

SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA
TRI-BOARD MEETING OF THE COLUMBIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN (BOS),
COLUMBIA BOARD OF EDUCATION (BOE) and COLUMBIA FINANCIAL
PLANNING AND ALLOCATION COMMISSION (FiPAC)

Wednesday, December 18, 2019 - 7 pm
Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT. 06237

BOS Members Present: First Selectman Steven Everett; Deputy Selectman Robert Hellstrom; Selectman William O'Brien; Selectman Lisa Napolitano; Selectman Judy Ortiz.

BOE Members Present: Chairman Chris Lent; Joseph Napolitano; Kathy Tolsdorf.

FiPAC Members Present: Chairman Earnest Sharpe; Richard Szegda; Kelley Peck; Judith Jordan; Brian Pedersen.

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

CALL TO ORDER: S. Everett called the meeting to order at 7:10pm

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Agenda as presented.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
3. **PURPOSE OF THE MEETING:** S. Everett outlined the purpose of the meeting and turned the meeting over to Beverly Ciurylo.
4. **REVIEW OF FY 18-19 REVENUES & EXPENDITURES:**
 - a. **Municipal:** B. Ciurylo directed the BOS, BOE and FiPAC to the FY 18-19 Actual & Anticipated Revenues report that reflected a surplus of approximately \$420,000. The budgeted tax collection rate was 97.5%. The Education Equalization Grant (ECS) reflects a surplus of \$34,500. Interest on investments are over 2% at \$82,000 surplus. Real estate conveyance has a surplus of \$20,000. The Transfer Station sticker fees have a surplus of \$8,700 and Town Beach fees has a surplus of \$4,400. The Special Education Grant has a balance remaining of \$11,000, and Preschool Tuition Fees has a surplus of \$17,800. B. Ciurylo stated that overall the Town did well with the revenue collection.

B. Ciurylo then reviewed the BOE and BOS Town expenditures. The Town has a surplus of approximately \$573,000. On the Town side, there was a surplus of approximately \$210,000. Commercial insurance came in \$8,900 less than anticipated. The Registrar of Voters budget was less by \$3,000 due to no referendums in 18/19. Senior van service salaries were less than anticipated by \$4,200. The Public Works Department salaries were \$15,700 under due to a resignation of a full time position and that position became part-time. Planning and Zoning salaries and legal notices came in less than budgeted by approximately \$15,000. Lake Management (LMAC) came in under by \$11,000 because some lake testing was either not

completed or ordered. The Resident Trooper line was under by \$8,000. That normally tells the Town what to budget and one reason it may be less is due to no overtime billed to the Town.

b. Education: School: B Ciurylo stated that the BOE budget came under budget by approximately \$363,350. B. Ciurylo said this mainly had to do with the additional \$215,193 Town Allocation for 18/19 that the BOE needed allocated by the Town in order to be MBR compliant. B. Ciurylo also noted that Special Education costs have come down and this also contributed to the BOE surplus. -

5. STATUS OF FY 19-20 REVENUES & EXPENDITURES:

a. Municipal:

- 1) **State Budget:** M. Walter gave a brief recap of the current State budget. There may be a discussion on authorizing tolls in the transportation session. In July and January, TAR is budgeted at \$205,058 from the State. The scheduled bond commission for LOCIP is at \$39,000. The Governors' budget is due Feb 5th. There is no update on the State pension shortfalls or the Municipal Teachers Retirement payments.
- 2) **Status of 19-20 Revenues & Expenditures:** B. Ciurylo stated that the BOE does get State grants and all 18/19 funding has been received and appropriated. The current year in revenues on property tax collections is on par with what we budgeted. As of the date of this meeting, the Tax Collector has collected more than half at 56.33% collected. Interest has dropped, but we have collected \$45,000 and will have a surplus at end of the year. Real estate conveyance seems to be running on track. It is anticipated that there will be a surplus for preschool tuition. In the spring, B. Ciurylo will be working on LOCIP reimbursement for the Salt Shed. The BOE school security project reimbursement was not approved by the State and will be received by the Town. The year-to-date expenditures presented report reflects spending within budget except for a couple of transfers approved so far this year. One upcoming transfer is to add more funding to the Capital Hazardous Tree Removal account. B. Ciurylo reviewed the summary of BOE expenditure report that shows available funds of over \$600,000. She said that the budget is running smoothly and that some BOE grants have increased.
- 3) **Capital Projects:** M. Walter explained that the Salt Shed was completed in this year's budget. The Rec Park softball field is 95% complete. The grass is in and the last thing to complete is the scoreboard, which will be finished in the spring. The tennis court was completed. The basketball court has been demolished and the new location is staked out and will be completed in the spring. The road in Rec Park has been started and is in progress. The interior of the BOE/Town Maintenance garage is underway, the exterior is done, and half of the roof is done. The Public Works department is doing a great job on trimming and cutting trees, but it is hard to keep up. He stated that the Town will have authorized at the end of the year \$100,000 for tree removal. He stated that Open Space is making progress with their commitment with Trust for Public Land on the Wellswood property.

b. Education:

- 1) **Status of 19-20 Revenues & Expenditures:** M. Geryk stated that the BOE spending is on track. She said there are a few tuition lines with a surplus but does not expect any more spending. She stated that there is nothing unexpected within the BOE budget. There

were improvements in the curriculum; a new math program and assessment tool, new science and language arts. She said there has been a re-allocation of staff coaching and intervention roles to meet the needs of children. There is contract support for teachers and learning and a school-wide approach on student behavior and positive behavior when students are struggling.

- 2) **Capital Projects: The BOE** Capital projects included painting, rug replacement, and ceiling replacement. There was a request from Fire Chief to upgrade the fire alarm System and it is almost completed. Over winter break, there will be a Request for Proposal going out to upgrade the generator. The Security grant was not approved. The BOE has moved forward with the repeater/walkie talkie, and there was an upgrade with the surveillance cameras. This project was covered with the funds in the Capital Account and some was paid from the BOE Operating Budget. An upgrade to the phone system and all the ducts were cleaned in the building and new air conditioners were installed to help with air quality. The BOE had a security and data assessment that provided significant feedback on student/staff data recommendations and a request will be put in the upcoming budget.

6. KEY ISSUES IMPACTING THE FY 20-21 BUDGET:

a. Municipal

- 1) **Tax Base /Grand List:** M. Walter stated that the Grand list is not established yet, but it is anticipated to not be going down.
- 2) **Tax Collection Rate:** Reviewed previously.
- 3) **Debt Payments:** B. Ciurylo stated that in 2021 the last debt payment of approximately \$150,000 will be made.
- 4) **Undesignated Fund Balance:** B. Ciurylo stated that as of June 30th, 2019 the undesignated fund balance will be at \$4,139,934, up from \$3.8 million. Adjustments included \$400,000 out of the General Fund to keep mill rate down. Another \$75,000 was moved from the General Fund and put into the BOE non-lapsing account. Also, \$50,000 was transferred from the General Fund to establish a new Capital Account for hazardous tree removal. B. Ciurylo said that overall the Town ended the 18/19 year with a 23% Undesignated Fund Balance vs. the 18/19 Budget Requirement. For the 18/19 budget, this was projected to be 21%. For 19/20, there will be \$85,000 being transferred out of the General Fund after the town meeting on Jan 21st to cover capital projects; such as the Salt Shed and Hazardous Tree Removal. Overall, the Town is in a good position financially.
- 5) **Revenues from the State of Connecticut:** Already discussed.

b. Education

- 1) **Projected Student Counts:** M. Geryk stated Pre-K through 8th grade projected enrollment was 387 and is currently at 409 student's and they anticipate that will remain stable for next year. At the high school, there are currently 238 students and the anticipation are that there will be a decline of around 222 or so. M. Geryk stated that they do not see a significant increase for tuition for high school. M. Geryk stated that they renegotiated the high school contracts with E.O. Smith and Bolton for the next 10 years.

- 2) **Special Education Costs:** M. Geryk stated that they are not anticipating any increase in Special Education costs, but they will have a firmer projection in March.
- 3) **Staffing:** Staffing levels are anticipated to stay the same with one more classroom in 4th grade that they may be able to adjust internally.
- 4) **Minimum Budget Requirement:** B. Ciurylo stated that we have not received notification yet from the State regarding non-compliance with the MBR and the additional amount that the Town may need to allocate to the 19/20 BOE Budget. Based on the fund balance, she does not think that will impact the Town too much.

7. **LONG RANGE PLANNING**

- 1) **Municipal:** M. Walter stated that we anticipate over \$300,000 in long-range planning, of which \$100,000 will be for hazardous tree removal, road work on Lake Rd, and getting back on track with the Rec Park projects at \$195,000. M. Walter stated that we will start planning for the municipal maintenance garage at Rec Park that will hold equipment. M. Walter said that an estimate on new Public Works garage would be over 3million; however, one option would be to add an addition to the existing Public Works garage. The heating system at the Beckish Senior Center will have to be replaced at \$50,000. On the operations side, we will be looking into a part-time social worker. We recently had an IT Security audit and the plan is to address saving data to cloud server, new password architecture, etc. and training for employees. E. Sharpe stated that the Town should consider bonding for the garage and that the Town should do some homework on this. S. Everett said he would entertain looking at that, but he would like to talk about expansion first.
- 2) **Education:** M. Geryk stated that currently the long-range plan is consistent with requests made from past history. M. Geryk stated that in the 20/21 Capital Budget requests, there will be a request for a new maintenance truck for \$25,000, upgrading/replacing the Porter track and additional 17 security cameras.

8. **DISCUSSION GENERAL FUND RESERVES AND MILL RATE:**

S. Everett stated that the Town will keep the mill rate as low as possible.

Judy Jordan and Brian Pedersen, both elected to FiPAC introduced themselves to the Tri-Board members. Joseph Napolitano elected to the Board of Education also introduced himself.

9. **ADJOURNMENT:** S. Everett MOVED to ADJOURN the Meeting at 8:04pm. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.