



Town of Groton, Connecticut

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Meeting Minutes

Town Council Committee of the Whole

Mayor Heather Bond Somers, Councilors Dean G. Antipas, Bruce S. Flax, Bill Johnson, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Deborah L. Peruzzotti, Rita M. Schmidt, James L. Streeter, and Harry A. Watson

Monday, January 30, 2012

5:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

SPECIAL MEETING - JOINT MEETING WITH BOARD OF EDUCATION

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Somers called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Somers, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Streeter and Councilor Watson

Members Absent: Councilor Antipas, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr. and Councilor Peruzzotti

Board of Education: Kirsten Hoyt, Robert Peruzzotti, Kim Watson, Chaz Zezulka, Shelley Gardner, Beverly Washington, Rita Volkmann

Other: Jean-Claude Ambroise, Moderator of the RTM; Lori Watrous, RTM/Board of Education/Town Council Liaison Committee

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

3. NEW BUSINESS

2012-0005

Joint Meeting with Board of Education (2012 Standing Referral)

Discussed

- FYE 2013 Budget

Ms. Hoyt noted that the most recent version of the Board of Education budget represents a 0% increase. Superintendent of Schools Paul Kadri noted that most of the savings are associated with the middle school consolidation and excess fund balance in the health insurance account. Mr. Kadri explained how the health insurance fund works for the Board of Education and Town Manager Oefinger explained how the Town manages its portion of the health insurance fund.

Councilor Flax stated that he anticipated an increase associated with the consolidation. Mr. Kadri noted that there are costs for the consolidation located in the Capital Improvement Program. Also, this year, there is a reduction of about five temporary teacher positions.

Ms. Gardner asked if consideration has been given to regional health care coverage.

Councilor Flax asked if the current year's fund balance will be used for next year's budget. Mr. Kadri stated that there is some rollover that is spent on supplies, replacement computers, and security cameras.

- Supplemental Appropriation Request

Wes Greenleaf stated that the Board of Education will need a supplemental appropriation of approximately \$1.3 million for portable classrooms and interior building renovations associated with the middle school consolidation. Renovations will require architectural design and permitting. The state will not provide grant funds for leased portable classrooms. The Town is

eligible for a grant that will cover approximately 50% so the net cost to Groton will be \$750,000. The Town cannot apply for a grant until the entire amount is funded locally.

Mayor Somers expressed concern that the request for supplemental appropriation has not yet been received. She noted that it will need to be approved by the Town Council and RTM. Mr. Greenleaf indicated that he has already engaged an architect, but he does not have a solid figure for the request. Mayor Somers offered the Town's assistance to move the project and supplemental request forward more quickly, but Mr. Greenleaf declined stating that he is already working with Town staff where possible.

Ms. Hoyt noted that there will be six community meetings scheduled to discuss the middle school consolidation. Mr. Greenleaf described some of the planned changes to interior space. Discussion followed on redistricting and the development of models that will be brought to the Board of Education for approval. Mr. Kadri addressed teacher configurations which will be determined after student placement and how the School Based Health Centers will operate.

- Vision Committee Report

Mayor Somers and Ms. Hoyt have discussed a time when the two groups can go over the Vision Committee Report in more detail. A tentative date of Saturday, February 11th, at a location to be determined, was identified.

Ms. Washington asked about surveying the community on the failure of Phase II and Ms. Hoyt suggested that conducting a survey will be the first charge of a new School Design Committee. Discussion followed on the purpose of the survey.

- Meeting with State Legislators

Mr. Peruzzotti suggested that state legislators should seek more money for the Town or work to alleviate some of the mandates.

The consensus of the group was to invite the state legislators to the joint meeting on February 11th, prior to or at the end of the meeting.

Wes Greenleaf, Rick Norris, and Peter Manning were commended for obtaining an additional \$6.4 million in grant reimbursement for the Phase I school project.

With respect to the Town Council/Board of Education/RTM Liaison Committee, Mr. Ambrose noted that Lori Watrous and Jonathan Heller have been appointed by the RTM. Councilor Watson and Mr. Peruzzotti agreed to co-chair the group.

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.