Rd. stated that he is in favor of the veteran's exemptions; however, he cautioned that the Town should make sure the person is disabled. S. Everett stated that the Armed Services Board determines disability. Paul Kubala asked what qualifications the Building and Land Use Administrative Assistant has, and did she go through some training on the job.
5. **OLD BUSINESS:**
 - 5.1 **Discussion Regarding Veterans Exemption Options.** S. Everett opened up the discussion to the BOS. J. Ortiz stated that there are different reasons people are disabled and she asks that we look at the exemptions at its merit. S. Everett stated that Veterans Administration Board declares the level of disability for veterans and that we will go by those guidelines. He stated that the Town does not qualify the level of the disability and that if a veteran applies for an exemption, they will have to bring the supporting documentation from the Veterans Administration Board. W. O'Brien stated that in the last meeting S. Everett seemed to have some reservations regarding 100% disability. S. Everett said that his reservations were to look deeper at that line item exemption that provided up to 3 times the current veterans exemption. He stated he would not recommend 3 times the exemption.

Discussion ensued on the following specific exemptions:

- **12-81f - Local Exemption off property exemption of up to 25,000 and Surviving Spouse:** S. Everett recommends setting the level at \$20,000 off the assessed value. He said that this is equal to what surrounding towns currently offer. Discussion ensued. R. Hellstrom

MOVED to change the exemption to \$20,000 for 12-81f. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

- **12-81h – Ordinance for tax exemption on motor vehicles equipped for disabled veterans.** S. Everett explained that the Town currently provides an exemption for disabled residents and we would just be adding disabled veterans. S. Everett MOVED to accept 12-81h for exemption on motor vehicles equipped for disabled veterans. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
- **12-8ii – Municipal option to provide exemption for parent or surviving spouse of person killed in action while performing active military duty.** S. Everett MOVED to offer 12-8ii municipal option to provide exemption for parent or surviving spouse of person killed in action while performing active military duty at \$25,000. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
- **12-81g (b) – Offers maximum of 3x’s the current veteran’s exemption for 100% disabled.** S. Everett MOVED to offer 12-81g(b) at the level at 1.5 times the current veteran’s exemption for 100% disabled. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

5.2 **Discussion Regarding Transfer Station Hours.** S. Everett opened up the discussion regarding extending Wednesday’s Transfer Station hours by one hour. S. Everett stated that he spoke with the Department of Public Works Director and he was not in favor of doing this. S. Everett stated that we are considering adding a third person on Saturday on our busiest day. He said that the cost would be \$3,000 up until June 30th.

6. **NEW BUSINESS:**

6.1 **Discussion and possible Approval on hiring an additional part-time Transfer Station employee.** S. Everett MOVED to allow Department of Public Works bring on a third person on Saturdays. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

7. **COLUMBIA LAKE / DAM / BEACH:** None.

8. **APPOINTMENTS / RESIGNATIONS:**

8.1 **Approval to Appoint Jeffrey Viens to FiPAC.** S. Everett MOVED to Appoint Jeffrey Viens to the Financial Planning & Allocation Committee. MOTION CARRIED 5.0. L. Napolitano stated that he was endorsed by the RTC and a letter will be forthcoming.

8.2 **Recommendation to Approve continued employment of the Building and Land Use Administrative Assistant, Terri Lasota having successfully completed the probationary period.** M. Walter explained Terri was our Land Use Board Clerk for many years. He added that her experience provided the necessary training for the current position. He said that she was by far the most qualified and the recommended person by the employee’s in the department. He said that T. Lasota has met all her goals set during the 6 months’ probationary period and she has created a more efficient workflow system and he is very impressed with her work. S. Everett MOVED to Accept the Town Administrator’s Recommendation of Terri Lasota’s satisfactory completion of her probationary period resulting in full-time employment. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

8.3 **Approval for modification of Park and Recreation job description to include the duties of the Gate Monitor and Marine Patrol Supervisor**

and salary adjustment. S. Everett shared the updated job description and asked that training be added to the job description. M. Walter explained he will be offering an increase of 2,000 in salary for the added responsibilities. W. O'Brien stated he has the utmost respect for Marc Volza but expressed his concern about having someone without a law enforcement background in this position. M. Walter stated he will work with Marc and the State Trooper on safety protocol. He said that Marine Patrol is about enforcing safety on the lake and only give out warnings. After two warnings the State Trooper is called. S. Everett stated that he will work with M. Walter on safety protocol. S. Everett MOVED to Approve the additional duties of the Gate Monitor and Marine Patrol Supervisor as amended and salary adjustment for the Park and Recreation Director. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

8.4 Appoint Steven Everett as the Eastern Regional Tourism District representative for Columbia with Mark Walter as his proxy. S. Everett explained that he was contacted 2 months ago to be a representative from Columbia for the Eastern Regional Tourism District, and he stated he would like to be appointed to the Eastern Regional Tourism District board. W. O'Brien MOVED to Appoint Steven Everett as the Eastern Regional Tourism District representative for Columbia with Mark Walter as his proxy. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

9. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:

9.1 2019 Projects Year in Review. M. Walter shared the list of projects completed in 2019 with the BOS. M. Walter invited the BOS to the dedication to the new digital sign at the Horace Porter School on January 24th at 4:00 pm.

10. CORRESPONDENCE:

- 10.1** CT State Trooper Monthly Report for November 2019.
- 10.2** Article in *The Chronicle* "Town say a year of progress."
- 10.3** Columbia Congregational United Church of Christ Food Panty Donation.

11. BUDGET:

- 11.1 Transfers:** None.
- 11.2 Refunds:** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Refunds totaling \$254.14.

AMOUNT	FROM	TO
\$33.87	TOWN OF COLUMBIA	EDWARD BELLONE
\$220.27	TOWN OF COLUMBIA	RAYMOND MILHOMME

MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

12. APPROVE PAYMENT OF BILLS: S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Payment of Bills totaling \$185,504.35 consisting of 2019-2020 Emergency, 2019-2020 Regular, SBL Grant Payment, Credit Card and Paychex. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

13. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS: None.

14. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS: W. O'Brien asked why the part-time social worker was not on this agenda. M. Walter stated that we are working with other agencies to gather more information. He said that the Senior Center Director is working on a job description. S. Everett stated that we are asking the school for input as well. M. Walter stated we will put this on the next agenda.

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 Statutes Section 1-200(6)(A). None.

16. ADJOURNMENT: S. Everett MOVED to Adjourn at 7:56 pm. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully Submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie