



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

Tuesday, December 6, 2016

6:45 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

SPECIAL MEETING

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:47 p.m. by Mayor Bruce Flax.

2. **ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Mayor Flax, Councilor Grim, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Morton, Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Watson

Members Absent: Councilor Barber, Councilor Nault and Councilor Moravsik

Also present was Town Manager Mark Oefinger.

3. **NEW BUSINESS**

2016-0289

Groton Utilities DEEP Micro Grid Grant Application

Discussed

Randall Surprenant from Groton Utilities began the meeting with an overview of the microgrid project planned if the grant is awarded by DEEP and the USDA. The goal of this project is for Groton Utilities to sustain power in the community for a longer period of time if there is a catastrophic power outage. In a past power outage caused by storm Irene, the Town had 8,000 to 9,000 residents without power for a period of 2-3 days and this was considered a mild storm. Mr. Surprenant noted that this project could create the ability to sustain a load longer than 5-7 days and has the potential to go up to 21 days with refueling.

Mr. Surprenant reviewed the two microgrid locations that will take place within this project, the West side and the East side. The west side would consist of two 2.5 megawatt generators on Bridge Street that will feed Eastern Point Road down to the waste treatment center and ending with the Hess Gas Station, Buckeye Terminal. The idea is to be able to potentially work out a contract with Hess to provide the diesel fuel supply for the generators. In the other direction on Eastern Point Road, it will provide power to Charter Oak Federal Credit Union and the Cumberland Farms in the City, Poquonnock Road past Buford's Restaurant and ultimately the City of Groton Municipal building. Other areas the west side microgrid would provide power to is River Road, Grove Road, the Pleasant Valley Sub Station, Stop and Shop, Walmart and the hotel series next to Walmart.

The east side microgrid will consist of two 2.5 megawatt generators by the Groton Utilities' operation building and two 2.5 megawatt generators by the Town PAF, equaling 10 megawatts. The east side grid will feed a much larger area including Poquonnock Road, Long Hill Road, Kings Heights Technology Center, Groton Regency, the Big Y Plaza, Tower Avenue, Drozdyk Drive, Fort Hill Road, Newtown Road, Groton Library, the Senior Center, Pequot Medical Center, Marriott Hotel and Spa and potentially a school in the future to be used as a warming shelter.

It was stated that Schneider Electric is the firm Groton Utilities is working with as a consultant for this project. Their engineers have been reviewing the loading data to find switching points to shed loads and add loads as needed. The engineers are also looking for way to maximize the grid.

Councilor Watson questioned the number of people these generators will supply power to should an outage occur. Mr. Surprenant answered that the 5 megawatts total in the west side will

generate power for 200 residential properties and businesses total, running at the 13,800 volt level. He noted that Electric Boat will not be included in the grid as they run on a different voltage. Electric Boat and Pfizer would have to maintain their own businesses.

Councilor Antipas asked if the residents and businesses would notice any fluctuations in power while the power source was switching over to the generators. Mr. Surprenant explained that there are 17 megawatts of diesel generation currently running on the circuits for distribution load shedding.

It is currently in place to ensure that we do not go over the peak established from last year thus not establishing a new peak and costing more money. He notes CCMEC runs the distribution generators once a month to monitor the peak and to eliminate that peak. The generators match the voltage on the system. There have been no complaints that he is aware of as most people do not realize they are running from the diesel generation. It is essentially the same thing. The generators are tier 4 generators that have a low toxic output and special scrubbers.

DEEP has allocated monies for this grant and the money is issued on a first come, first serve basis. With this grant Groton, Bozrah and Norwich will be a regional hub for people to retreat to during storms to seek food and warming shelters in our community, while contributing to the Town's economy. As part of the commissioning and the grant there will be a design created to test methodology testing the grid for four hours once a year. The testing would be done during a night/evening non-heating and cooling month. Schneider Electric is currently working on that design.

Mr. Surprenant is requesting an endorsement from the Town Council on the project moving forward. The DEEP grant is for 3 million with the USDA providing another 2 million on top of that if the program is warranted.

Councilor Peruzzotti questioned whether Groton Utilities had to match the State in anyway. Mr. Surprenant stated that it is 100% state funded. Councilor Peruzzotti also questioned how much Schneider Electric was being paid as a consultant for the project. Mr. Surprenant stated that there was one fee of \$10,000 paid to Schneider Electric and another \$10,000 fee split between Groton, New London and Norwich. It was noted that Groton Utilities is managing the project.

Councilor Watson asked why the project will not include Fitch High School as it is a warming center when there is an outage. Mr. Surprenant explained that it is not in the Groton Utilities territory and they have a non-compete agreement with Eversource. Mr. Surprenant stated that the application and letter of endorsement is due to the State by the end of December.

Town Manager Mark Oefinger mentioned that he believed it was a great project and noted that a lot of the system was in place and are essentially adding switches, hardware and software. Mr. Surprenant explained that the most expensive part of this project could have been the generators but they are already in place. The generators were put in place about 7 years ago and have a life expectancy of 20-25 years.

Mr. Surprenant mentioned that Schneider Electric has not released the cost of the project yet. This is a larger design then they have seen in the past.

Mayor Flax stated that he supports the project and believes that it will be good for the community.

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

The motion carried unanimously

4. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Watson, to adjourn the meeting at 7:16 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.