

Town of Columbia
Financial Planning and Allocation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 28, 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; Superintendent Lol Fearon; First Selectman, Steven M. Everett; Selectman, Rob Hellstrom; Finance Director Beverly Ciurylo; Board of Education Chairman Chris Lent; Board of Education Vice Chairman Kathy Tolsdorf; Linette Dooley; Christopher Tolsdorf; Ann Dunnack; Joan Hill; Steve Piro; Brian Pedersen; Violet Szegda

Staff Present: Public Works Director, George Murphy; Parks and Recreation Director, Marc Volza

1. **Call to Order:** E. Sharpe called the meeting to order at 7:00
2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. **FiPAC Budget Discussion Continued:** E. Sharpe asked L. Fearon if he could update FiPAC on the exception to Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR) and the new statute. L. Fearon responded that he did follow-up on this. He reminded FiPAC that the Commissioner has never granted a waiver and that six communities have fallen below the MBR threshold this year. All six have been flagged and are under an obligation to increase their town's budget appropriation to the appropriate MBR level for their respective towns. The Board of Education's 18/19 budget request includes only funding for what the BOE needs and which brought the proposed budget in at 2.2% below current spending. The proposed 18/19 budget was brought forward with the expectation that the Education Cost Share (ECS) funds will be cut for the 18/19 budget year. There is a cushion in the budget for at least another \$148,000 ECS decrease in funding. If there are no further cuts and the BOE budget is flagged as MBR non-compliant, then the Town would need to approve a supplemental appropriation from the General Fund for 2018-2019.

E. Sharpe asked L. Fearon to explain the residual amount for 17/18 BOE capital budget and the proposed capital items placed in the 18/19 BOE proposed operating budget. L. Fearon said both would be spent. He gave an example of the balance of \$20,000 for cabling (technology) in the BOE capital and a requested \$50,000 in the 18/19 proposed operating budget. The two amounts combined would fund the \$75,000 to cover the cost of the cabling project. He added that this project actually costs more and that the additional cost would be offset with E-Rate funding.

E. Sharpe motioned to approve the BOE budget as presented. D. Toepfer seconded. MOTION CARRIED: 7-0.

M. Walter presented the Rec Park Commission Powerpoint regarding the Master Plan for the Recreation Area Improvements (Rec Park). M. Walter

explained that the Master Plan for Recreation Park will guide future development of the park by enhancing existing facilities; meeting current demand for usage; improving safety, and that by planning the future layout, this will enable Rec Park to grow with Columbia's future needs. J. Ortiz said she would like more input from the town's people. M. Walter stated there is a public meeting to be held on April 19th. D. Toepfer said that Rec Park does need an upgrade and that the 5 year plan would be expensive and suggested that FiPAC makes a decision to move forward for the 1st year, then make a decision next year to move forward. J. Ortiz said that the plan presented previously was to complete the whole project at once. M. Walter explained that to complete the whole project the town would have to bond for the 3 million. R. Szegda added that interest rates are going up and it would be better if the Town works on Rec Park without bonding. E. Sharpe added that make sense and that it would be nice to have a couple of public meetings before we have to make a final decision. J. Viens asked if we could take out the \$85,000 for the new road and just put in the softball field. S. Everett demonstrated on the map the plan for the road to improve safety as well as what Phase I entails. K. Peck asked if the committee could talk about some of the other Capital improvements and table the Rec Park discussion towards the end. D. Toepfer stated that he would be in favor of leaning towards the budget of \$195,000 per year for the Rec Park over the next 5 years that the BOS endorsed, but would be if favor of the BOS studying the budget and decrease it. E. Sharpe said as the Charter states FiPAC makes revisions, not BOS.

The budget discussion continued. E. Sharpe asked what the reval process is and B. Ciurylo said that the cost is approximately \$150,000, but will confirm the amount and will follow up with FiPAC. E. Sharpe asked if there are any questions on the capital. There was a question about the old firehouse. G. Murphy stated that the roof needs replacing. The solar on the roof has to come off and new solar panels need to be put back on. In addition, the building needs to be sided and the doors facing the school need to be changed out to double door access. K. Peck asked if we are still doing the salt shed this year. G. Murphy said the salt shed will be completed in June and that the DPW equipment will be moved from the firehouse and into the old salt shed at the DPW facility. There was a question regarding the heating and cooling at the senior center and G. Murphy said the heating and cooling is over 20 years old.

Discussion turned to the cuts in special education grant and elderly tax credit. B. Ciurylo stated that the special education grant is separate than the ECS grant. With the changes in special education this year, it is anticipated that the Town will be receiving less in 17/18 as well as 18/19. As for the elderly tax credit, the state cut the funding in 17/18 and the town will have to absorb the cost of the credit.

E. Sharpe asked if this proposed BOS budget is acceptable with FiPAC. D. Szegda stated that the BOS did a lot of work and put together a fair budget, but the problem is if we don't have enough funds coming in from the State. It will be difficult to cut and asked if the BOS would like to come back with recommended cuts. M. Walter asked FiPAC to take a look at the revenues page of the FY 18/19 budget and pointed out the \$825,000 decrease variance in intergovernmental revenue and B. Ciurylo added that this is subject to change depending on what the Governor does. K. Peck stated that by the time FiPAC votes, we won't have a firm number and is concerned about raising taxes.

E. Sharpe presented a budget worksheet for discussion on the fund balance. Discussion ensued. B. Ciurylo said last year the Town had a very good collection rate and the Town is doing well again this year with a collection rate of at least 98%. K. Peck stated that the Public Works department has waited a long time to do the things they need to do. She said that FiPAC could ask the BOS to cut \$200,000, if the state cuts are as big as they expect and then maybe defer capital projects to a later year as well as take less out of the general fund. R. Szegda said that this is a lean budget and that the bottom line is if BOS is to cut, it will be Rec Park. He added that the public should come to the public meeting on April 19th and give their input. E. Sharpe said he will email the budget worksheet to FiPAC members for their review and instructed them to use it for calculation purposes as well as get an understanding on fund balance impacts when variables change; such as, mill rate, revenues and expenditures.

S. Everett requested leaving Rec Park in the budget and that the public meeting will happen prior to the Town budget vote. If FiPAC decides to cut it out of the budget, they do not have the ability to add it back in at the Town vote.

E. Sharpe asked if the members wanted to vote on the BOS operating and capital budget or to defer to next week. FiPAC agreed to defer the vote until next week's Special Meeting on April 4th.

4. New Business: None

5. Transfers: B. Ciurylo provided background and explanation on the transfers. R. Szegda MOVED to Approve. Judy Ortiz seconded. MOTION CARRIED: 7:0.

TRANSFER # / AMOUNT/	FROM A/C #, DESCRIPTION	TO A/C #, DESCRIPTION
#2018-016: \$2,342.00 (Beach Services Salaries \$400.00 (Supplies) \$200.00 (Prof/Tech) \$129.00 (Printing)	10-4640-010, Beach Services Salaries 10-4640-300, Supplies 10-4640-500, Prof/Tech 10-4640-520, Printing	10-4640-811, Mach/Equip, \$3,071
#2018-017 \$ 600.00	10-4250-240, Van Fuel	10-4250-500, Prof/Tech
# 2018-018 \$2,628.00	10-4112-030, Group Insurance	10-4112-030, Workers Comp. Premiums
#2018-019 \$ 810.00	10-4440-230, Street Lighting Electricity	10-10-4116-230, Chapel Electricity
# 2018-020 \$ 500.00	10-4440-230, Street Lighting Electricity	10-4117-230, History Place Electricity

6. Next Meeting: The next meeting is a budget workshop scheduled for April 4, 2018 at 7 pm.

7. Adjournment: T. Sheppard MOVED to ADJOURN at 8:55 pm and the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie