

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 - 3.1 **BOS Meeting Minutes for November 19, 2019.** S. Everett rescinded his motion.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

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
COLUMBIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Tuesday, November 19, 2019 – 7 pm
Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT**

Members Present: Steven M. Everett, First Selectman; William O'Brien (arrived at 7:03 pm), Selectman; Lisa Napolitano, Selectman; Jeff Viens.

Members Absent: Deputy Selectman, Robert Hellstrom.

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 MOVED to Approve the Agenda for November 19, 2019. MOTION CARRIED 3.0.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**
 - 3.1 **BOS Regular Meeting Minutes for November 12, 2019.** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the BOS Regular Meeting Minutes for November 12, 2019. MOTION CARRIED 3.0. L. Napolitano stated that she would like to add that her point of her comments regarding U.S. Debt and CT's Fiscal Health was that we should be careful when taking grant money from the US Government due to the degree of debt.
4. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** None.
5. **OLD BUSINESS:**
 - 5.1 **Dedication Annual Report.** S. Everett MOVED to honor Lou Scotti and dedicate the Annual Report to him. MOTION CARRIED 4.0
 - 5.2 **Continued Discussion on Medical Car.** S. Everett discussed scheduling options for the van that would include medical transportation and wellness trips. He stated that we could try using a new schedule to accommodate the various uses of the van before financing a new car and an additional driver. W. O'Brien stated that the original intention for the van was not for medical transport and he has concerns that there is wear-and-tear on the van with the use of medical rides. W. O'Brien stated that he was not opposed to a temporary fix by adding more hours. He also asked if the town could look into getting funds for the medical car through a grant or a donation/sponsorship by a local car dealership. J. Ortiz stated that if a resident is on Medicaid, they will pay for a cab. She stated that the BOS should be aware of all the options. J. Viens stated he would be in favor of expanding the hours but would be leery about buying another car. S. Everett stated that we have asked B. Derring to look into a Social Worker to help not just the seniors but other residents. L. Napolitano asked if the town has looked into a mobile trailer park for seniors. S. Everett stated that this discussion will continue to the next BOS meeting on December 3, 2019.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

6.1 Approval of Budget Schedule for FY 2020-21. S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Budget Schedule for FY 2020-21. MOTION CARRIED 4.0.

6.2 Set and Discuss Tri-Board Meeting on 12/18/19 at 7:00 pm.

6.3 Ordinance to Repeal Ordinance 23-1, Art. III, Justice of the Peace.

6.4 Ordinance to Repeal Ordinance 4-1, Art. II, Canvassers.

6.5 Ordinance to Repeal Ordinance 15-1, Art. I, Abandoned Refrigerators.

6.6 Ordinance to Repeal Ordinance 9-1, Art. I, Library Planning Commission.

S. Everett MOVED to Repeal Ordinance 23-1, 4-1, 15-1 and 9-1. MOTION CARRIED 4.0.

6.7 Signage at Rec Park, Transfer Station and Roadway Signage. S. Everett stated that the DPW Director and Rec Director have asked for permission to place signage at Rec. Park stating that there are to be no pets allowed on athletic fields.

S. Everett stated that fines will be levied against the town if we don't comply with recycling mandates. To help residents with what's recyclable and where it should go at the Transfer Station, we will be putting up more signage at the Transfer Station to help residents. S. Everett stated on Macht Rd. there is a problem with speeding and people using the road as a thru-way to the Transfer Station. He said that we are looking into different options for signage to help with this problem. S. Everett stated we are also looking at installing larger stop signs at 66 and 87 and at other major intersections. S. Everett MOVED to add signage at Rec Park, "No Animals Allowed on Athletic Fields." MOTION CARRIED 4.0.

7. COLUMBIA LAKE / DAM / BEACH:

7.1 Application for Construction of a Structure on or Over Columbia Lake: Henry Beck, 41 Sleepy Hollow Road. W. O'Brien MOVED to Approve the application as set forth by the LMAC Committee with the listed conditions. MOTION CARRIED 4.0.

7.2 Distribute Overview of Changes Recommended for Standard Guidelines for Construction and Maintenance of Structures and Shoreline on Columbia Lake. S. Everett stated that there is a 2-page summary of the changes to the standard guidelines as well as the completed guidelines with the changes. S. Everett asked that the BOS take this information and read through it. L. Napolitano asked how the people who will be most affected be made aware of the changes. J. Viens stated that these are guidelines and that these guidelines can be changed. W. O'Brien stated that most importantly it should be fair, and he felt that it would be a good idea to have a Public Hearing. S. Everett stated that a continued discussion will be at the next BOS meeting on December 3rd

and the BOS will decide next steps. Mary Roickle of 34 Erdoni Rd. stated that the Columbia Lake Association (CLA) Board has reviewed the changes and have blessed the guidelines. She stated that there will be occasional issues and the Board would take into consideration those issues. She stated that we don't want to see the lake shrink by adding more buoys. She also stated that CLA is recommending no additional buoys and that in the guidelines there are no enforcement clauses.

8. APPOINTMENTS / RESIGNATIONS:

8.1 Resignation of Gary King from the Szegda Farm Management Committee. J. Viens MOVED to Accept the Resignation of Gary King from the Szegda Farm Management Committee. MOTION CARRIED 4.0.

8.2 Appointment for Antonio Tigeleiro to the Recreation Commission. S. Everett MOVED to Appoint Antonio Tigeleiro to the Town Recreation Commission. MOTION CARRIED 4.0.

9. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:

9.1 CIRMA Update. M. Walter stated that CIRMA has had an incredible financial year. Net earned Premium is at \$79.1M, down 6%; Investment Income is at \$11.2M, up 10%; Total Revenue is at \$89.8M, a decrease of 4.5%; Loss and Expense is at \$44.6M, a decrease of 22%; Net Income is at \$35.8M, up 30%; Total Assets is at \$402M, and has grown by \$8.2M from prior year; Members' Equity is at \$177M up \$88.4M over the last 5 years; and Members' Equity Distribution is at \$5M, nearly \$30M over the last 9 years. M. Walter stated that we have received a member equity distribution for the 9th year. M. Walter said that he attended a recent safety meeting and that CIRMA is analyzing safety in all aspects of the town. He stated that cybercrimes are up and that the employees will be going to training. He said that we are having Novus Insight; our IT Consultant go over our IT security. CIRMA is at 98% retention.

