

**Town of Columbia**  
**Financial Planning and Allocation Commission**  
**Special Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, March 22, 2017 - 7 pm**  
**Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room**  
**323 Route 87, Columbia, CT. 06237**

**Members Present:** Chairman Earnest Sharpe; Judy Ortiz; Dean Toepfer; Richard Szegda; Kelley Peck; Todd Shepard.

**Also Present:** First Selectman Carmen Vance; Deputy Selectman Steven Everett; Town Administrator Mark Walter; Superintendent Lol Fearon; Vice-Principal Michael Kenyon; Finance Director Beverly Ciurylo; BOE Chairman Christopher Lent; Tom Currier.

1. **Call to Order:** E. Sharpe called the meeting to order at 7 pm.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. A Moment of Silence was held in recognition of the passing of Pamela Viens, wife of commission member Jeff Viens.
3. **FiPAC Budget Discussion (continued):** M. Walter told FiPAC that he spoke with Bond Consultant Bill Lindsay in regards to bonding options. He explained that if the town chooses to bond, the funds must be spent within two years or may be subject to arbitrage. He stated that B. Lindsay emphasized the importance of maintaining a healthy general fund in uncertain times, such as this and that current bond rates are at an all time low.

Discussion regarding the proposed state budget ensued. L. Fearon stated that the figure proposed to be paid by Columbia for teacher pension is based on the active amount of teachers in town. At this time, municipalities are being asked to pay 1/3 of this total cost. M. Walter expressed that he does not feel this will pass, but that the cost Columbia will be required to match may be closer to 6%.

E. Sharpe reviewed a bonding exhibit he created with FiPAC and asked for feedback from FiPAC as to whether or not they are in support of bonding. FiPAC was in agreement to move forward in requesting support from the BOS in regards to bonding. K. Peck stated that she would rather bond all at one time, versus bonding year after year. This will save money on the process cost which is approximately \$70,000. E. Sharpe stated he doesn't feel that it can be all taken on at one time because one large project alone will be done piece by piece. He stated that bonding process cost of \$70,000 will be paid over 20 years. Discussion followed. T. Shepard does not feel that bonding for "short lived" projects is a good idea i.e. vehicles with a life expectancy of only 10-15 years. Discussion followed.

S. Everett stated that at this time, he feels as though a tax increase is almost inevitable in order to cover the downfall that the state is pushing back to the towns. He fears that next year or the following year, the state will push things back to municipalities again and we will have to pay more. He feels that we must be very cautious when it comes to "slicing and dicing" from the general fund and bonding, etc.

E. Sharpe asked what FiPAC feels an appropriate increase is to propose to the town. Discussion followed. The consensus of FiPAC is that they will not support a mill rate of 3.6%. C. Vance stated that she feels a 2 mill increase would be feasible. Some members of FiPAC concurred. K. Peck and T. Shepard would like to see the mill increase less than 2 mills. T. Shepard explained that the percent increase of 2 mills is equivalent to 7.3% and feels that is what residents will pay attention to. K. Peck stated that at this time, FiPAC has not requested any cuts to either the BOS or BOE proposed operating budgets. However, that could change.

C. Vance stated that a special BOS meeting will be held on Monday, March 27, 2017 at 8 am to continue budget proposal discussion. Recommendations will be given to FiPAC prior to its next budget workshop on Wednesday, March 29, 2017.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, March 29, 2017 at 7 pm.

**Adjournment:** T. Shepard MOVED to ADJOURN at 8:58 pm and the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by Kimberly A. Bona