

**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
COLUMBIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
Wednesday, December 18, 2019 – 6 pm  
Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room  
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT**

**Members Present:** Steven M. Everett, First Selectman; Robert Hellstrom, Deputy Selectman; William O'Brien Selectman; Lisa Napolitano (arrived at 6:05pm), Selectman; Judy Ortiz, Selectman.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**5. OLD BUSINESS:**

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

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

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

6. **NEW BUSINESS:**

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

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

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

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

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

8. **APPOINTMENTS / RESIGNATIONS:**

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

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

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

9. **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:**

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

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

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

10. **CORRESPONDENCE:**

11. **BUDGET:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**15. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Real estate per State Statutes Section 1-200(6)(D); Pending Litigation per State Statutes Section 1-200(6)(B); Personnel per State Statutes Section 1-200(6)(A).** S. Everett MOVED to enter into Executive Session at 6:58pm and invited Mark Walter, Town Administrator and Carol Price, Tax Assessor. S. Everett MOVED to come out of Executive Session at 8:04 pm.

**15.1 Tax Delinquency.** No business was voted upon.

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

Respectfully Submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie