



# Town of Groton, Connecticut

## Meeting Minutes

### 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 Bruce Flax, Councilors Dean G. Antipas, Diane Barber, Joe de la Cruz, Greg Grim, Karen F. Morton, Bonnie Nault, Deb Peruzzotti, and Harry A. Watson*

Tuesday, January 19, 2016

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

#### SPECIAL MEETING

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

*Mayor Flax called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.*

#### 2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Flax, Councilor Barber, Councilor Grim, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Morton, Councilor Nault, Councilor de la Cruz, Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Watson

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

#### 3. NEW BUSINESS

##### 2016-0015 FYE 2015 CAFR

##### Discussed

*Town Manager Oefinger explained that the auditor was unable to attend so discussion of this item has been postponed to a special meeting of the Committee of the Whole on February 2nd.*

##### 2016-0009 Joint Meeting with Board of Education (2016 Standing Referral)

##### Discussed

*Board of Education members Weitlauf, Newsome, Ackerman, White, Fitzgerald, Volkmann, and Watson were present, along with Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mike Graner and Business Manager Don Meltenbarger.*

##### - FYE 2016 Adjustments

*Dr. Graner stated that he has been working with the current budget and he feels the Board is okay. There have been more retirements than anticipated resulting in a budget savings, but increased magnet school participation continues to be a significant cost driver. Currently, there is about \$100,000 extra in the budget, but that equates to only one special needs placement. The Board is also doing well in the medical account.*

*Town Manager Oefinger explained that more importantly, the Town is projecting a \$500,000 shortfall in revenues for FYE 2016, which equates to 3.3% of the Town Operations budget. He is asking all departments to identify what a 3.3% reduction in their budgets would mean. The purpose of this agenda item was to discuss what Town Operations and the Board of Education can do collectively to save some of those dollars. At this point, the Town may have to budget money to maintain the fund balance at 7.75%. Mayor Flax feels there should be some give back on the Board of Education side since it represents over 60% of the budget. The entire shortfall cannot be absorbed by Town Operations alone. Mayor Flax asked the Board to attempt to find some savings in the current budget year.*

##### - FYE 2017 Budget

*Dr. Graner distributed a proposed FYE 2017 budget and provided an overview of highlights, big budget impacts, and the budget history. Discussion followed on the cost of students attending out*

*of district schools and the issue of magnet schools.*

*- School Facilities Update*

*Dr. Graner provided an overview of the school initiative. The School Facilities Initiative Task Force has proposed special legislation to receive diversity funding for all three schools, which would greatly reduce the cost of the plan to Groton. Currently the proposal is in the State Education Committee and Task Force representatives will be meeting with the chair of the Committee next week.*

*- School Resource Officer at Middle School*

*Currently, there is a full time officer at West Side provided by the City. The Board would like to have one at Cutler. Dr. Graner noted that given the constraints on the budget, a school resource officer at Cutler would be a nice to have, but the school is currently well run and safe.*

*- Shared Services*

*Mayor Flax distributed and reviewed a paper on shared services, which each body was asked to consider for action. Discussion followed. Board of Education Chair Watson agreed to discuss it with the Board and Newsome stated she would reach out to her husband, the RTM Moderator.*

*- Possible Collaboration on Joint Town/Board of Education Marketing Position*

*Dr. Graner noted that the school district does not have a marketing person and the board would like to consider sharing a person with the Town. Discussion followed. It was suggested that this item be discussed at a Liaison Committee meeting.*

*Councilor Peruzzotti expressed concern with the Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR) and the lack of flexibility. It was suggested that the Liaison Committee discuss forming a legislative subcommittee to address MBR.*

*- Outsourcing by Board of Education*

*Town Manager Oefinger explained that the Council was wondering what services are outsourced by the Board of Education, and the discussion was meant to take place in the context of shared services.*

**2016-0024**

**Appointment of Other Attorneys as Recommended by the Town Attorney**

**Discussed**

*The Town Council appointed Eileen Duggan as the Town Attorney. Ms. Duggan then identifies the persons within her firm who will assist her, as well as other attorneys (Board of Education attorneys, bond attorneys, and other special attorneys).*

*Ms. Duggan noted that in the past, she has also recommended an environmental attorney (no current issues) and a conflict attorney (now appointed on a case by case basis). For the Board of Education, Ms. Duggan recommends Berchem and Moses with the concurrence of the Board of Education. Ms. Duggan reviewed the firm's fee structure, which is competitive. For bond counsel, Ms. Duggan recommends Day Pitney, whose fee structure is based on the work.*

*Watson noted that the Board has not yet discussed appointing Berchem and Moses, but those present expressed support for the firm.*

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

The motion carried unanimously

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

*The meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.*