



# Town of Groton, Connecticut

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## Meeting Minutes

### Town Council Committee of the Whole

*Mayor Rita M. Schmidt, Councilors Dean Antipas, Joe de la Cruz, Bruce S. Flax, Bob Frink, Patrice Granatosky, Rich Moravsik, Deborah L. Peruzzotti and Harry A. Watson*

Tuesday, August 11, 2015

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

#### REGULAR MEETING

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

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

#### 2. ROLL CALL

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

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

#### 3. Calendar and Communications

*Town Manager Oefinger distributed two items to be added to the agenda: a letter from the Eastern Regional Mental Health Board seeking an appointee from Groton to the Catchment Area Council and a referral memo from the Town Clerk concerning setting referendum date, form of the question, and explanatory text for the November WPCF bond referendum.*

#### 4. Approval of Minutes

##### 2015-0193 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 28, 2015 are hereby accepted and approved.

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

**Mayor Schmidt noted a correction on page 3 of the minutes.**

**The motion carried by the following vote:**

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

#### 5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

*None.*

#### 6. NEW BUSINESS

##### 2015-0073 Fitch Middle School Reuse Plan - Update

##### Discussed

*Town Manager Oefinger noted that one of the goals of this Council is to explore the feasibility of using Fitch Middle School as a future Town Hall location and in support of that goal, the Town hired a consultant to conduct a space planning study.*

*Mike Fortuna of TLB Architects reviewed a PowerPoint presentation including a history of the architectural firm, goals of the project which included assessing the current condition, identifying current and future space needs of Town departments, and conducting a test fit of consolidated*

spaces. The study does not include the Police, Library, Senior Center or school buildings/uses. A map showing the distribution of public buildings shows that the outliers are William Seely, the Board of Education Administration building, and Spicer house. Mr. Fortuna provided a brief overview of each building included in the study including square footage, uses, primary public access, and geographic adjacencies. Next Mr. Fortuna reviewed a conditions assessment of Fitch Middle School. The identified space needs for various departments exclude basement storage space and meeting spaces.

Mr. Fortuna presented two options for the use of Town Hall and Fitch Middle School and provided an overview of the use of the spaces including advantages and disadvantages. TLB also looked at asset preservation costs for Fitch Middle School and provided rough order of magnitude costs by wing and site and general building repairs.

Rough order of magnitude costs for Options A (\$18,000,000) and B (\$15,650,000) do not include soft costs (20%) or annual escalation (4%). The major difference between the two options is moving Public Works administration and the Office of Planning and Development Services into Fitch Middle School. Mr. Fortuna responded to Councilors' questions.

Next steps are to explore partial occupancy for various temporary needs; evaluate options for vacated buildings; determine potential costs and savings associated with consolidation; and further develop programming and renovation plans.

Town Manager Oefinger noted that staff needs direction from the Town Council on priorities. Is it more important to collocate Town departments or integrate the Board of Education and general Town operations?

Mr. Schneider noted that the cost for additional test fitting would be tens of thousands of dollars, which could be reprogrammed from other CIP projects or programmed new.

The majority of Councilors expressed general support for Option B.

Discussion followed, including on relocating William Seely uses if the building is sold. The Town Manager stated that staff could come back in a couple of weeks with a budget for next steps and an outline of potential savings.

Bill Robarge, Assistant Director of Public Works, provided an overview of a potential temporary use of the kitchen and cafeteria by Community Meals including space issues, code considerations, and renovation and annual maintenance costs.

Town Manager Oefinger explained that the uses being discussed are temporary and they may have to be asked to leave at some point in the future. Discussion followed. The money (\$25,000) would have to come from Contingency or unexpended capital reserve if done out of the budget cycle.

Mr. Schneider noted that if the Town Council is willing to consider temporary uses, staff can refine the estimated costs numbers. Town Manager Oefinger reviewed the issues that arose when LEARN wanted to use the Fitch Middle School space.

Mr. Robarge reviewed the costs associated with temporary use of Fitch Middle School by community policing, the revaluation firm, and the Fitch robotics team.

The Town Manager reiterated that the purpose of the presentation was to provide information and seek guidance and staff can now come back with a more succinct proposal.

The Committee of the Whole recessed at 8:24 p.m. and reconvened at 8:29 p.m.

**2015-0184 Aquarion Water Tower - Northeast Academy Property****Discussed**

*Liz Camerino-Schulz from Aquarion Water Company reviewed a proposed project to acquire an easement from the Town and build a new water tower on the Northeast Academy site to replace the tank off Nantucket Drive. Aquarion representatives have spoken to various Town departments about the proposal. Councilors reviewed a handout showing the site plan and renderings of various tanks. The proposed tank will be much larger than the existing tank (260,000 gallon vs. 150,000) and will be approximately 150 feet high. The new tower will allow elimination of the underground booster pump station. Access to the new tower would be off Ann Avenue with a fenced in permanent easement area. Construction would take approximately one year and would not interfere with the school. Town Manager Oefinger stated that Aquarion is not ready to start the formal process, but they are looking for Town Council support for the project.*

**A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Moravsik, to refer the proposed Aquarion Water Tower on the Northeast Academy site to the Planning Commission under CGS Section 8-24.**

**Councilor Granatosky asked for a connecting walking path around the fenced water tower area from the school to Ann Avenue. It was noted that the existing tower off Nantucket Drive would be dismantled and the ultimate disposition of the property is unknown at this time as there may be restrictions on the use of the property. With respect to antennae on the new tower, Ms. Camerino-Schulz explained that Aquarion has a whip antenna, but no cell carriers will be allowed on this tank. Municipal emergency equipment would be allowed. Also, no logos are allowed on Aquarion tanks.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2015-0194 Groton Utilities - Taxation without Representation?****Discussed**

*Councilor Watson stated he would like to postpone discussion of this item due to the late hour.*

**2015-0195 Request for Waiver of Building Permit Fees - Mystic Arts Center****Discussed**

*The Town has received a request to waive the \$510.00 building permit fee for the Mystic Arts Center roof replacement. Town Manager Oefinger noted the circumstances surrounding the waiver of building permit fees for St. Mary Church in 2006.*

*A motion was made by Councilor Antipas, seconded by Councilor de la Cruz, that this item be Recommended for a Resolution. Councilor Watson noted his concern that if approved, this request has the potential to set precedent. Discussion followed on Mystic Art Association's tax status. The Town Manager stated this is a policy decision. Representatives of the Mystic Arts Center are willing to appear before the Council if desired.*

**A motion was made by Councilor Moravsik, seconded by Councilor Frink, that this matter be Tabled.**

**The motion carried by the following vote:**

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

**2012-0050 Potential Disposition of William Seely School Property****Discussed**

*Town Manager Oefinger explained that the Town is working on finalizing a purchase sales agreement for the William Seely School property. The Town Manager is looking for authorization to sign the agreement, refer the sale to the Planning Commission under CGS Section 8-24, and schedule a public hearing.*

**A motion was made by Mayor Schmidt, seconded by Councilor Moravsik, to enter executive session at 9:07 p.m. to discuss 2012-0050 Potential Disposition of William Seely School, and to invite Town**

Attorney Eric Callahan and Town Manager Mark Oefinger to attend.

The motion carried unanimously

Discussed

*The executive session ended at 9:25 p.m.*

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

The motion carried unanimously

*A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, to add to the agenda the appointment to the Eastern Regional Mental Health Board's Catchment Area Council and setting the referendum date, form of the question, and explanatory text for the November WPCF bond referendum.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

**2015-0204 Miscellaneous and Ad Hoc Committee Appointments**

Discussed

*As previously noted by the Town Manager, a letter was received from the Eastern Regional Mental Health Board requesting that David Hume be appointed as Groton's representative to the Catchment Area Council.*

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

The motion carried unanimously

**2015-0191 Referendum Date, Form of the Question, and Explanatory Text for the Refurbishment of the Water Pollution Control Facility Effluent Pump Station and Rehabilitation of the Fishtown Road Pump Station Bond Ordinance**

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

The motion carried unanimously

*A motion was made by Councilor Frink, seconded by Councilor Moravsik to add to the agenda the request by L&M Hospital to support their affiliation with Yale.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

**2015-0203 Letter in Support of L&M Hospital's Affiliation with Yale**

Discussed

*Councilor Frink stated he cannot support the request because he does not feel it is the Town's role to endorse a merger or affiliation.*

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

The motion carried by the following vote:

**Votes:** In Favor: 4 - Mayor Schmidt, Councilor de la Cruz, Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Watson  
Opposed: 3 - Councilor Antipas, Councilor Frink and Councilor Moravsik  
Abstain: 1 - Granatosky

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

**Recommended for Deletion:**

**2014-0164 Police Chief Recruitment**

Recommended for Deletion

**2015-0031 Commercial Solid Waste Program**

Recommended for Deletion

**8. OTHER BUSINESS**

*None.*

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

*A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor de la Cruz, to adjourn the meeting at 9:38 p.m.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*