Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes - Draft

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

Thursday, November 7, 2013 | **7:00 PM** | **Groton Senior Center, Route 117**

SPECIAL MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Somers called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

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

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

6. NEW BUSINESS

2009-0166 Townwide Police Assessment

Discussed

Mayor Somers introduced Tom Wilson of Police Executive Research Forum (PERF). Mr. Wilson thanked the Town for the opportunity to do the study and complimented the Town's professionals.

Mr. Wilson emphasized that the findings and recommendations were developed after careful study and evaluation, but it is up to local officials in the community to decide what to do with the recommendations.

Mr. Wilson provided background information on PERF, the services it provides, and studies it has conducted. The scope of work for the Town study has always been to review the demand for police services, evaluate how resources are deployed, review management systems, recommend changes, and provide a cost for police service in the City and Groton Long Point if the Town of Groton police were to provide the service. The methodology used interviews, observation, data analysis, and review.

Mr. Wilson provided an overview of the findings in the study, which indicate that Groton has high quality police service with personnel who are well managed and well trained. The departments are adequately staffed to provide core services, but there are no 'extra bodies.'

Mr. Wilson expressed concern with the interoperability of City and Town and the need to be able to communicate seamlessly. Consolidation of functions and collaboration should improve both service and costs.

Recommendations in the report include:

- *Consolidation of dispatch*
- *Integration and sharing of Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD)/Record Management Systems (RMS)*
- *Consolidation of prisoner holding process*
- *Collaborative investigative efforts*
- *Collaborative marine and dive response capability*

Demographics for the three areas were compared (population, square miles, and population density). Population per officer is not an effective tool for determining the necessary size of a law enforcement agency.

The crime rates in the three areas are low compared to the state. Mr. Wilson complimented the City on its efforts to reduce criminal activity.

Mr. Wilson provided an overview of the three police departments and the specific services that they offer.

Groton Dispatch handles all 911 calls.

The Town Police Department is a very good agency overall, with its focus on community/problem solving policing. There are adequate resources for core services and specialized functions are appropriate. The study recommends using uniformed non-sworn officers for front desk duties; integrating the 911 center CAD with RMS; utilizing a case management system for investigations; and reviewing the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) and Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) programs for effectiveness.

The Groton City Police Department is well managed and adequately staffed to provide core functions. The department has a community policing/problem solving focus. Interoperability with the Town is a significant issue. The City's prisoner holding could be consolidated with the Town. Also, the City's dispatch center is redundant. The study recommends consolidating the communication center; integrate RMS with the Town; consolidating the prisoner holding process; and collaborating with the Town on marine/dive response and investigations.

The Groton Long Point Police Department does not have a lot of interaction with the other agencies. It is community/customer-service oriented and provides traditional and non-traditional services. Groton Long Point is not a traditional law enforcement environment, but is more like a university setting. It is difficult to compare Groton Long Point to the Town or City as it is more service and quality of life centered.

Mr. Wilson reviewed the patrol workload statistics for the Town and City, noting that PERF did not have comparable data from Groton Long Point. Top calls for both departments are medical and domestic violence is also a big concern. Both the Town and City have opportunities to take patrol and put them in the right places and the right times. Mr. Wilson would not recommend decreasing staffing because there is no time for proactive policing. Neither agency uses a case management system to track investigations or time commitments so it is difficult to compare efforts. The study recommends implementing a shared case management system and conducting future internal reviews of workload.

Mr. Wilson noted that the three entities use different budgeting approaches. Because the City and Groton Long Point request supplemental funding from the Town, the study recommends that they adapt the Town's budgeting format for police funding requests. Mr. Wilson noted that cost per capita, cost per officer, and cost per patrol activity are not effective ways for comparing police services.

The cost for the Town to provide police services in the City would be $1,925,174 based on 12 officers, 2 detectives, equipment and vehicle costs. In Groton Long Point, the cost would be $27,000 based on 600 hours of overtime during the summer and a different deployment of Town resources during the summer.

Mr. Wilson provided a summary of consolidation/collaboration considerations. The study's

conclusions follow:

- *Current staffing can handle the workload.*
- *Consolidation and collaboration efforts have been identified.*
- *PERF provided a budget format worksheet.*
- *The entities should not dismiss merger discussions to solve issues of fragmentation, redundancy and lack of communication.*
- *Town residents should have the opportunity to discuss police service, understand the cost implications, and provide input to local officials*

Mr. Wilson answered questions from the audience with highlights noted below:

- *The full study will be available on the Town's web site.*
- *Implementation of the study recommendations is a local decision and collaborative effort.*
- *Costs to patrol the City and Groton Long Point are if the Town provided the service.*
- *Officer-initiated work is proactive policing which is desirable in a community.*
- *Groton Long Point, like other seasonal communities, could decide to augment Town patrols with part-time officers. It is the community's decision based on what they would be willing to pay for.*
- *Town Manager Oefinger explained that traffic/parking violations would be enforced in Groton Long Point just like other areas of Town; however certain Groton Long Point ordinances which are not traditional police issues would not..*

9. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, to adjourn the meeting at 8:51 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.