



# 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*

Wednesday, August 15, 2012

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

#### SPECIAL MEETING

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

*Mayor Somers called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.*

#### 2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Somers, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Streeter and Councilor Watson  
Members Absent: Councilor Flax and Councilor Morton

#### 3. Calendar and Communications

*None.*

#### 4. Approval of Minutes

##### 2012-0242 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 24, 2012, July 30, 2012 and July 31, 2012 are hereby accepted and approved.

**A motion was made by Councilor Johnson, seconded by Councilor Watson, to adopt.**

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

**Votes:** In Favor: 6 - Mayor Somers, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Streeter and Councilor Watson  
Abstain: 1 - Councilor Antipas

#### 5. NEW BUSINESS

##### 2012-0200 Adoption of an Ordinance Changing and Redefining the Voting Districts

**Tabled**

##### 2012-0201 Resolution Authorizing Use of a Description of the Ordinance Changing and Redefining the Voting Districts

**Tabled**

*Town Manager Oefinger asked that these items be tabled, noting that the issue is still under review by the Town Attorney.*

##### 2012-0227 Regional Probate Court - Update

**Discussed**

*Probate Judge Nick Kepple and Carolyn Bessette were present to address the Council. Mr. Kepple stated that he enjoys being in Groton Town Hall, but the space is small for the court's purposes despite taking over the former Registrar of Voters space. Mr. Kepple has looked at several other sites, but they do not meet the court's needs or they would require substantial renovations. To avoid the cost of a move, Mr. Kepple proposes rearranging the current space to allow a hearing room/judge's chambers. A total of \$18,000 remains in CIP LoCIP funds designed for the regionalization of the probate court. The total cost of the proposed improvements is \$18,600;*

however, LoCIP funds cannot be used for furniture so approximately \$9,000 of work does not qualify. The proposed work will address security and confidentiality issues by creating a counter and installing sound-deadening work stations. Physical space modifications include moving a door. The Probate Court can contribute \$4,000 from the operating budget and Mr. Kepple is requesting an appropriation from the Town in the amount of \$5,600. The cost will be prorated among the towns represented by the court.

Town Manager Oefinger reiterated that LoCIP funds cannot be used for furniture. He recommended a transfer from Contingency with the understanding that other towns will pay their fair share of all the improvements.

Mr. Kepple noted that unlike other regional collaborations, there is a statutory obligation for the towns to pay their share of the regional probate costs.

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

Councilor Antipas asked about the State's space requirements for the court. Mr. Kepple noted this court is one-third to one-half the recommended size. Additionally, the volume of work at the court warrants six clerks, but there is physical space for only five.

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2012-0237**

#### **Eastern Point Road Golf Cart Tunnel Agreement**

**Discussed**

Town Manager Oefinger explained that the Town was notified by DOT that a new agreement for the golf cart tunnel under Eastern Point Road was required, which was signed and returned to the state. The state then asked for a resolution authorizing the Town Manager to sign the agreement. The tunnel is necessary for the golf course to function.

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

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2012-0238**

#### **School Facilities Initiative Task Force**

**Discussed**

A proposal was submitted to the Board of Education by Milone and MacBroom (M&M) for activities associated with the school facilities initiative. Mayor Somers feels that M&M would be a vital asset in moving forward on the schools noting that they would act as a facilitator for the School Facilities Initiative Task Force. M&M is currently working on the Plan of Conservation and Development update and with Board of Education on redistricting. The FYE 2013 CIP includes \$75,000 for the next phase of the school plan. M&M estimates that it will take about seven months for the committee to formulate a plan. The Town Manager reminded that Council that M&M does not provide architectural services. If the Task Force identifies an approach, the Town would still have to hire someone to come up with more definitive designs and cost estimates. Town Manager Oefinger noted that approximately \$50,000 in funding remains in an old CIP project for Phase II design work, which may be accessible.

Although this proposal is addressed to the Board of Education, historically these efforts have been managed by the Town. The Town Manager noted upcoming staff changes at Groton Public Schools including the retirement of Wes Greenleaf. Mayor Somers expressed support for entering into an agreement with M&M with the Town Council heading up the effort. Councilor Johnson feels the Town should wait until a Superintendent is in place to avoid the problems encountered in the last Phase II effort. Discussion followed on the Board of Education's role in making sure a new Superintendent is on board with the plan.

Town Manager Oefinger also has concerns with bringing a new Superintendent on board in the

*middle of the process. He emphasized that this must be a joint effort of the Town Council and Board of Education, but managing the contract is strictly an administrative item. It is unknown how the two bodies can move forward without a point person (a Superintendent or Wes Greenleaf) to provide continuity. It has been difficult to even arrange meetings with the Board of Education and there must be active involvement by both the Town Council and Board of Education throughout the process. Wes Greenleaf played a large role in previous efforts and did a tremendous amount of work behind the scenes. The Town Manager questioned how this effort will fit into the Board's priorities since they will be particularly busy in upcoming months.*

*The Town Manager will reach out to Wes Greenleaf, Caroline Dickey and Mike Zuba regarding M&M's proposal and report back to the Council. Mayor Somers will speak to Kristin Hoyt about the plan when Wes Greenleaf retires.*

