



# 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 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, October 27, 2015

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

#### REGULAR MEETING - REVISED

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

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

#### 2. ROLL CALL

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

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

#### 3. Calendar and Communications

*Councilor Watson appealed to the Mayor to shorten the meeting if possible to allow Councilors to see the beginning of the World Series, featuring the Mets and Matt Harvey from Mystic.*

*- SEAT Presentation*

*Mike Carroll, Executive Director of Southeast Area Transit (SEAT), provided an overview and brief update on what is happening at SEAT in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. SEAT, owned by the State of Connecticut, has 10 member towns, a \$6.5 million operating budget, and 65 employees. The Board of Directors includes elected or executive officers from member municipalities. SEAT recently conducted a service study to the route level of analysis. As part of the study, SEAT held numerous meetings with stakeholders, developed priorities, conducted market studies, developed and refined routing scenarios, and developed a recommended service plan.*

*Mr. Carroll reviewed the following comments/recommendations:*

- Current service too slow/redesign route alignments*
- Limited Sunday service/prioritize Sunday service in expansion options*
- Service information hard to find/improve public information*

*Mr. Carroll explained that the study looked at every route, addressed issues within funding constraints through route changes and recommended a number of options to expand SEAT in the future. The Board is currently struggling with allocation of local costs, which account for 8% of SEAT's budget.*

*Mr. Carroll reviewed the service changes recommended for Groton including straightening routes, splitting a route, changing the transfer point, and establishing a local route.*

*The Board will be receiving the final recommendations from the consultant for review and consideration. If approved, the next step would be another round of public hearings soliciting input before moving forward with a final plan. The earliest the plan could be implemented is July 2016, but more likely it will be in 2017.*

*Mr. Carroll addressed questions from Councilors. In response to Councilor Granatosky, Mr.*

*Carroll noted that Groton is ranked third after Norwich and New London in terms of ridership. The funding formula has not been adjusted in years and there are disparities. Mr. Carroll explained how level of service is calculated based on hours and miles travelled in a given town.*

*Councilor Granatosky expressed concern with the straightening of Route #11 in Groton and taking service away from people who need mass transit the most. She expressed support for a seasonal Mystic route and an additional line from Avery Point to the Submarine Base.*

*Councilor Flax questioned ridership information for Route #11 and Mr. Carroll indicated the information is located on SEAT's website. Mr. Carroll explained the effort to identify and provide service to transit markets and then make the routes more frequent and/or direct.*

*Town Manager Oefinger explained the discussions associated with adjusting the payment schedules for participating municipalities to address disparities.*

*Mr. Carroll noted that ridership has been stable, but recently it has declined, which could be the result of cuts in state funding.*

*Councilor Granatosky suggested that if Groton is paying more than its fair share (11% vs. 8%), then there should be no loss of service. Mr. Carroll noted that the intent is to adjust the funding formula and under the new plan, Groton receives more service, not less. If a town wants more service and is willing to pay for it, then that is a topic for discussion.*

*Mayor Schmidt suggested that further suggestions be provided to the Town Manager or Councilor Moravsik, and she thanked Mr. Carroll for attending.*

**4. Approval of Minutes**

*None.*

**5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

*None.*

**6. NEW BUSINESS**

**2015-0258 Job Description for Foreman - Parks**

**Discussed**

*Bob Zagami, Director of Human Resources/Risk Management, explained that a Foreman recently retired from the Town which provided an opportunity to reexamine the position. The Town would like to add management responsibilities to the position including hiring, training, promoting, and preparing the budget. The tree warden responsibility would also be removed from the job description since there are other people on staff who can fill that position.*

*In response to Councilor Antipas, Mark Berry, Director of Parks and Recreation, noted that currently the Town's insurance company conducts playground inspections.*

*Councilor Flax asked for background on the proposed change. Mr. Berry noted that people have different strengths and weaknesses. The Town has identified a need for budgeting and software experience to improve efficiency. Town Manager Oefinger explained that the position with these responsibilities was previously eliminated.*

