



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 Rita M. Schmidt, Councilors Dean Antipas, Genevieve Cerf, Joe de la Cruz, Bruce S. Flax, Bob Frink, Rich Moravsik, Deborah L. Peruzzotti and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, February 3, 2015

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

SPECIAL MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Schmidt, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Cerf, Councilor de la Cruz, Councilor Flax, Councilor Frink, Councilor Moravsik, Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Watson

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

3. Calendar and Communications

- *Presentation by Nancie Keenan, Groton Representative on the Eastern Regional Tourism District, and Ed Dombroskas, Executive Director of the Eastern Regional Tourism District*

Mr. Dombroskas provided a brief history of the district known as Mystic Country and its role in promoting tourism. He noted that southeastern Connecticut has the highest level of tourism in the state. Councilors received a package of information providing an overview of what the district does. The district maintains a database of tourism assets, maintains an industry-based web site, develops marketing and advertising, develops the social media campaign, and does direct sales for hotels and attractions.

Councilor Watson asked about instituting a local hotel tax. Ms. Keenan stated she has reached out to legislators on the issue. When it was attempted in the past, on a local basis, it cost the region a lot of revenue. Mr. Dombroskas explained that a great deal of tourism is based on packages and groups, so any increase in the tax rate affects competition. Ms. Keenan added that there is a large business component to Groton's tourism, and if there were even a small tax increase they would be willing to shift their occupancy to another area.

Ms. Keenan assured the Council that she takes her duties as Groton's representative to the tourism district very seriously. She serves on the Sales and Marketing committees to develop strategies to attract people to the area and to provide information to people about the area.

Mr. Dombroskas noted that tourism has increased 9% over the last three years. The tourism district competes for funds from the State's General Fund budget.

4. Approval of Minutes - None

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

6. NEW BUSINESS

2014-0342 FYE 2014 CAFR

Discussed

Director of Finance Cindy Landry and Vanessa Rossitto and Emily Fournier from Blum Shapiro were present to address the Council. Ms. Landry provided an overview of the audit documents

provided to the Council.

Ms. Rossitto explained that the Town was given an unmodified (or clean) opinion, which is the highest opinion. She reviewed the CAFR document (financial statements, budgetary presentations) and addressed questions.

Ms. Rossitto then addressed GASB changes to pension fund and OPEB reporting.

Councilors Flax and Antipas left the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

Roll Call: Members Present: Mayor Schmidt, Councilor Cerf, Councilor de la Cruz, Councilor Frink, Councilor Moravsik, Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Watson
Members Absent: Councilor Antipas and Councilor Flax

Discussed

Ms. Fournier reviewed the single audits and material findings in the federal audit. The Town was given a qualified opinion because of the findings. The Town received an unmodified (clean) finding on the state audit.

Ms. Rossitto reviewed the management letter, which outlines suggestions to strengthen controls or improve processes.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2015-0016 National Recreation and Parks Association Arthritis Walking Program Grant

Discussed and Recommended no action taken

Town Manager Oefinger noted that this grant application was not funded so no action is required.

2014-0286 Implementation of Police Study Recommendations

Not Discussed

2015-0023 Shepherd of the Sea Property, Gungywamp Road

Discussed

Town Manager Oefinger explained that the boundaries of this parcel are not known at this time and the Town is waiting for additional information.

2015-0022 Miscellaneous and Ad Hoc Committee Appointments

Discussed

The School Facilities Initiative Task Force has recommended the appointment of Andrew Ilvento and Jackie Massett to fill vacancies on the task force.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2014-0257 FYE 2016 Budget Discussion

Discussed

Councilors discussed the proposed budget review calendar. They had no problem with Saturday sessions on April 11th and April 18th. Councilors were asked to provide information on their availability during March and April. A single meeting with the Board of Education is proposed for Monday, April 6th. Councilors concurred with the proposed dates for the pre-budget public hearing (February 17th), budget public hearing (March 30th), and RTM budget meeting (April 29th).

2015-0024 FYE 2016 Pre-Budget Public Hearing

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

The motion carried unanimously

2015-0020 Public Hearing on FYE 2016 Proposed Budget

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

The motion carried unanimously

2015-0021 Annual RTM Budget Meeting

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

The motion carried unanimously

2014-0346 Connecticut Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program Funding

A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Watson, to enter executive session at 7:58 p.m. to discuss #2014-0346 Connecticut Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program Funding, and to invite Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Planner II Deb Jones to attend.

The motion carried unanimously

Councilors Antipas and Flax returned to the meeting during executive session and joined the discussion.

Roll Call: Members Present: Mayor Schmidt, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Cerf, Councilor de la Cruz, Councilor Flax, Councilor Frink, Councilor Moravsik, Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Watson

Discussed

The executive session concluded at 8:27 p.m.

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 Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Watson, to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.