**2012-0240 Resolution Setting the Referendum Date and Approving the Form of the Question for the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Program Bond Ordinance**

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

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2012-0241 Explanatory Text for Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Program Bond Ordinance Referendum**

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

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2012-0243 Review of Town Council Goals**

**Discussed**

*Mayor Somers asked Councilors to review the Town Council goals and discuss the status. The Mayor and Council noted the following:*

- After the November election, the Council will meet with local legislators.*
- The Economic Development Commission is working on updating financial incentives.*
- No Revenue Generating Task Force has been established.*
- The Environment, Energy and Conservation Committee has been set up and there is a tentative date for an organizational meeting in the beginning of September.*
- The Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Program is going to referendum in November.*

**2012-0247 Groton Heights School**

**Discussed**

*Mayor Somers suggested that the Council needs to make a decision on the school. Town Manager Oefinger noted receipt of the Task Force report in February. There does not appear to be a municipal use for the building, but there is universal concurrence that the building should stay. The Town does not want to be a landlord. The Town was approached by a number of non-profits about the building, but the Task Force feels the group(s) should have the financial resources to improve the space. If the Town is going to dispose of the building, the conditions must be identified. The Town Manager offered Councilors a tour of the building.*

*One of the recommendations of the Task Force was to pursue a zoning regulation amendment to allow other uses, modeled after the Town of Groton's Institutional Reuse regulations. Discussion followed and the Council expressed support for applying for an amendment of the City Zoning Regulations.*

*The Council asked the Town Manager to arrange a tour of the building on a Saturday morning.*

**A motion was made by Councilor Streeter, seconded by Councilor Watson, to authorize the Town Manager to apply for an amendment of the City Zoning Regulations modeled after the Town of**

Groton's Institutional Reuse regulations.

The motion carried unanimously

**2012-0101 Labor Negotiations (2012 Standing Referral)**

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, that the members of the Town Council, together with Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Director of Administrative Services Doug Ackerman, Manager of Labor Relations Joyce Sauchuk and Town Attorney Eileen Duggan go into executive session at 7:04 p.m. for the purpose of discussing strategy and/or negotiations with respect to current and pending collective bargaining with multiple bargaining units. This action is taken without prejudice to the Council's right to discuss these matters in a private meeting pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §1 200(2).

The motion carried unanimously

Discussed

*The executive session concluded at 7:50 p.m.*

A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Antipas, that the members of the Committee of the Whole approve the tentative agreement and the expenditure of funds necessary to implement the tentative agreement between the Town and the Local 818 of Council #4 American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees AFL-CIO for the term July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2016.

Town Attorney Eileen Duggan noted that the contract has been negotiated a year ahead. The wage increases (0%, 2%, 2%) and insurance modifications are beneficial to the Town. Ms. Duggan reviewed specifics of the contract and noted she is comfortable that the changes in health care will offset the wage increases.

The motion carried unanimously

**2012-0246 Pending Claim**

A motion was made by Councilor Antipas, seconded by Councilor Watson, that the members of the Town Council, together with Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Director of Administrative Services Doug Ackerman, Manager of Labor Relations Joyce Sauchuk and Town Attorney Eileen Duggan go into executive session at 8:53 p.m. for the purpose of discussing a pending claim/grievance.

The motion carried unanimously

Discussed

*The executive session concluded at 8:42 p.m.*

**2012-0239 Revised Position Descriptions (2012 Standing Referral)**

Discussed

*Director of Administrative Services Doug Ackerman reviewed a number of proposed revised job descriptions. The Manager of Golf Course and Parks Maintenance consolidates supervision of the two divisions to take advantage of the synergy between the two operations, especially in the off season. This change has been in place and is working. The Golf Professional is a unique position that is a Town employee that also operates the golf shop as a private business. The job description has been revised to clarify the two roles. Updates to the job descriptions for Assistant Golf Professional and Pro Shop Attendant clarify duties. In Public Works, the Public Buildings and Fleet Supervisor position consolidates supervision of two divisions. The Foreman at the Transfer Station will be promoted to a Working Leader position. The Inspection Services Technician in Planning and Development Services was approved in the FYE 2013 budget for six months and will provided administrative and technical support to Inspection Services.*

*Town Manager Oefinger noted many of the changes were made as a result of the ongoing dialog with consultant David Dunn who was hired by the Town to look at some of these issues.*

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Antipas, to approve the revised position descriptions for Manager of Golf Course and Parks Maintenance, Golf Professional, Assistant Golf Professional, Pro Shop Attendant, Public Buildings and Fleet Supervisor, Working Leader, and

Inspection Services Technician.

The motion carried unanimously

2012-0050

**Potential Disposition of William Seely School Property**

A motion was made by Councilor Johnson, seconded by Councilor Antipas, to enter executive session at 8:51 p.m. to discuss the potential disposition of William Seely School and to invite the Town Manager to attend.

The motion carried unanimously

Discussed

*The executive session concluded at 9:06 p.m.*

6. **ADJOURNMENT**

*The meeting adjourned at 9:06 p.m.*