



# 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*

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Tuesday, January 26, 2016

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

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#### REGULAR MEETING

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1. **CALL TO ORDER**

*Mayor Flax called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.*

2. **ROLL CALL**

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

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

3. **Calendar and Communications**

*None.*

4. **Approval of Minutes**

**2016-0029 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 12, 2016 and January 14, 2016 are hereby accepted and approved.

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

**The motion carried unanimously**

5. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

*None.*

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

**2016-0022 Town Clerk Compensation**

**Discussed**

*Mayor Flax noted that the Town Clerk has the option of meeting in executive session. Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher chose not to go into executive session, citing the fact that she is a public figure so the discussion should be public.*

*Town Manager Oefinger explained that he had conferred with the Town Attorney who recommended that the Town Council go into executive session, unless the Town Clerk specifically requests that the discussion be held in open session. Although the Town Council will be setting the Town Clerk's compensation, it is likely that discussion will involve performance at some point and under FOI, the Council should go into executive session.*

*Councilor Peruzzotti asked if the Town Clerk had anything she wanted to share with the Council and Ms. Moukawsher stated she did not bring anything with her.*

**A motion was made by Councilor Nault, seconded by Councilor de la Cruz, to enter executive session at 6:07 p.m. to discuss #2016-0022 Town Clerk Compensation and to invite Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher to attend.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**Discussed**

*The executive session concluded at 6:58 p.m.*

**2015-0272**

**Groton Housing Authority Redevelopment Plan**

**Discussed**

*Elaine Schmidt, Executive Director of the Groton Housing Authority (GHA), and Rick Ross from Westmount Development Group were present to address the Council. Ms. Schmidt explained that GHA is trying to make improvements at its two developments (Pequot Village and Grasso Gardens) and is working on major grant applications for low income tax credits and other funding sources. The GHA has hired a consultant, Westmount Development Group, to put together a plan for a major renovation.*

*Mr. Ross noted that the plan will first address Pequot Village and then Grasso Gardens. In order to put in competitive applications, GHA needs to address how the entity pays taxes and fees. Currently, there is a cooperation agreement between GHA and the Town whereby GHA pays 10% of the rents to the Town and the Town pays the sewer use fees, which are approximately equal. GHA is requesting a reduction from 10% to 0% and asking to pay the sewer use fee. This will allow GHA to demonstrate that there is municipal involvement in and contribution to the project.*

*Mr. Ross reviewed the various sources of funding for the project. One source is a mortgage through CHFPA, which would require an increase in the rents.*

*In response to Councilor de la Cruz, Town Manager Oefinger noted that GHA pays nothing to the Poquonock Bridge Fire District so this modification would have no effect on the fire district.*

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

*A motion was made by Councilor Antipas, seconded by Councilor Nault, to amend the motion to clarify in the resolution that this is a tax abatement, not an exemption.*

*Town Manager Oefinger explained that the resolution developed for the Town Council will state how the two agreements that are currently in place will be modified, in effect eliminating the shelter rent payment to the Town with the understanding that the Housing Authority will pay the sewer use fees.*

*The motion to amend carried unanimously.*

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2016-0012**

**Road Reconstruction Bond - Year 4 Projects**

**Recommended for a Resolution**

*Public Works Director Gary Schneider, Groton Long Point Association President Mike Flynn, City Mayor Marian Galbraith, City Public Works Foreman Tim Umrysz, and City Finance Director Ron Yuhas were present.*

*Town Manager Oefinger explained that as part of the road maintenance and rehabilitation bond, the Town, City, and Groton Long Point are required to submit an annual report in December outlining what has been accomplished in the calendar year and what is planned for the upcoming calendar year.*

*Mayor Galbraith reviewed changes to the City's 2015 program and noted that they anticipate having remaining funding. For 2016, the City is planning to do the Shore Avenue seawall, Slocomb Terrace, and Jupiter Point drainage engineering. The City is also asking that funds remaining in a 2013 CIP project be used for another project.*

*Town Manager Oefinger provided a more detailed explanation of how the road bond works.*

*In response to questions about the 2013 CIP funding, the Town Manager stated that the Town Council needs to know what is planned for the remaining funds and the reappropriation will require Town Council, and possibly RTM, approval.*

*A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Nault, to accept the City of Groton's report.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

*Mr. Flynn noted that a revised program was distributed to the Town Council. He stated that last year was the first time that Groton Long Point worked with the Town Public Works Department and it was a pleasure. In 2016, Groton Long Point plans to do East Shore Avenue and the cost provided by the Town is lower than the original estimate. In 2017, more funding will be used because there is a larger project planned.*

*A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor de la Cruz, to accept Groton Long Point's report.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

*Mr. Schneider provided an overview of the program from the Town's perspective. The Town used a new pavement mixture this year with a longer life expectancy. The Town is now able to work around the construction schedules of other entities. Mr. Schneider projects unexpended funds of approximately \$250,000 and several roads have been added to the program. He added that the road bond program has been very positive and advantageous.*

*A motion was made by Councilor de la Cruz, seconded by Councilor Nault, to accept the Town's report.*

*Discussion followed on the advantages of the program versus budgeting and avoiding the cost of bonding. After the fourth year, the Town will be in a better position to provide an analysis of the pros and cons of the program and prepare for the next referendum.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

**2016-0014**

**Agreement to Convert HPS Streetlights to LED**

**Discussed**

*Rick Norris, Sustainability Program Project Manager, noted that the Council previously approved exploration of the conversion of High Pressure Sodium (HPS) streetlights to LED. The Town conducted an RFP process and selected Tanko Streetlighting, Inc. Mr. Norris provided a brief overview of the process.*

*Jason Tanko reviewed a PowerPoint presentation on the conversion. The project starts with a comprehensive GIS audit to identify a baseline and reconcile streetlight data with Eversource, followed by lighting design and final cost estimates. Tanko would handle material procurement and logistics management. Installation is done in a phased approach. Tanko will coordinate rebates and recycling of old materials. The Town can maintain the fixtures, contract with Tanko, or issue an RFP for ongoing maintenance. M. Tanko reviewed the cost of Tanko's standard maintenance plan. With respect to light pollution concerns, Mr. Tank explained that the proposed fixtures are more directed with less light directed upward so light is contained to the street and right-of-way area. This project will only address Town-owned lights and not the lights owned by*

Groton Utilities, and the Town will be looking at parking lot lights as well. The schools are working on their own conversion program. Mr. Tank noted that the HPS streetlight failure rate is 17-22%. With LED, the failure rate drops to less than 1%.

Mr. Tanko provided a recap of services provided by Tanko and a summary of their proposal.

Mr. Tanko and Mr. Norris responded to Councilors' questions regarding the project timeline, fixtures, savings program/return on investment, and LED color temperature.

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

The audit will be conducted using \$30,000 in Public Works operational funds. Councilor de la Cruz asked for an analysis of light fixtures other than those manufactured by GE.

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2016-0017 Rural Communities Energy Assurance Program**

**Discussed**

Rick Norris, Sustainability Program Project Manager, explained that the Town was approached by the state and their consultant about participating in a program to obtain technical assistance with energy projects at no cost to the Town. The state is asking the Town to sign an Assurance Agreement, which is an equal opportunity agreement.

**A motion was made by Councilor Nault, seconded by Councilor de la Cruz, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2016-0028 Repurposing of 2015 Justice Assistance Grant (JAG)**

**Discussed**

Police Chief L. J. Fusaro explained the proposed modification to the 2015 Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) to purchase in-car cameras rather than body-worn cameras for police officers as originally approved. After the Town received the grant, it was determined that while the cost of body-worn camera technology is low, other costs associated with storage, maintenance, and legal issues are prohibitive. Chief Fusaro feels the in-car cameras are a more appropriate use for the grant right now.

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

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2016-0034 Acceptance of Open Space in the North Woods Subdivision**

**Discussed**

Town Manager Oefinger noted receipt of a referral memo from Jon Reiner, Director of Planning and Development, recommending acceptance of open space in the North Woods Subdivision off Route 117.

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

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2016-0032 National League of Cities Membership**

**Discussed**

Councilor Watson requested this referral. The National League of Cities (NLC) conference will be held in the beginning of March. Councilor Watson feels it is worthwhile for Councilors to attend the conference for the workshops and the opportunity to meet with federal legislators. Councilor Nault expressed a desire to attend along with Councilor Watson. It was noted that the Town is no longer a member of NLC and conference registration is more expensive for non-members. The

*consensus of Councilors was to forego membership and to obtain more information about the cost to attend the conference.*

**2016-0033 Establishment of Shared Services Task Force with Board of Education**

**Discussed**

*Mayor Flax noted that this issue was discussed at the last joint meeting with the Board of Education. His desire is to work to find efficiencies in like departments of the Board of Education and Town. The proposal is to establish a shared services committee comprised of two Board of Education members, two Town Councilors, two RTM members, and the two Finance Directors from the Board of Education and Town. Mayor Flax explained his reasoning for the proposal.*

*Discussion followed on the difficulties in effectuating change and how the committee would work; the need for concrete proposals; using a bottom up approach for suggestions on efficiencies; and establishing a course through the Liaison Committee.*

*Mayor Flax expressed his desire for a resolution stating that the Town Council supports establishing a committee and a time frame to accomplish something. Discussion followed on potentially hiring a consultant to guide the process. The consensus was to have Councilor Watson report out to the Liaison Committee the Town Council's position before passing a resolution.*

**2016-0031 Connecticut Sub Trail Proposal**

**Discussed**

*Councilor Nault provided an overview of Connecticut's Submarine Century initiative. Town Manager Oefinger explained the CT Sub Trail proposal, which involves manufacturing 20 five-foot long fiberglass submarines on a podium to be painted by various artists. Sponsorships for the subs are \$5,000 each.*

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

*Town Manager Oefinger noted that the funds would have to come from Contingency. Funding is for sponsorship only as the submarines will be sold.*

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2016-0023 Town Council Goal Setting**

**Discussed**

*A special meeting of the Committee of the Whole was scheduled for Thursday, February 4th from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Annex, CR3.*

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

**2014-0289 OpenGov Software**

**Recommended for Deletion**

**2014-0293 Town Council Rules Revision**

**Recommended for Deletion**

**8. OTHER BUSINESS**

*None.*

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

*A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Nault, to adjourn the meeting at 9:28 p.m.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*