

**Town of Columbia**  
**Financial Planning and Allocation Commission**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, March 15, 2017 – 7 pm**  
**Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room**  
**323 Route 87, Columbia, CT. 06237**

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

**Also Present:** First Selectman Carmen Vance; Selectman William O'Brien; Town Administrator Mark Walter; Superintendent Lol Fearon; Principal Alyssa Gwinnell; Vice Principal Michael Kenyon; Finance Director Beverly Ciurylo; Director of Student Services Barbara Wilson; BOE Chairman Chris Lent; BOE Vice Chairman / Secretary Kathy Tolsdorf; Ann Dunnack.

1. **Call to Order:** E. Sharpe called the meeting to order at 7:08 pm.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. **Approval of Minutes:**
  - 3.1 **Approval of January 18, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes:** J. Ortiz MOVED to approve the FiPAC minutes of January 18, 2017. R. Szegda SECONDED the MOTION and it CARRIED 6:0.
4. **Fiscal Year 2017-2018 Budget Presentations by the BOS and BOE:**

M. Walter presented the proposed FY 2017-2018 Town Budget to FiPAC. He began by speaking about proposed intergovernmental revenue, touching on large drivers such as the ECS Grant, Special Education, LoCIP Funding and Transportation costs.

M. Walter explained that the BOS has approved an increase in both Beach fees/passes and Transfer Station Stickers. Beach pass fees will be increased by \$5, with the exception of senior citizen passes which will remain the same. This creates an estimated revenue increase of approximately \$8,000. M. Walter stated that the regular transfer station stickers/passes (for residents under the age of 62 years) will increase by \$10, and that senior citizen stickers/passes (residents 62 years or older) will increase by \$5. This increase expected to generate a revenue increase of approximately \$7,000.

M. Walter discussed FY 2017-18 appropriations. He stated that the total increase is 9.05%. This includes BOE, BOS and Capital. He pointed out that the BOS increase reflects the worst case scenario (increase of 19.17 %). This is based on whether or not the Governor's budget proposal passes, which will require Columbia to pay 1/3 of the teacher's pension equaling \$613,199. M. Walter explained that the Hop River Trail Bridge Project in the amount of \$2,200,000 is excluded in since it is to be 100% State and Federal funded.

M. Walter reviewed notable operating increases and decreases. He explained that a 2% gross wage increase has been proposed for FY 17-18. He explained that Anthem healthcare costs are expected to increase 11%, although a final quote is still pending. B. Ciurylo explained that the town went out to bid and that other vendors quoted increased costs of up to 30%-50%. M. Walter stated that all town staff will be moved to the High Deductible Health Plan with a Health Savings Account (HSA) effective July 1, 2017. This will result in an anticipated budget line decrease of approximately \$37,650. M. Walter discussed the proposed FY 2017-18 Town Capital Budget. He stated that the total proposed cost for is \$1,005,600. He discussed a recommendation to help reduce the state impact. The recommendation would be to use the existing General Fund to offset proposed capital projects amounting to \$455,000. Discussion followed.

M. Walter stated that based on the Governor's proposed budget, Columbia is currently facing a 3.6 mill or 13.11% increase.

L. Fearon presented the proposed FY 2017-2018 BOE Budget to FiPAC. He stated that the total that the BOE is requesting is \$12,734,368 which is an increase of \$168,571 or 1.34%. He explained that the Columbia School District is a high performing district that focuses on rigorous programs that meet or exceed the needs of all its students. L. Fearon stated that the main focuses of the BOE are long range planning, maintaining and improving current programs and improving student success.

L. Fearon discussed major budget increases and decreases. He pointed out that magnet school tuition costs are approximately \$236,000 or 1.85% of the total budget. L. Fearon reviewed enrollment, stating that the predicted enrollment for FY 2017-2018 at this time for grades Pre-K thru 8 is 412 students. Discussion followed.

5. **Audience of Citizens:** C. Lent asked if a new fee structure for the Porter Pals Pre-School Program has been discussed yet. L. Fearon stated that he and B. Wilson will work on this.
6. **FiPAC Budget Discussion:** E. Sharpe stated that in the past the town has utilized the General Fund to cover some of the budget increase costs. However, he feels that FiPAC must decide what they feel is sensible use of the General Fund when it is faced with such a mill rate increase. Discussion followed. R. Szegda asked M. Walter to speak to other towns to get an idea of what amount they feel is considered to be a healthy fund balance. And, how much, if any, they will use from their Fund Balance in order to help bring down mill rate increases. E. Sharpe would like to understand how the state came up with the estimated \$613,199 Columbia will be accountable for if the Governor's Budget passes in regards to the teacher pensions. Perhaps a Freedom of Information request can be made to obtain further information on as to how this figure was calculated. M. Walter will look into this.

**7. New Business:**

**7.1 Transfers:** J. Ortiz MOVED to approve the following transfers:

<b>AMOUNT / TRANSFER #</b>	<b>FROM A/C #, DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>TO A/C #, DESCRIPTION</b>
\$3,970 / 2017-032	10-4112-040, Admin Group Insurance	10-4112-022, Admin Unemployment
\$4,396 / 2017-027	10-4800-900, Contingency	10-4410-600, DPW Rep/Maint
\$3,442 / 2017-027 <i>TOTAL \$7,838</i>	10-4800-900, Contingency	10-4410-610, DPW Bldgs/Grounds, Rep/Maint
\$1,125	10-4132-520, Assessor Printing	10-4132-110, Assessor Postage

R. Szegda SECONDED the MOTION and it CARRIED 6:0.

**8. Next Meeting:** The next meeting is a budget workshop scheduled for Wednesday, March 22, 2017 at 7 pm.

**9. Adjournment:** T. Shepard MOVED to ADJOURN at 9:04 pm and the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by Kimberly A. Bona