

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
COLUMBIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Tuesday, April 28, 2020 – 7:00 pm
Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT

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

Also Present via Remote Access: Mark Walter, Town Administrator; Beverly Ciurylo, Finance Director.

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

1. **MOMENT OF SILENCE:** S. Everett asked for a moment of silence.
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Special Meeting Agenda for April 28, 2020. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** None.
4. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** *For public input before the meeting please email your comments to PublicInput@columbiact.org. For public input during the meeting, your comments can be submitted through the "Chat" feature in Zoom Meeting or use the "Raise Hand" function" feature to let the host know you would like to speak. PLEASE INCLUDE IN BOTH METHODS YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS.*

5. **OLD BUSINESS:**

- 5.1 **Review revised and discuss budget recommendations from FiPAC.** S. Everett explained that FiPAC has requested reductions in the FY 20/21 Operating and Capital Budgets totaling \$257,158. FiPAC has asked the Board of Selectman to look at the Town's Capital Plan and Operating budgets and propose recommendations for reductions. S. Everett stated the total updated reduction of the BOS proposed 2020-2021 net Capital decrease is \$3,000 and the net Operating is \$10,106, totaling \$13,106.

The Capital plan includes the following recommended changes:

- \$25,000 to \$40,000 for the Playscape for a net change of \$15,000
- \$35,000 to \$30,000 for the Pavilion for a net change of (\$5,000)
- \$35,000 to \$30,000 for the Pickle Ball Court for a net change of (\$5,000)
- Transfer Station Equipment will remain unchanged with a decrease of (\$8,000).

Total Net Change is (\$3,000).

The Operating budget includes the following recommended changes:

- Reduction of \$6,800 for salt supplies
- Reduction of \$1,000 for postage
- Reduction of \$2,306 for Library grant

Total Net Change is (\$10,106).

S. Everett explained that the pickle all court and the pavilion could be done at a reduced cost with the help of Public Works department. Discussion ensued.

L. Napolitano asked if the culvert on Hunt Rd. could wait. M. Walter explained that he reached out to Anchor Engineering and they said that the degradation to the culvert has not gone further than what they have seen from their original analysis. M. Walter also explained that we will be applying for state funding which may provide a 50% reimbursement from the State.

- 5.2 Approve revised 20/21 budget and send back to FiPAC:** S. Everett MOVED to Accept FiPAC's request for reductions in the Operating and Capital Budgets of \$257,158. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

S. Everett MOVED to authorize the Board of Selectman to send over the 20/21 budget revision suggestions totaling \$13,106 in net additional reductions to FiPAC. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

- 6.1 Discussion and vote to support Solar Farm Application.** S. Everett stated that Walt Tabor was approached by US Solar to put solar on his property on Route 87 in a remote area on Walt Tabor's property. S. Everett explained that supporting this application will benefit the Town from a tax-base perspective. Th project includes perennial native vegetation to support honeybees, native pollinators, and songbirds. M. Walter explained that the solar power company would offer to pay \$5,000 pilot payment in lieu of taxes for the solar polar grid. S. Everett shared the support letter to CT DEEP and discussion ensued. S. Everett MOVED to vote in support of the solar farm application. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

- 6.2 Town Mailer for Beach Passes and Transfer Station.** S. Everett explained that the mailer will state that the beach will not be open until further notice. S. Everett stated we are following the State and CDC recommendations. Discussion ensued.

7. COLUMBIA LAKE / DAM / BEACH. None.

8. APPOINTMENTS / RESIGNATIONS. None.

9. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:

- 9.1 Emergency Management COVID-19 update.** M. Walter shared the weekly update that the Town's Emergency Management Director provides at the beginning of each week. He explained that Dartmouth Village wells had a leak in the system causing the wells to go dry on Friday of last week, but that both wells are up and running now. He added that the Public Works department and Senior Center Director provided Dartmouth with drinking water and that both the Emergency Management Director, Jerry James and Steven Everett were kept abreast on the situation.

M. Walter explained that on Wednesday the Town will be receiving extra PPE equipment, we have ordered more personal computers for employees to work from home and have set up work-from-home protocols. M. Walter explained that he received a call that the Leo's have voted to donate \$250 to the Town and \$250 to the Columbia Volunteer Fire Department for COVID-19 related expenses.

M. Walter stated that Tolland County is the least affected area in the State. He stated that there are 7 positive cases and 2 hospitalized with COVID-19. S. Everett stated that this is the cumulative number.

- 9.2 **Office of Policy & Management COVID-19 total spend by Town and BOE.**
This was not covered in the meeting.
10. **CORRESPONDENCE:** None.
11. **BUDGET:**
- 11.1 **Transfers:** None.
- 11.2 **Refunds:** None.
12. **APPROVE PAYMENT OF BILLS:** None.
13. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** Carol Kubala, Lake Rd. asked to have the information repeated on the beach passes and transfer station.
14. **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:** None.
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).**
16. **ADJOURNMENT:** S. Everett MOVED to Adjourn at 7:37 pm. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully Submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie

**Board of Selectmen Budget
2020-2021 Proposed Budget
Reductions as of 04/22/20**

FiPAC Proposed Operating Budget Reductions

Dept 350	Assistant to the EM Director	\$ 2,500.00	Removed from Budget
Dept 410	DPW Admin Assistant	\$ 8,708.00	Reduced budgeted hours from 18 per week to 12 per week; currently 9 hours per week
Dept 410	Seasonal Park Maintainer	\$ 4,500.00	Reduced budget per discussion with Public Works Director
Dept 250	Van Services Salaries	\$ 1,000.00	Correction to budget figure posted
	Total Salary changes	<u>\$ 16,708.00</u>	
Dept 112	Commercial Insurance	\$ 3,450.00	Reduced budget
Dept 120	Judicial	\$ 10,000.00	Reduced budget
	Total Operating Decreases	<u>\$ 30,158.00</u>	Approved by FiPAC on 04/22/2020

FiPAC Proposed Capital Budget Reductions

20-6187-001	Hunt Road Box Culvert	\$ 75,000.00	Reduced 20/21 appropriation to \$100,000 and spreading funding to a 4th year
20-6190-001	Rec Park:		Left \$95,000 funding for continuing Rec Park Renovations/ Upgrades
	Maintenance Garage	\$ 50,000.00	
	Pavilion	\$ -	
	Pickle ball court	\$ -	
	Bocce Ball court	\$ 5,000.00	
	Playscape	\$ 25,000.00	
	Total	<u>\$ 80,000.00</u>	
20-6205-001	Public Works Director SUV	\$ 37,000.00	FiPAC include extra \$2,000 in Reduction; Purchasing in 19/20 with unused equipment funds
20-6206-002	Town Hall Htg & Cooling System	\$ 60,000.00	Moved to 21/22
	Sr Ct Htg & Cooling System	\$ (25,000.00)	Moved to 20/21
	Net decrease	<u>\$ 35,000.00</u>	
	Total Capital Decreases	<u>\$ 227,000.00</u>	

Overall Net Decrease in Proposed 2020-2021 BOS Operating and Capital Budgets **\$ 257,158.00**

NOTE:

- Hunt Road Culvert Reducing 20/21 request and moving to fund over 4 years: Currently not eligible for DOT Local Bridge Program due to out of date 1991 DOT report. New submission being pulled together but no guarantee if the Town will qualify. Current projected replacement cost is \$448,000 with design and engineering costs (\$75,000). Total projected cost is \$525,000.
- Adjusted the General Fund transfer being set up for the replacement of the CVFD Rescue Truck from \$300,000 to \$175,000. This is being reflected in Proposed 2020-2021 Budget Document and is pending BOS and FiPAC approval. The balance needed for the Rescue Truck replacement will be appropriated when a final cost is presented by CVFD and the truck is ready for purchase.

3. Other Potential BOS 20/21 Proposed Budget Reductions:

Dept 410	Supplies - salt	\$ 6,800.00	Reduced budget; have enough in storage
Dept 570	Postage	\$ 1,000.00	Reduced budget
Dept 620	Library Grant	\$ 2,306.00	Reduced budget - per discussion with Su Epstein

Operating Reductions to be discussed by BOS **\$ 10,106.00**

20-6190-001	Current Rec Park Proposal:	\$ 95,000.00	After FiPAC reductions on 4/22/20
	Potential changes/reductions		
	Balance left of original submission:		
	Maintenance Garage	\$ -	
	Pavilion	\$ 35,000.00	
	Pickle ball court	\$ 35,000.00	
	Bocce Ball court		
	Playscape	\$ 25,000.00	
	Total Rec Park	<u>\$ 95,000.00</u>	

20-6205-002	40 yd container	\$ 8,000.00	Purchase in 20/21; clam covers pending for future
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Capital Reductions to be discussed by BOS **\$ 103,000.00**

Total Reductions to be discussed by BOS **\$ 113,106.00**



TOWN OF COLUMBIA

323 Jonathan Trumbull Highway, Columbia, CT 06237
(860) 228-0110 FAX: (860) 228-1952

OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN

April 28, 2020

Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106
Attn: Shared Clean Energy Facility Program

Dear Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Staff:

The Town of Columbia is excited to partner with US Solar on the Shared Clean Energy Facility (SCEF) being proposed in our Town. Columbia's land was purchased in 1699 and the Town has been incorporated as an independent Town since 1804. We have a long agricultural history and a quintessential rural character. US Solar is an established and growing developer and owner/operator of community solar projects with offices in Fairfield, CT and Minneapolis, MN.

The Town understands that Connecticut DEEP has been working diligently for several years to allow solar projects as part of the SCEF program for up to 4 MWac, or approximately 40 acres, in size. We also understand that the statute places a strict cap on the number of SCEF arrays that will be allowed in 2020, which could result in DEEP selecting as few as 5 projects this year. Most importantly, we understand that the SCEF program is designed to benefit a wide array of community stakeholders and project subscribers, including but not limited to low- and moderate-income subscribers.

Over the past few months, the Town has had the opportunity to develop a relationship with US Solar and fully supports US Solar's application to DEEP for permission to install a SCEF project on a portion of the Tabor property off of Highway 87.

We are supporting this application because it will be sited within the Town and will benefit the Town from a tax-base perspective, support our constituents desiring to use their land for this purpose, and also as a potential subscription opportunity. The dedication that US Solar is showing to develop quality solar projects, including perennial native vegetation to support honeybees, native pollinators, and songbirds is laudable.

We urge DEEP to select US Solar's project for its SCEF program as soon as possible so we can bring these economic and environmental benefits to our community. We are excited to see this kind of responsible development in our community.

Sincerely,

Steven M. Everett
First Selectman

UPDATE FROM THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR FOR THE WEEK OF 4/27/20

General

Positive COVID-19 Test results - **INCREASED**

Mandatory Mask / Covering for face in public when 6 foot separation is not possible

Maintain Social Distancing and report any deficiencies for appropriate correction.

Town wide Street Sweeping continues (weather permitting).

AHM Youth & Family Services available 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM (M-F) 860-228-9488 Ext. 13

Town Beach - CLOSED

Monday

Emergency Meals - HW Porter School – 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM

Planning & Zoning Committee (PZC) virtual meeting – 7:00 PM

Tuesday

Non-perishable food donations - Beckish Senior Center - 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Meals on Wheels delivery – 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Wednesday

Emergency Meals - HW Porter School – 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM

Transfer Station OPEN for household waste and recyclables, leaf drop off - 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Level 3 & 4 PPE pick-up at Mohegan Sun Expo Center 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Local Health District phone Conference Call with CT DPH - 1:00 PM

EMD Conference Call with DEMHS Region 4 using "Zoom" - 2:30 PM

Governor's Phone Conference Call - 5:00 PM

FIPAC Virtual meeting - 7:00 PM

Thursday

FD / Ambulance PPE pick-up at Mohegan Sun Expo Center 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Town Office departments closing at 4:00 PM

Friday

Emergency Meals - HW Porter School – 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM

Saturday

Transfer Station OPEN for household waste and recyclables, leaf drop off, **bulky waste and brush being accepted** - 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM