



# 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 Heather Bond Somers, Councilors Dean G. Antipas, Bruce S. Flax, Bill Johnson, Karen F. Morton, Deborah L. Peruzzotti, Rita M. Schmidt, James L. Streeter, and Harry A. Watson**

Tuesday, July 23, 2013

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

#### REGULAR MEETING

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

*Mayor Somers called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.*

2. **ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Mayor Somers, Councilor Flax, Councilor Morton, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Schmidt and Councilor Watson

Members Absent: Councilor Antipas, Councilor Johnson and Councilor Streeter

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

3. **Calendar and Communications**

*None.*

4. **Approval of Minutes**

**2013-0194 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 July 9, 2013 are hereby accepted and approved.

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

**The motion carried unanimously**

5. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

*None.*

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

**2013-0190 Adoption of Ordinance for Police Station Improvements**

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

*Town Manager Oefinger noted that the dispatch addition was the most recent bonded activity at the police station. The detective area was reconfigured about 10 years ago as a CIP project. Councilor Flax asked how the improvements will fit into the City's and Groton Long Point's needs. Chief Crowley explained that the cell area was not planned to accommodate any other department, but it could. The proposal is sized to accommodate prisoners appropriately (juveniles, males, and females). The Town currently holds Groton Long Point prisoners. The Town does not provide that service the City unless their facility is full. Town Manager Oefinger explained that an important factor in sizing is the ability to separate and accommodate different populations. Councilor Flax stated there is no question the facility needs to be renovated. Councilor Peruzzotti asked if the floor plan is flexible. Chief Crowley explained that the use of pod systems where doors can be closed makes the space much more flexible. Additional tours of the police station for the RTM are scheduled for July 24th and August 6th at 6:00 p.m. Mayor Somers suggested that the Chief find a way to educate the general public about the condition of the facility utilizing pictures for example.*

The motion carried unanimously

2013-0191

**Adoption of Ordinance for Flanders Road Utilities Expansion**

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

Councilor Peruzzotti reiterated a comment she heard at the last meeting noting that in order to make something happen, the Town has to do something. If the Town does nothing, nothing will happen. Councilor Watson feels this gives the voters the opportunity to decide if the project will go forward. Councilor Schmidt feels that water and sewer availability are important for a community. Councilor Flax believes that it is possible to have a project the size of the Mystic Marriott and he expressed support for the project. Councilor Morton agreed and feels that bold moves are necessary to increase the Town's tax base. She also expressed support for the renovations to the police station. Mayor Somers noted that people spoke at the public hearing about filling empty storefronts, but filling the storefronts does not expand the grand list. She noted that there must be services to bring new businesses into the Town and the Town can't choose the businesses. Businesses choose to locate in a community based on their own criteria. The Mayor suggested this is an investment in the Town noting that the development on Route 117 paid for the utilities extension in a few years. The Town Manager explained that the City, which has its own sewer system, is not taxed for improvements to the Town sewer system.

The Planning Commission has endorsed both the police station renovations and Flanders Road utilities expansion projects. The WPCA made no recommendation on the Flanders road project, but feels that the existing treatment plant will handle the increased load.

Town Manager Oefinger explained that project payback depends on a number of factors: 1) direct benefit assessment; 2) the increase in the value of the industrial land once services are available; and 3) when development actually occurs. This project will facilitate multiple developments over a number of years and provide opportunities for incubator businesses to expand. Staff will be preparing some very conservative assumptions about development build out.

At the airport, some lots are vacant, but they have been purchased and there is not a lot of potential for additional development. With respect to pay back, from a practical standpoint, it will take 5 to 20 years to realize a reasonable return, and up to 30 years when borrowing costs are included. Discussion followed on estimated costs and interest rates which are conservative estimates.

The Town Manager noted that staff is preparing a Frequently Asked Questions document. Mayor Somers suggested including an explanation of how the grand list is expanded, which is not by filling vacant storefronts. The Town Manager noted that storefronts are the last level of economic development. There must be creation of wealth. Regional and national chains don't want to locate in Groton's storefronts because they are too old. Instead, those spaces are converting to personal services and quasi-office spaces. The extension of utilities will create the types of jobs that spin off wealth. The Town Manager asked Councilors to e-mail him any constituent questions.

The motion carried unanimously

2013-0192

**Authorization to Use a Description of the Ordinance on Police Station Improvements in Notice of Adoption**

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

Mayor Somers asked that the Town Manager sign off on the Explanatory Text before it is distributed.

The motion carried unanimously

2013-0193

**Authorization to Use a Description of the Ordinance on Flanders Road Utilities Expansion in**

**Notice of Adoption**

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

The motion carried unanimously

**2013-0185 National Council on Aging Grant**

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

The motion carried unanimously

**2013-0189 Master Municipal Agreement for Construction Projects****Discussed**

*Michael Murphy, Director of Planning and Development, explained that the state now requires an agreement for any project that the Town does with the Connecticut Department of Transportation. The master document codifies all of the common requirements and will be good for 10 years. A smaller Project Authorization Letter (PAL) will be generated for each project.*

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

The motion carried unanimously

**2009-0166 Townwide Police Assessment****Discussed**

*The purpose of having this item on the agenda is for the Council to decide whether to try to salvage the document and try to finalize the study or to pursue potential litigation. The Town Manager has not spoken with the consultant, the City of Groton, or Groton Long Point recently. The entities have met to review the draft and the accuracy of the data. The Day has requested a copy of the report, but because it is still a draft document, it has not been released. That action has been reviewed with the Town Attorney. There is a lot of misinformation in the report.*

*The Town Manager reiterated that this discussion is about whether or not to proceed and if not, how to end the relationship with the consultant, which should take place in executive session. Mayor Somers stated she cannot accept the report as it is and it is not the Town's role to try to craft the report. Councilor Peruzzotti concurred and suggested that if the Town invests in a study, all three entities must provide the most accurate information possible. She is not sure the three entities can agree on some of the items in the study and this may not be the consultant the Town should move forward with. Councilor Flax feels that if the inaccuracies can be identified and corrected, the Town should provide that information to the consultant. Councilor Flax stated that he has not read the report, but the concerns are not based on the results of the study, but on the inaccuracy of the information in the study. Councilor Morton has read the report and feels it is a disaster. She expressed concern with the methodology because all of the information is derived from the three chiefs of police who all have a vested interest.*

*The Town Manager stated this was a noble experiment to bring the three entities together. He agreed that it is not the Town's responsibility to rewrite the document. Discussion filed on how the data was provided to the consultant. The Town Manager suggested one option is to notify the consultant that the Town is not happy with the report and ask what they are willing to do to make it right. Councilors concurred. It was noted that the Town has not paid for the study at this point. Further discussion was tabled to the next Committee of the Whole meeting.*

**2013-0125 City of Groton FYE 2014 Highway Budget - Request for Mediation****Discussed**

*Town Manager Oefinger received a response from James Redeker, the Commissioner of DOT, after sending a joint letter from the Town and City regarding the City highway budget mediation process. Mr. Redeker has requested the same background information from both the Town and the*

*City. The Town still needs to identify a Town representative.*

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

**2011-0032 Sister Cities Committee - Update**

**Recommended for Deletion**

**2013-0096 Review of Town Register**

**Recommended for Deletion**

**8. OTHER BUSINESS**

*Councilor Peruzzotti requested a referral on Registrars of Voters compensation and Mayor Somers made the referral to the Committee of the Whole.*

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

*A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Watson, to adjourn the meeting at 7:19 p.m.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*