

Town of Columbia
Financial Planning and Allocation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 15, 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.

Members Missing: Kelley Peck

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

1. **Call to Order:** E. Sharpe called the meeting to order at 7:02 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 June 20, 2018.** T. Shepard MOVED to approve the FiPAC Meeting Minutes of June 20, 2018, with J. Ortiz and R. Szegda abstaining. MOTION CARRIED 4.0.2.

E. Sharpe started a discussion on Open Space and asked for further information regarding the properties that were discussed in the July 10, 2018 BOS meeting. M. Walter explained that Hebron had reached out to the Town for a partnership regarding the purchase of the Jacques property. He added that Lebanon had expressed a similar interest in the Markel property. Discussion included some history on the Town's previous attempt to purchase these properties. M. Walter added that the partnerships would include applying for grants as well as working with Trust for Public Lands for funding. Each Town involved in the potential purchases would have to come up with the remainder of the purchase price. J. Viens voiced his concern regarding the town taking state money for Open Space and the requirements that the State would impose as to how the Towns could use the land. R. Szegda stated that he is in favor of open space and would recommend more information and research on the open space options. E. Sharpe expressed concerns with purchasing more Open Space if the Town is not having an increase in new construction to replace property purchased as Open Space.

5. **Correspondence:**
 - 5.1. **Minutes from BOS Meeting 6/5/18, 6/19/18, 7/10/18, 7/24/18 & 8/7/18. Special BOS Meeting Minutes on 6/7/18.**

5.2. CIRMA Memberships' Equity Distribution Program Article from *The Chronicle*. M. Walter explained that the Town received a member equity distribution of \$7,637.00 from CIRMA (Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency). Annually, CIRMA gives back to its members an equity distribution based on the membership's the prior year's risk management efforts and CIRMA's financial strength.

6. Old Business:

6.1. BOE and BOS 17/18 Year End Financials Update. B. Ciurylo provided year end updates. She stated that there is a projected surplus of approximately \$140,000 in the Town's revenues. This is mostly due to above normal property tax collections and higher than anticipated interest on short term investments with the state. The additional revenues more than made up for the cutbacks in the state municipal aid. The projected Board of Selectmen expenditure budget has a surplus of approximately \$270,000. Contributing factors include: \$25,000 in Group Insurance due to less than anticipated participating in the health insurance; \$50,000 budgeted for teacher pensions but the state reversed that mandate; \$18,000 for the State Trooper came in under budget, \$11,000 for Registrar of Voters salaries due to no special elections and referendums. Also, each department is returning funds back to the General Fund.

B. Ciurylo explained that the BOE financials have changed since the last FiPAC meeting and the ending available funds is approximately \$289,000. The change is due to finding a special education tuition purchase order that had not been updated which resulted in the year end surplus increasing to what is currently being reported. The final 2017-2018 BOE budget will be finalized in two weeks with the filing of the annual ED001. B. Ciurylo also explained that the BOE is considering a request to add funds from the 2017-2018 BOE surplus to the Non-lapsing Account. B. Ciurylo also mentioned that there are two new special needs students enrolling at Porter and the BOE may need to hire additional staff and services to accommodate the new students. The cost could total up to \$100,000. B. Ciurylo stated that the BOE is still reviewing the potential costs. A more formal request regarding the Non-lapsing account may come after the next BOE meeting in September.

6.2. Minimum Budget Requirement Update. B. Ciurylo presented the Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR) report that was submitted to the State Board of Education. She noted that the 2018-2019 BOE budget is \$283,736 less than the 2017-2018 budget. This means that the Town will probably be considered to be not in compliance with the State's MBR statute. She explained that the Town lost the MBR credit for the decrease in ECS funding when the state approved an increase in ECS funding. The State will probably send the Town a notice that it is noncompliant with MBR and will give a figure. The Town will then have to set up a Town meeting to appropriate more funds to the BOE. B. Ciurylo also mentioned that L. Fearon,

Superintendent, is currently trying to schedule a meeting with the Kathy Dempsey, Chief Financial Officer for the State Department of Education to discuss MBR.

M. Walter stated that he has spoken with Tim Ackert about the MBR statute and that T. Ackert would be willing to assist the town. In addition, M. Walter suggested including Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) in the discussions on drafting up legislation and presenting it to the state.

Discussion continued regarding what options and ideas that the town can implement to move forward on the issues with MBR.

E. Sharpe asked if anyone put the Town's specific case in front of the commissioner. M. Walter and T. Shepard explained it is been very difficult to meet with the State Department of Education Commissioner. It was attempted in the past. M. Walter added that he would bring this to the CCM Conference in October and that perhaps this could be a debate question for the gubernatorial debate that will be held at the CCM Conference.

B. Ciurylo mentioned that at the next FiPAC meeting, the ED001 will have been filed for the BOE and the Town numbers should be finalized. She is anticipating that there will be no more 2017-2018 transfers for FiPAC to approve. This is so that the Town is ready for the audit in October.

7. New Business:

- 7.1. Moody's Investors Services updated rating for Columbia.** M. Walter explained that Moody's upgraded the Town back to Aa2 rating and removed the negative outlook that was given last year when the State had not passed its budget. M. Walter noted the following as reasons from the Moody's Report regarding the upgrade to the Town's rating: The Town's solid and stable tax base supported by access to employment opportunities in Hartford, a history of stable financial operations and a low fixed cost with manageable long-term liabilities. B. Ciurylo mentioned that the healthy fund balance and the low debt contributed to this upgrade. D. Toepfer stated that the Town should get the message out that this upgrade in Moody's rating is a direct correlation to the dedication and hard work of the various town committees and this should be acknowledged.

- 8. Transfers: R. Szegda** MOVED to approve the following transfers totaling \$9,409.00. J. Ortiz SECONDED the MOTION and it CARRIED 6.0

TRANSFER #	AMOUNT	FROM A/C#	DESCRIPTION	TO A/C#	DESCRIPTION
2018-057 REVISED	1,230.00	10-4112-050	Pension Expense	10-4112-060	Employer 457 Match
2018-058	1,108.00	10-4132-110	Postage	10-4132-010	Salaries - Assessor
2018-059 REVISED	1,880.00	10-4112-040	Group Insurance	10-4260-010	Salaries - Senior Center
	197.00	10-4260-240	Fuel	10-4260-230	Electricity
2018-062 REVISED	2,654.00	10-4410-011	Salaries- Public Works OT	10-4410-010	Salaries- Public Works
	1,602.00	10-4410-500	Prof/Tech	10-4410-240	Fuel
	62.00	10-4410-300	Supplies	10-4410-630	Rental
2018-067	276.00	10-4133-010	Salaries-Tax Collection	10-4133-500	Prof/Tech
	400.00	10-4133-710	Professional Improvement		

- 9. Next Meeting:** The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 19, 2018 at 7pm.

M. Walter invited FiPAC to the next BOS meeting on August 21st at 7:00pm for a presentation by Honor Lawler from Trust for Public Lands on benefits of a Community Forest and Open Space.

- 10. Adjournment:** T. Sheppard MOVED to ADJOURN at 8:03 pm and the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie