

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
FINANCIAL PLANNING and ALLOCATION COMMISSION
Wednesday, March 27, 2019 – 7 pm
Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT

Members Present: Chairman Earnest Sharpe; Judy Ortiz; Mike Patel; Todd Shepard; Richard Szegda.

Members Absent: Kelley Peck; Dean Toepfer.

Also Present: Town Administrator Mark Walter; Superintendent Maria Geryk; Finance Director Beverly Ciurylo; BOE Chairman Chris Lent; BOE member Kathy Tolsdorf; BOE member Linette Dooley.

CALL TO ORDER:

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**
 - 2.1 **Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes of 3/20/19.** E Sharpe MOVED to accept the Regular Meeting Minutes of 3/20/19. R. Szegda SECONDED the MOTION and it CARRIED 5.0.0.
3. **FiPAC Budget Discussion (continued):** M. Walter discussed the changes to the proposed BOS Capital budget as a replacement to reducing the Rec Improvement budget line. He noted that there were \$5,000 of leftover funds in the Capital Building improvement line plus the Senior Center Heating/Cooling system would be pushed back a year so that the Rec Improvement line would not be reduced. E. Sharpe discussed the approximately \$200,000 balance in the Brand Fund and how to use those funds. R. Szegda expressed that he is uncomfortable taking the rest of the money to satisfy the towns financial needs and that the Brand money should be spent as it is intended. Discussion ensued regarding the use of the Brand money. M. Walter explained the main focus for the improvements to Rec Park is to improve safety. He mentioned that \$80,000 of the \$130,000 in the budget is to build a road around the park. E. Sharpe said the safety issues had been funded and that the Brand Funds should be used for recreational items being budgeted; such as, the basketball court and the ADA compliant items for the playscape. The consensus with FIPAC was not to postpone the Senior Center Heating/Cooling system.

E. Sharpe started a discussion of the BOE budget process and asked about the budgeted \$20,000 for the new truck. M. Geryk summarized the reasons for the new truck for the facilities manager at Horace Porter School. E. Sharpe stated that he would prefer to look at other options, such as renting, borrowing a public works truck, or the use of the school facilities manager's personal truck and reimbursing him for mileage.

M. Geryk explained that the BOE met to discuss the budget based on the guidance from FiPAC and after much deliberation, the BOE voted to come back to FiPAC to request a reduction from \$89,000 to \$69,000. M. Geryk explained that this is due to the E. O. Smith tuition line having an additional increase of \$20,323. With taking this increase into account, the total reduction would be \$109,323. E. Sharpe asked why FiPAC is just now learning about this increase in the E.O. Smith tuition line. M. Geryk explained that Bolton gave its tuition rate in a timely manner during the budget process, but E.O. Smith does not set their tuition figure until the summer. She requested E.O. Smith to provide the rate now so the budget could reflect the appropriate tuition rate. J. Ortiz favored the BOE's decision to only reduce the budget by \$69,000. R. Szegda questioned M. Geryk about the BOE budget reduction and how the District would handle a reduction more than the \$69,000. M Geryk explained that it could cause a challenge for the District for staffing needs and programs. E. Sharpe reviewed MBR and noted that the BOE should stay with the \$89,000 cut by FiPAC. M. Patel noted to stay with the \$89,000 reduction.

B. Ciurylo shared the budget worksheet with potential budget changes that included TAR Funds, reduction in the BOE Budget, a reduction in Rec Area spending and the truck for BOE. FiPAC looked at the impact of the potential budget changes on the mill rate as well as the use of fund balance. Discussion ensued on the scenarios shown on the worksheet. T. Shepard explained that the purpose of FiPAC is to look ahead fiscally. With a potential of over \$1 million increase in spending coming (increase in general fund usage, increase in salaries and teachers' pensions) the Town could be looking at over a 2 mill increase down the road. He stated that the Town has been pretty flat over time, and he favors small increases in property taxes over time. Discussion ensued.

R. Szegda MOVED to rescind the previous vote to cut the BOE budget of \$89,000 and reduce the BOE budget by \$69,000. J. Ortiz SECONDED the MOTION. The MOTION FAILED 2.3.0 with 2 votes in favor (J. Ortiz & R. Szegda) and 3 against (E. Sharpe, T. Shepard, M. Patel). The BOE reduction is to stay at \$89,000 in the proposed 19/20 budget.

E. Sharpe MOVED to reduce \$20,000 for the truck in the BOE Capital Budget. T. Shepard SECONDED the MOTION and it CARRIED 5.0.0.

E. Sharpe stated that there is no motion needed for the teachers' pension. No change was being made to that proposed budget line.

E. Sharpe MOVED to reduce the Rec Area Improvement proposed allocation from \$130,000 to \$100,000. T. Shepard SECONDED the MOTION and it CARRIED. 4:1:0 with R. Szegda opposed.

E. Sharpe MOVED to reduce Capital Improvement Buildings by \$5,000. T. Shepard SECONDED and it CARRIED 5.0.0.

M. Walter proposed moving more funds from the General Fund in order to pre-fund some capital projects for upcoming bridges and culverts. FiPAC

members were not comfortable with this idea at this point in the budget process and ended the discussion.

R. Szegda MOVED to use \$580,000 from the General Fund to offset mill rate increase. J. Ortiz SECONDED and it CARRIED. 5.0.0.

E. Sharpe noted there is no need for the 4/3/19 FiPAC Special Meeting – Budget Workshop which was tentatively scheduled. E. Sharpe motioned to cancel the 4/17/19 FiPAC Regular Meeting and move the meeting to immediately follow the 4/24/19 Public Hearing. T. Shepard SECONDED and it CARRIED 5.0.0.

3.1 NEXT MEETING(S):

3.2 04/17/19 FiPAC Regular Meeting: Meeting canceled and moved to 4/24/19 immediately following the Public Hearing.

3.3 04/24/19 Public Hearing, 7:00 pm, Yeomans Hall.

4. ADJOURNMENT: T. Shepard MOVED to ADJOURN the meeting at 8:50 pm and the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 5.0.0.

Respectfully Submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie