



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, March 8, 2016

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Flax called the meeting to order at 5:58 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

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

Members Absent: Councilor Barber, Councilor Nault and Councilor Watson

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

3. Calendar and Communications

None.

4. Approval of Minutes

2016-0076 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 23, 2016 are hereby accepted and approved.

A motion was made by Councilor Antipas, seconded by Councilor de la Cruz, to adopt.

The motion carried unanimously

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

6. NEW BUSINESS

2016-0077 Proposed Revisions to Part-Time/Seasonal/Temporary Pay Plan, Policies, and Job Descriptions

Discussed

Bob Zagami, Director of Human Resources/Risk Management, and Mark Berry, Director of Parks and Recreation, were present. Mr. Zagami explained a proposed increase in the part-time pay plan to address market pressures and the increase in minimum wage. The Town has been unable to fill some positions due to non-competitive wages. Mr. Zagami provided a comparison of wage rates in nearby towns. Mr. Berry addressed additional responsibilities added to the job descriptions for the Senior Lifeguard and Water Safety Instructor positions. Mr. Zagami then reviewed the impact to the FYE 2017 budget.

Mr. Berry noted that within Parks and Recreation, this change would affect approximately 60 people.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2016-0068 Disposition of Town Owned Property Acquired through Tax Foreclosure**Discussed**

Cindy Landry, Director of Finance, and Cindy Small, Tax Collector, were present. Ms. Landry explained that there is a process in place for the Council to decide whether to retain properties obtained through tax foreclosure or to sell them. Four properties have been reviewed by the Property Review Team, which is recommending that the parcels be sold. If the Town Council agrees, the proposed disposition of the properties must be referred to the Planning Commission under CGS Section 8-24.

A motion was made by Councilor de la Cruz, seconded by Councilor Morton, to refer the proposed sale of four parcels of Town-owned property acquired through tax foreclosure to the Planning Commission under CGS Section 8-24.

Ms. Small reviewed the assessed values of the parcels. Discussion followed on the desire to recoup costs associated with the foreclosures.

The motion carried unanimously

2016-0069 FYE 2016 Contingency Transfers - Wage Adjustments**Discussed**

Cindy Landry, Director of Finance, explained that when the FYE 2016 budget was developed, several contracts were not yet settled and funds were set aside in Contingency. Two contracts have settled (Police and CILU-Clerical), and this request is for a transfer of \$337,296 from Contingency to cover the costs of the agreements. Town Manager Oefinger explained that the Council usually budgets \$350,000, but last year added \$200,000 to Contingency rather than adding anticipated wage increases to department budgets. This is the first transfer from Contingency in FYE 2016. For FYE 2017, only one group (Telecommunicators) has a contract in place, so the Town will be negotiating four contracts and the non-union agreement. Discussion followed on the reasoning behind including funds in Contingency rather than budgeting 2% across the departments.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2016-0073 Use of FYE 2016 CIP Funds to Purchase Police Radios**Discussed**

Police Chief L. J. Fusaro described the request to reallocate funds in a FYE 2016 CIP project for the purchase of police radios. The funds were originally allocated to conduct studies, but the Town was able to get the studies done for free by current vendors. The more pressing issue is the radios and infrastructure that is in dire need of repair. The radios are over 20 years old and have a normal shelf life of about seven years. The units can no longer be repaired. Chief Fusaro would like to utilize some of the CIP funds to begin replacing radios over the course of several years and make meager enhancements to infrastructure. Chief Fusaro noted that discussions are taking place with regional chiefs about developing an integrated network radio system. The radios proposed for purchase would be compatible with any system and would be expandable and upgradeable. Chief Fusaro would like to purchase 12 to 24 radio units and remove the oldest units from the system.

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

Town Manager Oefinger explained that this is not actually a reallocation, but because this was a Town Council initiative and the CIP narrative mentions using funds for studies, it was felt that the Council should receive an update. The proposal is in line with the CIP project description. The Town had hoped to make more progress integrating with the City, but it has not happened. The lack of progress with the City cannot hold back the Town Police Department, especially when

officer safety is an issue.

The motion carried unanimously

2016-0078 2016 Rates for Shennecossett Golf Course

Discussed

Mark Berry, Eric Morrison, and Todd Goodhue were present. Mr. Berry explained the process and request for approval of the 2016 Shennecossett Golf Course rates. The Golf Advisory Board develops proposed rate changes that are forwarded to the Parks and Recreation Commission. Mr. Berry noted that the Golf Advisory Board recommended a 3% increase in season pass rates; the Parks and Recreation Commission additionally recommended a \$1.00 increase in the fees for 18-hole weekday and weekend guest passes and the daily fee. No changes are proposed to the Golf Course rules this year. Mr. Berry explained that the rates are based on comparable local courses and anticipated expenses. Staff is recommending that the rates proposed by the Golf Advisory Board be approved because they believe that Shennecossett is already on the high end of daily pass fees.

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

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 5 - Mayor Flax, Councilor Grim, Councilor Morton, Councilor de la Cruz and Councilor Peruzzotti
Abstain: 1 - Councilor Antipas

2016-0072 Claude Chester School Asbestos Removal Project

Discussed

Mike Graner, Superintendent of Schools, and Sam Kilpatrick, Manager of Building and Grounds, were present. This request involves a project this summer to remove asbestos from Claude Chester School. Mr. Graner is requesting that the Permanent School Building Committee be appointed as the building committee for the project. Mr. Kilpatrick explained the project. The reimbursement rate is expected to be 53%. Town Manager Oefinger explained that the asbestos needs to be abated whether the school is used or vacated. While Claude Chester is being used as a school, the project is reimbursable.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2016-0074 Electric Vehicles and Charging Stations Grant

Discussed

Town Manager Mark Oefinger explained that the Town recently received a grant to purchase an electric vehicle. This round is for charging stations only, and the proposal is to install one at the Town Hall. The cost of electricity is minimal compared to the administrative costs of trying to charge so the Town will bear the cost. The purpose is to encourage alternative forms of transportation.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2015-0298 Establishment of a Charter Revision Commission

Discussed

The Town Council has set up interviews on Saturday, March 12th and Monday, March 14th. Councilors received a packet of applications and the interview schedules. Councilors were asked to arrive at 8:15 a.m. on Saturday and to review the applications ahead of time.

2014-0312 School Facilities Initiative Update

Discussed

Councilors received a *Frequently Asked Questions* document and two previous PowerPoint presentations on the project. A special meeting will be held on March 16th at 6:00 p.m. so that the School Facilities Initiative Task Force (SFITF) can make a presentation to the Town Council and the Board of Education. Mayor Flax encouraged Councilors to review available information ahead of time. Town Manager Oefinger provided a brief summary of the project. He noted the survey conducted by the SFITF that identified the project cost that the community could support. Councilor de la Cruz noted the significant amount of work that has gone into developing this plan.

2016-0075 Revised Agreement with Milone and MacBroom for a Long-Range School Facilities Plan

Discussed

Town Manager Oefinger noted this is not a new appropriation; the funds were approved in FYE 2016. He explained that the Town Council is not usually involved in signing off on contracts, but in this case the desire was to move forward with the school initiative project before a scope of services was identified. The Town Manager is asking the Town Council to authorize access to the funding. The remaining effort will be to prepare for a November referendum. The consultants, Milone and MacBroom, have done a tremendous job for the Town and the Town Manager recommends in favor of the revised agreement.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2016-0079 Request for Donation for Thames River Heritage Park Water Taxi

Discussed

Town Manager Oefinger explained that the Town donated \$10,000 in FYE 2015 for a water taxi program for the Thames River Heritage Park, and they are now requesting funds (\$10,000) in FYE 2017. The group is also requesting funds from the City of Groton and City of New London. The Town Manager noted that the funds have not been included in the FYE 2017 Proposed Budget, but the Council can choose to add the money during budget deliberations if so desired. Councilor Grim stated he would like a presentation on the project, and it was noted that there will be a presentation on March 31st at 6:30 p.m. at The Garde in New London. Councilors were encouraged to attend.

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

None.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor de la Cruz noted there will be a fundraiser at Utopia Studios hair salon on March 20th from 12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m. with all proceeds going to Community Speaks Out. The cost is \$25.00.

Town Manager Oefinger noted that the Pettini settlement will be considered by the RTM tomorrow night.

The Town Attorney would like to review an item with the Town Council on March 15th at a special meeting of the Committee of the Whole at 6:45 p.m.

9. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilor de la Cruz, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.