M. Walter stated that at a recent CCM meeting the biggest problem that the State currently has is unfunded pensions.

M. Walter stated that the Trust for Public Land (TPL) has been approved for the Community Match Fund program through Sustainable CT. The Community Match Fund is a new program that provides matching funds to support sustainability projects in Sustainable CT-registered towns. TPL is leading the efforts to expand Mono Pond State Park. TPL is looking for funding to cover the costs of surveys, appraisals, environmental, and title & closing costs for the 99-acre property purchase.

10. CORRESPONDENCE:

10.1 CT State Police Monthly Report for October 2019.

11. BUDGET:

11.1 Transfers: None

11.2 Refunds: None

12. APPROVE PAYMENT OF BILLS: S. Everett MOVED to Approve payment of bills totaling \$64,637.01, consisting of 2019/2020 Emergency, 2019/2020 Regular, Bond '01 Interest Payment, Credit Card, Paychex. MOTION CARRIED 4.0.

13. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** None.
14. **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:** S. Everett welcomed Judy Ortiz to the Board of Selectman. S. Everett expressed his appreciation for J. Vien's guidance on all the boards and that Jeff has always done what's right for the Town of Columbia and will be missed. W. O'Brien expressed his appreciation for J. Viens ability to drill down on issues and he has been very helpful. J. Viens thanked the BOS for having him on the board.
15. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**
 - 15.1 **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 8:05 pm. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully Submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie

**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
COLUMBIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Wednesday, December 18, 2019 – 6 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; Lisa Napolitano (arrived at 6:05pm), Selectman; Judy Ortiz, Selectman.

Also Present: Mark Walter, Town Administrator; Bernadette Derring, Senior Center Director.

CALL TO ORDER: S. Everett called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Agenda as written for December 18, 2019. MOTION CARRIED 4.0.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**
 - 3.1 **BOS Regular Meeting Minutes for November 19, 2019.** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the BOS Regular Meeting Minutes for November 19, 2019. The Motion did not pass because S. Everett was the only BOS member that could vote on approving the minutes. R. Hellstrom and J. Ortiz were not present at the November 19, 2019 meeting and L. Napolitano had not yet arrived (L. Napolitano arrived at 6:05pm). S. Everett MOVED to revisit the MOTION to Approve the BOS Regular Meeting Minutes for November 19, 2019. MOTION CARRIED 3:0 with J. Ortiz and R. Hellstrom abstaining.
 - 3.2 **BOS Regular Meeting Minutes for December 3, 2019.** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the BOS Regular Meeting Minutes for December 3, 2019. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
4. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** Joanne Prague Doyle 145 Rte. 87 stated that she has spoken to Steven Everett and Mark Walter regarding hiring a part-time social worker to help residents in need and she would like the BOS to consider this request in the upcoming budget. She said that she has grown up in Columbia and has seen the changes in town. She stated that there is a need for services related to mental health issues, food issues and transportation issues. She felt that the social worker should not be housed in the Senior Center and she stated that it is difficult for people who are in need to find out how they would access the help that they need.

Millie Ramsey, 100 Hunt Rd. stated that she would like to follow up with what Joanne Prague said. She said the Congregational Church recently delivered food to 22 families and this past Monday, the church delivered food and gifts to 27 families. She stated that there is a definitely a need for any age group. She said that a social worker would be much needed and welcome in town.

Jeff Viens, 132 Route 66 stated that he does not think we should establish a Town Meeting to endorse the Town's participation in the expansion of the Mono Pond State Park. He said he has a problem with Trust for Public Land and giving our rights away for our citizens in the future. He stated we are not land poor and that we have a lot of open space. He said that in 2018 and 2019 we had 6 new houses and since July we have had 0 new houses. He stated that once we give up our ownership of the property and it becomes a State park it will not be a Columbia park and Columbia will no longer have a say on what we can do with the park.

Ann Dunnack, 103 Lake Rd. stated that the money that the State is using to fund the purchase of this particular annex to the State park does not come from taxpayers. She said the money is coming from a federal fund that comes from offshore drillers. She said there is a federal necessity that the offshore drillers must pay into and fund for the environment. That fund is then disbursed to all the states including CT and it is that fund that they are using, it is not the CT taxpayers. Therefore, because they are using those funds there is a stipulation that the land can only be used for open space, because this is the tradeoff if the oil companies take from the environment they must give back to the environment. She said that this is written into the deed language that the funds used is only for open space.

5. OLD BUSINESS:

- 5.1 To establish a Town Meeting to approve the towns participation with the Trust for Public Land and others in the acquisition of land parcels within the Town of Columbia as part of the Mono Pond State Park expansion and in furtherance thereof to reserve the balance of the Town's Open Space Fund for this purpose and to specifically allocate \$15,000 of this reserve as the Town's contribution towards the acquisition costs of the Markell properties parcel, title of which shall be acquired by the State of CT, and otherwise on such terms and conditions as the Board of Selectman shall subsequently approve.** S. Everett MOVED to establish a Town Meeting on January 21, 2020 at 6:00 pm in Yeomans Hall for the Town participation with the Trust for Public Land and others in the acquisition of land parcels within the Town of Columbia as part of the Mono Pond State Park expansion and in furtherance thereof to reserve the balance of the Town's Open Space Fund for this purpose and to specifically allocate \$15,000 of this reserve as the Town's contribution towards the acquisition costs of the Markell properties parcel, title of which shall be acquired by the State of CT, and otherwise on such terms and conditions as the Board of Selectman shall subsequently approve. J. Ortiz stated that this should go to a Town Meeting. L. Napolitano said that she would like to have seen it on the ballot. She said that personally she loves walking through the park, but she emphasized that residents should have the option to attend meetings and be informed. R. Hellstrom and W. O'Brien both agreed that this should go to a Town Meeting. S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Resolution for Columbia BOS acquisition as written by counsel. MOTION CARRIED with 4 Votes Yes (S. Everett, J. Ortiz, R. Hellstrom & W. O'Brien) and 1

Vote No (L. Napolitano). S. Everett explained that there is a resolution available for the BOS to review in their BOS binder.

- 5.2 **Discussion Regarding Veterans Exemption Options.** S. Everett MOVED to table the discussion regarding Veterans Exemption Options until next BOS meeting on January 7, 2020. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
- 5.3 **Discussion Regarding Transfer Station Hours.** S. Everett MOVED to table the discussion regarding Transfer Station Hours until the next BOS meeting on January 7, 2020. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
- 5.4 **Amend Public Hearing Date on Tuesday, April 15, 2020 for the Standard Guidelines for Construction and Maintenance of Structures and Shoreline on Columbia Lake to Tuesday April 21, 2020.** S. Everett MOVED to Amend the Public Hearing Date on Tuesday April 15, 2020 for the Standard Guidelines for Construction and Maintenance of Structures and Shoreline on Columbia Lake to Tuesday, April 21, 2020 at 6:00pm. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

6. **NEW BUSINESS:**

- 6.1 **Discussion concerning Senior Center Request for Additional Funds from Contingency for Senior Van Transportation.** B. Derring explained her original request was for a second vehicle for medical appointments to free up the Senior Center Van for more wellness trips. She was asked to provide a proposed transportation program schedule that would include both medical rides and wellness trips if she did not receive the funding for a medical car. She said that to accommodate the schedule for both medical and wellness rides she is asking for additional hours and a additional part-time driver as well as additional hours for the dispatcher which would increase the current scheduled hours from 18.75 hours per week to 35 hours a week. B. Derring explained that it is necessary to have the dispatcher there while the van is running. She said that the drivers are not scheduled if rides are not needed. She is requesting a total budget increase of \$16,000.

B. Derring shared the Transportation Program Schedule with the BOS. She said that the van schedule is from 8:00am to 3:00pm. She explained that the social wellness trips would include grocery shopping, banking, etc. on Tuesday and Thursday and medical rides would be on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

B. Derring explained where Dial-a-Ride fits in with Columbia's transportation program. She said that she makes sure the resident is referred to Dial-a-Ride first and if they cannot accommodate the request, the resident can come back to the Senior Center if the schedule works. B. Derring explained that medical rides have been a priority, but with Dial-a-Ride and the municipal grant program for out-of-region rides, they are now able to push out the medical rides and have more availability for social wellness trips. B. Derring explained that in the Beckish Sr. Center December and January newsletter they will advertise the wellness trips. S. Everett MOVED to Approve the additional funds of \$16,000 from Contingency to the Senior Van Transportation budget. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

6.2 **Discussion for Additional Appropriation of \$25,000 for Tree Removal from the General Fund and to Set a Town Meeting.** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Additional Appropriation from the General fund of \$25,000 for Tree Removal and to Set a Town Meeting for January 21, 2020 at 6:00 pm. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

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

8. **APPOINTMENTS / RESIGNATIONS:**

8.1 **Reappointment of Ronald Wikholm, Thomas Archambault and John Allen to the Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission.** S. Everett MOVED to Reappoint Ronald Wikholm, Thomas Archambault, and John Allen to the Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

8.2 **Appointment of David Bull to Szegda Farm Management Committee.** S. Everett MOVED to Accept the Appointment of David Bull to Szegda Farm Management Committee. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

8.3 **Resignation of Todd Sheppard from FiPAC.** S. Everett MOVED to Accept the Resignation of Todd Sheppard from FiPAC. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

9. **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:**

9.1 **Solar Analysis.** M. Walter will explain in further detail at the next BOS meeting the results of the analysis for the solar arrays.

9.2 **Vacancy in Planning & Zoning Commission.** M. Walter explained that we have several vacancies in our boards and commissions. We have been posting the vacancies in the monthly newsletter.

9.3 **Vacancies for Alternates in: Planning & Zoning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission.**

10. **CORRESPONDENCE:**

11. **BUDGET:**

11.1 **Transfers:** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Transfer of \$500.00 from Legal Notice to Professional Dues that encompassed the cost of employment advertisements. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Transfer of \$16,000 from Contingency to Van Services Salaries. MOTION CARRIED. 5.0.

S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Transfer of \$25,000 from the General Fund to Hazardous Tree Removal. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

11.2 **Refunds:** L. Napolitano MOVED to Approve Refunds totaling \$227.93. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

12. **APPROVE PAYMENT OF BILLS:** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Payment of Bills Totaling \$101,734.13 consisting of 2019-2020 Emergency, 2019-2020 Regular, Credit Card and Paychex. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

13. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS;** J. Viens 132 Rte. 66 stated his concern about information getting out to citizens ahead of time before Town meetings and anything to do with policy should be given more time to be addressed.

14. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS: W. O'Brien stated that he would like the BOS to explore hiring a part-time social worker and that we this should be put on the next agenda for January 7th.

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). S. Everett MOVED to enter into Executive Session at 6:58pm and invited Mark Walter, Town Administrator and Carol Price, Tax Assessor. S. Everett MOVED to come out of Executive Session at 8:04 pm.

15.1 Tax Delinquency. No business was voted upon.

16. ADJOURNMENT: S. Everett MOVED to ADJOURN at 8:05pm.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully Submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie



TOWN OF COLUMBIA

ASSESSOR'S OFFICE
323 Jonathan Trumbull Highway
Columbia, Connecticut 06237

To: Steven Everett
Selectman
From: Mary Lavalley,
Assessor
Date: October 24, 2019

Subject: Veteran exemption options

The Town of Columbia is currently not offering 12-81g(b), 12-81h, 12-81ii, 12-81ji, or 12-81(21)(c).

I emailed all the surrounding Towns of Andover, Coventry, Hebron, Lebanon and Windham to ask if they offer anything more than we do.

Andover offers 12-81h which is an exemption to remove totally the assessment on a disabled veterans motor vehicle that is specially equipped for someone with disabilities. There are 45 Towns currently offering this.

Coventry offers 12-81(21)(c) This exemption deals with special housing under Title 38. This allows for a total exemption for residences with respect to special housing under title 38 United States Code. There are currently 25 Towns offering this.

Hebron offers 12-81f for the amount of 20,000. There are 93 Towns offering this.

Lebanon currently offers the same veterans' exemptions that we do.

Windham currently offers the same veterans' exemptions that we do.

The other exemptions are as follows:

12-81g(b)- offers 3x the current veteran's exemption for 100% disabled. That equates to \$27,000. There are 21 Towns currently offering this.

12-81ii- provides an exemption for a parent or surviving spouse of a person killed in action. Similar in requirements for 12-81f in that the Town can offer up to \$25,000 and it has the same income requirements. There are currently 20 Towns offering this.

12-81ji- offers exemption to provide exemption for veterans not eligible for certain other exemptions. Currently there are no Towns are offering this.



TOWN OF COLUMBIA

ASSESSOR'S OFFICE
323 Jonathan Trumbull Highway
Columbia, Connecticut 06237

To: Steven Everett
Selectman
From: Mary Lavalley,
Assessor
Date: November 19, 2019

Subject: Veteran income based additional exemption

12-81f. This exemption allows towns to offer a local exemption of up to 25,000. There are maximum income limits of \$43,000 if married and \$35,300 if unmarried. We currently give these folks 6,000 off their assessment. There are 93 towns out of 169 offering this exemption. For example, nearby Hebron and East Hampton offer 20,000 in additional exemption off the assessment.

- **We had 23 veterans apply for additional veterans for the 2017 GL**
- **We had 27 veterans apply on the 2018 GL.**
- **Applicants apply for this exemption every other year.**

Using the 50 people who are currently are in the system multiplied by 20,000 which equals 1,000,000 in total exemption. This equates to \$29,330 in total tax revenue loss for all the applicants in the program. However, that \$29,330 would be lost within a two-year period because some file in an odd year and others in an even year depending on the year they first applied.

For example, if we had this program in 2017, then the 23 veterans that applied that year multiplied by 20,000 would be a revenue loss of \$13,491.80. In 2018 it would have been 27 multiplied by 20,000 which equates to \$15,838.20.

Additional Exemption for Veterans

(in accordance with Public Act 16-191)

(Pursuant to Section 12-81f of CGS under local ordinance Title X Sec. E.)

- 1. Any Veteran entitled to an exemption from property tax in accordance with subdivision (19) of section 12-81 of the Connecticut General Statutes shall be entitled to an additional exemption applicable to the assessed value of property up to the amount of twenty thousand dollars, provided such Veterans' qualifying income does not exceed the applicable maximum amount as provided under 12-81l.**
- 2. Any Veterans' surviving spouse entitled to an exemption from property tax in accordance with subdivision (22) of section 12-81 shall be entitled to an additional exemption applicable to the assessed value of property up to the amount of twenty thousand dollars, provided such surviving spouses' qualifying income does not exceed the applicable maximum amount as provided under 12-81l.**
- 3. Any such Veteran or spouse submitting a claim for such additional exemption shall be required to file an application on a form prepared for such purpose by the Assessor, not later than the assessment date with respect to which such additional exemption is claimed.**

Each such application shall include a copy of such Veterans' or spouses' federal income tax return, or in the event such a return is not filed such evidence related to income as may be required by the Assessor, for the tax year of such veteran or spouse ending immediately prior to the assessment date with respect to which such additional exemption is claimed.

Presented: Town Meeting: Month/Day/Year

Adopted: Month/Day/Year

Published: Month/Day/Year

Effective Date: Month/Day/Year

ORDINANCE FOR TAX EXEMPTION ON MOTOR VEHICLES EQUIPPED FOR DISABLED VETERANS

(in accordance with CGS 12-81h)

Section 1: Upon the Assessor's determination of adequate proof, there shall be exempt from personal property taxation any motor vehicle specially equipped for disabled veterans.

SECTION 2: Any person seeking an exemption as provided under this ordinance shall be required to file an application, on a form prepared for such purpose by the Assessor and approved of by the Board of Selectmen, not later than the date of the assessment list with respect to which such exemption is claimed.

Presented: Town Meeting: Date

Adopted: Date

Published: Date

Effective Dates:Date

Office of The Assessor
323 RT 87, Columbia, CT 06237
Phone: 860-228-9555 Fax: 860-228-235
mlavallee@columbiact.org

APPLICATION FOR TAX EXEMPTION FOR SPECIALLY EQUIPED MOTOR VEHICLES FOR DISABLED VETERANS
CGS 12-81h **2019 GRAND LIST**

LAST NAME _____ **FIRST NAME** _____

ADDRESS _____

1. Description of vehicle for which exemption is requested.
MAKE **MODEL** **YEAR** **REG.NO.** **V.I.N.**

2. Is this vehicle used exclusively for or by the disabled veteran applying for exemption?

Yes **No**

4. Describe any modifications or special equipment (i.e. lifts, hand controls, etc.) which were required to accommodate the incapacitated persons.

5. Estimate the cost of these modifications. \$ _____

6. **APPLICANT'S AFFIDAVIT**
The applicant herein claims a tax exemption under provisions of the State General Statutes and the Town ordinance and certifies that the above statements are true and complete.

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT: _____

DATE SIGNED: _____ **TELEPHONE NUMBER:** _____

ASSESSOR'S AFFIDAVIT

Approved _____ Exemption Amount Approved _____
Not Approved _____

SIGNATURE OF ASSESSOR
OR MEMBER OF ASSESSOR'S STAFF _____ **DATE** _____

Sec. 12-81ii. Municipal option to provide exemption for parent or surviving spouse of person killed in action while performing active military duty. (a)(1) Except as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection, any municipality, upon approval by its legislative body, may provide that any parent whose child was killed in action, or the surviving spouse of a person who was killed in action, while performing active military duty with the armed forces, as defined in subsection (a) of section 27-103, which parent or surviving spouse is a resident of such municipality, shall be entitled to an exemption from property tax, provided such parent's or surviving spouse's qualifying income does not exceed (A) the maximum amount applicable to an unmarried person as provided under section 12-81i, or (B) an amount established by the municipality, not exceeding the maximum amount under section 12-81i by more than twenty-five thousand dollars. The exemption provided for under this section shall be applied to the assessed value of an eligible parent's or surviving spouse's property and, at the municipality's option, may be in an amount up to twenty thousand dollars or in an amount up to ten per cent of such assessed value.

(2) (A) If both parents of any such child killed in action while performing active military duty with the armed forces are domiciled together, only one such parent shall be entitled to an exemption from property tax provided for under this section.

(B) The exemption provided for under this section shall be in addition to any exemption to which an eligible parent or surviving spouse may be entitled under section 12-81. No such eligible parent or surviving spouse entitled to exemption under section 12-81f or 12-81g and this section shall receive more than one such exemption.

(b) (1) Any parent whose child was killed in action, or the surviving spouse of a person who was killed in action, while performing active military duty with the armed forces and who claims an exemption from taxation under this section shall give notice to the town clerk of such municipality that he or she is entitled to such exemption.

(2) Any such parent or surviving spouse submitting a claim for such exemption shall be required to file an application, on a form prepared for such purpose by the assessor, not later than the assessment date with respect to which such exemption is claimed, which application shall include at least two affidavits of disinterested persons showing that the deceased child or person was performing such active military duty, that such deceased child or person was killed in action while performing such active military duty and the relationship of such deceased child to such parent, or such deceased person to such surviving spouse, provided the assessor may further require such parent or surviving spouse to be examined by such assessor under oath concerning such facts. Each such application shall include a copy of such parent's or surviving spouse's federal income tax return, or in the event such a return is not filed

such evidence related to income as may be required by the assessor, for the tax year of such parent or surviving spouse ending immediately prior to the assessment date with respect to which such exemption is claimed. Such town clerk shall record each such affidavit in full and shall list the name of such parent or surviving spouse claimant, and such service shall be performed by such town clerk without remuneration. No assessor, board of assessment appeals or other official shall allow any such claim for exemption unless evidence as herein specified has been filed in the office of such town clerk. When any such parent or surviving spouse has filed for such exemption and received approval for the first time, such parent or surviving spouse shall be required to file for such exemption biennially thereafter, subject to the provisions of subsection (c) of this section.

(3) The assessor of such municipality shall annually make a certified list of all such parents or surviving spouses who are found to be entitled to exemption under the provisions of this section, which list shall be filed in the town clerk's office, and shall be prima facie evidence that such parents or surviving spouses whose names appear thereon are entitled to such exemption as long as they continue to reside in such municipality and as long as the legislative body of such municipality continues to provide for such exemption, subject to the provisions of subsection (c) of this section. Such assessor may, at any time, require any such parent or surviving spouse to appear before such assessor for the purpose of furnishing additional evidence, provided, any such parent or surviving spouse who by reason of disability is unable to so appear may furnish such assessor a statement from such parent's or surviving spouse's attending physician or an advanced practice registered nurse certifying that such parent or surviving spouse is totally disabled and is unable to make a personal appearance and such other evidence of total disability as such assessor may deem appropriate.

(4) No such parent or surviving spouse may receive such exemption until such parent or surviving spouse has proven his or her right to such exemption in accordance with the provisions of this section, together with such further proof as may be necessary under said provisions. Exemptions so proven shall take effect on the next succeeding assessment day.

(c) Any such parent or surviving spouse who has submitted an application and been approved in any year for the exemption provided in this section shall, in the year immediately following approval, be presumed to be qualified for such exemption. During the year immediately following such approval, the assessor shall notify, in writing, each parent or surviving spouse presumed to be qualified pursuant to this subsection. If any such parent or surviving spouse has qualifying income in excess of the maximum allowed under subsection (a) of this section, such parent or surviving spouse shall notify the assessor on or before the next filing date for such exemption

and shall be denied such exemption for the assessment year immediately following and for any subsequent year until such parent or surviving spouse has reapplied and again qualified for such exemption. Any such parent or surviving spouse who fails to notify the assessor of such disqualification shall make payment to the municipality in the amount of property tax loss related to such exemption improperly taken.

Town Administrator

From: Mark Walter
Sent: Monday, January 6, 2020 5:15 PM
To: Jennifer LaVoie; Town Administrator
Subject: Fwd: Additional Transfer Station Personnel

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: George Murphy <gmurphy@columbiact.org>
Date: January 6, 2020 at 1:58:32 PM EST
To: Mark Walter <mwalter@columbiact.org>
Subject: Additional Transfer Station Personnel

As we discussed in recent months, I believe there is a need to increase part time staffing for the Transfer Station. For over one year staff has noticed at the end of the day an increase in unacceptable items in the swap shop which ultimately are Bulky Waste, inform residents that scavenging is not allowed in our Electronics Trailer, failure to stop and pay attendant for disposing of Bulky Waste all because of limited available supervision by staff while performing other duties. In addition, the town has received notice on more than one occasion from our contracted disposal service vendor (Willimantic Waste Paper) that they have found a number of items in our recyclables which were not acceptable. Fortunately for Columbia we were not fined as it was below the percentage currently allowed by contract.

Given those reasons above and a potential for future more restrictive rules by the State DEEP or Recycling contracts, I believe it would be prudent to add one new part time staff member starting as soon as possible. I would also recommend that we start with Saturdays until July 1st and then decide if we are to continue with one day per week or if we need that person two days per week.

Respectfully submitted,

George Murphy
Director of Public Works

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From: Bruce MacDonald <brucemac2010@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, December 8, 2019 4:31:34 PM
To: Steven Everett <severett@columbiact.org>
Cc: Rita Schmidt <rmschmidt1212@gmail.com>
Subject: Eastern Regional Tourism District

Dear First Selectman Everett:

I am writing to request your help in resolving a serious problem that has prevented the Eastern Regional tourism District from promoting our part of the state to visitors. The problem is outlined in the enclosed editorial which ran recently in The Day newspaper of New London.

As you can read in the editorial, a significant part of the problem has stemmed from the district board's failure to achieve a quorum at meetings called to take the steps necessary to draw down the \$400,000 allocated by the legislature to promote this important segment of our economy.

Under state law, your community is entitled to appoint a representative to the district board. If that hasn't been done, I respectfully ask that you take that important step. Article 4, Section 1 of the district by laws addresses the municipal government appointees:

"Each municipality within the District shall be entitled to appoint one representative to the Board. Municipal representatives to the District's Board shall be appointed by the municipality's legislative body, except that where the legislative body is the town meeting the board of selectman shall make such appointment." (emphasis added)

Rita Schmidt of Groton is the board chair. You could forward the appointment letter of your representative to her at: rmschmidt1212@gmail.com. The letter should also be sent to Randy Fiveash, Director of the Connecticut Office of Tourism at randall.fiveash@ct.gov. If you prefer, he also can be reached at 450 Columbus Blvd. Suite 5; Hartford, CT 06103.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Connecticut's tourism industry provides jobs and tourism-related businesses pay taxes. Please help us keep this important economic engine running at peak efficiency. If you have any questions, feel free to call me at 860-235-1387 or contact me via email at: brucemac2010@gmail.com

Bruce MacDonald

Board representative from New London

HERE IS THE NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL I REFERENCED IN THE LETTER:

Problems cry out for new tourism approach

8

Published November 25, 2019 5:00PM

By **The Day Editorial Board**

The troubles befalling the Eastern Regional Tourism District cry out for the General Assembly to reassess how state funding to promote tourism is distributed. The state senators and House members representing this tourism-rich region should lead the way.

A recent story by Day Staff Writer Erica Moser outlined how the tourism district will have to return funds that went unspent during the 2018-2019 fiscal year that ended this past June 30. Now the state is holding back \$200,000 that could otherwise be spent on marketing this year because the district never completed the paperwork for last fiscal year, including submission of an audit.

Tourism district business does not get done at meetings for lack of quorums. Many towns that are supposed to be served by the district have assigned no representatives to its board. New board members complain about a lack of access to basic information.

Otherwise, the district is performing perfectly. But, seriously, there has got to be a better way of doing this. The tourism industry is too important to our region to squander opportunities to promote it.

The General Assembly divides the state into three tourism districts to promote their local attractions — Eastern, Central and Western.

According to Randy Fiveash, director of the state's Office of Tourism, two out of the three districts have not provided the necessary accounting concerning the past use of state grants to get their appropriations for the current fiscal year. Only the Central Regional Tourism District submitted an audit and other required documentation and received its \$200,000, representing the first two quarterly payments.

Fiveash has advised the other two districts to take a look at how the Central Tourism District is getting it done.

The current configuration seems inherently unwieldy. In eastern Connecticut the district sprawls across 41 towns, each of which is supposed to have a representative on the board. Eleven towns have not assigned one. Meetings are poorly attended, even by towns with representatives. The vacancy and poor attendance make it hard to get the necessary quorums and get business done.

Ed Drombrokas, who directs the district's affairs as a \$70-an-hour consultant — when he can land the state funding — basically told Moser he is doing the best he can and that he cannot force towns to assign a representative to the district board.

Drombrokas' own status is troublingly informal. He has no contract with the district describing his services and his position has no job description.

Notably, the Central district utilizes the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce as a partner, paying a portion of the chamber's vice president for her work on tourism issues. In her role as executive director of the tourism district, Middlesex chamber Vice President Johanna Bond can utilize the chamber's support structure to help in communication and organizing.

The Eastern District Tourism District has its working relationship with the Norwich Community Development Corporation. A fine organization, but not a regional one — just look at the name.

The obvious group to help spearhead tourism promotion in the eastern one-third of the state, using state dollars, would be the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut. But Drombrokas and the chamber have a history, and not a good one, tied to past disputes over the issue of who should oversee tourism.

The legislature, it would seem to us, could tweak the regulations requiring representatives from every town if an organization, such as the chamber, could demonstrate in grant applications that it already has regional representation.

However this gets fixed, it is clear it needs fixing. Given the organizational challenges, it is hard to imagine the Eastern Regional Tourism District in its current configuration getting the job done well.

As Fiveash noted in his interview with *The Day*, had the district provided the necessary documentation to his office it could be utilizing grant money to promote the upcoming **Northern Lights attraction** at the Mystic Aquarium, just to note one example. There are plenty of activities to persuade people from elsewhere in the state, and from neighboring states, to visit the region during the holidays. But they have to know about them.

“It’s a crying shame,” Fiveash said.

Indeed it is.

The Day editorial board meets regularly with political, business and community leaders and convenes weekly to formulate editorial viewpoints. It is composed of President and Publisher **Tim Dwyer**, Editorial Page Editor **Paul Choiniere**, Managing Editor **Tim Cotter**, Staff Writer **Julia Bergman** and retired deputy managing editor **Lisa McGinley**. However, only the publisher and editorial page editor are responsible for developing the editorial opinions. The board operates independently from the *Day* newsroom.

2019 Year in Review

- **CT -Chip:** Purchasing health care as 600 employee customers. This is the 1st 6-town fully insured collaborative for health care insurance. To level out long-term cost inflation to the employees and towns.
- **Retirement:** retirement plan was sent out to bid and upgraded to a new retirement program saving the employee's 50% in expenses.
- **CIRMA Achievement Award for Sustained Risk Management Programs:** CIRMA's Excellence in Risk Management Award honors the achievements of those CIRMA members who rise to the challenge and generate significant impact through their risk management programs and initiatives. This program seeks out the best of these programs to honor. Their innovative problem solving, excellence in management, and success in creating organizational change deserve the highest recognition.
 - Town of Columbia embarked on a risk management initiative to mitigate and reduce slips/trips/falls on town-owned property and improve handicap accessibility by establishing a town-wide risk management program. Projects included:
 - Town beach installation of a new retaining wall and sidewalks that were constructed to level the beach to eliminate trip hazards and halt soil erosion and make the beach and pier handicap accessible.
 - Town Hall Parking lot (new pavement tied into roof drains under the parking lot and a new layout design to improve pedestrian safety. Crosswalks were painted to improve visibility
 - Sidewalks raised at the Saxton B. Little Library and new drainage was added to collect water shedding from the parking lot that eliminated possible ice hazards
 - New sidewalks at The History Place, Moor's Charity Indian School, Horace Porter School; and Yeomans Hall to eliminate trip hazards.
 - New playgrounds were installed at the Horace Porter School and at Rec Park to include handicapped railings, and new fall zones were brought up to standard; and Rec Park Improvements that includes a new roadway to improve pedestrian safety and new resurfacing to both the basketball and tennis courts to address trip and fall hazards.
 - Replaced old annex wood deck with Trex decking.
- **Rec Park Update:**
 - New ADA Playground accessible units were added at Rec Park.
 - Girls softball field is almost complete.
 - Tennis court are resurfaced.
 - Basketball courts will be completed in the spring.
 - New road has been started.
- **Public Works town-wide initiative for tree removal/safety pruning of over 200 trees and safety pruning.**
- **General Code Update:** 1st proof of Town Ordinances has been processed.
- **Webster Bank Lock Box for Tax Payments:** The new process has reduced the hours needed in the Tax Office by streamlining the tax printing, processing, and payment process.
- **Senior Center Van program & New Coffee Station at the Sr. Center:** The Sr. Van program has expanded to better cover wellness trips, as well as medical appointments. A New coffee station has been installed at the Sr. Center.

- **Mono Pond State Park Expansion:** 1st phase of the expansion of the Mono Pond State Park has begun. 313 acres is being considered for purchase by the Town on January 21st. This is a partnership with the Town of Lebanon, the Trust for Public Land, and the State of CT.
- **BOE/TOWN:**
 - Refurbished old firehouse into a BOE/Town Maintenance Facility. Work included new windows, doors, roof and HVAC Heating cooling system/electrical upgrades. Internal remodeling has begun.
- **New Salt Shed** is complete.
- **New redesigned entrance to School House Rd:** The road was designed to improve safety and installation of a new digital sign soon.
- **New 1000-gallon fuel (gas) tank** for Town vehicles is complete. Elimination of underground storage tanks for Public Works.
- **New Roof at Town Hall.**
- **Solar system software upgrades of all Town solar panels.**
- **Village Hill Bridge** refurbishment complete.
- **Completion of Rail to Trails bridge from Willimantic to Columbia.**
- **Design phase of new pedestrian bridge on Hop River in Columbia.**
- **Design Phase with Coventry for the Hop River Bridge.**

s:\selectman\mark walter\markw\2019 year in review.docx



Commanding Officer
Lt. Marc Petruzzi #037

State of Connecticut



Connecticut State Police Troop K - Colchester



Executive Officer
Master Sergeant Eric Peck
#085

Date: 12-01-2019

Mr. Steve Everett
Columbia First Selectman
323 Jonathan Trumbull Highway
Columbia, CT 06237

Dear Mr. Steve Everett

This correspondence is an effort to keep you apprised of the monthly police services occurring within the Town of Columbia.

During the month of November 2019 the Columbia Resident Trooper as well as Troop K Troopers responded to 159 Calls for Service in the Town of Columbia. Of these Calls for Service the most notable are:

Accidents:	9
Burglaries:	0
Larcenies:	2
Other Criminal:	4
Other Non-Criminal:	3
Non Reportable Matters:	91
Other Noteworthy Events (List):	
One emergency committal	
Three domestic disturbances (same address)	
One narcotic infraction	

In addition to the above investigations Troopers conducted the following motor vehicle enforcement:

On-Sight DWI:	0
Traffic Citations:	41
Written Warnings:	9

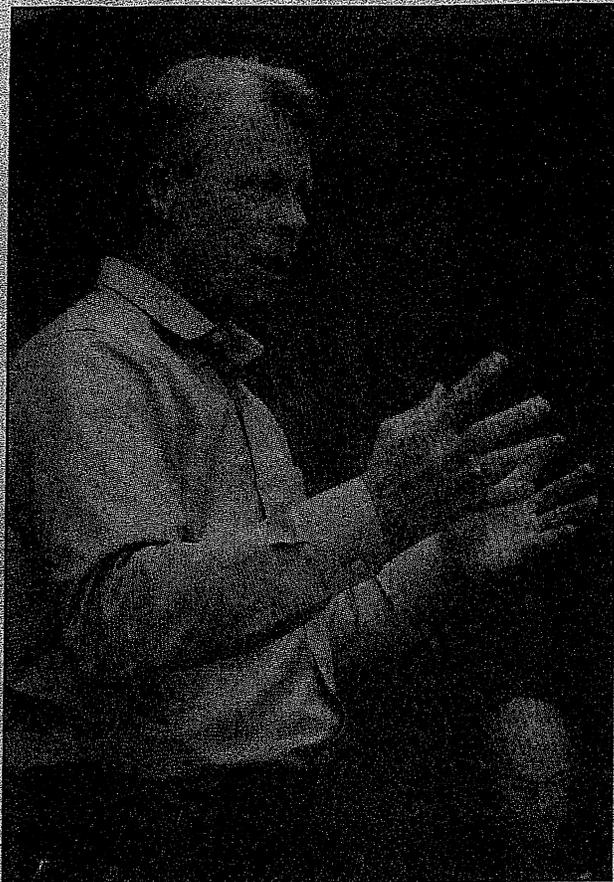
Sincerely,

LT Petruzzi #037

Lt. Marc Petruzzi #037

COMMANDING OFFICER
Troop "K" Colchester, CT

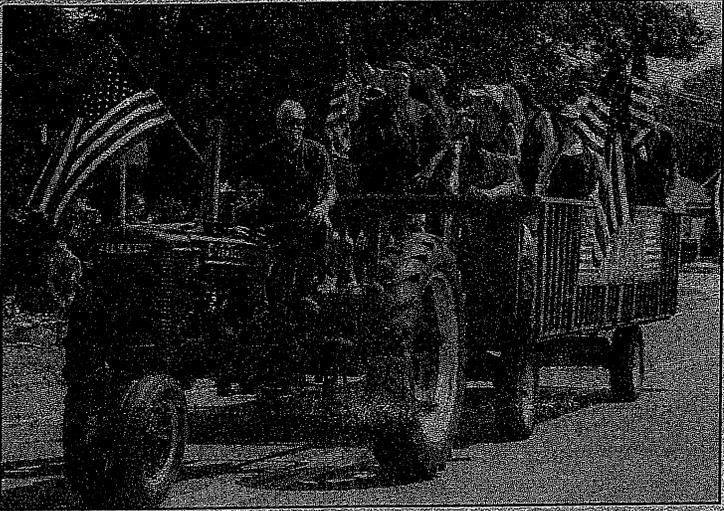
15A Old Hartford Road
Colchester, Connecticut 06415
Phone (860) 537-7500
FAX (860) 537-7550



Columbia First Selectman Steven Everett, a Republican, speaks during a town budget hearing back in April.
Lisa Massicotte | Staff



A bald eagle soars over Columbia Lake last June. Roxanne Pandolfi | Staff



Representatives of The Main Moose are pulled along by a tractor in Columbia's Fourth of July parade. Marissa Oceguera | For the Chronicle

Town saw a year of progress

LISA MASSICOTTE
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

COLUMBIA — The year 2019 was another year of progress for Columbia, not only for municipal and school district initiatives, but also for businesses.

“I think we were very successful as a town this year,” Columbia First Selectman Steven Everett said Monday. “Columbia is in a very good position for growth in quality of life for the people who live here.”

Columbia Town Administrator Mark Walter said he was pleased with the growth of local businesses and an increase in manufacturing job opportunities.

He took out a page from the Dec. 16 Hartford Courant, which contained an article highlighting how the aviation boom has helped Columbia Manufacturing Inc., located

Columbia 2019 Year in Review

at 165 Route 66 East, expand its employment by 15 workers over 2019.

The business said it expects to grow by 10 to 15 percent over the next few years.

In addition to economic growth, improvements were made to the town's roads and sidewalks, bridges, parks as well as municipal and school facilities.

Walter said the town went full-force in making its infrastructure and recreational opportunities safe and accessible throughout 2019.

In fact, Walter said the town was recently awarded a \$2,500 grant by the Con-

I think we were very successful as a town this year. Columbia is in a very good position for growth in quality of life for the people who live here.

Steven Everett

necticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency (CIRMA) for excellence in risk management. The town will be formally recognized at an upcoming CIRMA meeting Jan. 31, Walter said.

Traditional celebrations

Looking back at the year that was, the traditional celebrations that make Columbia residents appreciate where

they live thrived.

Among those annual municipal events were the traditional Fourth of July parade, Veterans Day remembrance and Christmas celebration earlier this month.

“It’s a major event for our town to host a Fourth of July parade,” Everett said.

Bald eagle family

July 2019 didn’t only feature a parade in Columbia, it brought a pair of returning nesting bald eagles that successfully raised an eaglet on Columbia Lake.

“The eaglet, a symbol of our freedom — right?” Everett said. “I’m very proud that we have eagles flying above Columbia and on Columbia Lake.”

Everett said he’s proud of many things that happened in 2019, including easily pass-

Columbia saw a year of progress

Continued from Page 1

ing a budget with no increase in taxes.

“Good budgeting, being prepared and being ready for the future without having to raise taxes,” he said. “And I anticipate the same for this year, we’ll see what the state throws at us, but we’ll do the best we can.”

But not all remained positive for Columbia in 2019.

Tree removal

The invasive emerald ash borer beetle, which is devastating ash trees throughout the country, took a hefty chunk out of town funds for tree removal.

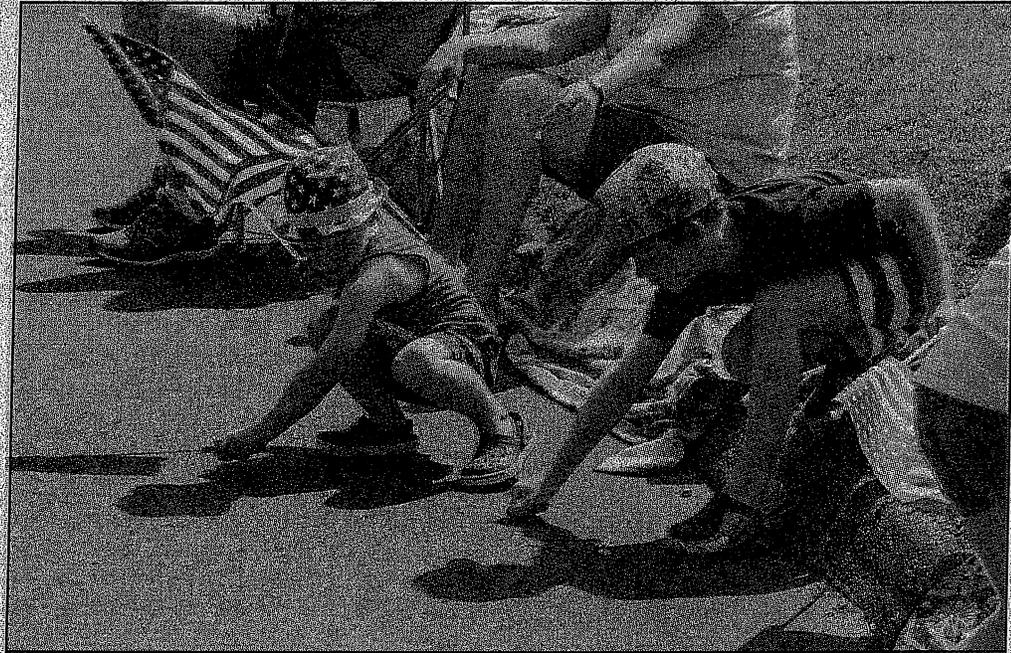
Walter said he expects the total to get up to \$75,000 spent toward tree removal by the end of the year and they plan to allocate \$100,000 for tree removal in the next budget.

“That’s just unheard of for tree removal,” Walter said.

School district

Additionally, the board of education lost a prominent member to cancer this year.

“Gary Littlefield was a very strong, dedicated member of the board of education,” said Columbia Superintendent of Schools Maria Geryk, who joined the district in October 2018. “As a new superin-



Brothers Barrett Culpin, then 4, and Teagan Culpin, then 7, collected as much candy as they could at Columbia’s annual Fourth of July parade. Marissa Ocegüera | For the Chronicle

tendent entering Columbia’s school district, Gary was a great resource for me.”

In light of it all, the town and school district are looking forward to building on the accomplishments and strengths set in place this year.

“It’s been an amazing first year and I’m really looking forward to now this upcoming year for us to build on the strengths that have already been in place,” Geryk said.

Follow Lisa Massicotte on Twitter - @LMassicotteTC.



Columbia Board of Education members bow their heads in a moment of silence Aug. 6 to remember former member Gary Littlefield, who passed away this year. Lisa Massicotte | Staff

COLUMBIA CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

P.O. Box 177
COLUMBIA, CONNECTICUT 06237

Pastor Barry J. McCarthy



PHONE
(860) 228-9306

December 16, 2019

Mike Walter
Town Administrator's Office
Town of Columbia
323 Jonathan Trumbull Highway
Columbia, CT 06237

Re: Food Pantry Donation

Enclosed please find a check for \$100 from the Thanksgiving church service with Columbia and Andover Congregational churches for the Columbia Food Pantry.

Sincerely,

Timothy Bassett
Head Deacon
Columbia Congregational Church