



# Town of Groton, Connecticut

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## Meeting Minutes

### Town Council Committee of the Whole

**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**

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Saturday, October 16, 2010

9:00 AM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

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#### SPECIAL MEETING

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1. **CALL TO ORDER**

*Mayor Streeter called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.*

2. **ROLL CALL**

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

*RTM: Jackie Massett, Patrice Granatosky*

*Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Executive Assistant Nicki Bresnyan.*

3. **NEW BUSINESS**

**2010-0172 FYE 2012 Budget**

**Discussed**

*Town Manager Oefinger stated that FYE 2012 is going to be an exceptionally difficult budget year. Compounding that fact is that state revenues will likely remain unknown throughout the Town's budget process. The purpose of this meeting is to begin to discuss ideas outside of the actual budget process.*

*Mayor Streeter led the group in an identification of ideas for consideration, as follows:*

- 1) *Grounds maintenance*
- 2) *Sharing grounds equipment*
- 3) *Police assessment*

*Mayor Streeter provided an update on this issue. A third meeting of the interested parties has taken place and the group has developed suggestions for a Scope of Services. Councilor Watson asked that marine patrol be included in the study. Discussion followed on the need for budget format standardization among the various entities in Town.*

- 4) *Fleet maintenance program*

*The Town Manager explained the program and what entities use it. There are three fleet maintenance programs in Town. Unfortunately, there is no existing space available to consolidate the operations.*

- 5) *Fire districts*

*The Town Manager explained PILOT funding and pass through district taxes. It was noted that if the Town cuts PILOT funding, the fire districts will raise their district taxes. Discussion followed on taking a closer look at the fire districts' budgets.*

- 6) *Lessons learned*

*Councilor O'Beirne suggested evaluating the savings that have been achieved in Town Operations versus the Board of Education which historically returns nothing to the General Fund.*

- 7) *Encumbrances*
- 8) *Capital Reserve Fund*
- 9) *Cell phones*

*Doug Ackerman, Director of Administrative Services, noted that the Town examines its cell phone plans periodically. The Town Manager feels the bigger issue is monthly fee "creepage."*

10) *City highway budget meeting*

11) *Outside Agencies*

*The Town Manager noted that options for outside agency funding include accepting no new applications or placing a cap on the funding. The intent was never to fund an agency forever. Discussion followed on reviewing outside agencies' operating budgets and including Councilors in the review process. Councilors Peruzzotti and Watson volunteered to participate in the outside agency review process.*

12) *Ambulance funding*

13) *Increasing user fees*

14) *Labor negotiations*

*Mr. Ackerman explained the labor negotiation process and issues for consideration.*

15) *Department/division/staffing realignment*

16) *Golf course*

*Discussion followed on the desirability of owning the golf course and the return on investment.*

17) *Travel/professional development and training*

18) *Board of Education*

*Topics for discussion relative to the Board of Education including professional development, the outlook if the Phase II school program is not approved, minimum budget amount, payroll, time keeping, and purchasing.*

19) *Libraries*

20) *Insurance (privatization)*

21) *Payroll (privatization)*

*Councilor Peruzzotti asked if additional revenue opportunities have been considered. Town Manager Oefinger noted that user fees are looked at every year. He also cited two recent examples of revenue opportunities under consideration by the Council: use of the animal control facility by New London and community access television.*

*Discussion followed on how much of a budget deficit the Town is starting with based on fund balance and anticipated reduced revenues from state and federal sources.*

#### 4. **ADJOURNMENT**

*A motion was made by Mayor Streeter, seconded by Councilor Monteiro, to adjourn the meeting at 11:00 a.m.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*