

**Town of Columbia**  
**Financial Planning and Allocation Commission**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, February 21, 2018 – 7:00**  
**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, Jeff Viens.

**Also Present:** Town Administrator Mark Walter; Finance Director Beverly Ciurylo

**1. Call to Order:** E. Sharpe called the meeting to order at 7:00pm

**2. Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Election of Officers:** D. Toepfer nominated E. Sharpe as Chair. K. Peck SECONDED the MOTION and it CARRIED 5:0: 1 (E. Sharpe abstained).

R. Szegda made a motion to elect J. Ortiz for Vice Chairman. K. Peck made a motion to elect J. Vien as Vice Chairman. R. Szegda stated that he is nominating J. Ortiz because she is the most experienced candidate. R. Szegda continued that J. Ortiz is free to attend Fiscal Policy meetings and other meetings that will enable her to keep the FiPAC committee informed. K. Peck responded that she also agrees with R. Szegda points, but that she feels that the FiPAC committee would maintain a more seamless board by electing an officer from each party.

J. Viens agreed with K. Peck; however, he did agree with R. Szegda that J. Ortiz does go to Fiscal Policy meetings and that he can't always make those meeting. K. Peck stated that she would assume that anyone from FiPAC that can attend the Fiscal Policy meeting would share with the rest of the FiPAC group.

E. Sharpe asked for the committee to put the election of Vice Chairman to a vote. D. Toepfer, R. Szegda & J.Ortiz all raised there hand in favor of J. Ortiz as Vice Chairman. E. Sharpe, K.Peck, J. Viens & T. Shepard all voted in favor of J. Viens as Vice Chairman for FiPAC. E. Sharpe MOVED to nominate J. Viens as Vice Chairman. K. Peck SECONDED the motion and it CARRIED. 6:0.

**3. Audience of Citizens: None.**

**4. Approval of Minutes:**

**4.1. FiPAC Meeting Minutes of December 20, 2017.** E. Sharpe MOVED to approve the FiPAC Meeting minutes of December 20, 2017. J. Viens SECONDED the MOTION and it CARRIED 6:0. E. Sharp asked about the act of Seconding a Motion at a BOS meeting. M. Walter stated that for the BOS there does not need a second; however, seconds are needed in other Committee's such as FiPAC.

**5. Correspondence:**

- 5.1.** Minutes from BOS Meeting 12/20/17, 1/9/18, 1/16/18, 2/6/18 & 2/13/18 & BOE Minutes 2/5/18. E. Sharpe MOVED to approve the BOS Meeting Minutes for 12/20/17, 1/9/18, 1/16/18, 2/6/18 & 2/13/18 and BOE Minutes for 2/5/18. K. Peck SECONDED the MOTION and it CARRIED 6:0.

J. Viens asked about the Public Works at purchasing a Vac-All. M. Walter stated that this is only projected way out because of the possibility of DEEP requiring this, but the Vac-All will not be purchased until DEEP requires it. The Town would vigorously argue that this is not needed.

J. Veins asked if the Town will be buying any new Open Space property this year. M. Walter stated that no but the purchase of the Oberlander property is still pending.

T. Shepard asked about the Recreation Departments budget. T. Shepard asked if there is a separate budget. M. Walter stated that BOS does not want to bond and that there will be a public meeting on 4/19/18 regarding the Rec Park Master Plan. The concept for the projects in the Capital Project budget is that each component of the project will not be tied with another project; therefore allowing for each project to be completed on it's own. These projects include breaking down the road project into two years, work on existing fields and fixing handicap assessibility, addition to the playscape and a new maintenance garage at the park.

- 5.2. Letter detailing MBR legislation.** K. Peck asked if this letter detailing the MBR legislation was provided to clarify FiPAC's questions that they had in January. It is unclear as to what year (2017 or 2018) that the Town should start from. T. Shepard added that it looks like there are 3 opportunities to reduce MBR; 1) Cost savings – up to 50% by regionalizing, 2) a reduction in aid by ECS but the enrollment decline. 50% the net current per expenditure per student. B. Ciurylo states that the Town gets a credit for a reduction in student count in the high school because the Town doesn't have a high school. This is in addition to a credit for a reduction in the ECS grant as well as a credit for a drop in enrollment in Porter. Lol Fearon, the superintendent, is working on ensuring that the credits are applied for Minimum Budget Requirement for the 18/19 Budget. At this point, there a drop of 1 high school student credit, which provides a savings of \$12,000 and none for the Porter school student count since that actually increased. Also, it is estimated that the ECS reduction amounts to approximately \$120,000.

E. Sharpe noted from his reading of the legislation that if BOE deems it appropriate to reduce the MBR they can ask the commissioner to consider the reduction and the commissioner may allow this. E. Sharpe added that the Town should clarify this and possibly pursue this avenue.

- 5.3. What's in the New ECS Formula:** M. Walter stated that one of the main factors of the new Educational Cost Sharing (ECS) formula is a switch to per capita wealth factor as opposed to property wealth. In October 2017, the

Connecticut General Assembly passed a new ECS formula as part of the state's biennial budget for fiscal years 2018 and 2019. K. Peck asked what basis is FY 2019, \$120,000 that was listed in the Total ECS Grant Amounts and is it the right number? B. Ciurylo said this is the latest number that we have and B. Ciurylo stated that BOE is factoring in a reduction in the MBR with a possible overall 2% reduction in the budget for next year.

**6. Old Business: None**

**7. New Business:**

**7.1. 16/17 Audit:** B. Ciurylo handed out the Analysis of 16/17 Year end fund balance and gave a brief explanation and what makes up the numbers included in the funds balance. K. Peck noted that because of B. Ciurylo's diligence and hard work every year we have had a good audit and it is a direct reflection on B. Ciurylo's great work.

**7.2. Appointment of the Auditor:** J. Ortiz MOVED to approve King, King and Associates as the Town's Auditor. J. Viens SECONDED and it CARRIED 6:0.

**7.3. Update on the 17/18 budget:** B. Ciurylo provide the latest update on the 17/18 budget and addressed some highlights. M. Walter provided the Connecticut Conferences of Municipalities (CCM) FY 17 – FY 19 Municipal Aid Comparison for Columbia report and ECS Grant funds is at \$2,193,265 for FY 18 Post-Holdback. B. Ciurylo noted that a Tax sale is planned and possibly a 98% collections rate in this year's budget. The LoCIP Reimbursement will be applied for the salt shed in this fiscal year (before June) once the project is completed. The Town will be going out to bid on this project soon. B. Ciurylo stated that she is not sure what we are getting on the Special Education Grant in 17/18. She added that Town revenues are coming in fairly steady; the interest being earned in the Town's Short Term Investment Funds (STIF) are continuously increasing; and expenditures are within budget. Some possible transfers will be occurring due to an increase in some staff floaters time as well as for increases in fuel and electricity. The State Trooper cost is unknown at this point, but we should be getting a quote shortly on what that cost will be. M. Walter provided the Capital budget, but added that this is just information for the committee, as it is not finalized. Flanders River Bridge has come in at a higher cost than what was anticipated and the Town is waiting for final invoice. A Town meeting will be set up to transfer funds from the General Fund once the costs for Flanders has been finalized. The beach is being finished soon. New lifeguards chairs have come in and the pavilion is on order (small 10x10) for the lifeguards.

**7.4. Update on Budget Schedule:** FiPAC received an updated budget schedule.

D. Toepfer asked B. Ciurylo how she felt about the budget and if it was of any concern. B. Ciurylo said that with tax sale and the tax collections that should help to make up the loss of ECS funding. M. Walter added that the \$10,000 for

the Phragmites/weed control at the lake will be reviewed by LMAC at their next meeting in March and M. Walter will review the RFP's in greater detail. Fuel has gone up and the Town has locked in pricing and there has been an increase in electricity costs. Solar panels is still on track for school and will help reduce energy costs. The Town is still waiting for the manufacturer to certify the roof warranty. Capital projects for Rec Park/DPW and CVFD across the board will stay steady over the next couple of years. The Library came in at 1.5% increase and the CVFD had an increase of 1.79%. CVFD increase is due to stipends being set up for some of the officers in order to keep from having to hire a full time staff person. M. Walter added that they raise 36% of their own funding, which is a huge benefit.

M. Walter mentioned that the state did not fund renters assistance and it is not the Town's responsibility to fund this program. Also, the state is not funding the elderly tax credit which is now a revenue loss to the Town.

M. Walter also mentioned that there is a reduction of the gate monitoring hours for the upcoming beach season. The gate will not be manned during bad weather and slow times. However, there will be 4 lifeguards at the beach at all times which caused the beach salary line to increase for 18/19.

M. Walter reviewed the cost of the Resident State Trooper cost. He is confirming if the Town will be paying 85% and not the 100% which the Town has heard on and off that the State may force towns to fund the full cost of the resident state trooper.

**18/19 Budget Considerations:** M. Walter healthcare went up 14.32% and will be going out to bid to see to if the Town can get a lower premium rate. \$10,000 has been budgeted for Phragmites weed/control for the lake. E. Sharpe presented a framework discussion on a first draft of a financial model for the FiPAC committee to review. By next meeting E. Sharpe would like to make assumptions where each of the items and also on the expense side. This is just a thought process as to help each member to frame their thought process. It is just a tool for the committee's use.

**Transfers**

AMOUNT / TRANSFER #	FROM A/C #, DESCRIPTION	TO A/C #, DESCRIPTION
\$723.00 / 10-4800-900	Contingency	10-4133-010, Salaries – Tax Collector
\$1,672.00 / 10-4800-900	Contingency	10-4134-010, Salaries – Town Clerk
\$2,182.00 / 10-4800-900	Contingency	10-4250-010, Salaries – Van Services
\$1,774.00 / 10-4800-900	Contingency	10-4260-010, Salaries – Senior Center
\$407.00 / 10-4800-900	Contingency	10-4570-010, Salaries – Land Use
<b>Total = \$6,758.00</b>		

M. Walter stated that the transfers are for salary adjustments being made this year after looking at salary comparisons for similar positions. R. Szedga  
 MOVED J. Veins . MOTION CARRIED 6:0

M. Walter mentioned that he attended a conference at CRCOG with a speaker from CT CyberSecurity expert. The Number 1 threat to our county is cyber security. Hackers are going after governments and Towns are very vulnerable. It is recommended that employees are constantly trained about cyber risks. M. Walter states that he is emphasizing to staff to be careful opening emails.

8. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting is a budget workshop scheduled for March 14, 2018 at 7 pm.
9. **Adjournment:** J. Ortiz MOVED to ADJOURN at 8:25 pm and the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie