

**Town of Columbia
Financial Planning and Allocation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 19, 2018 - 7:00 pm
Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT. 06237**

Members Present: Chairman Earnest Sharpe; Vice-Chairman Jeff Viens; Judy Ortiz; Todd Shepard; Dean Toepfer; Richard Szegda; Kelley Peck.

Also Present: Town Administrator Mark Walter; Finance Director Beverly Ciurylo, Lol Fearon, Interim Superintendent; Christopher Lent, Board of Education Chairperson.

- 1. Call to Order:** E. Sharpe called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- 3. Audience of Citizens:** None.
- 4. Approval of Minutes:**
 - 4.1. FiPAC Meeting Minutes of August 15, 2018.** J. Ortiz MOVED to approve the FiPAC Meeting Minutes of August 15, 2018. R. Szegda SECONDED and the MOTION CARRIED 6.0: with K. Peck Abstaining.
- 5. Correspondence:**
 - 5.1. Minutes from BOS Meeting 8/7/18, 8/21/18 and 9/4/18. Special Town Meeting Minutes on 9/4/18.**
- 6. Old Business:**
 - 6.1. Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR) Update.** L. Fearon explained that he and B. Ciurylo met with Kathy Demsey and Kevin Chambers at the State Department of Education to discuss the MBR requirements and get some clarification. Preliminary figures from the State Department of Education indicate that Columbia may be under the MBR foundation level by approximately \$215,000. L. Fearon stated that the Town's 18/19 budget was approved prior to the final State budget approval around June 6th. The response received from Kathy Demsey was to wait until the MBR review is completed for all districts. The state will red-flag any districts that fall below the MBR. Letters will be sent out at that point and then the Town will have to take action with an additional budget appropriation. L. Fearon added that also in the meeting with Kathy Dempsey, she suggested that the BOE send a letter to the State Department of Education Commissioner requesting a waiver for 2018-2019 and include that the BOE's MBR noncompliance is directly attributable to 3 students. L. Fearon explained that during the school year, two students chose to take their

diplomas early and graduate and a third student moved out-of-town prior to the opening of school. This accounted for a surplus of \$235,000. He added that for a small town \$235,000 is 2% over our budget and a huge burden on the town and as a small district. A copy of the letter to the Commissioner was provided to FiPAC.

L. Fearon further stated that it may take over a month to hear back from the State regarding the MBR noncompliance due to the fact there are approximately 30 school districts that still haven't reported/filed their MBR compliance reports.

E. Sharpe asked what was the feedback from Kathy Demsey. L. Fearon responded that Ms. Demsey listened to their concerns and offered feedback that Columbia was not the only town dealing with this issue; such as; Sprague, Franklin, Region 11 (Parish Hill), and several smaller districts.

D. Toepfer asked about the other 30 towns that have not completed their MBR requirements and how that could affect us. L. Fearon said that it is hard to say and that the MBR can be very complicated. Larger districts have had issues with budgeting and reporting their MBR, so the issues are not necessarily related when compared to smaller districts.

M. Walter stated that he will be attending a legislative meeting at CCM and will bring L. Fearon's letter to the meeting. L. Fearon responded that one of the things that Ms. Demsey and K. Chambers mentioned in the meeting is perhaps some sort of Legislative relief will come at some point.

6.2. Update on 17/18 BOE and BOS Budget. B. Ciurylo stated that the Town 17/18 revenues should be posted and there was a surplus of \$138,219.07. As for the 18/19 expenditures, the combined total surplus is \$548,859.20 which consists of the BOE surplus of \$279,052.10 and the BOS surplus of \$269,807.10. The final report for Capital Projects shows a balance of \$3,320,128.20 which will be carried forward to 2018-2019. B. Ciurylo noted that \$2.2 million of the balance is for the Hop River Park Trail which will be fully reimbursed by the State.

M. Walter stated that another Capital Project on the horizon is the Hop River Bridge and the Town will be working with the Town of Coventry on this project. E. Sharpe asked what the total municipal share would be. M. Walter stated he believes the total cost of the bridge replacement will be \$400,000 with a 60/40 split, but he will confirm.

J. Ortiz asked why we had \$269,000 left over from the town side. B. Ciurylo responded that there were many lines that came under budget.

Some of the highlights are the teachers' pension retirement (\$50,000 was budgeted and not spent); health insurance came under budget by \$23,500 because some employees did not participate in health insurance; election salaries were under by \$10,000; the budget for the State Trooper came less than anticipated (approximately \$18,000) based on the final state billing; the Senior Center van start-up was later than anticipated, which meant that the expenses were less than anticipated; the Transfer Station professional tech line was less than anticipated by \$7,800; and Contingency was underspent by \$20,500.

7. New Business:

7.1. BOE Non-lapsing Account Request. L. Fearon discussed the letter submitted to E. Sharpe, Chairman of FiPAC that outlines the BOE's request \$40,000 of the FY 2017-2018 BOE surplus be allocated to the BOE non-lapsing account. The BOE ended with an unaudited budget surplus of \$279,052.10 with \$235,000 directly related to special education requirements He also added that part of this surplus was due to going to a single vendor for transportation.

K. Peck moved to adopt the BOE request that \$40,000 of the FY 2017-2018 surplus be allocated to the BOE non-lapsing account.
R. Szegda SECONDED and the MOTION CARRIED 7.0.

8. Transfers: J. Ortiz MOVED to approve the following transfers.

TRANSFER #/AMOUNT	FROM A/C#, DESCRIPTION	TO A/C#, DESCRIPTION
2019 #002/ \$1,200.00	10-4250-240 / Fuel	10-4250-500 / Prof./Tech
2019 #003 / \$894.00	10-4800-900 / Contingency	10-4610-300 / General Supplies

J. Viens SECONDED and the MOTION CARRIED 7.0.

9. Next Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 17, 2018 at 7:00 pm.

J. Viens commented on the Trust for Public Lands presentation on the community forest. He would like to see the maintenance budget for the properties and if there are any types of grant restrictions. He would also like to know the accessibility for residents on these properties. Finally, he expressed that he would like the purchases to go to a town-wide referendum, not just a town meeting.

T. Shepard stated same concern with the community forest and what would be the cost to maintain the property.

10. Adjournment: E. Sharpe MOVED to ADJOURN at 7:43 pm and the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie