

Town of Columbia
Financial Planning and Allocation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 20, 2019
Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT. 06237

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

Also Present: Town Administrator, Mark Walter; Finance Director, Bev Ciurylo.

1. **Call to Order:** E. Sharpe called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. **Audience of Citizens:** Nelisa Regan, PTO Chair addressed the FiPAC Board regarding the funding of the digital sign board. She stated that the PTO raised approximately \$18,000 in the last 5 years for the purchase of the digital sign. She stated that the sign will be used to put out school information, PTO information, community-based information, and town emergency situations. The PTO asked the Board of Selectman for the remaining balance of \$9,000 to finish the project and the BOS agreed. J. Ortiz asked if the purchase of the sign went through a bidding process. N. Regan said that it did not and stated that as a private organization they did not know that they needed to get multiple bids. E. Sharpe asked if the PTO approached the Board of Education for the remaining funds. N. Regan said no they did not. S. Everett, First Selectman, stated that the BOS closely considered the design of the sign and that it was not grandiose in size. He stated that the BOS felt that the digital sign would be a good way to communicate with the community and that the sign would be beneficial to the town. R. Szegda stated that it is a good idea and supports it.
4. **Approval of Minutes:**
 - 4.1. **FiPAC Regular Meeting Minutes of July 17, 2019 and September 18, 2019.** R. Szegda MOVED to Approve the FiPAC Regular Meeting Minutes of July 17, 2019 and September 18, 2019. K. Peck Seconded the MOTION and it CARRIED 6.0.
5. **Correspondence:**
 - 5.1. **BOS Meeting Minutes 6/4/19, 6/18/19, 7/2/19, 7/16/19, 8/6/19, 8/20/19, 9/3/19, 9/17/19, 10/1/19, 10/15/19, 11/12/19.**
 - 5.2. **Fiscal Policy Board Minutes 6/12/19.**
 - 5.3. **Board of Education Minutes 4/8/19, 5/6/19, 6/3/19, 8/5/19, and 9/9/19.**

J. Ortiz asked for an update on the Trust for Public Land (TPL). M. Walter stated that TPL is under contract with one major property, and in the

process of a second property. TPL is in discussions with other landowners at additional properties. M. Walter stated that TPL has been approved for the Community Match Fund program through Sustainable CT. The Community Match Fund is a new program that provides matching funds to support sustainability projects in Sustainable CT-registered towns. TPL is looking for funding to cover the costs of surveys, appraisals, environmental, and title & closing costs.

J. Ortiz asked for an update on the new pension plan for BOE and Town employees. M. Walter stated that we hired and are working with Empower Retirement to make the transition from AXA Equitable. M. Walter stated that moving from AXA to Empower as reduced our fees that our employees pay by half.

J. Ortiz asked if we had any updates on the Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR). B. Ciurylo stated that she had not heard back from the State and we are currently waiting for our letter showing we are not compliant with the MBR. She stated that it is around \$89,000. She expects a letter to come in in December from the State.

6. Old Business: None.

7. New Business:

7.1. Tri-Board Meeting Wednesday, 12/18/19 at 7:00 pm. R.

Szegda stated that he will not be available and asked if we could change the date of the Tri-Board meeting. M. Walter stated that at the first Tri-Board meeting we will be talking about big picture, what's coming, and updates from BOE.

7.2. Preliminary Budget Discussion. E. Sharpe asked the Board if they wanted to hear from the library or other committees. K.

Peck stated that she would appreciate for those boards and committees to come earlier in the process. She felt that the Rec Department/Commissions came too late in the budget process. She stated that they did not come to any of the FiPAC meetings and after we set the budget it's too late to ask us for a change. E. Sharpe asked S. Everett if he meets with those committees. S. Everett stated that he and M. Walter go through the budgets carefully and then bring it to the BOS. K. Peck stated that the boards/committees do have an opportunity to come to FiPAC meetings. M. Walter stated that often the perception is that once it goes through the BOE and BOS it's complete. He added that the committee's need to attend FiPAC meetings as well. R. Szegda, stated that in the past the BOS would meet with the Library, Rec Dept., Fire Dept. and those departments would present and give reasons for their budget. He stated that it makes a lot of sense to have some of these meetings with both FiPAC

and BOS to hear the reasons for each budget. He would like to see more involvement in the process and get information on the budget request and the reason for those requests. E. Sharpe stated that he would not want to schedule additional joint meetings. K. Peck would like us to remind the boards and commissions of the FiPAC meetings and have them attend if possible. T. Sheppard asked if the budgets can be made available to FiPAC. S. Everett stated that yes, we supply the budget documents to FiPAC. T. Sheppard stated that we should not be dictating how to spend privately raised funds. He said the Library and Fire Department raise funds privately and we should not overstep and tell them where to spend their funds. E. Sharpe stated that his perspective is that each department/commission should have enough money to do what they need to do. E. Sharpe asked what the best way is to get the information for this year and expressed that he would not like to schedule extra meetings. R. Szegda does not think it's fair for departments/commissions to attend multiple meetings. S. Everett stated that when the departments/commissions present to BOS it will be on the Agenda so FiPAC can attend the workshops.

E. Sharpe asked B. Ciurylo if she had the projected fund balance. B. Ciurylo stated this it is around 3.8 million.

7.3. FiPAC Membership: E. Sharpe thanked Dean Toepfer for his service and congratulated J. Ortiz on her appointment to BOS. J. Ortiz stated that Judi Jordan will be recommend as an appointment to FiPAC.

7.4. FiPAC Meeting Schedule for 2020. K. Peck MOVED to Approve the FiPAC Meeting Schedule for 2020 as presented. M. Patel SECONDED and the MOTION CARRIED 6.0.

8. Transfers. B. Ciurylo stated that the first transfer is for \$516.00 from the Professional Tech line to purchase walkie talkies for Emergency Management. The second transfer is for \$9,000 from contingency to pay for the sign for the PTO. J. Ortiz asked what is left in the Contingency fund. B. Ciurylo said there will be \$69,000. K. Peck asked if half of the \$516.00 is paid by the emergency management grant. B. Ciurylo stated yes. E. Sharpe asked N. Regan if the sign had already been ordered. N. Regan said it is already on order. K. Peck stated that she appreciates that departments raise their own private dollars and supports that the town meets them halfway. K. Peck stated that she was troubled that the sign was already ordered; but that she fully intends to support the funding for the sign. K. Peck MOVED to Approve the two transfers as presented and the MOTION CARRIED 6.0.

9. Next Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 18, 2019 immediately following the Tri-Board Meeting.

10. Adjournment: T. Sheppard MOVED to ADJOURN the meeting at 7:47 pm. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully Submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie