



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council Committee of the Whole

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Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Mayor Bruce Flax, Councilors Dean G. Antipas, Diane Barber, Greg Grim, Rich Moravsik, Karen F. Morton, Bonnie Nault, Deb Peruzzotti, and Harry A. Watson

Wednesday, April 26, 2017

6:00 PM

Groton Senior Center

SPECIAL MEETING - REVISED

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Flax called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Flax, Councilor Grim, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Morton, Councilor Nault, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Watson and Councilor Moravsik
Members Absent: Councilor Barber

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Assistant to the Town Manager Nicki Bresnyan.

3. Calendar and Communications

Councilor Morton attended the first meeting (orientation session) of the TIF Advisory Committee. The next meeting will begin to layout the framework for the program. Councilor Morton explained the purpose of the committee.

Mayor Flax stated he heard from legislators about additional e-mails from the Town Assessor regarding Odd Fellows and he would like to see what is being written. Town Manager Oefinger noted the first letter was the one signed by the Town Council, followed by an answer to a question from a legislator and clarification of an issue that was misinterpreted. The Town Manager will forward copies to the Mayor. The Mayor stated he would like to send a letter noting that the Town Council is negotiating in good faith with Odd Fellows, is still trying to gather facts, and is not willing to say that they want the legislation pulled. The Town Manager noted that is completely opposite from the letter that was signed by the Council. The Mayor confirmed that the Council was amenable to sending another letter.

4. Approval of Minutes

2017-0104 Approval of Minutes (Committee of the Whole)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council Committee of the Whole meetings of January 3, 2017 and April 11, 2017 are hereby accepted and approved.

A motion was made by Councilor Morton, seconded by Councilor Nault, to adopt.

The motion carried unanimously

5. NEW BUSINESS

2017-0100 Approving FYE 2018 Budgets

Discussed

Cindy Landry, Director of Finance, distributed a revised referral memo regarding the FYE 2018 budgets and computing the tax rate for the General Fund, Mumford Cove, and Sewer District. She provided a brief recap of the Town Council budget review process. With the Town Council adjustments, there is a 2.1% decrease from the 2017 budget, which results in a 1.61 mill increase. After RTM review of the budget, Ms. Landry will look at revenues again and come back to the

Council to set final mill rates. Ms. Landry distributed additional attachments including reconciliation of accounts for budgets and CIPs. The figures are based on receiving the same amount of funding from the state as in 2017. Discussion followed on the impact of the Minimum Budget Requirement on the cuts to the Board of Education budget. Mayor Flax reviewed the process related to potential state cuts.

Councilor Peruzzotti asked what would happen if the Council did not follow the charter. The Town Manager stated the budget process is outlined in the Charter. The RTM can add money back in up to the Town Manager's number. He noted receipt of a communication from CCM noting the Appropriations Committee failed to vote on the budget and that it appears unlikely that the Committee will reconvene before Thursday. It further stated that negotiations will take place in the upcoming months, which seems to confirm that the Town will not have state numbers by the time the budget is adopted. The Charter is the Town's "constitution" and it should not be broken. The RTM has the final say on the budget, and from a practical standpoint the Town must have a budget by the end of June. There is barely one month's operating funds in the General Fund.

Discussion followed on options if the state cut is higher than expected including tightening belts, tapping into the General Fund and other fund balances, and cancelling CIP projects. A supplemental tax bill is not recommended or affordable in the current Finance budget.

Discussion followed on the cuts made to the budget by the Town Council. The Town Manager explained that compared to last year's budget, cuts to the Board of Education and Town were approximately \$6 million. If there are additional cuts, the Town Manager will need some direction on how they would be divided between the Town and Board of Education.

Councilor Peruzzotti suggested that the Charter Revision Commission review the Town's budget timeline and consider aligning it better with the state's budget process. Discussion followed on changing the Town's fiscal year versus the state meeting its obligation to pass a timely budget. The Town Manager reviewed the relief offered in the current legislation.

Councilor Watson left the meeting.

Roll Call: Members Present: Mayor Flax, Councilor Grim, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Morton, Councilor Nault, Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Moravsik
Members Absent: Councilor Barber and Councilor Watson

A motion was made by Councilor Grim, seconded by Councilor Moravsik, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

Councilor Watson returned to the meeting.

Members Present: Mayor Flax, Councilor Grim, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Morton, Councilor Nault, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Watson and Councilor Moravsik
Members Absent: Councilor Barber

2017-0101 Computation of Tax Rate for General Fund (FYE 2018)

A motion was made by Councilor Nault, seconded by Councilor Moravsik, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 7 - Mayor Flax, Councilor Grim, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Morton, Councilor Nault, Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Moravsik
Abstain: 1 - Councilor Watson

2017-0102 Computation of Tax Rate for Mumford Cove (FYE 2018)

A motion was made by Councilor Moravsik, seconded by Councilor Nault, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

2017-0103 Computation of Tax Rate for Groton Sewer District (FYE 2018)

A motion was made by Councilor Antipas, seconded by Councilor Nault, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

2017-0099 Information Technology Systems Administrator Job Description

Discussed

Bob Zagami, Director of Human Resources/Risk Management, and Brian Hancock, Manager of Information Technology, were present. Mr. Zagami noted the request to update the job description for the IT Systems Administrator. There are no major changes, just updates to the responsibilities. Mr. Hancock briefly described the duties of the position.

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Nault, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

2017-0006 Labor Negotiations (2017 Standing Referral)

A motion was made by Mayor Flax, seconded by Councilor Nault, that the Town Council Committee of the Whole, along with Town Manager Mark R. Oefinger, Human Resources Director Robert Zagami and Town Attorney Eileen Duggan, go into executive session at 7:15 p.m. for the purpose of discussing strategy and/or negotiations with respect to current and pending collective bargaining with multiple bargaining units. This action is taken without prejudice to the Council's right to discuss these matters in a private meeting pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §1 200 (2).

The motion carried unanimously

Discussed

The executive session concluded at 7:50 p.m.

At the end of the meeting, the Committee returned to discussion of this item.

A motion was made by Mayor Flax, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, to approve the funds necessary to implement the tentative agreement between Supervisory Employees, Local 818 of Council #4, AFSCME, AFL-CIO for the term July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2019.

The motion carried unanimously

2017-0094 Vergennes Court Project - Update

Discussed

Gary Schneider, Director of Public Works, reported on the March 22nd public information meeting on the Vergennes Court/Route 1 project. He provided a brief background on the project that would dead end Vergennes Court and leave only an emergency access. Mr. Schneider summarized public comments, suggestions, and alternatives.

Councilor Moravsik stated his opposition to the project. Other Councilors also commented, noting the opposition from the Poquonnock Bridge neighborhood, potential traffic increase with the school project, and comparisons with Allyn Street.

A motion was made by Councilor Moravsik, seconded by Councilor Grim, to not authorize continuation of the project, effectively cancelling the project and leaving Vergennes Court as is.

Mayor Flax suggested that the Town must do a better job communicating issues such as this. He would prefer to see the Town look at alternatives because of safety issues and what has been invested in the project to date. Discussion followed on looking at other options. Councilor Moravsik offered to withdraw the motion providing Vergennes Court would not be closed. The motion and second were withdrawn.

A motion was made by Councilor Nault, seconded by Councilor Antipas, to pursue other alternative designs for Vergennes Court with DOT and the neighbors' input.

Councilor Moravsik attempted to clarify that Councilor Nault's motion included not closing Vergennes Court. Discussion followed on whether or not "other alternatives" includes closing Vergennes Court.

Town Manager Oefinger noted that the Town Council has been aware of this project for well over 10 years. The Town Council and RTM already agreed to fund the project, but staff found an alternate source of funding. He asked the Council to consider where the petition originated and where the people come from.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 7 - Mayor Flax, Councilor Grim, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Morton, Councilor Nault, Councilor Watson and Councilor Moravsik
Opposed: 1 - Councilor Peruzzotti

The Committee recessed at 8:33 p.m. for the Town Council special meeting. The meeting resumed at 8:45 p.m.

2017-0044 Town Manager Search Committee

A motion was made by Mayor Flax, seconded by Councilor Watson, to go into executive session at 8:45 p.m. to discuss the Town Manager search effort and to invite Randi Frank to attend.

The motion carried unanimously

Discussed

The executive session concluded at 9:26 p.m.

A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Moravsik, to authorize Randi Frank to enter into negotiations with a potential candidate for Town Manager.

The motion carried unanimously

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:28 p.m.