



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council Committee of the Whole

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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, August 9, 2016

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

A motion was made by Councilor Barber, seconded by Councilor Watson, to elect Councilor Antipas Chairman Pro Tem.

The motion carried unanimously.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pro Tem Antipas called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Councilor Barber, Councilor Antipas, Councilor de la Cruz, Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Watson

Members Absent: Mayor Flax, Councilor Grim, Councilor Morton and Councilor Nault

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

3. Calendar and Communications

None.

4. Approval of Minutes

2016-0197 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 meetings of July 26, 2016 and August 2, 2016 are hereby accepted and approved.

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

The motion carried unanimously

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

6. NEW BUSINESS

2016-0198 FYE 2017 Fire District PILOT

Discussed

During the FYE 2017 budget sessions, the Town Council asked fire district representatives to appear before the Council prior to distributing the PILOT funds.

- *Old Mystic Fire District*

Chief Ken Richards and District Board President Carl Strang were present to address the Council. Chief Richards provided a brief overview of the department including budget, staffing, volunteers, call volume, development on the Stonington side of the district, training, and apparatus. Chief Richards explained that volunteers are actually all firefighters who are paid a stipend for responding or staffing the building overnight.

Discussion followed on voluntary taxes to be paid by Masonicare and a comparison of the FYE 2016 and FYE 2017 fire district budgets. One copy of the most recent audit was submitted to the Town.

- *Poquonnock Bridge Fire District*

Chief Joseph Winski, Deputy Chief Timothy Driscoll, District Board President Kenny Richards, Board Member Alan Ackley, and District Board Vice President Ron Yuhas were present to address the Council. Chief Winski read a prepared statement that addressed contracts, equipment, and the budget. He also reviewed non-taxable property information for the district and requested adequate PILOT funding.

Deputy Chief Driscoll reviewed the operational side of the department.

Discussion followed on the budget, the status of ambulance responses, hydrant rental costs, the potential impact of the Airport Development Zone, mutual aid, and a comparison of various line items in the FYE 2016 and FYE 2017 district budgets.

One copy of the most recent audit was submitted to the Town.

2016-0179 North Stonington Road Bridge

Discussed

Town Manager Oefinger noted that Stonington First Selectman Rob Simmons was invited to the meeting, but he was not able to attend. Mr. Simmons would like to attend a future meeting. The Town has received a letter from the state on the Local Bridge Program grant and the intent was to have a discussion with Stonington about funding the project. Mr. Simmons has indicated that from a policy standpoint, Stonington is committed to the project and will take the money out of reserves if necessary. Gary Schneider, Director of Public Works, noted that preliminary design would be completed around November, which would result in a final cost estimate. Discussion was postponed to a future meeting.

2016-0043 Use of Recycling Building on Flanders Road for Fire Training

Discussed

Chairman Pro Tem Antipas noted that representatives of the Mystic Fire Department, who made the request, were unable to attend the meeting.

Gary Schneider, Director of Public Works, described the recycling building which is currently being used for storage. In the winter, the concrete pad is used for a snow dump. There is no public water available and the building is not secure.

Chief Ken Richards of the Old Mystic Fire District noted that the facility was looked at a number of years ago for offices. Fire departments would not be able to do live fire training unless tankers were brought in because of the lack of water. He noted that all departments (not including the City and Groton Long Point) train together on a regular basis.

Discussion turned to Old Mystic's use of the fire training facility on the Mystic Education Center property. Chief Richards noted that Old Mystic will need to vacate the site and they are looking to use the Town's Welles Road site.

Chairman Pro Tem Antipas suggested soliciting fire departments for their intended use of the recycling building. Chief Richards indicated he will bring it up at the next Fire Officers' meeting and ask departments to e-mail the information to the Town Manager's office.

2016-0208 Solar Farm at Flanders Road Landfill

Discussed

Gary Schneider and Rick Norris from Public Works were present, along with Dan Duffy from Geosyntec Consultants and Jesse Stowell from Encore Energy. Mr. Norris provided background information on the proposal to install a solar farm at the Flanders Road landfill and noted the presentation would provide an update.

Mr. Duffy reviewed a PowerPoint presentation including an update to the project team, a timeline of events, options for electric off-takers, the recent RFP issued by DEEP requiring site control in the form of a lease or option to lease, details of a lease option, and a preliminary site plan. Mr. Duffy and Mr. Stowell solicited and answered questions from Councilors.

The option to lease would be for two to three years and a lease would have a 25 year term with extensions

Town Manager Oefinger explained that the Town Council has already approved a resolution authorizing the Town Manager to enter into an Option to Lease with Geosyntec. An option to lease (if required) and lease are currently being reviewed by the Town Attorney. When finalized, the lease will have to be approved by the Town Council and RTM. All parties agreed that the Option to Lease that is in place is sufficient and no further action is required at this time.

2016-0209**Energy, Efficiency and Conservation Committee - Update****Discussed**

Rick Norris, Sustainability Program Project Manager, noted that staff has been working with the Energy, Efficiency and Conservation Committee (EECC) for some time. At this time, staff is receiving significant energy savings information outside of the Committee by working with other entities. Most activities charged to the EECC are being handled by staff. Participation on the Committee is down and it has been difficult to obtain a quorum for meetings. Mr. Norris is recommending that the Committee be retired or reconstituted as a staff committee. Councilors concurred that the Committee could be disbanded.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2016-0113**Tax Incentive Agreement for Branford Manor****Discussed**

Town Manager Oefinger reported that the Town has provided a list of items for Related's review, but there has been no response at this point. Further discussion was tabled.

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

None.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor Peruzzotti asked for a referral on the Town Manager's Annual Evaluation.

9. ADJOURNMENT