



# 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 Patrice Granatosky, Councilor David Atwater, Councilor Conrad F. Heede, Councilor Rachael Franco, Councilor Rich Moravsik, Councilor Lian Obrey, Councilor Juliette Parker, Councilor Rita Schmidt, and Councilor Joe Zeppieri*

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Tuesday, December 12, 2017

6:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

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#### SPECIAL MEETING

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1. **CALL TO ORDER**

*Mayor Granatosky called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.*

2. **ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Chairperson Granatosky, Councilor Atwater, Councilor Franco, Councilor Heede, Councilor Moravsik, Councilor Obrey, Councilor Parker, Councilor Schmidt and Councilor Zeppieri

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

3. **Calendar and Communications**

*Councilor Zeppieri stated he has been in touch with Jonathan Lamas concerning noise at Chapter One. Mr. Lamas stated that the noise level is better this weekend than it has been in a long time. Councilor Atwater received a verbal complaint about Chapter One.*

*Mayor Granatosky received an email about an event for Special Olympics (Cop on Top) on Friday, December 15th from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. at Cardinal Honda.*

4. **Approval of Minutes**

**2017-0286 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 November 14, 2017 are hereby accepted and approved.

**A motion was made by Councilor Schmidt, seconded by Councilor Moravsik, to adopt.**

**A motion was made by Councilor Heede, seconded by Councilor Atwater, to strike the sentence on page 4 of the minutes under item 2017-0263 "Efforts by Senator Somers have restored funding to Groton."**

**Discussion followed. The motion to amend the motion passed 5 in favor (Mayor Granatosky, Councilors Heede, Atwater, Moravsik, Parker), 4 opposed (Councilors Franco, Zeppieri, Schmidt, Obrey).**

**Mayor Granatosky noted a correction to the minutes on page 6 with respect to a vote under item 2017-0263.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

5. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

*None.*

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

**2017-0246 Introduction of Ordinance Amending Various Ordinances to Increase Fines**

**Referred**

*Police Chief L. J. Fusaro explained the request to increase parking violation fees and to establish*

*a fee for solicitor permits. The fees go to the General Fund. Doubling of the fines after seven days is consistent with past practice and other communities. Councilor Zeppieri expressed support for fines, but he expressed concern with the period of time to make the payment and suggested extending it to 30 days. Chief Fusaro noted the appeals process.*

*Town Manager Burt suggested that if the time limit for doubling the fine is increased, the time limit for legal action should be extended as well.*

*There were no objections to increasing the fines. The majority of Councilors were in favor of the time limits as proposed.*

**2017-0247 Resolution Setting a Public Hearing on Ordinance Amending Various Ordinances to Increase Fines**

**A motion was made by Councilor Heede, seconded by Councilor Franco, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.**

*Councilor Zeppieri expressed concerns with the time limits in the ordinance and the need to appear in person to pay a fine.*

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2017-0287 Supplemental Appropriation for Contingency**

**Discussed**

*Finance Director Cindy Landry described the request for a supplemental appropriation from the General Fund to Contingency. Wages associated with settled labor contracts were not included in FYE 2018 department budgets. Ms. Landry will be requesting a transfer from Contingency to cover the wages, but the balance in Contingency is insufficient. Contingency was originally approved at \$650,000. The current balance is \$344,376. One additional labor contract is still in negotiations. Ms. Landry is requesting this item be referred to the RTM under Rule 6.5.3 so that the adjusted figure can be included in the FYE 2019 budget.*

*Councilor Obrey stated she feels the Town does not have to accept union increases.*

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

**The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Votes:** In Favor: 8 - Chairperson Granatosky, Councilor Atwater, Councilor Franco, Councilor Heede, Councilor Moravsik, Councilor Obrey, Councilor Parker and Councilor Schmidt  
Opposed: 1 - Councilor Zeppieri

**2017-0288 Contingency Transfer for Wage Increases and Other Items**

**A motion was made by Chairperson Granatosky, seconded by Councilor Parker, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.**

*In response to Councilor Zeppieri, Finance Director Cindy Landry explained each of the transfers from Contingency to the various functions.*

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2017-0283 Authorization for Town Manager to Fill Town Clerk Vacancies**

**A motion was made by Councilor Parker, seconded by Councilor Heede, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.**

*Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Director of Human Resources/Risk Management Bob Zagami were present. Ms. Moukawsher noted that the Deputy Town Clerk is retiring. Currently there is a hiring freeze in place, which requires the approval of Mr. Zagami, the Town Manager, and the Town Council. Ms. Moukawsher wants to hire a Deputy Town Clerk and two Assistant Town Clerks from existing staff, as well as an Office Assistant II. Mr. Zagami described the potential reorganization of the office if people within the office move up. The Clerk wants two Assistant Town Clerks since employees are currently unable to perform some required duties in their*

existing classifications.

