**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**
**COLUMBIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN**
**Tuesday, February 4, 2020 – 7:00pm**
**Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room**
**323 Route 87, Columbia, CT**

**Members Present:** Robert Hellstrom, Deputy Selectman; William O'Brien Selectman; Lisa Napolitano, Selectman; Judy Ortiz, Selectman.

**Members Absent:** Steven M. Everett, First Selectman

**Also Present:** Mark Walter, Town Administrator; Beverly Ciurylo Finance Director; Marc Volza, Parks and Recreation Director.

**CALL TO ORDER:** R. Hellstrom called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** R. Hellstrom MOVED to Modify New Business in the Agenda 6.1 to read Town Administrator Presents Highlights of FY 20/21 Budget with Discussion and Workshop to follow and 6.2 will be the Recreation Director and Recreation Commission will be available for questions concerning their budget. MOTION CARRIED. 4.0.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**:

3.1 **BOS Meeting Minutes for January 21, 2020.** L. Napolitano MOVED to Approve the BOS Meeting Minutes for January 21, 2020. MOTION CARRIED 4.0.

4. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** None.

5. **OLD BUSINESS:** None.

6. **NEW BUSINESS:**

6.1 **Town Administrator Presents Highlights of FY 20/21 Budget with Discussion and Workshop to follow:** M. Walter reviewed the notable increases and decreases of the FY 20/21 Budget. He stated that salaries will be addressed in next week's budget workshop meeting.

**Operating Budgets:**
M. Walter explained that there is a placeholder of $59,000 in the Group Insurance line because we are not sure what the increase will be until sometime in February. He stated that the placeholder is a worst-case scenario.

Information and Technology has an increase of $13,600 in the professional/technical line because of a new security audit that will provide security training for employee's, new email archiving system, new password protocol and other IT security measures to protect the Town from cyber-crime. M. Walter stated that the school has already implemented this security audit.

M. Walter explained that the Registrar of Voters salary line may go up because of the presidential primary and election and he said he will check on this before the next meeting.

Financial Planning and Auditing will be going down by $2,000 due to an auditing reduction because we do not have to perform a GASB 75 Disclosure on post-employment benefits.

Eastern Highland Health District will have a 4% increase $1,244.

Social Services will have an increase for a Social Worker. M. Walter has been working with AHM and Access Agency to look into the salary range and implementation of a Social Worker. The benchmark we are working from are from $20,000 to $40,000. We have not received any proposals yet.

Elderly services include a proposed expenditure of $50,000 for one van driver and one dispatcher. At the next meeting he will have more information on the budget once we expand to 5 days a week van service for the whole year.

The Senior Center had minor changes with no significant increase

AHM needs an increase of $2,275 at 5%. This is the first significant increase in several years.

Police Protection has a 2% increase and it is anticipated that there should not be a large increase.

The Columbia Volunteer Fire Department's operating budget requests remained the same. The Fire Department will present their budget at the next workshop and the biggest increase will be in the capital budget.

In the next Budge Workshop discussion there is a request for an Assistant to the Emergency Management Director with a small stipend of $3,000.

Public Works Maintenance Services has a decrease of $9,000.00 in the Contracted Services for landscaping. M. Walter explained that this year the Town is considering bringing these services into a public works summer position. The is an increase of $15,000 in the Repairs and Maintenance line is due to several pieces of equipment.

Waste disposal has an increase of $3,000 in Contracted Services due to an increase in charges for brush disposal because of all the tree removals that Public Works Department is doing.

Public Celebrations has an increase of $4,500. This increase is for the Occum monument that will be placed behind the Moor's Charity school. We have received one quote and are currently waiting for more quotes.

The Saxton B. Little Free Library has requested a 3% increase primarily due to health care and salary increases. Increase requested is $12,288.

Lake Management Authority Commission (LMAC) has an increase in the Professional/Technical line of $8,500. The increase includes $18,000 for water analysis and $3,000 for the treatment of Phragmites. The water analysis is up because of the need to test for cyanobacteria management and will require equipment to perform this work. M. Walter explained that we are holding off on

purchasing testing equipment and are looking into having Marine Patrol staff take the water samples and send out for testing.

The proposed FY 20/21 expenditure for Contingency is at $78,000.

M. Walter stated that the Animal Control officer has tendered her resignation. We will be looking for a replacement or to merge with another town.

**Capital Budgets:**
M. Walter explained that the FY 2019/20 appropriation is $997,000 with a proposed FY 20/21 appropriation at $1,305,125.

Road Resurfacing for FY 2019/20 is at $214,000 with proposed FY 20/21 at $263,000. This includes the cost of overlay for Lake Road, the painting of double yellow lines, and road repairs (crack sealing).

The second installment for the box culvert replacement on Hunt Rd. is at $175,000.

The Recreation Area Improvement Capital budget for FY 19/20 was funded for $115,000. The new road at Rec Park is almost done and the extension of the road/2 parking lots and guardrail will be started after the winter in the Fall of 2020. FY 20/21 proposed expenditures are $235,000 consisting of $100,000 for a maintenance building and parking lot, $55,000 to add to the existing playscape, $5,000 for site preparation, $35,000 for the Pavilion (originally this was budgeted in the FY18/19 budget but was re-allocated for tennis and basketball court), $35,000 for pickle-ball court and $5,000 for a Bocce court.

Recreation Area Beach Capital's proposed budget for FY 20/21 is $16,625 to finish the parking lot guardrails.

Town Networking FY 20/21 proposed budget includes $8,000 for a new website. This includes $6,000 for design, development and implementation phase, and $2,000 for annual hosting, maintenance and customer support.

Department of Public Works Capital Equipment FY 20/21 proposed expenditures is $146,500 and the previous year was $126,500. This includes ½ replacement of the 2005 Peterbilt dump truck allocation 2 of 2, replacement 1990 trailer for paying box, dozer, vehicle for Public Works Director. The DPW Director's pickup truck will go to the Foreman.

Transfer Station proposed expenditure is for $8,000 to replace a 40yd steel container.

DPW Capital Improvement Buildings total FY 20/21 proposed expenditure is $115,000 which includes heating and cooling system replacement and /or upgrade at the Senior Center; replace two roof top units at the Finance Dept Annex Building; roof replacement at the New Firehouse apparatus bays, new tables and chairs in the Town Hall Conference Room, and Building and a small Land Use office renovation.

The b ridge on Hop River Bridge proposed expenditure includes the allotted $46,000 for 2019 to 2023. This includes the engineering for the rehab of the bridge. The total cost is estimated to be $3,000,000. The Federal Bridge program pays 80%, the Towns pay 20%. Coventry to pay 69.56% and Columbia to pay 30.44% ($182,640).

Future projects include the culvert bridge on Latham Hill. Future projected costs are $350,000 to $450,000.

The bridge on Roses Bridge Rd. is pending final invoicing in 18/19. As of 1/29/19, the state has not completed the sign-off on the bridge project. The balance in capital will be carried forward to 19/20.

Hazardous Tree Removal FY 20/21 proposed budget is $100,000. This was at $25,000 this year, but through the General Fund we have added another $75,000 this year.

Senior Center Furnishings & Kitchen proposed FY 20/21 capital budget is $11,500. This includes desks for 2 Dispatchers & the Director, ice maker, handicap bathroom doors and commercial oven range.

Columbia Volunteer Fire Department (CVFD) is on 3rd installment for the replacement of Rescue 105. The CVFD has received quotes on leasing $150,000 that we are short that was not budgeted. CVFD will discuss at the next budget workshop.

M. Walter explained that we went up 1.21% on the Grand List or $5,930,042 increase in assessed value.

**6.2 Recreation Director and Recreation Commission will be available for questions concerning their budget:**

M. Volza explained that the capital request for $100,000 includes a new maintenance building because the Public Works crew does not have adequate storage for the equipment used for Rec Park. This new building would allow for a centralized location that serves the purpose now and in the future. M. Volza explained that they would like to replace the concession stand in the future and he noted that the building will need to be ADA assessable.

M. Volza stated that the $55,000 for the playscape includes a ADA component slide for children with Cochlear Implants. He explained that when a child slides down a plastic slide, static electricity is generated. When the static electricity builds up there is an Electrostatic Discharge that can, in rare cases, affect the external transmitter of a Cochlear Implant.

M. Volza explained that the site prep of $5,000 includes signs and fencing around construction area.

The request for $35,000 for the Pavilion was moved to FY 20/21 because the original budgeted expenditure was re-allocated to resurface the tennis court and replace the basketball courts. The Pavilion is slated to be built behind the playground structure.

M. Volza explained that the Bocce court would replace the small portion of exiting parking lot between playscape and softball field. The old swing set and metal jungle gym will be taken out.

Bryan Tarbell, 113 West St. commented that the fields at Rec Park are kept in great shape and he stated that it makes sense to have a new maintenance building that is easily assessable and convenient for the Public Works crew. He expressed concern that if the jungle gym was taken out that something should replace that since kids really enjoy climbing. He stated that the Bocce Court is great for adults, but maybe kids would not like it.

M. Volza responded that the existing units/playground have other options to add climbing structures that would be a safer alternative to the metal jungle gym. He stated that there is a "mega tower" that you can change the pieces out, allowing for different climbing units with a sequence of towers

R. Hellstrom acknowledged two residents who wished to speak.

Brian Pederson, 211 Rte. 66 stated that the Rec Park improvements have gained momentum and implored that the Town keep going with the funding to continue the momentum.

Christine Sposito, 62 Doubleday Rd. stated that the playscape was cut last year and the Pavilion had to be put off. She stated that she is in support of additional funding for the Rec Park improvements and recoup the money that was cut.

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

**8. APPOINTMENTS / RESIGNATIONS:**

**8.1 Approval to Appoint Leslie Brand to the Szegda Farm Committee.** R. Hellstrom MOVED to Add Leslie Brand to the Szegda Farm Committee. MOTION CARRIED 4.0.

**8.2 Approval to Re-Appoint Mark Walter to the Eastern Highland Health District Board.** R. Hellstrom MOVED to Re-appoint Mark Walter to the Eastern Highland Health District Board. MOTION CARRIED 4.0.

**9. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:**

**9.1 Eversource Notification –** Overview of 2020 Transmission Line Work in Columbia. M. Walter explained that Eversource sent the Town a notification that Eversource will be conducting various activities associated with transmission line maintenance in CT throughout the year. He explained that Eversource may also reach out to talk with property owners in Columbia about topics such as securing off-right-of-way access on their properties.

**9.2 CIRMA Award:** M. Walter explained that the Town received an award for Excellence in Risk Management with a $2,500 grant.

**10. CORRESPONDENCE:**

**10.1 Town of Columbia Audited Financial Statement**

**10.2 CCM 2019 Annual Report**

**10.3 Article in The Chronicle "Columbia to vote on park expansion and funding for the removal of trees"**

**10.4 Article in The Chronicle "Columbia Oks high school contract"**

**10.5 Article in The Chronicle "Columbia woman deeply involved in town"**

**10.6 Article in The Chronicle "Exhibit shows beauty of peace"**

**11. BUDGET:**

**11.1 Transfers:** L. Napolitano MOVED to Approve Transfers Totaling $138.00.

| TRANSFER #/AMOUNT | FROM A/C# DESCRIPTION | TO A/C# DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|---|
| 2020-015/138.00 | 10-4112-130/Legal Notices | 10-4560-130/Legal Notices |

MOTION CARRIED 4.0.

**11.2 Refunds: L. Napolitano MOVED to Approve Refunds Totaling $372.45**

| AMOUNT | FROM | TO |
|---|---|---|
| $200.73 | TOWN OF COLUMBIA | Cab East LLC |
| $171.72 | TOWN OF COLUMBIA | Cab East LLC |

MOTION CARRIED 4.0.

**12. APPROVE PAYMENT OF BILLS**: L. Napolitano MOVED to Approve the Payment of Bills Totaling $61,451.97 consisting of 2019-2020 Emergency, 2019-2020 Regular, Credit Card and Paychex. MOTION CARRIED 4.0.

**13. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** Christine Sposito, 63 Doubleday Rd. stated that she is in support of the Columbia Volunteer Firehouse request for the new reserve truck.

**14. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:** L. Napolitano suggested the Town look to see if we can share lake testing equipment with nearby towns.

**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).** None.

**16. ADJOURNMENT:** R. Hellstrom MOVED to Adjourn at 8:00 pm. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSILY.

Respectfully Submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie

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**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**
**COLUMBIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN**
**Tuesday, January 21, 2020 – Immediately Following Special Town Meeting**
**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, 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 add to the Agenda under Town Administrators Report 9.7, Proclamation for Karl Then. MOTION CARRIED 5.0. S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Agenda as Amended. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**:

**3.1 BOS Meeting Minutes for January 7, 2020.** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Minutes for January 7, 2019. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

**4. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** None

**5. OLD BUSINESS:** None

**6. NEW BUSINESS:**

**6.1 Discussion regarding which Town Departments should be invited to review their respective budgets at the next BOS Budget Workshops on 2/4/20, 2/11/20 & 2/18/20 (tentative).** S. Everett stated we will schedule 2 or 3 departments to present their budgets at each meeting. He stated that we will keep the BOS updated on when those departments will present. He stated that tentatively the BOS may have a meeting on 2/11/20.

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

**7.1 Application of Chris and Lynn Connaughty for replacement of a dock at 36 Erdoni Rd.** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the application to Chris and Lynn Connaughty at 36 Erdoni Rd. upon the recommendations set forth by LMAC; subject to necessary approvals by Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission and obtaining building permits. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

**7.2 Application of Stephen and Louise Cooke for the replacement of a dock at 112 Route 87.** W. O'Brien MOVED to Approve the application to Stephen and Louise Cooke at 112 Route 87 upon the recommendations set forth by LMAC; subject to necessary approvals by Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission and obtaining building permits. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

**7.3 Application of Robert Sullivan to replace an existing stone seawall and two existing wooden docks at 7 Nuhfer Dr.** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the application to Robert Sullivan at 7 Nuhfer Dr. upon the recommendations set forth by LMAC; subject to necessary approvals by

Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission and obtaining building permits. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

**8. APPOINTMENTS / RESIGNATIONS:**

**8.1 Approval to Appoint Jack Dooley to the Youth Services Committee.** W. O'Brien stated he is pleased that Jack Dooley will be joining the Youth Services Committee and asked the BOS to approve his application W. O'Brien MOVED to Appoint Jack Dooley to the Youth Services Committee. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

**9. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:**

**9.1 Social Worker Update.** M. Walter stated that he has been working with Bernadette Derring, Senior Center Director on a job description for a social worker. He stated that he that he met with the Hunger Action Team and Teresa Giordano, Executive of AHM and he was told that Marlborough has the same interest in hiring a social worker. He said that he and B. Derring will be meeting with AHM and Marlborough to discuss having a social worker employed under AHM that would service both Columbia and Marlborough. L. Napolitano asked if we could contract with an independent social worker. S. Everett stated that this is something we are looking into as well.

**9.2 Solar Analysis Update.** M. Walter stated he is working with Adam Teff of Greenskies on the solar analysis and ran the software product that looks at the lifetime production of the solar panels. The graph indicates the lifetime kWh production from the arrays. The cost of the solar on the town buildings has been $0 because those arrays were purchased with a grant. The school's arrays have only been on for about a year, with a savings of $14,080.50. He stated that the school is showing a savings of over 50% a year. He stated that he will continue to monitor the solar analysis.

**9.3 Rec Park Update.** M. Walter said there has been a lot of progress on the road in Rec Park and it is half-way done. He stated that Public Works has used some of the stones to help build a stonewall to help reduce cost for guard rails.

**9.4 Jacob Osborne Transfer Station Attendant.** M. Walter notified the BOS of 3 new part-time employees.

**9.5 Nicole Morey Recreation Department Assistant.**

**9.6 Stephen Pulaski Part-time Plow Driver.**

**9.7 Proclamation for Karl Then.** S. Everett stated that LMAC had asked the BOS to sign a Proclamation of enduring gratitude for Karl Then. He said that Karl loved Columbia and loved the lake. S. Everett MOVED that we have a proclamation of enduring gratitude to present to his family at a later date. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

**10. CORRESPONDENCE:**

**10.1** CT State Trooper Monthly Report for December 2019.

**10.2** Article in *Journal Inquirer* "100th foundation fixed; new applications accepted beginning Monday."

**10.3** Article in *The Chronicle* "Senior center expands van service."

**10.4** Article in *The Chronicle* "Tourism district looks for town reps."

**11. BUDGET:**

**11.1 Transfers:** None.

**11.2** **Refunds:** S. Everett MOVED to refund 32.32 to Ryan Duffy.

| AMOUNT | FROM | TO |
|---|---|---|
| $32.32 | TOWN OF COLUMBIA | RYAN J. DUFFY |

MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

**12.** **APPROVE PAYMENT OF BILLS:** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Payment of Bills totaling $56,438.74, consisting of 2019-2020 Emergency, 2019-2020 Regular, Credit Card and Paychex. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

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

**14.** **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:** W. O'Brien asked where we were at with the dedication to Lou Scotti in the Annual Report. J. LaVoie stated that the draft is being prepared and will be ready for final edits shortly. L. Napolitano asked that the Agenda and supporting documents be sent to BOS at least 24 hours before the meeting.

**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).** None.

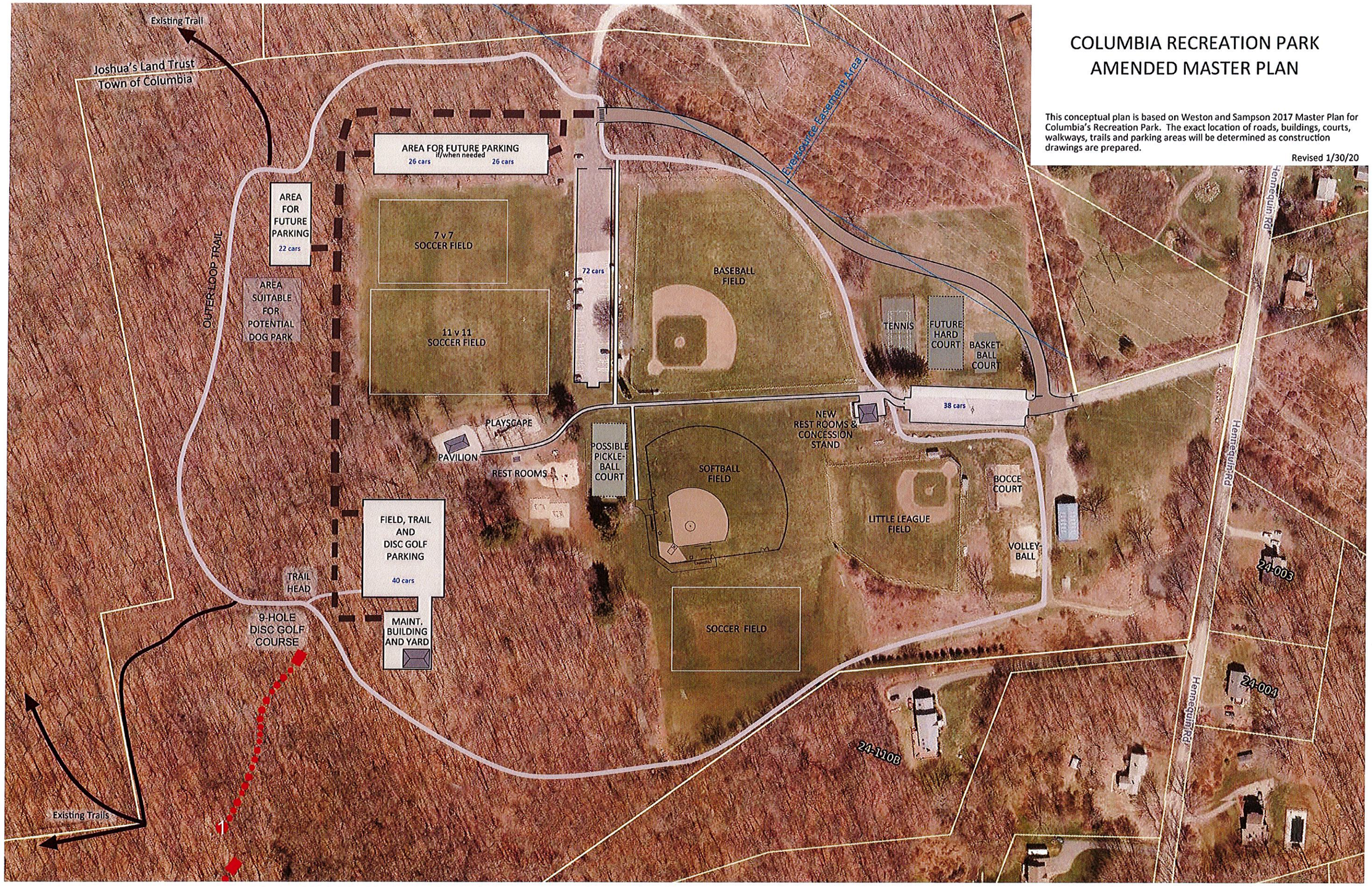
**16.** **ADJOURNMENT:** S. Everett MOVED to Adjourn at 7:36 pm. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

Respectfully Submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie

# COLUMBIA RECREATION PARK
# AMENDED MASTER PLAN

This conceptual plan is based on Weston and Sampson 2017 Master Plan for Columbia's Recreation Park. The exact location of roads, buildings, courts, walkways, trails and parking areas will be determined as construction drawings are prepared.

Revised 1/30/20



## Jennifer LaVoie

**From:** Bandzes, Patricia C <patricia.bandzes@eversource.com>
**Sent:** Thursday, January 30, 2020 10:32 AM
**To:** Town Administrator; Steven Everett; George Murphy; Jennifer LaVoie
**Subject:** Eversource Notification - Overview of 2020 Transmission Line Work - Columbia

Dear Columbia officials,

As part of our everyday effort to deliver reliable energy to our customers and communities, Eversource and our approved contractors will be conducting various activities associated with transmission line maintenance in Connecticut throughout the year. Work will take place within Eversource's existing rights-of-way (powerline corridors) and on Eversource-owned property. Maintaining infrastructure is one of the many ways Eversource supports the safe and secure transmission of electricity throughout the region.

Eversource will also be continuing its inspections of existing transmission structures, both by foot and utilizing drone patrols.

For larger undertakings including structure replacement or potential vegetation management projects, we will follow-up with you to provide more detailed project schedules and specific locations. Additionally, as is our practice for these larger projects, we will be communicating with nearby property owners and performing door-to-door outreach ahead of any construction activities.

Our work hours will typically be Monday through Sunday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Please note that these work activities will not interrupt electric service to homes or businesses.

As part of these ongoing efforts, we may also be speaking with property owners in your community about topics such as securing off-right-of-way access on their properties. If anyone calls you with questions about any Eversource transmission line work, please let us know and we will follow up promptly.

Lastly, we also have our dedicated Project Hotline Number (1-800-793-2202) and email address (ProjectInfo@eversource.com) that is always available for any project-related inquiries.

On behalf of Eversource, we look forward to our continued partnership as we work in your community. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Pat

**Patricia C. Bandzes**
Community Relations and Economic Development-Connecticut | Eversource Energy
22 East High Street, East Hampton, CT 06424 | ☎ 860-267-3861 (office) | ☎ 860-777-5685(cell)
✉ patricia.bandzes@eversource.com □ www.eversource.com

**Report electric power outages: CT: 1-800-286-2000**
**Report gas odors in CT: 1-877-944-5325 or 911**

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# TOWN OF COLUMBIA

## ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

323 Jonathan Trumbull Highway
Columbia, Connecticut 06237

Mary F. Lavallee, CCMA II
(860) 228-9555
(860) 228-2335 Fax
Email:mlavallee@columbiact.org

Mon., Tues., Wed. .8:00 am to 4:00 pm
Thursday .8:00 am to 6:00 pm
Friday .8:00 am to Noon

January 30, 2020

Steven Everett, First Selectman
Mark Walter, Town Administrator
Beverly Ciurylo, Fiscal Manager
Town of Columbia

Enclosed are the final Grand List figures for October 1, 2019. I have also included a chart illustrating the percentage of Residential and Commercial Real Estate, Personal Property and Motor Vehicles comprising the list.

A comparison of the 2018 and 2019 Grand Lists and a list of the top ten taxpayers for Real Estate, Personal Property and Motor Vehicles are also included for your review.

Sincerely,

Mary Lavallee

Mary F. Lavallee, CCMA II
Assessor

# TOWN OF COLUMBIA

## ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

323 Jonathan Trumbull Highway
Columbia, Connecticut 06237

Mary F. Lavallee, CCMA II
(860) 228-9555
(860) 228-2335 Fax
Email:mlavallee@columbiactorg

Mon., Tues., Wed. -8:00 am to 4:00 pm
Thursday -8:00 am to 6:00 pm
Friday -8:00 am to Noon

GRAND LIST OF 2019

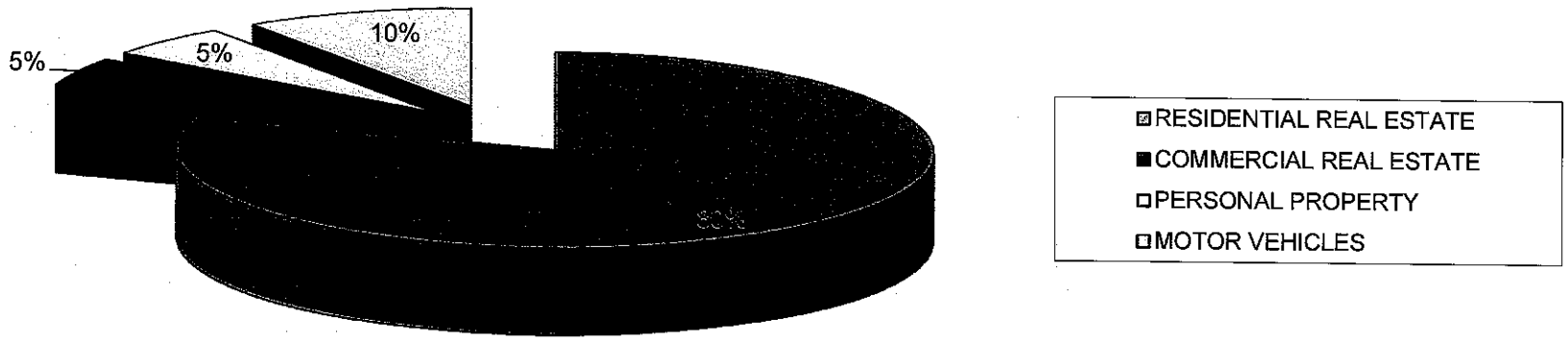
| | |
|---|---|
| REALTY | $ 414,042,910 |
| PERSONAL PROPERTY | $ 26,912,733 |
| MOTOR VEHICLES | $ 48,751,810 |
| (Prior to Elderly and Board of Assessment Appeals) | $ 489,707,453 |
| ELDERLY | |
| Freeze | 0 |
| Circuit Breaker | $ 8,230,340 |
| | $ 497,937,793 |
| WOODLAND (10 MILLS) | $ 10,660 |
| 2019 NET GRAND LIST | $ 497,948,453 |
| 2018 NET GRAND LIST | $ 492,018,411 |
| INCREASE IN ASSESSED VALUE | $5,930,042 |
| PERCENTAGE INCREASE | 1.21% |

Mary Lavallee

Mary F. Lavallee, CCMA II
Assessor 1/30/2020

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Motor Vehicles** | | |
| | **Number** | **Gross** | | **Net** |
| **Grand List** | **Accounts** | **Asmt** | **Exemptions** | **Asmt** |
| | | | | |
| 2019 | 6424 | $49,059,080 | $307,270 | $48,751,810 |
| | | | | |
| 2018 | 6379 | $47,090,906 | $711,090 | $46,379,816 |
| | | | | |
| **Difference** | 45 | $1,968,174 | -$403,820 | $2,371,994 |
| | | | | |
| **Percent Change** | 0.70% | 4.01% | -131.42% | 4.87% |
| | | | | |
| | | **Personal Property** | | |
| | **Number** | **Gross** | | **Net** |
| **Grand List** | **Accounts** | **Asmt** | **Exemptions** | **Asmt** |
| | | | | |
| 2019 | 345 | $31,236,053 | $4,323,320 | $26,912,733 |
| | | | | |
| 2018 | 374 | $29,764,775 | $5,480,110 | $24,284,665 |
| | | | | |
| **Difference** | -29 | $1,471,278 | -$1,156,790 | $2,628,068 |
| | | | | |
| **Percent Change** | -7.75% | 4.94% | -21.11% | 10.82% |
| | | | | |
| | | **Real Estate** | | |
| | **Number** | **Gross** | | **Net** |
| **Grand List** | **Accounts** | **Asmt** | **Exemptions** | **Asmt** |
| | | | | |
| 2019 | 2626 | $453,399,010 | $31,115,100 | $422,283,910 |
| | | | | |
| 2018 | 2620 | $451,884,230 | $30,530,300 | $421,353,930 |
| | | | | |
| **Difference** | 6 | $1,514,780 | $584,800 | $929,980 |
| | | | | |
| **Percent Change** | 0.23% | 0.34% | 1.92% | 0.22% |
| | | | | |
| Net GL 2019 | $497,948,453 | | | |
| Net GL 2018 | $492,018,411 | | | |
| | | | | |
| **Total Asmt Increase** | $5,930,042 | | | |
| | | | | |
| Motor Vehicle | $2,371,994 | | | |
| | | | | |
| Personal Property | $2,628,068 | | | |
| | | | | |
| Real Estate | $929,980 | | | |
| | | | | |
| Total | $5,930,042 | | | |
| | | | | |
| Total Net Increase | $5,930,042 | | | |
| **Percent Increase** | **1.21%** | | | |

# GRAND LIST 10/1/19



GROSS TOP 10 TAXPAYER ACCOUNTS FOR TOWN OF COLUMBIA LEVY YEAR : 2019 DATE : 01/29/2020 DISTRICT : TO PAGE : 1

| NAME | ASSESSMENT | # ACCOUNTS | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **REAL ESTATE** | | | |
| DNB LLC | 2,065,400 | 2 | |
| STORAGE PROS COLUMBIA LLC | 1,964,600 | 1 | |
| TOURGATE REALTY INC | 1,410,200 | 2 | |
| ANGELIDES MICHAEL J & SUSAN H | 1,345,900 | 3 | |
| OSWA LLC | 1,145,900 | 3 | |
| ENGLERT ALICE M TRUSTEE | 1,040,500 | 4 | |
| CORNERSTONE OF COLUMBIA LLC | 994,800 | 2 | |
| KASICA GENE | 861,030 | 6 | |
| ACADIA HOUSING INC | 860,900 | 1 | |
| COMMERCE DRIVE INVESTMENTS LLC | 832,100 | 3 | |
| | 12,521,330 | 27 | |
| **PERSONAL PROPERTY** | | | |
| CONNECTICUT LIGHT AND POWER CO | 19,377,170 | 1 | |
| COLUMBIA MANUFACTURING INC | 3,450,900 | 1 | |
| EA PATTON COMPANY | 1,560,200 | 1 | |
| ALGONQUIN GAS TRANSMISSION CO | 691,140 | 1 | |
| HAWK INTEGRATED PLASTICS LLC | 512,620 | 1 | |
| COLUMBIA FORD INC | 476,130 | 1 | |
| JOHNS SCRAP METAL REMOVAL | 340,510 | 1 | |
| SPRINT SPECTRUM LP | 296,620 | 2 | |
| CELLCO PARTNERSHIP | 193,740 | 2 | |
| GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY | 182,870 | 1 | |
| | 27,081,900 | 12 | |
| **MOTOR VEHICLE** | | | |
| HYUNDAI LEASE TITLING TRUST | 734,240 | 50 | |
| NISSAN INFINITI LT | 619,390 | 45 | |
| JP MORGAN CHASE BANK NA | 536,360 | 32 | |
| TOYOTA LEASE TRUST | 459,560 | 26 | |
| CCAP AUTO LEASE LTD | 369,410 | 19 | |
| ACAR LEASING LTD | 335,620 | 16 | |
| HONDA LEASE TRUST | 313,920 | 19 | |
| C WARD ELECTRIC LLC | 287,100 | 12 | |
| SCHATZ TRANSPORT INC | 235,390 | 15 | |
| M AND J BUS INC | 231,980 | 9 | |
| | 4,122,970 | 243 | |
| **COMBINED TOP 10 TAXPAYER** | | | |
| CONNECTICUT LIGHT AND POWER CO | 19,377,170 | 1 | P |
| COLUMBIA MANUFACTURING INC | 3,476,470 | 3 | P M |
| DNB LLC | 2,065,400 | 2 | R |
| STORAGE PROS COLUMBIA LLC | 1,976,100 | 2 | R P |
| EA PATTON COMPANY | 1,560,200 | 1 | P |
| TOURGATE REALTY INC | 1,410,200 | 2 | R |
| ANGELIDES MICHAEL J & SUSAN H | 1,345,900 | 3 | R |
| OSWA LLC | 1,145,900 | 3 | R |
| ENGLERT ALICE M TRUSTEE | 1,040,500 | 4 | R |
| CORNERSTONE OF COLUMBIA LLC | 994,800 | 2 | R |
| | 34,392,640 | 23 | |

# CCM 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

# WE'RE ALL IN CT

Connecticut Conference of Municipalities

# 2019 CCM Board of Directors

**Neil O'Leary**, Mayor of Waterbury, was CCM's 2018 President. Mayor O'Leary joined the Waterbury Police Department in 1980 and rose through the ranks, becoming Chief of Police in 2004. Chief O'Leary served in that role until his retirement in 2009.

Following his retirement, he was recruited by the town of Wolcott, Connecticut to serve as Police Chief to help rebuild the management structure and modernize the department. In 2011, O'Leary stepped down from this role to successfully run for Mayor of the City of Waterbury, taking office in December 2011.

**Michael Freda,** First Selectman of North Haven , CCM 1st Vice President

**Luke A. Bronin,** Mayor of Hartford, CCM 2nd Vice President

## Directors

- **Tom Banisch**
  First Selectman of Madison
- **Robert M. Congdon**
  First Selectman of Preston
- **John A. Elsesser**
  Town Manager of Coventry
- **Joseph P. Ganim**
  Mayor of Bridgeport
- **Toni N. Harp**
  Mayor of New Haven
- **Barbara M. Henry**
  First Selectman of Roxbury
- **Catherine Iino**
  First Selectwoman of Killingworth
- **Matthew S. Knickerbocker**
  First Selectman of Bethel
- **Marcia A. Leclerc**
  Mayor of East Hartford
- **Curt Leng**
  Mayor of Hamden
- **W. Kurt Miller**
  First Selectman of Seymour
- **Rudolph P. Marconi**
  First Selectman of Ridgefield
- **Leo Paul**
  First Selectman of Litchfield
- **Brandon Robertson**
  Town Manager of Avon
- **John Salomone**
  Town Manager of Norwich
- **Scott Shanley**
  General Manager of Manchester
- **Jayme A. Stevenson**
  First Selectman of Darien
- **Erin Stewart**
  Mayor of New Britain
- **Daniel Syme**
  First Selectman of Scotland
- **Michael C. Tetreau**
  First Selectman of Fairfield
- **Mark B. Walter**
  Town Administrator of Columbia

## Past Presidents:

- **Susan S. Bransfield**
  First Selectwoman of Portland
- **Mark D. Boughton**
  Mayor of Danbury
- **Matthew B. Galligan**
  Town Manager of South Windsor
- **Herbert C. Rosenthal**
  Former First Selectman of Newtown

## Honorary Members:

- **Steven R. Werbner**
  Town Manager of Tolland

Connecticut Conference of Municipalities

collaborating for the common good

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# Welcome

**Dear Connecticut Municipal Leaders:**

CCM runs a tight ship.

After our first full year in our new Long Wharf office space, we see boats coming and going on a daily basis, and there's a lot to that old adage that applies to this organization.

CCM is the leading state-local think tank and premier local government advocate at the State Capitol, tackling issues like government finance and labor relations; our services are geared toward local government because we understand exactly what municipal leaders need; we are the number one resource on innovative ideas for municipal government.

We have advocated on the behalf of towns when it comes to the recycling crisis that has hit towns after the Chinese Sword Policy caused that market to collapse. By November, there was a Blue Ribbon Panel on Recycling looking exclusively on improving recycling efforts and lower costs.

We have fought for municipalities to keep access to their municipal gain so that all households across the state can have access to broadband internet. Access to high speed internet can increase home values and bring in businesses, and it can be a tremendous resource for our children in our public school system. With the Office of Consumer Counsel, we made that case, and won for municipalities.

Our Certified Connecticut Municipal Official (CCMO) program graduated 10 officials in 2018, the first year of the program. That number ballooned to 66 in 2019. An additional 32 municipalities received certifications from Sustainable CT, our initiative in partnership with the Institute for Sustainable Energy at Eastern Connecticut State University.

The success of these programs have inspired us. So many municipal officials want to become CCMOs because the workshops and events that CCM puts together cannot be found anywhere else. Our Sustainable CT program includes over half of Connecticut's municipalities, because a green future allows our towns and cities to save money while planning for an uncertain future.

It was in this spirit that we put together the CCM Homelessness Prevention Task Force. Modeled on Sustainable CT, we're bringing together the best solutions

from around the state to address homelessness, many of which come from our municipalities already. In this task force we want to reward the work that we have already done, and commit to seeing homelessness end in Connecticut.

This task force is in line with our mission, to make life better for every resident in the state of Connecticut.

Our Triple Crown Charity event has raised $80,000 to date for six different charities, and the success of this event is one of our proudest accomplishments.

The ideas that come from Connecticut towns and cities are innovative, groundbreaking, and ready for the future. We at CCM want those ideas shared around the state.

Our production team has printed over 3.5 million pages of relevant material to municipal officials, which includes our quarterly magazine, Connecticut Town & City. There you will find all of the hottest trends and up-to-date policy news that only we can put together.

We have utilized Social Media to spread the word about policies and important news, and we have utilized it for fun like our wildly successful participation in National City Hall Selfie Day. Every August, Engaging Local Government Leaders (ELGL) celebrates local government service by sharing the hashtag #CityHallSelfie. This year, over 30 Connecticut towns got out with their selfie sticks and shared their love of local government and honored all the dedicated employees that make our towns work.

Our podcast, The Municipal Voice, celebrated its first anniversary, with over 50,000 listens and views coming in 2019 across Facebook Live, YouTube, SoundCloud, Twitter, Apple Podcasts, and more. We have brought on municipal and state officials to talk about issues that are important to towns and cities, one of the few digital programs to discuss these topics at length.

This is our leap into the technology of the future. We used live streaming to bring Municipal Unity Week into every corner of the state, increased our digital footprint, and launched IT in a Box, which provides affordable cybersecurity, IT and helpdesk services to towns and cities.

And perhaps most importantly, we have begun the work on changing the course of Connecticut with our Commission on Property Tax Reform. This rolls all of the work we do into one task: reforming the regressive property tax with the help of experts around the country and the people who are more acutely aware of the problems associated with the property tax than anyone else — you, our members.

The reason we are so successful in these endeavors is because, in the words of First Selectmen Michael Freda of North Haven, it's always better to be advocating from an organization that's well run. He was speaking to our 2019 financial audit which delivered a clear, unqualified no-note audit report, but that is true in every facet and in every department of CCM.

Policy, Communications and Member Relations, Municipal Resource and Service Center, IT, Production, Finance, and Human Resources have celebrated successes in 2019 through the exemplary work that you've come to expect from CCM, and are listed in the pages to come.

These are just some of the reasons that we were able to reach a milestone in 2019 — 100 percent membership for the first time in our over 50 year existence.

CCM runs a tight ship, and 2019 was proof of the extraordinary work we can accomplish together as the state's largest, nonpartisan organization of municipal officials, representing towns and cities of all sizes in every corner of the state.

Let us build on those successes in 2020, and keep the ship steady and impactful.

**Neil O'Leary, Mayor of Waterbury**
**& 2019 CCM President**

**Joe DeLong, CCM Executive Director & CEO**

# Executive

For the first time in CCM's history we have reached full membership, counting all 169 towns and cities as members. It is a testament to our members that they've decided to come together and advocate as a single group. And with those numbers comes great responsibility.

Bill Rose, First Selectman of Chaplin attended our Municipal Unity Week forum in Hampton, right in the thick of the legislative session. The forums highlighted many of the concerns that CCM had going into the year such as the push to put Teacher Retirement System costs onto municipalities, and "sparked conversation as a result."

These conversations along with our Connecticut Town Liaison program allow us to really know what our members are thinking: "There is a lot of attention paid by CCM to the member towns," Rose said. And that is what makes our lobbying efforts so successful.

Lobbying is a very important aspect of our membership, as Rose said, but that's not an excuse to rest on our laurels. Without true reform, many of these unfunded mandates or the TRS obligations are "going to come back around or they're going to have to raise taxes."

Efforts like the CCM Commission on Property Tax Reform were created because CCM knows it needs to make lasting changes. And approaching the legislature with full membership gives us the weight to advocate on these important issues. "There's definitely success in unity," Rose said, "You have to keep pushing back."

**Bill Rose, First Selectman of Chaplin**

For the first time in our over 50 year history, **CCM can count all 169 CT towns and cities as members**. This tremendous milestone is based on the value that we present to all of our members, no matter their size, location, or party. Our goal is to improve the everyday life for every resident of Connecticut. In 2019, we got closer to that goal than ever before.

We understand the fiscal situation in every municipality. That is why we have not raised dues in nine of the last ten years, last raising dues 1% in 2010. In our continued quest to provide more to members with a solid and transparent budget, we have had **$311,000 Budget Surplus in FY19. This includes our office relocation costs** to our beautiful Long Wharf office space that reflects the quality of work we do.

With our greater numbers, it was important to us to bring everyone together. That's what inspired **Municipal Unity Week – concurrent regional meetings with towns during General Assembly session to discuss legislative issues.** These meetings were held in every corner of the state, allowing members to interface and come together under the banner of making gains for municipalities.

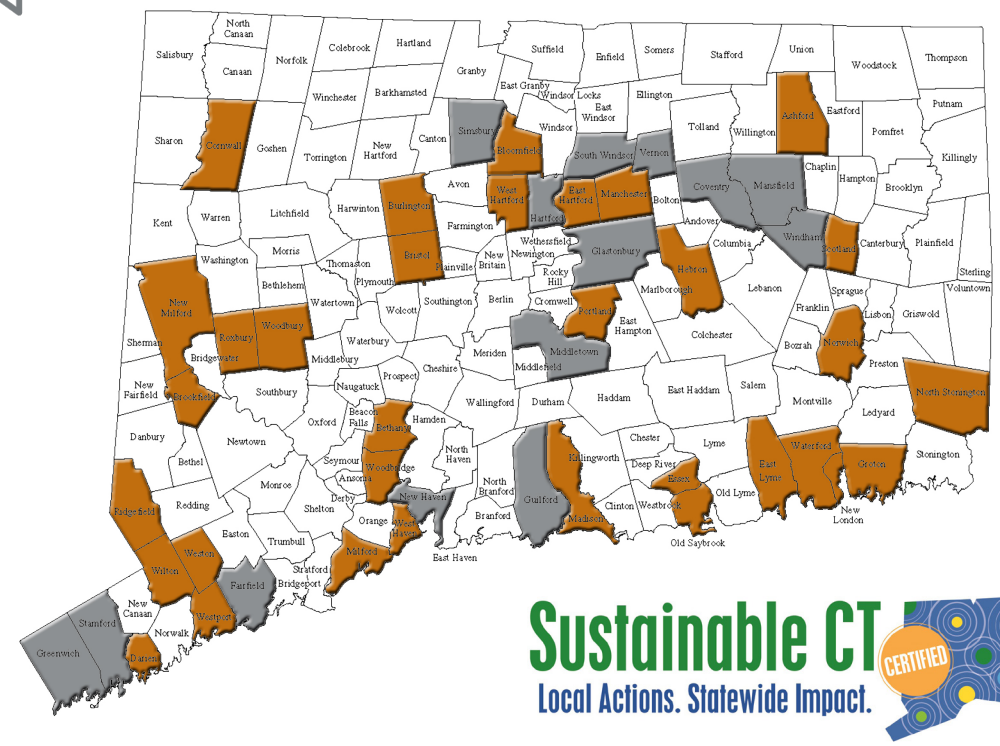
CCM's commitment to social welfare is no more apparent than our successful **CT Triple Crown Charity Event, which has raised over $80,000 for local charities.** These organizations have put their expertise to helping Veterans; supporting children with therapy, getting them into homes or allowing them to participate in summer camp; helping those struggling with addiction, to ending homelessness.

One of our banner programs is **Sustainable CT – where 32 municipalities received Bronze or Silver certification in 2019.** This program provides the framework, tools, and opportunities for grants to promote economic and environmental sustainability.

And finally, 2019 brought us the opportunity to shine new light on issues municipalities face every day. In the model of Sustainable CT, we established a **Homelessness Prevention Task Force** that will identify and share the work already being done by municipalities with the goal of ending homelessness**.**

**The Commission on Property Tax Reform** promises to be one of the most important projects we have embarked on as an organization since *This Report Is Different*. Bringing together experts in their fields and municipal leaders to reform this regressive tax has the ability to change the political and economic landscape in Connecticut for generations to come.

## Congratulations 2019 Sustainable CT Certified Communities!




Sustainable CT
Local Actions. Statewide Impact.
CERTIFIED

# Public Policy & Advocacy

This legislative session was a net positive for municipalities, thanks in no small part to the hard work of our Public Policy & Advocacy team. The slate of bills could have imposed new unfunded state mandates and the transfer of teacher pension costs onto towns and cities, but these were largely avoided.

"I believe this was a positive year for CCM and our member municipalities for many reasons," said Neil O'Leary, Mayor of Waterbury and 2019 CCM President, "We were able to avoid many unfunded mandates, and we saw a critical $116 million increase in Education Cost Sharing funding."

2019 also saw a breakthrough in the conversation surrounding a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder bill for police and fire departments. This important bill came about because union representatives and CCM members, with Mayor O'Leary at the fore, were able to come to a compromise.

"This bill was important to myself and so many. It was important that it be drafted in a fashion where a consensus could be found amongst the active stakeholders," O'Leary said. "We were able to bring municipalities, first responders, and labor to the table to pass a comprehensive bill that will make an impact for so many."

"Looking at the wrap-up from this year, it's clear that the Policy team, with the members help, were able to prevent burdensome unfunded mandates and the transfer of pension costs, and come together to spearhead transformative compromises like the PTSD bill."

**Neil O'Leary, Mayor of Waterbury; 2019 President of CCM**

Throughout 2019's long legislative session, CCM's crack policy team **effectively lobbied to maintain state aid to towns and cities.** We analyze every bill and amendment introduced in the General Assembly for its impact on municipalities, and we maintain a year round presence at the State Capitol to advocate on your behalf before the Legislature, state agencies, and the courts.

Because of these tireless efforts, CCM was able to **defeat 119 unfunded state mandate proposals.** Many of these mandates were close to passage and would have had a deleterious effect on municipal budgets. Overall, throughout the 2019 General Assembly, **we tracked 1,355 legislative proposals and provided testimony on 184 bills.**

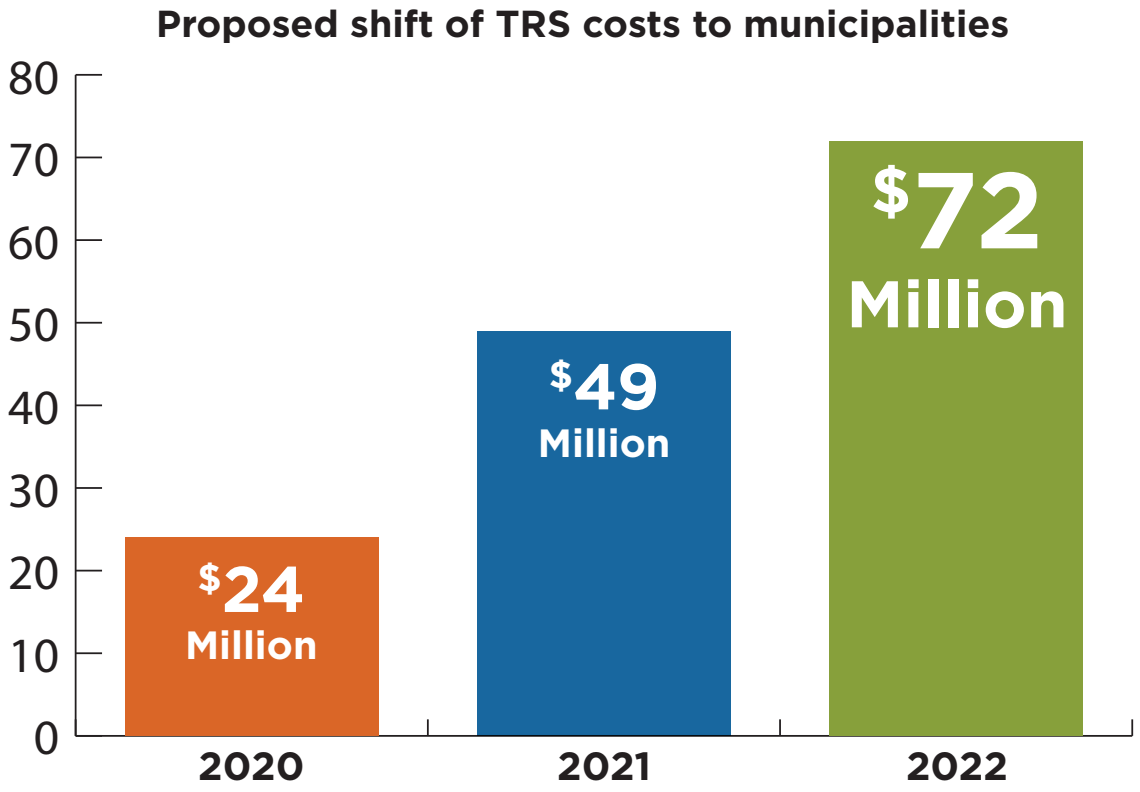
## State Legislature Wins

One example is defeating the **transfer of TRS costs onto municipalities.** This transfer would have accounted for $73 million unduly put onto towns and cities. At the same time, in the budget, there were additional funds allocated towards education, providing needed relief to local governments.

**We successfully advocated for meaningful MBR reforms.** It was expanded to allow for towns to reduce the MBR under specified conditions, which will allow those towns to achieve cost-savings. **There is still plenty of work to be done around this area, but this legislation resulted from pointed discussions with the Governor's Office, and we hope continued conversations result in more common sense decisions.**

## Win in Court

**The PURA decision to bar municipalities from using the statutory right to use the municipal gain on poles was struck down in November.** It was a great victory based on a clear, fair, and reasonable reading of state statutes. With the possibility of an appeal, CCM will keep a close eye on the issue and be ready to keep fighting for municipalities.



# Communications & Member Relations

One could hardly say it enough that the times have changed. CCM has been busy anticipating those changes in our audience and ability to tell municipal stories. The Municipal Voice, our bi-weekly podcast is the cornerstone of those efforts.

Aidee Nieves, a guest on the show said the "ripple effect" of being on a podcast that is aired on Facebook, YouTube, and elsewhere was impressive. "Small Minority Businesses and other topics we covered created a small buzz," reaching members of the Bridgeport community, including the Mayor, Economic Development director, and Bridgeport Regional Business Council (whose president was the other guest on that day).

It was a chance for Nieves to advocate on behalf of her city: "it's about bridging the gap in communication, and bringing development to our communities." And she was happy to see there was an organization that was willing to tell these stories. The Municipal Voice is one of the few places where the municipal news is "positive and helpful."

"Social media is a tool that you need to have in your toolbox," Nieves said, "and constantly have it sharpened." These outlets are integral to the successful messaging for Connecticut municipalities like Bridgeport. As the times keep changing, it'll be up to municipalities to tell their stories.

**Aidee Nieves, City Council President, Bridgeport**

Our communications department was as busy as ever getting out the news important to municipalities, **distributing over 50 news releases and op-eds, resulting in over 200 news articles on CCM and Connecticut towns and cities in 2019.** These ranged from highlighting the recycling issue to breaking down the employee pension problem to the Connecticut reader, advocating for municipalities at every step of the way.

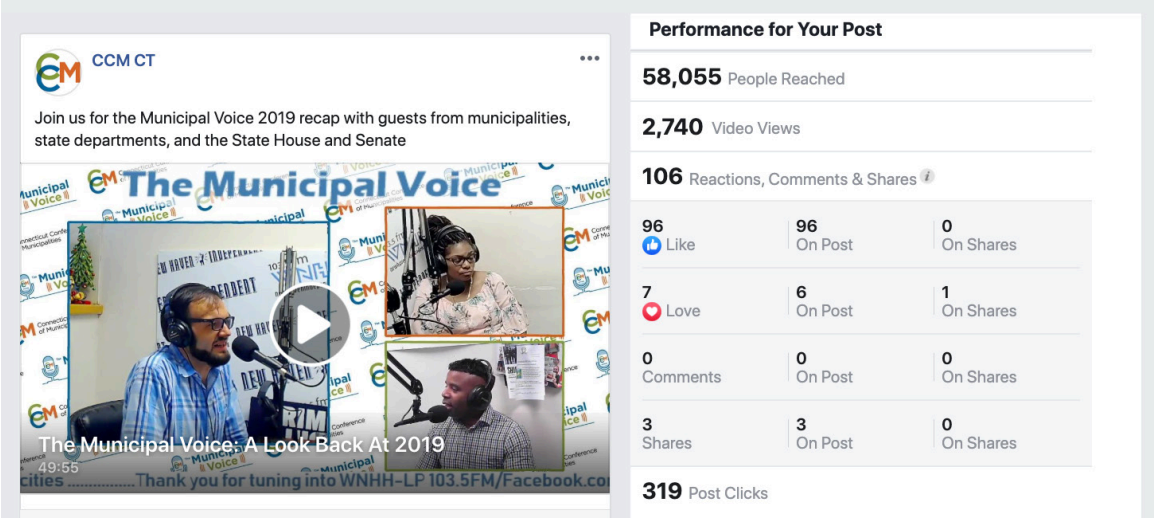
CCM launched **The Municipal Voice** at the end of 2018, and celebrated the first anniversary in 2019. Over the 26 episodes this year, **we had over 50,000 viewers across platforms like Facebook Live, YouTube, SoundCloud, and Apple Podcasts.** Our guests brought their unique municipal perspective to the forefront, and an additional news article on the New Haven Independent's website is posted after every show.

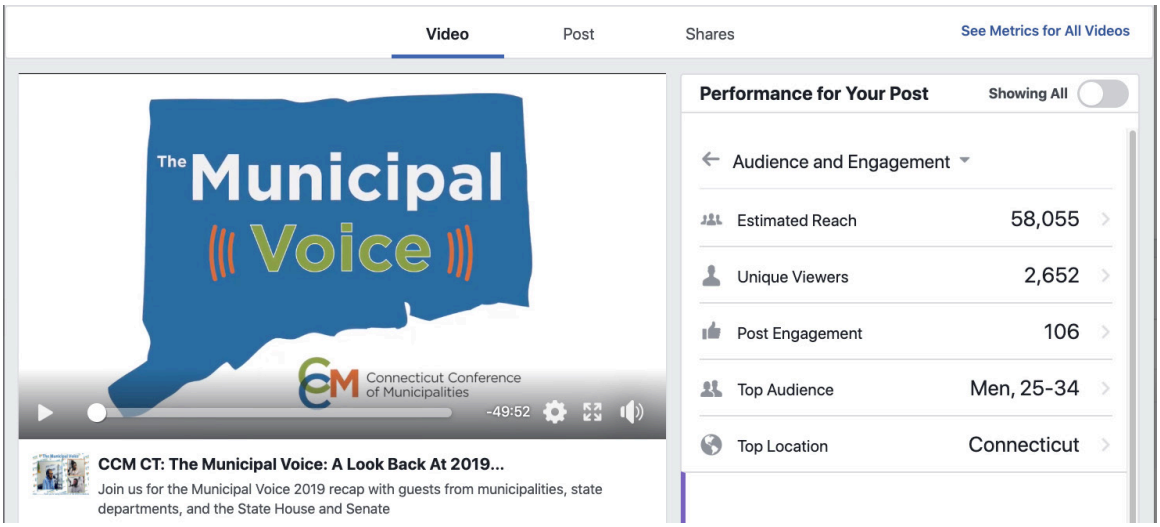
**Our quarterly CT&C magazine and our twice yearly Innovative Ideas** compendium are your number one resource for municipal innovation, policy news, and membership highlights**.** We cover local municipal news issues that others don't because our audience of **over 5,000 local and state officials** demands it.

With **CCM Chats,** we expanded our conversations with local leaders**, highlighting our local town and city parks in one series with our summer intern.**

Adopting new technologies to enhance our message is something we are extremely proud of. **We provided streaming services for CCM annual legislative wrap-up audio conference viewed by over 150 local leaders, utilized video conferencing in our task forces, and livestreamed from the 2019 CCM convention.** This increases our reach and gives access to our resources to people who couldn't make it.

**The CCM Town Liaison program** is one of the most essential services we offer **— providing a single CCM contact for each of the 169 CCM member towns and at least one town hall visit per year.** Our town visits are great opportunities for us to find out what's important to you.



# Municipal Resource & Service Center - Research & Labor Relations

No one knows municipalities quite like CCM does. With the knowledge and expertise of our employees and municipal officials, our Research & Labor Relations team gets you the information that you need to know. As First Selectman Matt Knickerbocker puts it, CCM in that regard is a real lifesaver.

In his experience, the town of Bethel has put in research requests for many different areas: roles and responsibilities of board of finance, how to orient newly elected officials, charter changes, input on ordinances and policies.

This includes using the salary survey, which he says “has gotten a lot more sophisticated over the last couple of years.” The ability to compare apples to apples, salary benchmarking, and employee job descriptions from similar size towns is important. An employee with the exact same title might have completely different roles in different towns, so that attention to detail is essential.

“We rely on CCM very heavily. We’ve looked at private sector job descriptions, but there is no direct comparison. There is no other place you can turn to for that kind of comprehensive information other than CCM.”

Our team knows where to go to get the data that municipalities need. As First Selectman Knickerbocker says, “CCM is the expert source of municipal information.”

**Matt Knickerbocker, First Selectman of Bethel**

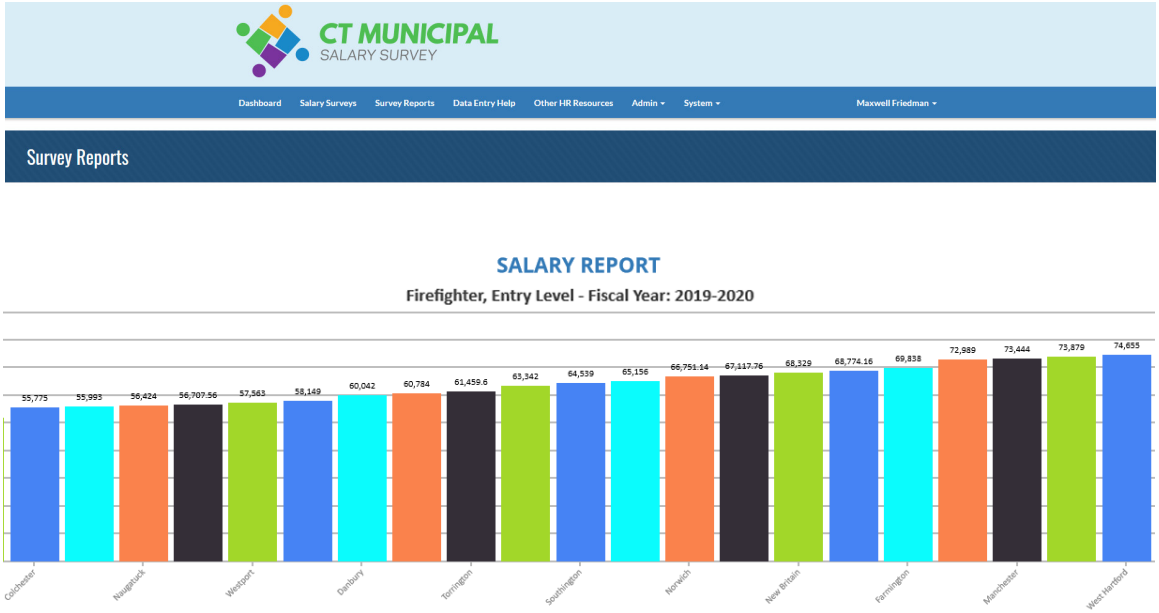
The Research and Labor Relations staff **provided timely answers to more than 700 information requests from municipal officials free.** These ranged from zoning to salaries providing information that if could be found elsewhere, would be very costly.

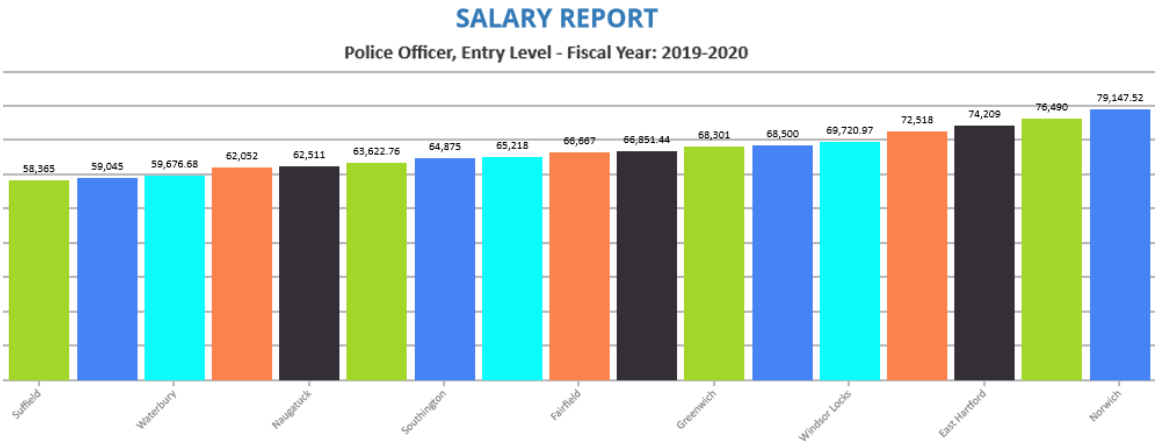
**CCM provides up-to-date and town-specific budget information on key points during General Assembly sessions.** This is a critical part of CCM's services. We keep you up to date on municipal aid, the impact of new legislation, trends in municipal finance, and more.

One of the most valuable resources we have is the **Annual Salary Survey created in conjunction with Capitol Region Council of Governments.** The online database tracks over 40 municipal positions and **is an important tool for hiring and labor negotiations.**

**The Municipal Labor Relations Data Reporter that CCM distributes monthly provides updates on labor relations trends and new binding interest arbitration decisions.** It is the only publication of its kind in Connecticut, with an up-to-date account of all interest arbitration awards, recent contract settlements and changes, ability-to-pay information by labor market area, consumer price index information, and timely news articles on the latest trends and developments in labor and employment law.

**CCM's annual MERA Manual, is a must-have reference tool for municipal labor relations.** Beginning with the law's enactment in 1965, it interprets the Municipal Employee Labor Relations Act from origin, development, and current status of every important topic.



# Municipal Resource & Service Center - Events, Training & Programs

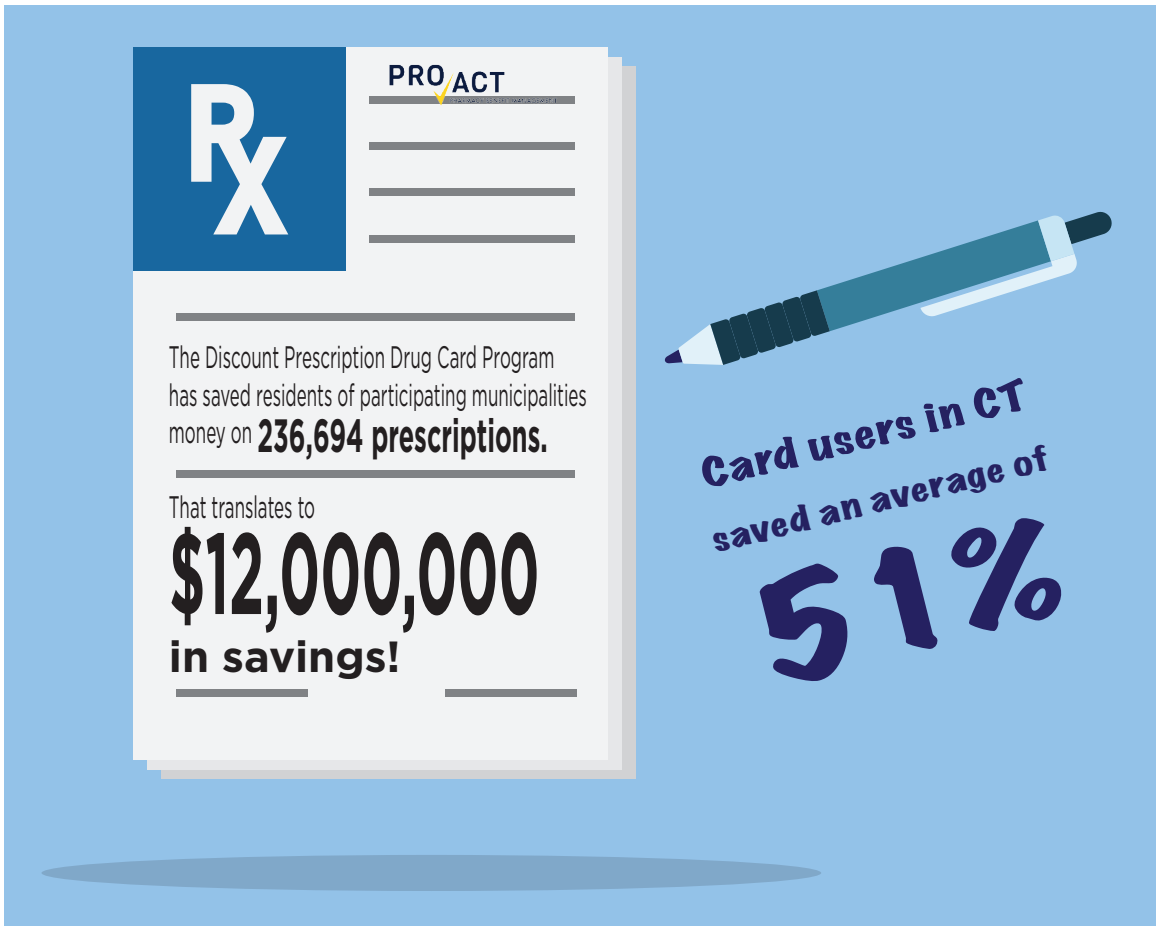
Very little connects municipal leaders other than the desire to serve their town. Some come from within government, some come from business, and others are life-long residents with a vision for their hometown. But being an elected official is a lot to take on, needing near expertise in many different areas. CCM created the Certified Connecticut Municipal Official (CCMO) program with this idea in mind.

First Selectman Paula Cofrancesco of Bethany immediately saw the value in the program. "As a newly elected official, you get all these emails, you become a member of organizations like CCM, and I felt participating in the CCMO program would help me do my job," she said. "The sooner I jumped in, the sooner I could learn the different aspects of the job and do it better."

The program is set up for officials to be able to soak in as much as possible. Though Cofrancesco just took office in July, she was already over halfway done with her certification by the end of the year. And one of the added benefits for her is the opportunity to network with representatives from other municipalities: "You go to some of these other events and workshops, and now you know people, so you aren't going in cold."

Municipal leadership is a "different dynamic," as she put it, than nearly any other job, and the CCMO program gives you the hands-on training that will help first-time CEOs or career municipal officials, learn, bring new information to their jobs, and enhance their abilities to serve their town.

**Paula Cofrancesco, First Selectman of Bethany**




The phrase last but not least applies to our **2019 CCM Convention,** which took place in December. It brought together more than 1,000 local government officials and over 150 companies and organizations for two days of educational workshops, collaborative discussions, and networking opportunities. **This year we included a special panel on the future of recreational marijuana legislation in Connecticut,** bringing together experts from Colorado and Massachusetts.

**Many of those exhibitors were Municipal Business Associates — businesses interested in preserving and investing in towns.** In 2019, there were over 70 MBAs, who partnered with us in a myriad of ways.

Our impressive list of services once again grew this year, **saving towns and cities tens of millions of dollars through money- and time-saving initiatives like IT-in-a-Box, Executive Search, Drug and Alcohol Testing Consortium, Fraud HL, StreetScan, and our energy programs.** Connecticut municipalities are not one-size-fits-all, and the wide array of offerings allows municipalities to choose what is right for them.

When we did a survey of our members this past year, our workshops came out with top marks. **We provided almost 60 free trainings for more than 2,400 municipal officials in 2019,** including a popular workshop on Microsoft Excel that had to be repeated several times because we kept reaching capacity.

Because our workshops are so popular, it's no surprise that this year's **Certified Connecticut Municipal Official (CCMO) Program had 66 municipal officials graduating at our annual convention** — a nearly 800% growth year over year. With direction from Trinity College, the CCMO program is the only program that offers comprehensive professional development for municipal officials.

**The Municipal Job Bank advertised almost 300 municipal job openings and RFP/Qs for municipalities in 2019.** This included jobs all across the state, and even throughout New England. **Our Prescription Discount Card Program** was once again one of our most popular services, **giving 141 municipalities access to prescription savings for their residents**.

# Information Technology Services

It's hard to overstate the necessity of good cybersecurity training. With dozens of towns and cities across the country being hit with so-called "ransomware" attacks, having the best defenses against attacks is crucial. Our Information Technology services team has been on the leading edge, not only optimizing CCM for any kind of IT need, but going out and training members in cybersecurity workshops.

Susan Bransfield, First Selectwoman of Portland and former CCM President was at one of those workshops saying that the training was not only comprehensive, but essential. "For the town of Portland, it's crucial that being prepared includes not only having the right equipment and software in place, but also to be armed with the knowledge to recognize possible viruses, and to train staff along the way."

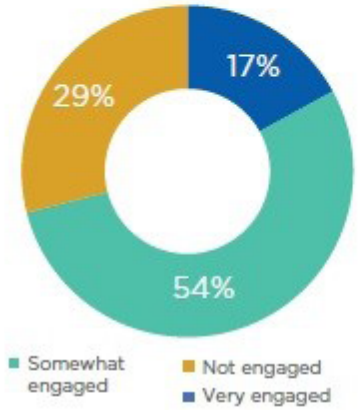
For this reason the IT department has begun roll out of IT-in-a-Box with Sophicity, offering an a la carte program of IT services like data protection, firewalls, storage and more. They bring the know-how into storing sensitive items like police camera footage or resident records, which will add to the training CCM's IT staff offers.

"This is a very sensitive area," Bransfield said, "We want to be armed with the knowledge that we are doing everything we can to prevent hackers and thieves from stealing our data or asking us to pay a ransom to gain access back to our computers." With CCM's IT team, they bring the newest and best information to towns with their trainings, and an all-around IT services program with IT-in-a-box.

**Susan Bransfield, First Selectwoman of Portland, Former President of CCM**

### HOW ENGAGED ARE YOUR LOCAL OFFICIALS IN CYBERSECURITY EFFORTS?

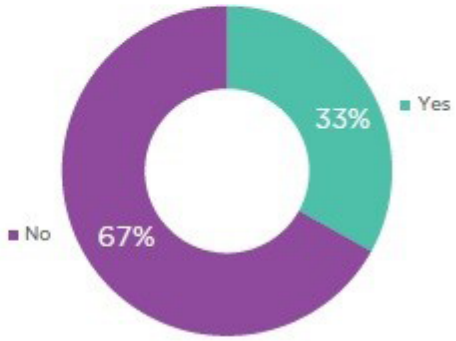
Only 17 percent of respondents say their local elected officials are very engaged in cybersecurity efforts. In fact, 29 percent admitted that they were "not engaged" at all.




### IS YOU BUDGET ADEQUATE ENOUGH TO SECURE THE NETWORK PROPERLY?

When asked if the local government's budget was adequate, 33 percent of respondents said it was high enough to secure the network properly.

Over half of those who answered the survey said that elected officials tended not to prioritize cybersecurity budgets and policy.

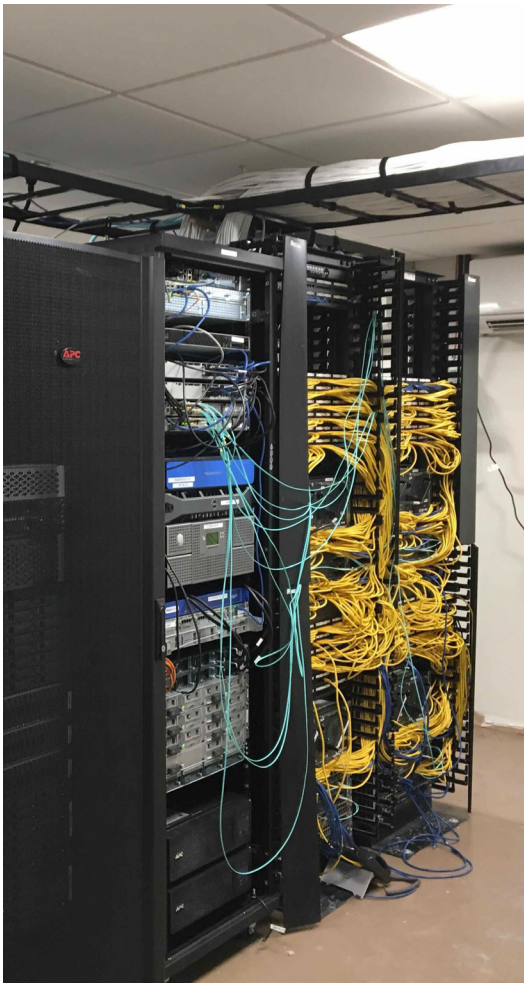



Throughout the last decade, more and more information was transferred from the physical world to the digital world, and that required a new set of tools. **IT Services built a new off-site Disaster Recovery Data Center and on-site Data Center.** This helps keep our data safe and manageable.

In large part because of our new Data Centers, our **Disaster Recovery Capability was improved from 2 days to 2 hours, over last 3 years.** Less down time means that CCM can get back to the important work of helping our municipalities.

Two of our most well attended workshops are helmed by IT staff. **They hold Member Workshops on Microsoft Excel and Cybersecurity.** In this day and age, municipal officials need to know how to use their computers safely, and CCM staff is there to guide that learning.

