



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes - Draft

Town Council Committee of the Whole

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Mayor James L. Streeter, Councilors Bruce S. Flax, Bill Johnson, Catherine Kolnaski, Deborah B. Monteiro, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Deborah L. Peruzzotti, Paulann H. Sheets, and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, February 22, 2011

7:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Monteiro, to nominate Councilor Watson to be Mayor pro tem in the absence of Mayor Streeter.

The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor pro tem Watson called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. **ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Watson
Members Absent: Mayor Streeter and Councilor Sheets

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Administrative Secretary Susan Wells.

3. **Calendar and Communications**

None.

4. **Approval of Minutes**

2011-0044 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 meeting of February 8, 2011 are hereby accepted and approved.

A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Monteiro, to adopt.

The motion carried unanimously

5. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

2010-0026 Terms and Conditions of Town Clerk Employment

Discussed

Town Attorney Eileen Duggan read the conditions to go into Executive Session.

Motion

Discussed and Recommended no action taken

The Executive Session ended at 7:35 p.m.

It was noted by Councilor Peruzzotti that Councilor Monteiro had left the meeting ill at 7:40 p.m.

Roll Call: Members Present: Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Watson
Members Absent: Mayor Streeter, Councilor Monteiro and Councilor Sheets

2011-0061 Town Clerk Compensation
Recommended for a Resolution

Councilor O'Beirne commented that his first reaction was to do as was done with the Town Manager; taking a zero percent increase in salary and the Town Clerk's salary for 2011 be retained.

A motion was made by Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., seconded by Councilor Flax, that the Town Clerk's salary for 2011 be retained at the same level as it is now.

Mayor Pro tem Watson agreed that Town Clerk Moukawsher was doing a great job, but times are what they are. Councilor Flax also agreed that the Town Clerk was doing a very good job and he agreed with the motion on the floor.

Town Clerk Moukawsher told the Town Council that it had been an interesting year for her and she had gotten to know a lot about the Town government. She also observed the dedication and quality of the workforce in the Town of Groton.

The motion carried unanimously

2011-0059 Task Force for Climate Change and Sustainable Community Final Report
Discussed

Chairperson Zell Steever reviewed a slide presentation and recommendations from the committee's final report. Mr. Steever introduced and thanked task force committee members present as follows: Syma Ebbin, Gerald Robinson, Matthew Jadamec, Neil Mackillop, Mary Ellen French, William Glazier, and Edith Fairgrieve. He also thanked committee members who were not present and they were: Councilor Sheets; Robert Westhaver and John Sutherland.

Mr. Steever in conclusion stressed that section III of the final report describes the four steps that the Town needed to take to lay a foundation for developing an effective strategy on climate change and they were as follows:

- 1. Resolve to support climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies as central organizing, planning and development principles for Groton.*
- 2. Establish an Office of Climate Change and Sustainable Community in the Town Manager's Office, staffed by a mid-level Climate Change Officer, by July 2011.*
- 3. Establish a permanent Task Force on Climate Change and Sustainable Community.*
- 4. Establish the Groton Energy Fund (GEF), a revolving fund created by the dollars saved in energy efficiency and energy rebates to fund additional public energy efficiency and conservation retrofit projects in the community.*

Councilor Sheets arrived at the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Roll Call: Members Present: Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Watson
Members Absent: Mayor Streeter and Councilor Monteiro

Discussed

Mayor pro tem Watson thanked Mr. Steever for his presentation and for all the work that had been done by the Task Force on Climate Change and Sustainable Community.

Councilor O'Beirne commented and questioned that from his understanding of this information they had heard before and what they heard tonight asked, wasn't this issue a prime example that could be a regional operation instead of each Town reinventing the wheel. Mr. Steever said that with very little staff to do the job, not much progress had been made at the state level on Climate Change. Mr. Steever added that there were 20,000 folks that come to work in Town everyday; and some sort of mass transit was needed and added that we already had in place SEAT. He continued that Groton had all boards, commissions, Planning and Zoning Department already in

place and that there were several things that were unique to our own community. Mr. Steever expressed that Federal and State funds would be available to the communities at this point and thought we should take advantage of this local issue for this community.

Councilor Sheets asked what part of the responsibility of the Grant Officer would be in getting grant monies. Mr. Steever said that one of the duties of the Officer of Climate Change and Sustainable Community would be to look into grants and funding.

Mayor pro tem Watson stated that Monday, March 4th, would be the last meeting of the Task Force and he thought there should be a continuing effort of this task force. Mr. Steever thought that there should be a permanent Task Force for Climate Change and Sustainable Community. Mayor pro tem Watson asked the Town Council to take home and read the final report. Mr. Steever said that the Task Force would be willing to come back and talk about it on March 8th at the Committee of the Whole meeting.

Councilor Peruzzotti asked if it was a request of the Task Force Committee to have a referral that they would like to extend their Task Force and was there anything specific that they were working on that they would want to continue with. Mr. Steever stated that the Task Force provided the Town Council with the four issues and they had a system that is very complex. Town Manager Oefinger suggested to the Town Council to take their time and go through the Task Force Final Report and come back to the March 8th Committee of the Whole meeting to talk about the report with the Task Force.

Councilor Sheets commented that in order to go forward there were a wealth of recommendations and a considerable amount of discussions that the Task Force would like to have and that there was one section in the report that listed all the topics. Councilor Sheets stated that this was a launching project and that this should be a top organizing principle and should be included in the Plan of Conservation and Development. She concluded that once money was generated, funds could be raised and that there was more work for the Task Force and she thought the Task Force should be permanent.

Councilor Flax commented on the extensive references and footnotes in the Task Force's final report and mentioned the reference regarding the heavily damaged areas from rainfall events. Councilor Flax supported what Mr. Steever has done and stated that it was an interesting problem having to do with risk management and public safety. Mr. Steever concluded that it was a work in progress and there were many unknowns.