*Councilor Frink questioned required certifications.*

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

*Councilor Antipas questioned other positions in Parks and Recreation with budget preparation*

*duties.*

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2015-0252 Supportive Housing Program Grant**

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

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2015-0256 Groton Education Foundation Grant - Library**

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

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2015-0259 Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC) Memorandum of Understanding**

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

*Councilor Granatosky asked about the assignment of an individual to the Task Force and the need for evidence storage space. Town Manager Oefinger noted that the Town is already involved in the Task Force and this agreement is a formality. The Town currently has the necessary resources. The agreement has been reviewed by the Town Attorney.*

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2015-0262 Brownfield Area-Wide Revitalization Planning Grant**

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

*Economic Development Specialist Kristin Clarke explained that this grant will cover a number of buildings within a certain area including Fitch Middle School, the former Poquonnock Bridge Fire Department, Human Services, and other vacant/inactive buildings. Overall revitalization of the area has been identified as a special focus in the draft POCD. This is a matching grant, but the Town may be able to apply for other grant funds for the match. Town Manager Oefinger noted the benefit of this grant, which will help develop a more effective way to clean up the area. This is a brownfield grant, but in the context of community planning.*

*Discussion followed on potential uses for the funds such as conducting environmental assessments to have on hand for developers.*

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2009-0124 Ethics Ordinance**

**Discussed**

*Councilor Antipas noted that he met with Councilor Frink to review Councilor Frink's comments. It was noted that a committee has been formed by SCCOG to look at the regional ethics commission issue again. Town Manager Oefinger noted that if it is ultimately determined that a regional ethics commission cannot be formed, there is nothing stopping individual communities from joining with other communities to create a commission. Discussion followed on how to proceed.*

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Watson, to take what Councilor Antipas has written [draft Code of Ethics] and move it forward for development as per the Charter.

Discussion followed on the draft code and the ordinance process. Councilor Antipas provided a history of the charter change which was prompted by the potential imposition of an ethics code by the state.

A motion was made by Councilor Frink, seconded by Councilor Granatosky, to amend the motion to form an Ethics Commission first and have the Commission finalize the code for the Town Council's review and approval.

Councilor Antipas noted that the document is already complete and it was developed by a Task Force. Discussion followed on the two different processes proposed by the motions on the floor and clarification of the motions. Councilor Antipas explained his desire for the Council to finalize its recommended code and then send it to the Board of Education for their input before moving forward. Councilor Watson suggested that a public hearing would provide the opportunity for input. Discussion followed on the need for training and application of the code to Town employees. Councilor Antipas reiterated his desire to have the Board of Education review the document prior to beginning the formal ordinance process.

Councilor Peruzzotti summarized the discussion as forwarding the document to the Board of Education, having a public hearing sometime around January, and beginning the process of setting up a commission. There was further discussion about the intent of the original motion. Town Manager noted that if there is a desire to give people a chance to comment, a January public hearing might not work given the election and other priorities in January and February.

The motion to amend the motion failed by the following vote:

In favor: 4 - Councilor de la Cruz, Councilor Frink, Councilor Granatosky, Councilor Moravsik  
Opposed: 5 - Mayor Schmidt, Councilor Watson, Councilor Flax, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Antipas.

The motion carried by the following vote:

**Votes:** In Favor: 5 - Mayor Schmidt, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Flax, Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Watson  
Opposed: 4 - Councilor de la Cruz, Councilor Frink, Councilor Moravsik and Granatosky

**2015-0219 FYE 2017 Budget Discussion**

Not Discussed

**2015-0232 Sale of William Seely School Property**

Not Discussed

**2015-0188 Distribution of PILOT Funds for State Owned Property**

Not Discussed

**2015-0201 PILOT Funds for State and Town Owned Property - Methodology and Future Distributions**

Not Discussed

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

Not Discussed

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

Not Discussed

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

*None.*

**8. OTHER BUSINESS**

*None.*

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

*A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor de la Cruz, to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 p.m.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*