**We also launched "IT-in-a-Box" Program — provides affordable Cybersecurity, IT and Helpdesk services to towns and cities.** This beneficial program gives municipalities all the resources it needs to avoid ransomware attacks, to store sensitive data, and to even help with their website.



# Human Resources

With unemployment at a record low, the candidate pool is drying up, making it harder to fill position in both the public and private sector. For municipalities, when seeking to hire key executive level personnel — municipal CEOs, department heads, etc. — they understand that an exceptional leader can make a significant difference in their communities. And that is where Municipal Consulting Service – Executive Search comes into play.

From the candidate side, David McBride said that the quantity of open positions throughout the state was amazing, and that skimming through them on sites like Indeed could be overwhelming. He said the process through CCM was very effective, and that he "would encourage others to utilize the service."

No one knows the mechanics quite like the experienced Human Resources at CCM, and from the municipal and candidate side, we ensure that our service will deliver a candidate who will fit all of your community's needs.

**David McBride, Director of Finance, New London**

# Municipal Consulting Service

## & Executive Search

**Our Executive Search program** that launched this year is one of our most exciting programs because it promises to help municipalities save real money and provide expertise in an area not many private businesses could offer. **So far we have helped municipalities fill 2 management positions at discount rates,** and look forward to helping towns and cities fill their essential positions.

**The average tenure of CCM staff is 14 years,** compare that to the Bureau of Labor Statistics average of 6.8 in the public sector.

Part of the reason our employees stick around is that we understand the importance of health and other benefits. In 2019, **HR negotiated a flat renewal on employee benefits for FY 20 and realized $281,000 in employee medical premium savings through incentives.** This is important to our employees, so it is important to us.

That includes our retirement program. In 2019 **we transitioned CCM's retirement program to Empower Retirement/Morgan Stanley, which offered a more robust program with less administrative fees.** It was a no-brainer for us and the employees.

CCM Staff wore pink for one of our Festive Fridays this year to support cancer awareness.

# Finance

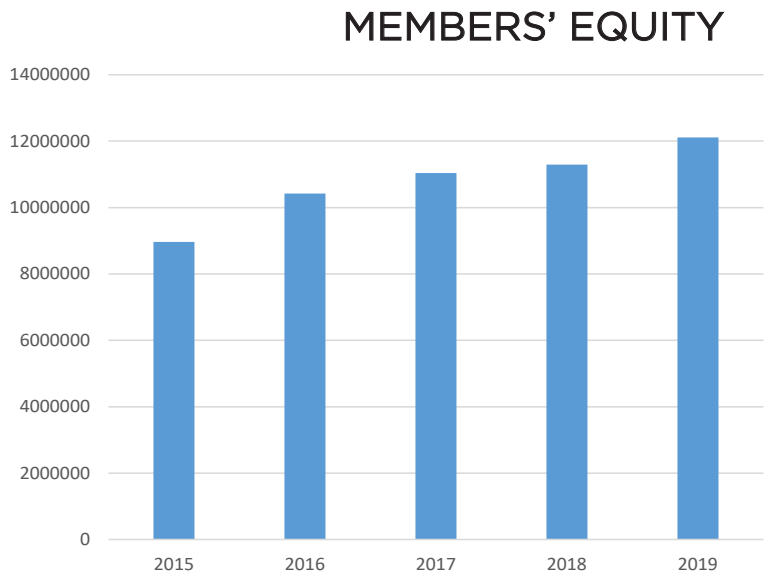
CCM's financial success is an integral part of our messaging as we speak on behalf of our member municipalities. That is something Mike Freda, First Selectman of North Haven and CCM's First Vice President noted when talking to him about the fiscal health of our organization.

Speaking to our clear, unqualified no-note audit report, he said it is the management and employees performing at very high levels that allowed us to have a net savings of revenue over expenses. Our financial health is strong and in compliance with general accounting principles, and that allows us to serve our members in a fiscally responsible manner.

"Being a member and one of the leaders of CCM, I know it's better to be in a good financial position when advocating at the capitol," He said, "the credibility is greatly enhanced when there's greater fiscal stability."

"We're tremendously cohesive, we're financially well run, and right now we are clicking at all levels of the organization," he continued, "In this coming year we will continue to focus in on using our tremendous resources, and presenting ourselves with a high level of professionalism and a high level of integrity."

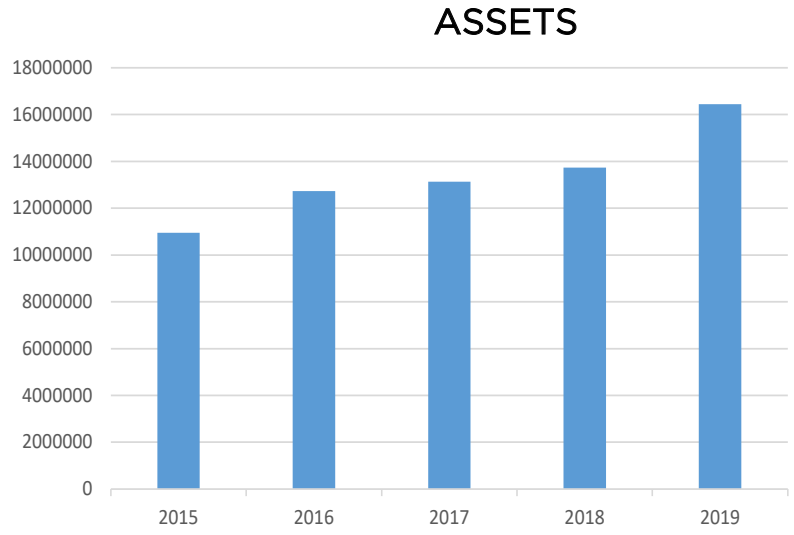
**Mike Freda, First Selectman of North Haven; 2019 CCM First Vice President**




Steady Increase in Members' Equity of 35%

$3.1 Million over the last 4 years

**Effective cash management procedures allowed CCM to maintain expenses and investments. Overall our investments saw growth of $3 million over past 4 years.**




Substantial Asset Growth Of 50%

$5.5 Million over the last 4 years

## Financial Statements 2018-19

| ASSETS | 2019 |
|---|---|
| Cash & Receivables | $2,989,451 |
| Property & Equipment | 2,844,207 |
| Investments | 10,604,716 |
| **TOTAL ASSETS** | **$16,438,374** |

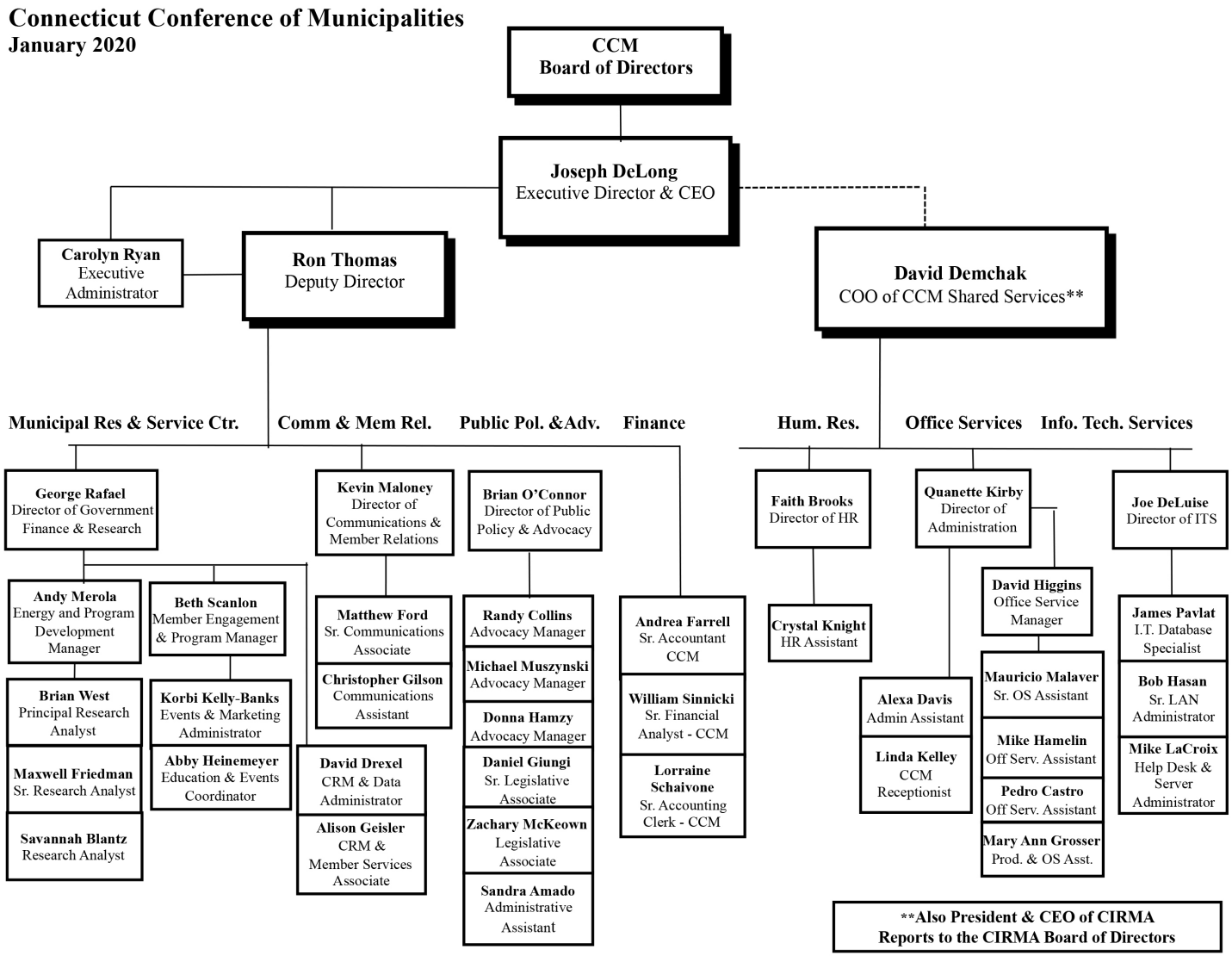
| LIABILITIES | |
|---|---|
| Current Liabilities | $2,293,106 |
| Long-Term Liabilities | 2,031,592 |
| **TOTAL LIABILITIES** | **$4,324,698** |

| | |
|---|---|
| **MEMBERS EQUITY** | **$12,113,676** |

| REVENUES | |
|---|---|
| Municipal Service Fees & Program Income | $18,961,625 |
| Investment Income | 610,185 |
| **TOTAL REVENUES** | **$19,571,810** |
| **EXPENSES** | |
| Program Services | $15,535,192 |
| Supporting Services | 3,213,773 |
| **TOTAL EXPENSES** | **$18,748,965** |
| **EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES** | **$822,845** |

Auditors, Simione, Macca & Larrow

# CCM Organizational Chart



# Columbia to vote on park expansion and funding for the removal of trees

**LISA MASSICOTTE**
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

COLUMBIA — A special town meeting Tuesday will allow taxpayers to decide on Columbia's participation in a land acquisition partnership to expand Mono Pond State Park in addition to a vote on tree removal funding.

The Columbia Board of Selectmen called for a special town meeting to take place Tuesday at 6 p.m. in Yeomans Hall, 323 Jonathan Trumbull Highway/Route 87.

Four votes will be taken, three of which address progress toward the Mono Pond State Park expansion and a $15,000 purchase of land for open space.

The fourth vote will be on appropriating $25,000 from the town general fund to the tree removal capital account for the purpose of covering tree removal costs due to tree damage.

The majority of trees that need to be removed are ash trees that have been infested by the invasive emerald ash borer beetle, according to Columbia Town Administrator Mark Walter.

Working in conjunction with the Town of Lebanon and the nonprofit Trust for Public Land, Columbia town officials are working to purchase a parcel known as "Wells Woods" as an expansion of Mono Pond State Park.

Columbia Open Space Committee chairwoman Ann Dunnack said the expansion has been in the works for around 15 years and was slowed, until recently, partly due to the negotiation process.

During last Tuesday's special town meeting, voters will first be asked to endorse the town's initiative to acquire the entire Wells Woods area as part of the expansion, totaling about 1,000 acres of open space as a final goal, according to Walter.

***Three votes address progress toward the Mono Pond State Park expansion and a $15,000 purchase of land for open space. The fourth vote will be on appropriating $25,000 from the town general fund for tree removal.***

Further, the board of selectmen is asking for voters to approve a proposed expenditure of up to $148,000 from the town's land acquisition fund to acquire the 1,000 acres, which will be spent over multiple years, Walter said.

Additionally, the immediate joint purchase of a 313-acre portion of the Wells Wood area with the town of Lebanon, the state and the Trust for Public Land will be put up to voters Tuesday.

That land is currently owned by Markell Properties and abuts the Lebanon Air Line Trail.

"It's key in connecting the Air Line Trail to Mono Pond," Walter said.

Columbia will be paying $15,000, according to the meeting agenda, while Lebanon residents approved in December to expend $30,000 for costs associated with the preservation and public access of its portion of the land.

The land includes 78 acres in Lebanon and 235 acres in Columbia, according to Lebanon Town Planner Philip Chester.

Columbia and Lebanon are paying less than 5 percent of the total cost of the land, Chester said, with the total cost coming to $625,000. This is because the state and the nonprofit picks up much of the cost.

Walter said, ultimately, the land will belong to the state, which will turn it into state forestland.

A stewardship agreement and joint management plan between Mono Pond State Park, Columbia and Lebanon are in the process of being developed, as town officials continue to work with the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

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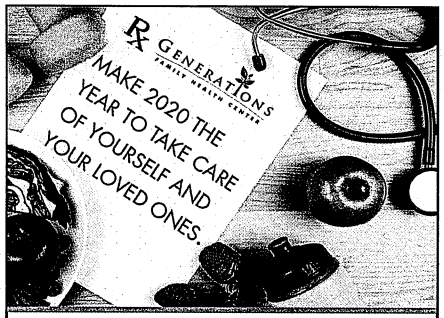

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# Columbia woman deeply involved in town

LISA MASSICOTTE

Chronicle Staff Writer

COLUMBIA — When the audience of citizens is empty at Columbia Board of Selectmen meetings, the selectmen can at least count on one resident to be there — Ann Dunnack.

"I dare to be a sponge to absorb what's happening," Dunnack said.

That dedication hasn't gone unnoticed by town officials.

When asked for recommendations for local outstanding residents, Columbia First Selectman Steven Everett told Chronicle staff Dunnack immediately came to mind.

"Ann was my first and only choice — I've known her for over 20 years," he said. "She's involved, she's dedicated and truly loves our town."

Dunnack, 68, moved to Columbia with her parents at age 6 and has, more or less, lived in town ever since.

"Every once in a while, because I have a long history in town, the board of selectmen even turn to me and say, 'oh, so what happened 50 years ago?'" Dunnack said while laughing.

"And I'm also kind of a watchdog — they know I'm listening," she added on a more serious note.

Not only does she attend every selectmen meeting she possibly can, but Everett and Dunnack herself also said she's usually the only resident seated in the audience of citizens at those meetings.

"I find that most townspeople have no idea what's going on in their town," Dunnack said. "What's really, really concerning is the tiny little handful of people that show up for the budget vote."

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She has an active resume, having been a day care provider, Girl Scout leader, paraprofessional and a lifeguard/water safety instructor, which she retired from just last year.

"I'm an energetic person — if I'm not working, I'm not the type that likes to sit down and watch TV, I need to be doing and moving," Dunnack said. "I seek to always be learning."

Dunnack is still very active in the St. Columba Catholic Church and she has a long history with Joshua's Trust nonprofit, where she now serves as the trust's Stewardship Committee chairperson, steward of Utley Hill Preserve and regional coordinator.

She also currently chairs Columbia's conservation and agriculture com-mission and the town's open space committee, which has been spearheading the Mono Pond State Park expansion.

"I am deeply, deeply concerned about the environment and climate change," Dunnack said. "I learned, not just me, but everyone needs to get moving or we're going to leave a very sad state of affairs for the next generation."

Formerly, she served as chairperson of the town's recreation council, recreation commission and Szegda Farm management committee.

The majority of her current volunteer time, however, is dedicated to serving as president and sexton of the town's West Street Cemetery, she said.

Dunnack said she typically puts three to four hours a day into volunteering, including weekends.

Follow Lisa Massicotte on Twitter - @LMassicotteTC.

*This article appears in our print edition and in our Chronicle e-edition (available at 4 p.m. weekdays, 8 a.m. Saturday) complete with all photos and special sections.*

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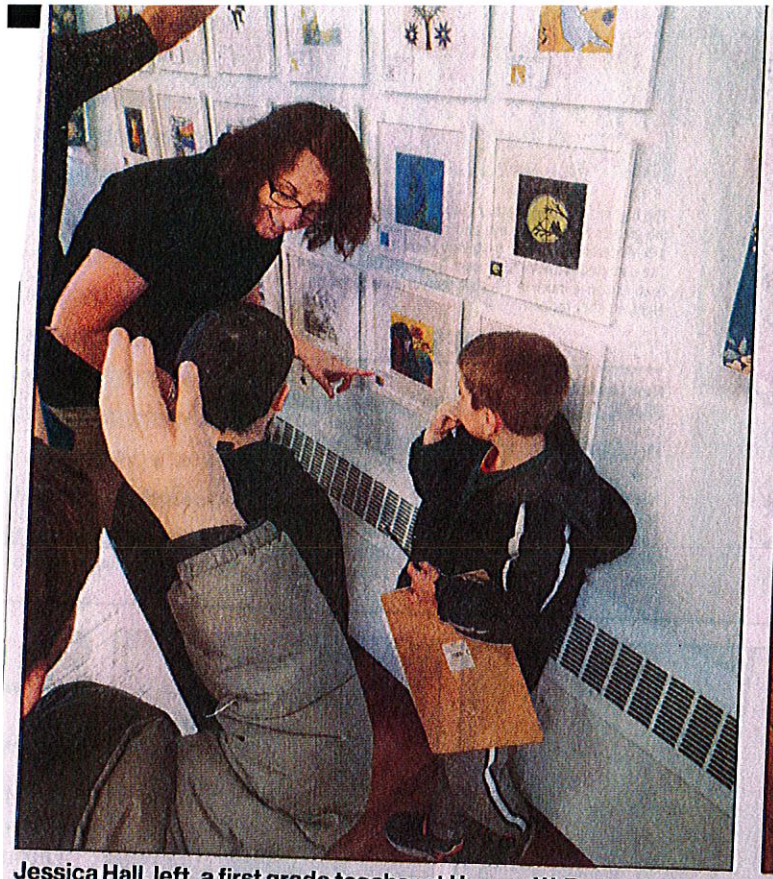

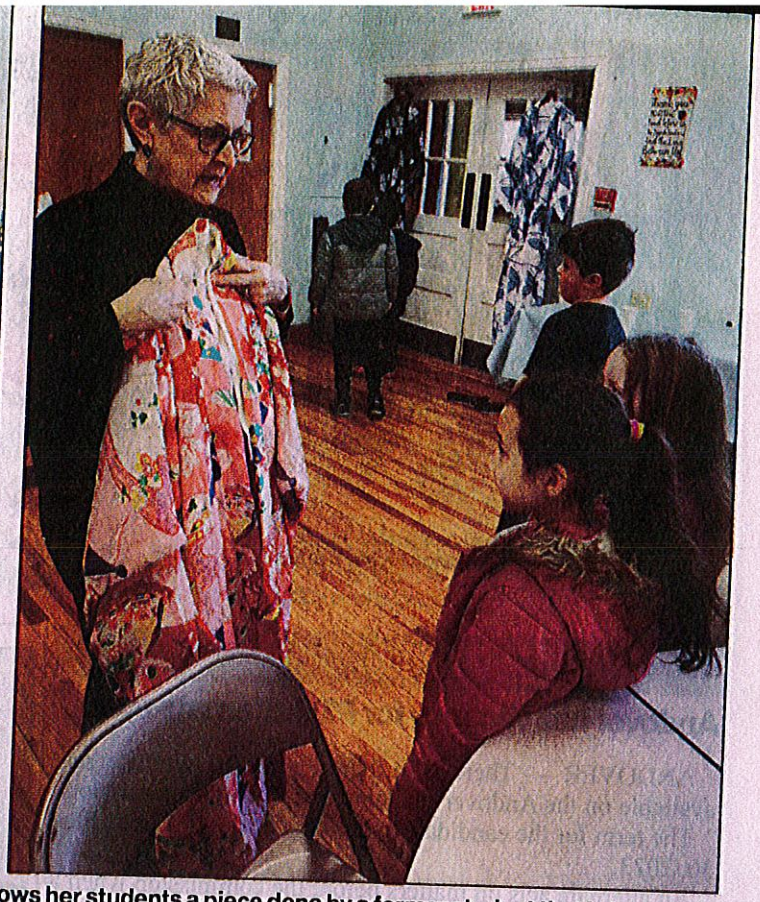

Jessica Hall, left, a first grade teacher at Horace W. Porter School, shows her students a piece done by a former student that is included in the 'Connecticut Pieces of Peace' exhibit at Columbia Congregational Church recently. Local artist Kim Kordonowy, right, shows a Japanese kimono to Porter students. Lisa Massicotte | Staff

# Exhibit shows beauty of peace

## Art collection currently on display at Columbia church

ane Hegener of Columbia looks at the exhibit at the church recently. Arnelia Ingraham | Staff

**LISA MASSICOTTE**
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

COLUMBIA — In a world surrounded by conflict, a state organization is striving to spread the message of peace to young minds through art.

What does peace look like to a child — that question is answered through the "Connecticut Pieces for Peace" exhibition currently on display at the Columbia Congregational Church, 325 Route 87, until Friday.

"This one is my favorite," said first grade student Alannah Smith, who visited the church last week with her class from Horace W. Porter School in Columbia.

"The flowers are beautiful and her hair is beautiful. Peace is beautiful," she said as she pointed to a painting by former Porter student Grace Carver.

The artwork depicts the Earth being embraced by a woman with long black hair surrounded with

ART COLLECTION, Page 4

# Art collection at church shows the beauty of peace

Continued from Page 1

bright red flowers.

The "Connecticut Pieces for Peace" exhibition is a traveling youth art collection organized through the state organization of the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, which is a worldwide organization for women educators.

"Now more than ever, the images of peace need to be shared," said Columbia Congregational Church educator and coordinator Millie Ramsey. "The church has a monthly community breakfast which attracts a wider audience from surrounding communities.

"Where better than to showcase the work of Connecticut students' ideas of peace?"

The collection features 30 drawings and paintings done by elementary, middle and high school students from Chaplin, Storrs, Willimantic, Eastford, Hampton and Warren.

Students answered the question "What does peace look like to me?" when creating their illustrations.

It was initiated through the DKG Society's "Curriculum of Hope for a Peaceful World" committee, which conducts workshops, presents exhibits and develops programs to teach adults and children skills necessary for peacemaking, according to the committee's mission.

The committee was inspired by a New York City organization called CITYarts, according to Ramsey, who is also a member of the DKG Society.

CITYarts has a global "Pieces for Peace" program and art from youth around the world can be viewed online at cityarts.org.

**Christine and Robert Vaughn of Colchester view the 'Connecticut Pieces for Peace' art exhibit at Columbia Congregational Church recently.** Amelia Ingraham | Staff

Porter pupils are spending the month of January taking field trips to see the "Pieces for Peace" collection along with another painting collection on display about post-occupation Japan in the 1950s done by Kim Kordonowy, who recently moved to Columbia.

"A new resident to Columbia, Kim Kordonowy is a talented artist who lived in Japan during the American occupation after World War II," Ramsey said.

"The United States used the atomic bomb as retaliation against the Japanese for the bombing of Pearl Harbor. My hope is that the atomic bomb will never be used again and the education of young students will help ensure and further that hope."

Kordonowy met with Porter students during their field trip to talk to them about her art and experiences and show them traditional Japanese clothing from that time period.

"When people look at how culture changes when other people move in, that's significant," Kordonowy said, referring to when the Western culture moved into Japan.

"In any regard, I think people are resilient and positive and they try to make the best of any situation and I think it's up to each of us to try to keep in that spirit."

Once the peace collection is removed from the Columbia Congregational Church, it will be heading to Colebrook Village in Hebron, according to Ramsey, while Kordonowy's collection will be on display at the church for the next few months.

This all ties together with upcoming peace events at ArtSpace in Willimantic from May 16-20 titled, "Sights, Sounds and Hopes for Peace," which is also organized through the Curriculum of Hope for a Peaceful World committee.

During that time the "Connecticut Pieces for Peace" will be on display and the committee has planned several other engaging activities for students and families.

"Our plans are to have this celebration be multidimensional, expressive and interactive," committee chairperson Susan Moon wrote in a letter to local educators. "Our vision for this event is for children to share their ideas and hopes for peace."

*Those interested in viewing the "Connecticut Pieces for Peace" collection at the Columbia Congregation Church by Friday should first call the church at 860-228-9306. The artwork on display can also be viewed online at dkgct.weebly.com/pieces-for-peace-gallery.html.*

*Follow Lisa Massicotte on Twitter - @LMassicotteTC.*

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