2010-0236 Credit Card Usage in Town Departments

Not Discussed

This referral was recommended by the Town Manager to be spoken about at the March 8th meeting.

2011-0038 Department of Education Youth and Family Services Funding

Discussed

Town Manager Oefinger stated that this item was normally sent to Group I. He explained that the memo from Marge Fondulas, Director of Human Services, stated that this was a grant from the State Department of Education and could be used to supplant a portion of the salaries of the Youth and Family Services counselors who provided short-term counseling, crisis intervention services, and groups to at-risk youth referrals. Councilor Flax asked if there were matching funds and Town Manager Oefinger said yes.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2011-0039 Department of Education Youth Services Enhancement Grant

Discussed

Town Manager Oefinger explained that the referral memo from Marge Fondulas, Director of Human Services, stated that the Department of Education distributes Youth and Family Services Enhancement Funding and Groton was eligible for a grant in the amount of \$7,550.

A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

2011-0045**Connecticut Dial-A-Ride Grant****Discussed**

Town Manager Oefinger stated that this grant was received from the State of Connecticut to enhance transportation services for the elderly and disabled and there was a copy of the authorizing resolution from the State attached to their packet.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2011-0043**Regulations for Parks and Recreation Facilities****Discussed**

Town Manager Oefinger explained to the Town Council that as stated in John Silsby's referral memo that the Parks staff, along with the Parks and Recreation Commission, were recommending changes to Section V. concerning waterfront areas. Town Manger Oefinger stated that there were minor adjustments in dealing with waterfront property and non motorized boats.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2010-0124**Review of Town Council Goals****Not Discussed**

Mayor pro tem Watson said that this referral would be discussed at the March 8th Town Council Committee of the Whole meeting since Mayor Streeter was absent tonight. Mayor Watson added that they are making progress on their goals in Group II.

2011-0060**Mortimer Wright Preserve Trail Update****Recommended for a Resolution**

Town Manager Oefinger gave an overview of this item. He spoke regarding where the north end of Brook Street intersects with Route 215, which is part of the Mortimer Wright Preserve and owned by the Town of Groton. He stated that when this item was on the agenda in 2008 it was talked about the Town's assistance in taking care of the overgrown area on the property. Dr. French and Sue Sutherland expressed in their e-mails to the Town Manager that they wanted to go ahead and take care of this property with volunteers that they had. Town Manager Oefinger asked the Town Council if they had any additional thoughts regarding this work; and stated that the Town needed to notify the two adjacent property owners.

Dr. French spoke to the Town Council regarding the small piece of property, where the north end of Brook Street intersects with Route 215, which was part of the Mortimer Wright Preserve. Dr. French spoke about his desire to put a trail on this piece of property; a three foot wide trail. He spoke about how there was a lot of junk and debris on the property and how it needed to be cleaned up.

Mayor pro tem Watson stated how he, Councilors Sheets, Monteiro and Mayor Streeter had walked the property and saw the debris on this piece of property. Mayor Watson stated that a trail

would be much less intrusive than a paved road into the woods.

Town Manager Oefinger stated that it was his desire to do what Dr. French and Sue Sutherland wanted; but that was two years ago and now Dr. French and his volunteers have indicated that they can do most of it on their own.

Councilor Johnson asked what this trail would be used for. Dr. French did not have a clear cut answer and added that using mountain bikes on the trail would be difficult and riding horses on the property would not be his call and that it was the Town's property and they could do what they wanted. The Town Council concluded that there should be a resolution made that Dr. French come back to the Town and Councilor O'Beirne thought that it would be a good idea to contact the two neighbors on both sides of this piece of property and let them know about tonight's discussion.

A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Flax, that the Town Council re-authorizes the installation of the above noted "access" trail utilizing volunteer help and that the immediate adjacent property owners to this section of the trail be notified of the Town Council action. The motion carried unanimously

2010-0172

FYE 2012 Budget

Discussed

Town Manager Oefinger addressed the Town Council regarding the Governor's proposed FYE 2012-2013 budget. Town Manger Oefinger stated that it appeared that, as a result of the governor's proposed budget, the Town of Groton would be receiving \$2.4 million less in state revenue and this reduction was due to the complete elimination of the Manufacturing/Machinery/Equipment (MME) PILOT program.

Town Manager Oefinger discussed Attachment 3 that was in the packet, which was the FY2012-FY2013 Governor's Proposed Budget Impact on the Town of Groton from CCM. He went over the chart which was a summary of the estimated statewide changes to major municipal grants. Town Manager Oefinger stated that Groton receives two types of grants from the State; Education and non-Education. He said that there was going to be \$140,000 less in education and public school transportation and \$38,000 less in non-education. The Town of Groton would be getting in major categories \$178,000 less than what the Town usually got.

Town Manager Oefinger stated that regarding the elimination of the MM&E program that Representative Moukawsher was already on this issue and wanted to know the full dollar amount to Groton. Town Manager Oefinger also added that one year the Governor was proposing that we would get into the business of taxing boats and airplanes, but it would not affect us this year.

Town Manager Oefinger gave a rundown from the Tax Assessors' report that our Grand List fell 0.1% from last year's and the net real estate rose about 0.4%

Town Manager Oefinger went over with the Town Council the draft budget schedule. He stated that the budget should be in the Council's hands by Tuesday, March 15th and that the Town would have the budget on the web site as quickly as possible. Town Manager Oefinger told the Town Council that they were proposing to have the budget hearing on Tuesday, March 29th at the Senior Center. He concluded that they would like to act on the budget on April 19th.

7. Consideration of Committee Referral Items as per Town Council Referral List

None.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

9. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Flax, to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.