



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 Bruce Flax, Councilors Dean G. Antipas, Diane Barber, Greg Grim, Rich Moravsik, Karen F. Morton, Bonnie Nault, Deb Peruzzotti, and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, October 10, 2017

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Flax called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Flax, Councilor Barber, Councilor Grim, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Morton, Councilor Nault, Councilor Watson and Councilor Moravsik
Members Absent: Councilor Peruzzotti

Also present were Town Manager John Burt and Assistant to the Town Manager Nicki Bresnayan.

3. Calendar and Communications

Councilor Morton congratulated Paige Bronk, Economic and Community Development Manager, on winning the CEDAS 2017 Member of the Year Award.

Councilor Nault attended the fly-in at the Groton-New London Airport. Mayor Flax also attended. Councilors Nault and Barber attended the Groton Fall Festival. Councilor Barber was asked about the grant received by the Board of Education, which she knew nothing about, and she suggested that there should be better communication. Town Manager Burt stated Dr. Graner will be present at the October 24th Committee of the Whole meeting and monthly thereafter to provide updates.

4. Approval of Minutes

2017-0227 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 September 26, 2017 are hereby accepted and approved.

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

The motion carried unanimously

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

6. NEW BUSINESS

2017-0221 Preliminary Results of Operations - FYE 2017

Discussed

Cindy Landry, Director of Finance, presented the Preliminary Results of Operations (unaudited) for FYE 2017. She noted the Town is better off than projected in May. Rather than using a portion of Fund Balance for the FYE 2017 budget, money will be returned to the General Fund. Ms. Landry reviewed the details on expenditures, revenues, and revenues by category, explaining the reasons for the differences from the May estimates. Fund Balance will increase from the 7.75% estimated in May to 9.16%. If there are any changes as a result of the audit, Ms. Landry expects that they will be minor.

Councilor Peruzzotti arrived at 6:07 p.m.

Roll Call: Members Present: Mayor Flax, Councilor Barber, Councilor Grim, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Morton, Councilor Nault, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Watson and Councilor Moravsik

Discussed and Recommended no action taken

Mayor Flax asked for an explanation from Director of Public Works Gary Schneider and Police Chief L.J. Fusaro of how they were able to come in under budget given the significant cuts to their budgets. The Mayor asked the Town Manager to also reach out to the City to find out how they did with their Police and Highway budgets.

2017-0218

Proposed Charter Revision - Draft Report

Discussed

Mayor Flax stated this is an opportunity for the Council to discuss the report, and he will invite the Charter Revision Commission to a special meeting next week to discuss recommended changes to the report.

Mayor Flax solicited and received comments from individual Councilors on the following recommended changes to the Charter:

- 1) *Replacing the RTM with a Board of Finance*
- 2) *Referendum Vote on Budgets*
- 3) *Staggered Terms for Town Councilors*
- 4) *Employees Prohibited from Serving on the Town Council or Board of Education*
- 5) *Responsibility for Annual Town Report*
- 6) *Ethics Commission*

Discussion followed on non-resident voting rights. Town Attorney Mike Carey provided a history of the issue. The original charter was adopted under a special act present in the statutes at the time. In Groton, non-resident taxpayers were allowed to vote on bond referenda only. With the 2008 Charter revision, a change in the Charter language eliminated the ability for non-resident taxpayers to vote. CGS Section 7-6 cited by Councilor Moravsik allows voting at a town meeting (usually in smaller communities). The Town Attorney could not find any statutory authority that would allow the Town to reinsert the previous language into the Charter, and if it were done and then challenged, the consequences could be catastrophic. Discussion followed on the bond counsel's opinion about having a dual legislative body (Town Council and Town Meeting).

Mr. Carey also recommended that the Charter Revision Commission (CRC) add language that would allow the Town to redo its budget after adoption if necessary.

Mayor Flax offered Councilors the opportunity to make final comments/suggestions.

Councilor Barber thanked the CRC for its work and left the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Roll Call: Members Present: Mayor Flax, Councilor Grim, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Morton, Councilor Nault, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Watson and Councilor Moravsik

Members Absent: Councilor Barber

Discussed

Councilor Antipas would like to have an appointed Town Clerk. Councilor Morton would like to have an appointed Town Clerk. She encouraged the CRC to look at the Town Attorney's comments. Councilor Peruzzotti would like to have an appointed Town Clerk. She asked the CRC to consider the Town Council's comments, noting that she cannot support a charter that does not truly benefit all citizens of the Town and she cannot support the draft as it is. Councilor Watson agreed with comments with respect to the appointment of the Town Clerk. He does not feel that some proposed items belong in the Charter. Councilor Grim agreed that the Town Clerk should be

appointed. Councilor Nault supports the changes regarding appointment of the Town Attorney and agrees that the Town Clerk should be appointed. Councilor Moravsik agrees with the changes regarding the appointment of the Town Attorney. Mayor Flax stated his goal is to go forward with a proposal that will be approved by the voters. He noted that some areas are not ripe for change and he encouraged the CRC to focus on big areas, making sure they are cohesive and fair to everyone in the Town.

All Councilors thanked the CRC for its efforts.

Town Manager Burt stated his only concern is the budget timeline.

Town Attorney Mike Carey stated it is not appropriate for him to comment on the policy aspects, but he feels the work the CRC did is impressive.

The Town Council recessed at 8:02 p.m. and returned at 8:09 p.m.

2017-0230 Contingency Transfer for Tax Increment Financing District for "Five Corners" and Thames Street

Discussed

Town Manager Burt explained that the City has appropriate \$15,000 for Tax Increment Financing (TIF) studies for Thames Street and "Five Corners," and in the spirit of cooperation he is recommending that the Town contribute \$7,500 from Contingency. Town Manager Burt discussed the issue with Mayor Hedrick who was appreciative of the gesture.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2017-0235 Request for Donation for Thames River Heritage Park Water Tax (FYE 2019)

Discussed

Mayor Flax noted this donation request is for FYE 2019 to be paid in June of 2018. Funds are available in the Legislative function in the Initiatives line item.

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

Councilor Peruzzotti asked about the group's budget and Mayor Flax said he would the budget to the Council.

The motion carried unanimously

2017-0228 Interlocal Agreement for Regional Community Enhancement Task Force - Modification

Discussed

Town Manager Burt explained that the Council previously authorized an interlocal agreement. The Town of East Lyme now wants to join in the agreement, and all member communities need to adopt modified resolutions. Town Manager Burt stated he would not bring forward for a formal resolution until the agreement is ready.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2017-0229 Modification of Rules - Presentations by Department Heads at Town Council Meetings

Discussed

Town Manager Burt described his request to modify Town Council Rule 8 - Order of Business and Agenda, to add E. Department Heads' under VII. Communications and Reports (Other than Committee Reports) on Town Council agendas.

Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

2017-0222 Adoption of 2018 Town Council Regular Meeting Schedule

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Nault, that this matter be

Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

2017-0223 Adoption of 2018 Committee of the Whole Regular Meeting Schedule

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, that this matter be

Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

2017-0224 Adoption of 2018 Personnel and Appointments Committee Regular Meeting Schedule

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

The motion carried unanimously

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

None.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor Antipas suggested another subcommittee to look at the Town Manager's suggestions regarding a Code of Ethics. Mayor Flax and Councilors Antipas, Morton, Nault and Moravsik expressed a willingness to serve on a subcommittee.

Town Manager Burt stated he will compile the Councilor comments on the Charter Revision Commission report so that the Town Council can vote on recommendation(s) at a special meeting next week.

9. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Nault, to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.