



Town of Groton, Connecticut

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Meeting Minutes - Draft

Town Council Committee of the Whole

Mayor Bruce Flax, Councilors Dean G. Antipas, Diane Barber, Greg Grim, Rich Moravsik, Karen F. Morton, Bonnie Nault, Deb Peruzzotti, and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, February 28, 2017

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

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

2. **ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Mayor Flax, Councilor Barber, Councilor Grim, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Morton and Councilor Nault

Members Absent: Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Watson and Councilor Moravsik

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

3. **Calendar and Communications**

Councilor Nault and Mayor Flax attended legislative meetings regarding the Education Cost Sharing grant and Councilor Nault testified on the proposed dock at Nautilus.

4. **Approval of Minutes**

2017-0052 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 14, 2017 are hereby accepted and approved.

A motion was made by Councilor Morton, seconded by Councilor Barber, to adopt.

The motion carried unanimously

5. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

2017-0011 Meeting with State Legislators (2017 Standing Referral)

Discussed

Representative Chris Conley was present. Mayor Flax asked for an update on the budget. Ms. Conley explained the budget is working its way through appropriations; public hearings are still being held. Subcommittees start their working sessions on Friday. Special state elections tonight could change party control and committee structure. A vote on the budget is expected in June, after the Town adopts its budget.

Councilor Nault read a statement from Representative Somers noting that the budget will be very different than that proposed by the Governor.

Councilor Peruzzotti arrived at 6:11 p.m.

Roll Call: Members Present: Mayor Flax, Councilor Barber, Councilor Grim, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Morton, Councilor Nault and Councilor Peruzzotti
Members Absent: Councilor Watson and Councilor Moravsik

Discussed

Representative Conley suggested conferring with the Town Attorney about options under the Town Charter. The Town Manager noted the issue has already been discussed with the Town Attorney. Unlike some towns, Groton's budget process is laid out in the charter so the budget must be adopted on schedule. The Town Manager asked if there is something the state could do that would supersede towns' charters.

Representative Conley stated there is no working session scheduled yet for the Education Committee. With regard to the next Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula, OPM has requested particular information from Groton, which is being provided.

Representative Conley answered questions from Councilors. Bonding (for Groton's school project) is done in June, after the budget. Ms. Conley assured the Council that all three legislators are working together to get the best for Groton.

Mayor Flax asked how the regional health district bill would impact Groton. Ms. Conley indicated she is not familiar with the bill. Mayor Flax stated that the Council is not in favor of the proposal because it would result in higher costs to the Town.

Ms. Conley provided updates on issues before other committees including tolls and the Fairview issue. Discussion followed on the ECS formula.

Representative Conley asked Councilors to let legislators know of any bills that are of interest to Groton.

Mayor Flax thanked Representative Conley for attending the meeting.

2016-0288

Presentation by Town's Actuary**Discussed**

Town Manager Oefinger explained that because of the subject matter, which may be the subject of contract negotiations, it is recommended that the Town Council go into executive session.

A motion was made by Mayor Flax, seconded by Councilor Morton, that the Town Council Committee of the Whole, along with Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Human Resources Director Robert Zagami, Town Attorney Eileen Duggan and consulting actuary Timothy Ryor, go into executive session at 6:34 p.m. for the purpose of discussing strategy and/or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining and retirement benefit negotiations with multiple bargaining units. This action is taken without prejudice to the Committee's right to discuss these matters in a private meeting pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 1-200(2).

The motion carried unanimously

Discussed and Recommended no action taken

The executive session concluded at 7:37 p.m.

2017-0036

Road Reconstruction Bond - Year 5 Projects**Discussed**

Gary Schneider, Director of Public Works, and representatives from the City of Groton and Groton Long Point were present. Town Manager Oefinger explained that one of the requirements of the road bond was that the entities provide an annual update on past and current calendar years. This is the fifth year of the five-year program, but there have been some discussions about a sixth year using remaining funding. The City of Groton's plan was distributed to Councilors. Staff is recommending that if there is going to be another round of funding (another bond), then the pavement management program should be updated; however, no funding for an updated program has been included in the FYE 2018 Proposed Budget.

City of Groton Finance Director Ron Yuhas reviewed the road work completed to date and

scheduled for 2017 in the City. Remaining funds would be \$416,518.58. The City has other road projects, but they will not be able to complete them in 2017. Mayor Galbraith noted projects that have approved engineering costs, but not construction costs. The City also has remaining 2013 CIP funds of \$29,713.59. The Town Manager noted the funds will expire on June 30, 2017 so Mayor Galbraith stated she will use those funds first and roll more funds into the road bond. Tim Umrysz noted that there are one or two roads that have been completed that were not identified in the original plan. Projects have been awarded to the state contract low bidder, with some prep work done by City personnel.

Mr. Schneider noted that one of the Town's goals is to reduce impervious surface by narrowing the paved portion of roads in the program. In 2016, the Town reduced pavement area by just under 13,000 sq. ft. Mr. Schneider reviewed the Town's plan for 2017 which includes postponing a number of roads associated with other projects and adding new roads. He then reviewed roads that would be done in 2018 and 2019 if the bond authorization is extended. Approximately \$1.2 million will remain after 2017. With the 2018 and 2019 projects, Mr. Schneider anticipates about \$100,000 remaining.

Mr. Schneider highlighted accomplishments associated with the bonded road maintenance and rehabilitation program, and responded to questions from Councilors.

Steve Panikoff and Mike Flynn from Groton Long Point provided a plan for roads for the years 2017 through 2020. Mr. Panikoff complimented the Town on two repaving projects that they did in Groton Long Point and stated he would be happy to use Town forces again. The roads proposed for 2017 exceed remaining funds of \$372,000, but other roads identified for 2018 and 2019 can be substituted.

Town Manager Oefinger indicated that the three entities are looking for Town Council authorization to proceed with the roads identified for 2017.

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

Councilor Peruzzotti asked if the program has met the needs of the various entities and they all said yes. Mr. Schneider noted that having the funding available at the beginning of the season has been a big advantage. Councilor Peruzzotti noted it is important for taxpayers to understand that this has been a successful joint effort. Councilor Antipas asked if the funds could be appropriated on a year-by-year basis to avoid the cost of borrowing, and Mr. Schneider stated the funding would have to be designated for only roads and be available prior to the start of the paving season to be as advantageous as the road bond.

The motion carried unanimously

2017-0053 Extension of Appropriation for Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Program

Discussed

Town Manager Oefinger explained that the Town is requesting an extension of the appropriation for the road reconstruction bond so that remaining funds can be used for additional projects. The Town would still be looking for an extension of the appropriation even if there were not remaining funds because not all of the bills will be paid by November 6, 2017.

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

Cindy Landry, Director of Finance, provided background information on the request for the five-year extension.

The motion carried unanimously

2017-0056 Reallocating Bond Proceeds from Thames Street Rehabilitation Program to Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Program

Discussed

Cindy Landry, Director of Finance, described the request to reallocate excess bond proceeds in the amount of \$791,779.25 from the Thames Street Rehabilitation Program to the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Program. The reallocation doesn't increase funds available in the road maintenance program, but it reduces the amount the Town needs to borrow.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2016-0090**City Highway Budget - FYE 2017****Discussed**

City Mayor Marian Galbraith, members of the City Council, and City staff were present. Mayor Galbraith noted there was a recommendation in the arbitrator's decision on the FYE 2016 City highway budget request that a study be conducted to figure out the cause of the differences in costs between the Town and the City. Commissioner Barry met with Town and City staff and talked about looking at road standards, program for meeting those standards, and how the program is rolled out in the budget. The City is willing to go forward with the recommendation to bring someone in to do the study, but the Town and City must discuss the scope of the project to issue an RFP to hire a professional.

Town Manager Oefinger agreed that both parties would like to resolve the issue to avoid the continuing the cycle of not being in agreement. Commissioner Barry stressed "standards" which exist for both the Town and City, but they must be codified on paper. Similarly, "programs" and replacement scheduling must be identified. The Town Manager agrees with Mayor Galbraith that a professional should be engaged. Councilor Antipas agreed that everyone wants to resolve this and he is willing to take the recommended action.

Mayor Galbraith agreed that standards need to be identified. Not all standards are the same, but they should be understood.

The Town Manager noted that the potential cost of a study is unknown and no funds are budgeted at this point.

Discussion followed on the past arbitration decisions, the results of the decisions, having a single highway department, and how to move forward.

The Town Manager noted that the purpose of having this item on the agenda was to brief the Council on the discussion with Commissioner Barry. A meeting of the mayors, Town Manager, and Town and City Public Works personnel should be held after the FYE 2018 Proposed Budget is out. The entire process will probably take six months.

The consensus was to move forward with a meeting to discuss a scope of services.

2017-0054**City Highway Budget - FYE 2018****Discussed**

City Mayor Marian Galbraith noted that she submitted the City's FYE 2018 budget today. She stated that she is not prepared to meet because two of the three City Councilors chosen to meet with three Town Councilors are out of town. Mayor Flax stated the Town Council needs to appoint three Councilors and he will let the City know who they are.

2017-0007**Property Acquisition/Sale (2017 Standing Referral)****Discussed**

Town Manager Oefinger advised the Council that after the last meeting, Kincora pulled out of the

purchase and sale agreement for William Seely School. William McCabe and/or Mark Mancuso would be willing to talk to the Council about lessons learned from their experience in Groton. Kincora withdrew primarily because the developer they were working with was not responsive. Planning and Development staff will be at the March 14th Committee of the Whole meeting to discuss disposition of the William Seely property.

The Town has also received a letter from the state asking if the Town would be interested in acquiring the property at the corner of Bridge Street and Thames Street. The Town Manager is not aware of any Town use. The asking price is approximately \$700,000, which is based on the Town's assessment.

Discussion followed on helping the state market the property and potentially touring the property. This item will be placed on the March 14th Committee of the Whole agenda for further discussion.

2017-0050 2017 Rates for Shennecossett Golf Course

Discussed

Mark Berry, Director of Parks and Recreation, and Todd Goodhue, Golf Professional, were present to review the proposed Shennecossett Golf Course rates for 2017. Each year, rates are proposed by staff and presented to the Golf Advisory Board, which makes a recommendation to the Parks and Recreation Commission, which then makes a recommendation to the Town Council. For 2017, the recommendation is a 3% increase in season pass rates and a new Limited 2-Person membership option.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2017-0040 Groton Recreational Fields Project - Presentation

Discussed and Recommended no action taken

Town Manager Oefinger noted receipt of additional information from Jim Kamercia of the Parks and Recreation Commission. The recreational fields study is identified in the FYE 2019 CIP.

2017-0051 Connecticut Police Work Dog Association Grant

Discussed

This request is for authorization to apply for two \$1,000 grants to install safety equipment in the police vehicles for the K-9s.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2017-0057 Public Hearing on FYE 2018 Proposed Budget

Discussed

A public hearing on the FYE 2018 Proposed Budget has been identified for Wednesday, March 29, 2017.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2017-0055 Resolution Setting RTM Budget Meeting Date for the FYE 2018 Annual Town Budget

Discussed

The RTM annual budget meeting is proposed for Monday, May 1, 2017.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2016-0260 FYE 2018 Budget Discussion

Discussed

The FYE 2018 Proposed Budget is being finalized and will be going to the printer on March 9th. Town Manager Oefinger discussed how he is considering addressing the state revenue shortfall. The Council may have to approve the budget without knowing what the state revenues are, but the Council has the ability to rescind funds. The Town Manager recommended a discussion between the Town Council, RTM and Board of Education on the revenue issue. With respect to the Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR), if the state funding for education is cut, the Town can cut the Board of Education budget dollar for dollar.

Mayor Flax noted the largest CIP project proposed is the Information Technology initiative, which he suggesting freezing until a new Town Manager is on board. The Town Manager noted the initiative is included in the proposed budget, and he assured the Council that the next Town Manager will be on board and will be intimately familiar with the project by the time the Town is ready to purchase. Town Manager Oefinger stated he cannot recommend delaying the project for another year.

2016-0113 Tax Incentive Agreement for Branford Manor

Discussed

Town Manager Oefinger explained that resolutions related to the City and Town Development Act are being prepared in advance of the resolution setting the public hearing which will be acted on by the Town Council on March 7th.

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

None.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

There will be no Town Manager Search Committee meeting on March 1st. The next meeting will be on March 22nd at 6:15 p.m. at the Library.

9. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Barber, to adjourn the meeting at 9:33 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.