

Town of Columbia
Financial Planning and Allocation Commission
Special Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 13, 2019 – 7:00
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; Richard Szegda; Kelly Peck.

Members Absent: Dean Toepfer.

Also Present: Town Administrator Mark Walter; Finance Director Beverly Ciurylo, Maria Geryk, Superintendent.

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. **Budget Presentation**
 - 3.1. **BOE:** M. Geryk presented the proposed FY 19-20 BOE budget to FiPAC. She stated that the total Town Appropriation that the BOE is requesting is \$12,825,826. This is a 0% net decrease/increase. The 19/20 BOE proposed budget takes into account the 18/19 additional appropriation that was approved at a Town Meeting in order in order for the BOE to be in compliance with the Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR). M Geryk noted the projected impacts of Federal and State grants on the BOE proposed budget and the anticipated Town appropriation net of grants. M. Geryk presented a cost comparison for high school and Pre-k through grade 8. The high school proposed costs are down 4.7% while the Porter Pre-k through 8 proposed costs are up 2.5% for 19/20. M. Geryk reviewed the special education cost comparisons that show a decrease in tuition, high school services and transportation costs for 19/20. She reviewed the process for the continuous improvement for the District which included goals, curriculum and professional development. M. Geryk reviewed the notable increases: Electricity (\$45,265) - for the LED Project Loan that was not budgeted, Curriculum Support 5-year plan (\$25,000) – use of curriculum consultants and the Technology plan (\$31,020) - the replacement cycle for technology needs. M. Geryk also presented the notable decreases: Health Insurance Benefits (\$51,344) – savings from the change from Anthem to Cigna in the CT-Chip program, Magnet School Tuition of \$97,800 – based on projected enrollment and projected tuition costs, Out Placement Tuition (\$180,250) – decrease in Special Ed, High School Services (\$91,868) – decrease in Special Ed and Capital Project Items (\$60,698) – some items were moved from Capital and will be done in 18/19 through the BOE operating budget. M. Geryk reviewed the staffing proposal that included staffing adjustments of 3.0 FTE with no financial implications, and additional certified staff and non-certified staff of 1.0 FTE each. She noted that the staffing additions are

pending further review of the school's needs. M. Geryk stated that the proposed added certified staff member is to address behavioral needs in the school. She stated that enrollment projections for FY 19-20 demographic study from 2016 reflected a pre-k through 8 project enrollments of 384, the current projection is 426. The demographic study from 2016 for grades 9-12 reflected a projected enrollment for FY 19-20 was 248 and the current projection is 253. M. Geryk concluded with the proposed Capital Projects which include a School Security Project which is covered 45.71% by a State Security Grant as well as the second town installment for a new generator.

3.2. BOS: M. Walter presented the proposed FY 19-20 town budget to FiPAC. M. Walter began by reviewing the proposed intergovernmental revenues based on the information provided by the State on February 20, 2019. He briefly went through the Education Cost Share (ECS) Grants, School Security Projected Reimbursement, School Construction Bond Payment Reimbursement and LoCIP entitlement. M. Walter reviewed the revenues and noted several key revenues that are projected to increase in FY 19-20: investment interest (\$45,000), transfer station fees and stickers (\$4,000), and pre-school tuition (\$5,000). The total variance from proposed FY 18-19 to FY 19-20 showed an overall increase in municipal revenues of \$57,325 at 13.23%. M. Walter noted that the BOS salaries and wages would increase 2.3% along with some salary adjustments. He also noted that the Town and the BOE had joined a health insurance consortium call CT-CHIP to reduce costs as well as level out the variability of renewals. M. Walter presented the notable increases and decreases in the Operating Budget. He mentioned that the Group Insurance increased (\$9,546) due to increases in enrollment, Telephone costs decreased (\$4,300) due to change to VOIP service, Commercial Insurance decreased (\$4,750) due to in the estimate for the LAP policy, Election Workers salaries increased (\$1,844) due to anticipated primaries in 2020, History Place decreased (\$1,100) to to completed of project, Tax Collection decreased (\$2,103) due to outsourcing the mailing of the tax bills but also had an increase (\$3,888) for outsourcing its mailings, Police Protection increased (\$8,000) due to final step increase for the trooper, Public Works increased (\$24,750) for maintenance management system for DPW/Facilities, landscaping and tree services as well as for facility projects, Waste Disposal Services increase (\$22,576) due to an increase in the Willimantic Waste contract, Public Celebrations increased (\$2,000) for the Lions Club annual town grant and Lake Management Advisory decreased (\$5,000) due to less cost for the invasive species abatement services. The total proposed BOS operating budget net increase is \$124,129 (3.18%). M. Walter reviewed the FY 19-20 proposed Capital projects and touched on new projects that impacted the Capital Projects' Budget: Box Culvert Replacement on Hunt Road (\$175,000 – 50% of estimated cost), DPW capital equipment (\$126,500), DPW capital improvement buildings (\$69,000), Hop River Bridge replacement (\$46,000) and hazardous tree removal (\$25,000). The total proposed BOS Capital appropriation for FY 19/20 is \$1,017,000, with a net increase of \$153,785

(17.82 %). M. Walter then reviewed a summary of the FY 19-20 proposed Appropriations, this included the teacher's retirement, BOS, BOE, Debt and Capital (BOS & BOE) and Other (contingency, dog fund, internal services fund, Szegda farm, and recreation). Total proposed appropriations for FY 19-20 is \$18,372,640, which is an increase of \$459,100 (2.56%): The current mill rate is 29.33 and the proposed mill rate is 31.33. This results in a mill rate increase of 2.00 mills or 6.81%.

4. Audience of Citizens. Chris Lent, BOE Chairman, of 4 Randazzo Rd. commended Maria and the BOE for their proposed budget. Cathy Tolsdorf had a question regarding Mono pond and the culvert repair. M. Walter explained that the State is repairing the dam and that it is the Town's responsibility to repair the culvert. Discussion ensued.

5. FiPAC Discussion. R. Szegda asked about the special education cost and whether any of it pertained to residential placement. M. Geryk replied that the special education cost consists of day placements with no residential. J. Ortiz asked if the schools unions agreed on the change of insurance. M. Geryk explained that the union for the certified teachers are going through the process noted in the contract and that if necessary, they have the option to go to arbitration. However, she does not anticipate any concerns with the certified staff with this change. J. Ortiz asked if we had any other choice than Willimantic Waste for trash disposal. M. Walter stated in our area, Willimantic Waste is the only choice. Discussion ensued. R. Szegda asked if the Columbia Rec Improvement project anticipates spending the \$195,000 by end of the fiscal year. M. Walter stated that it is anticipated that the softball field and the road will be completed in the spring. J. Ortiz asked for clarification on the proposed costs for the facilities maintenance. M. Walter explained that this was for the interior of the facilities maintenance (old fire-house) and that the outside renovations are complete.

E. Sharpe began a discussion about the ECS with the committee and with M. Geryk. Discussion ensued. S. Everett asked for clarifications from M. Geryk and M. Walter on the BOE and the BOS budgets and discussion ensued. E. Sharpe asked if there is any anticipation that there will be 18/19 funds remaining from the BOE budget to return to general funds. M. Geryk noted the goal is to be fiscally responsible and the hope is to be able to return conservatively \$150,000. K. Peck asked about teacher pensions and when the town can make that decision since we will be deciding before the State budget in June. Discussion ensued. T. Sheppard had a question on enrollments. M. Geryk stated that the projection for Pre-k through grade 8 is at 426. Discussion ensued. C. Lent added a comment about the survey report and stated that the BOE felt it was necessary to add to the behavioral staff position based on the survey that was conducted during the superintendent search. E. Sharpe asked about current tax collections. B. Ciurylo stated that conservatively we are anticipating another \$150,000. T. Sheppard asked about the motor vehicle exemptions on the tax list. Discussion ensued. E. Sharpe asked about the management of the LoCIP money. B. Ciurylo stated that if we get the authorization this year and the project is finished then the money will be received this fiscal year. Discussion ensued. E. Sharpe asked about Town Aid Road (TAR)Resurfacing budget. B. Ciurylo stated that all road resurfacing projects will be covered by TAR. Discussion ensued.

6. Approval of Minutes

6.1. Approval of FiPAC Meeting Minutes of 01/16/19. R. Szegda MOVED to Approve the FiPAC Meeting Minutes for 01/16/19. J. Ortiz SECONDED and the MOTION CARRIED 5.0. J. Viens stepped out of the room and was not present during the vote. When he returned, he gave E. Sharpe his letter of resignation from FiPAC. He will be replacing an opening on the Board of Selectmen.

7. Correspondence:

- 7.1. BOS Regular Meeting Minutes 2/5/19 with Budget Workshop.
- 7.2. BOS Special Meeting Minutes 2/26/19.
- 7.3. BOE Regular Meeting Minutes Draft 11/5/18.
- 7.4. BOE Regular Meeting Minutes Draft 1/07/19.
- 7.5. BOE Special Meeting Minutes Draft 1/23/19.
- 7.6. BOE Regular Meeting Minutes Draft 2/4/19.
- 7.7. BOE Special Meeting Minutes Draft 2/25/19.
- 7.8. Audit Engagement Letter.
- 7.9. 2018 Grand List Report.

8. New Business

8.1. Appointment of Auditors. E. Sharpe MOVED to Appoint King, King & Associates, P. C. for the 18/19 Town Audit. J. Ortiz SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6.0.

9. Transfers. J. Viens MOVED to Approve the Transfers totaling \$2,556.00, J. Ortiz SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6.0.

TRANSFER #/AMOUNT	FROM A/C#, DESCRIPTION	TO A/C#, DESCRIPTION
2019 #014 / \$1,000.00	10-4132-500 / Professional/Tech	10-4132-770 / Transportation
2019 #015 / \$ 556.00	10-4260-230 / Electricity	10-4260-600 / Repairs/Maintenance
2019 #016 / \$1,000.00	10-4112-130 / Admin Legal Notices	10-4110-130 / Town Meeting Legal Notices

10. Next Meeting

- 10.1. 03/20/19 FiPAC Meeting with Budget Workshop.
- 10.2. 03/27/19 FiPAC Special Meeting – Budget Workshop.
- 10.3. 04/03/19 FiPAC Special Meeting – Budget Workshop (tentative).

11. Adjournment. J. Viens MOVED to Adjourn at 8:38pm. K. Peck SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie.