



# Town of Groton, Connecticut

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## Meeting Minutes

### Town Council Committee of the Whole

*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, June 2, 2015

7:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

#### SPECIAL MEETING

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

*Mayor Schmidt called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.*

#### 2. ROLL CALL

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

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

#### 3. NEW BUSINESS

2015-0156

#### Transfer of Fund Balance(s)

##### Recommended for a Resolution

*Town Manager Oefinger referred to a staff referral memo from Director of Finance Cindy Landry that provides a recap of three options for setting the General Fund mill rate: 1) the original proposal outlined at the last Committee of the Whole meeting; 2) inclusion of additional of impact aid and return of funds from the Board of Education; and 3) the additional funds included in Option 2 along with \$750,000 from the Solid Waste Fund. A fourth option includes everything in Option 3 along with funds from the Capital Reserve Fund, the Recreation and Senior Activities Fund, and the Fleet Fund. Option 4 results in a mill rate equal to what the Council tentatively approved in April. The Town Attorney has reviewed the transfer of funds from the Solid Waste Fund with the attorney for the Department of Revenue Services who indicated that the transfer would be acceptable.*

**A motion was made by Councilor Moravsik, seconded by Councilor Flax, to transfer funds to achieve Option #4 for setting the mill rate.**

**Town Manager Oefinger noted that whether or not the Town stays in the solid waste business does not impact the available fund balance in the account because the Town started with a balance of \$1.4 million at the beginning of the waste program. The Town Manager noted that the Town has had the sales tax owed to the state (in protect) and has been collecting taxes that have been passed on to the state since the time. If the Town wins the lawsuit, it is expected that the money will be returned. If the Town loses the lawsuit, the sales tax has already been paid. The Town Manager then explained the use of the funds in the Recreation and Senior Activities Fund. Those funds will be shown as a revenue in the Parks and Recreation account, which decreases the General Fund contribution. With the Capital Reserve Fund, the transfer will require that more money be put into the account for future projects.**

**Councilor Flax noted that the revenue information comes late in the budget process and in the future staff will be trying to get a better handle on pupil impact aid. The Town Manager cautioned that the Town is still working with estimates and the impacts of the state budget remain an unknown. Although there is no ability to change the expenditures in the budget as adopted by the Town Council and RTM at this time, the Town could curtail spending if something catastrophic happened. Councilor Antipas clarified that the budget increased 2.4%; the mill increased 7.7%. The average annual increase in taxes has been around 4.5% since 2000.**

**Councilor Peruzzotti questioned whether the Town Council worked hard enough on the budget this year. Councilor de la Cruz decried "kicking the can down the road" by taking money from the various**

funds.

Superintendent of Schools Mike Graner confirmed the Board of Education's commitment to return \$303,000 resulting from a savings in diesel fuel for school buses and unused funds in a maintenance account. They are legitimate savings, not deferred items. Dr. Graner also distributed information on pupil impact aid and explained the expected additional funds. Councilor Watson questioned the threshold figure for civilian employees on the base with children in the school system and how to assure that the forms are submitted. Dr. Graner noted that they have changed the form and will be reaching out to the magnet schools as well as tracking the forms in the future.

The motion carried by the following vote:

**Votes:** In Favor: 7 - Mayor Schmidt, Councilor Antipas, Councilor de la Cruz, Councilor Flax, Councilor Frink, Councilor Moravsik and Councilor Watson  
Opposed: 1 - Councilor Peruzzotti

**2015-0140 Establishment of Tax Rate for General Fund (FYE 16)**

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

*The Town Manager noted that the \$65,000 being taken from the Fleet Fund is the additional contribution that was made from General Fund. He noted the need to have a discussion about the Fleet Fund, which will be depleted in about a year and a half forcing the Town to "pay as you go" for fleet.*

The motion carried by the following vote:

**Votes:** In Favor: 7 - Mayor Schmidt, Councilor Antipas, Councilor de la Cruz, Councilor Flax, Councilor Frink, Councilor Moravsik and Councilor Watson  
Opposed: 1 - Councilor Peruzzotti

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

*A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Moravsik, to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*