



# 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**

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Tuesday, November 27, 2012

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

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#### SPECIAL MEETING

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

*Mayor Somers called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.*

**2. ROLL CALL**

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

**3. Calendar and Communications**

*Councilor Watson noted that there will be a Town Council/Board of Education/RTM Liaison Committee meeting next Wednesday and he solicited topics for discussion from other Councilors.*

**4. NEW BUSINESS**

**2009-0124**

**Ethics Ordinance**

**Discussed**

*Councilor Antipas noted that up until recently, there was only one option available to the Town, which was to draft an ordinance and adopt it in accordance with the Charter. Now there is the possibility of a regional approach and Councilor Antipas feels the Council should discuss the approach before reviewing the draft ordinance. Councilor Schmidt noted that individual municipalities would still have their own ethics ordinances under the regional proposal. Mayor Somers explained that discussions have suggested that a Regional Ethics Commission could adopt an ethics code or use individual towns' codes.*

*Town Manager Oefinger suggested that going through the committee's draft ordinance would be valuable for the Council to understand the issue. A regional board has been talked about a number of times and there appears to be more support this time. He noted that a regional board's decisions would be purely advisory.*

*Town Attorney Mike Carey suggested that he meet with the Ethics Task Force (Councilors Antipas and Flax) to address his questions on the draft ordinance.*

*Mr. Carey offered his opinion on the regional board noting that there is a principle that government decisions should be made at the most local level as possible. Some people believe that a regional board would provide a less-biased review, but those subjected to the process may feel that they are being judged by a distant group. A regional process could cause delays if conflicts arise in functions such as purchasing.*

*Councilor Antipas has looked at the Norwich information and it is a different setup than Groton's draft. In Norwich, the Commission would set up their own guidelines, which is why their ordinance appears smaller than Groton's. Councilor Antipas suggested that the group making the decision should be as removed from the setup as possible.*

*Town Manager Oefinger noted that the Ethics Task Force was originally comprised of three people*

including former Councilor Sheets. Rita Schmidt volunteered to take her place. A meeting of the Ethics Task Force will be scheduled in the near future.

**2010-0215 Community Access Television Application to DPUC**

A motion was made by Mayor Somers, seconded by Councilor Morton, to enter executive session at 6:24 p.m. to discuss 2010-0215 Community Access Television Application to DPUC and to invite Town Attorney Mike Carey, Director of Library Services Betty Anne Reiter, Shawn Greeley, and Town Manager Mark Oefinger to attend.

The motion carried unanimously

Discussed

The executive session ended at 6:39 p.m.

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

Discussed

The Town Manager explained that there are two positions being modified: Economic Development Specialist and Library Associate.

Doug Ackerman, Director of Administrative Services, noted that the Economic Development Specialist description has been reviewed by the Director of Planning and Development. There are no changes in salary range or job requirements. An emphasis on economic sustainability has been added to the description. For Library Associate, two jobs have been combined into one general job description that is more attuned to new technologies.

Councilor Flax asked if any consideration was given to having the Economic Development Specialist report to the Town Manager. Town Manager Oefinger explained the history of the position and noted that he prefers the position in Planning and Development Services because of the synergy. When he held the position, it was located in the Town Manager's Office and while he was promoting economic development, the rest of the organization was going in a different direction. The Town Manager further noted that if an Assistant Town Manager position were created, he would not combine the position with Economic Development Specialist. The resources needed to do the job are in the Planning Department. The only thing that would change his mind would be if Town departments were co-located in the same building.

Mayor Somers asked Councilor Johnson to report on the status of the Economic Development Commission's report on incentive programs before the end of the year.

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Antipas, to approve the revised position descriptions for Economic Development Specialist and Library Associate.

The motion carried unanimously

**2012-0316 Trails Coordinating Committee Modification**

Discussed

The Town Manager noted this is a request to modify a previous action by the Town Council establishing the Trails Coordinating Committee. The Committee was originally set up to report to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Implementation Committee, but the desire is to make the group a task force of the Council.

Doug Ackerman, Director of Administrative Services, noted that the group has not actually met yet.

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

The motion carried unanimously

**2012-0321 Reallocation of CIP Funds to Fitch High School Roof Replacement**

Discussed

*Town Manager Oefinger explained that William Robarge, the new Director of Buildings and Grounds for Groton Public Schools, has provided preliminary information on a request to reallocate CIP funds to the Fitch High School Roof Replacement project. The state is requiring that the roof pitch be increased which has raised the cost of the project by \$200,000. Funds will come from the middle school consolidation project. Mr. Robarge expects to have more exact numbers soon and this item will be placed on a future agenda. Councilor Watson stated he would like to know that status of the request for waiver of the roof pitch.*

2012-0007

**Meeting with State Legislators (2012 Standing Referral)****Discussed**

*The Town Manager has confirmed a meeting with state legislators on December 4th at 6:00 p.m. Mayor Somers reminded Councilors that they need to forward topics for discussion to her. She noted that at the Council of Governments meeting, the legislative liaison indicated that Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR) and Binding Arbitration are off the table for discussion.*

*Topics for discussion to date include MBR, redistricting, disposition of the Oral School property and transfer of land to DEEP, the Old Mystic Fire Department letter regarding their interest in a portion of the Oral School property, unfunded mandates, education funding, interaction of the Department of Agriculture with the Shellfish Commission and hatchery, and Pfizer.*

*The Town Manager distributed the Council of Government's draft legislative agenda. Discussion followed on MBR, the ramifications of cutting the education budget, and the origins of MBR.*

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

*A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Flax, to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*