Town Manager Burt noted that because the person leaving the Deputy Town Clerk position is at a higher pay scale, there are some savings over the next two years.

Training will be done in-house. The Deputy Town Clerk position will be an in-department posting. If no one applies, the posting will go out into the Town organization, and then outside of the Town if necessary.

**The motion carried unanimously**

The Committee of the Whole recessed at 7:16 p.m. to conduct a special meeting of the Town Council, and returned at 7:18 p.m.

**2017-0289**

### **Supplemental Appropriation for Town Hall Complex**

#### **Discussed**

Director of Public Works Gary Schneider described the request to approve additional funds in the amount of \$75,000 from Capital Reserve Fund fund balance to complete a code compliance project at the Fitch Middle School. This is the third phase of the reuse plan for the building. In FYE 2018, Mr. Schneider requested \$400,000, but it was reduced to \$300,000 by the RTM. A proposed dance floor has been eliminated from the plans. Two of six bids for the project were under \$400,000, but the lowest base bid (\$339,000) should include a 10% contingency. When the project is completed, the Town will be able to vacate William Seely School.

Councilor Moravsik expressed support for the dance floor. Mr. Schneider noted that the Director of Parks and Recreation has made the recommendation based on a cost analysis. The dance floor would be an additional \$25,000.

If funding is approved, Mr. Schneider would plan to vacate William Seely at the beginning of June 2018.

Councilor Obrey expressed support for a recreation center at the school; however, she feels that without a plan, the Town should not spend any more money on the facility. Mr. Schneider noted that Wing A cannot be occupied because it does not meet health and safety codes. Town Manager Burt agreed with not doing the project piecemeal, but he wants to put the Poquonnock Bridge Fire Marshal at Town Hall Annex, which means that Registrars' equipment being stored at the Annex would have to be moved to Fitch Middle School.

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

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2017-0295**

### **Payments to Outside Agencies**

#### **Discussed and Recommended no action taken**

Town Manager Burt noted that with state funding in place, The Town has started to release payments to various agencies. The previous Town Council wanted to wait to make Fire District PILOT payments until they met with the fire districts. Councilor Schmidt recommended making the payments, but still meeting with the fire districts. PILOT payments total \$246,000 for all fire districts. Councilor Moravsik expressed opposition to the \$246,000 payment. He noted the history of the payment and feels that the fire districts are not getting their fair shares.

Chief Winski of the Poquonnock Bridge Fire District noted that 52% of the district is non-taxable property. He is concerned with the impact on district taxpayers and he wants to promote growth by creating a more affordable environment.

The consensus of the Council was to make the PILOT payments.

*Town Manager Burt noted that the Town is still holding the City's FYE 2017 Highway Budget funds.*

*A motion was made by Councilor Obrey, seconded by Councilor Zeppieri, to release the City's FYE 2017 Highway Budget funds. Town Manager Burt noted that the benchmark cost comparison study is ongoing and should be completed around May or June.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

**2017-0291****Filling of Telecommunicator I Position****Discussed and Recommended no action taken**

*Director of Human Resources/Risk Management Bob Zagami explained the request to fill a Telecommunicator I position in the dispatch center. Salary savings from the vacancy will cover the cost of the position through the end of the fiscal year. If the position is not filled, the work will be covered with overtime.*

*Town Manager Burt noted there is a lot of overtime in the Emergency Communications division, which is being reviewed and may be addressed with part-time employees.*

*A motion was made by Councilor Zeppieri, seconded by Councilor Moravsik, to authorize the filling of the Telecommunicator I position.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

**2017-0284****Office of Planning and Development Services - Overview of Initiatives****Discussed and Recommended no action taken**

*Director of Planning and Development Services Jon Reiner, Assistant Director Deb Jones, Manager of Inspection Services Kevin Quinn, and Manager of Economic and Community Development Paige Bronk were present. Mr. Bronk distributed a packet of information to the Town Council and Mr. Reiner reviewed a PowerPoint presentation on current initiatives in the Office of Planning and Development Services (OPDS).*

*OPDS staff answered questions from Councilors about development projects; the Nautilus Dock; the rewrite of the Zoning Regulations; combining the Planning and Zoning Commissions; the Poquonnock Bridge design effort; the Thomas Road project; a location for a flea market; the Sustainable Connecticut program; SEAT bus shelters; and a proposed transportation hub at the Submarine Base.*

*An executive session was called to discuss land development projects.*

**A motion was made by Chairperson Granatosky, seconded by Councilor Heede, that the members of the Town Council Committee of the Whole, Town Manager John Burt, Manager of Economic and Community Development Paige Bronk, Planning and Development Director Jon Reiner, Assistant Director Deb Jones, and Manager of Inspection Services Kevin Quinn go into executive session at 8:35 p.m. pursuant to General Statutes Section 1-200 (6) (D) for the purpose of discussing the lease, sale or purchase of real estate concerning Town-owned properties.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**Discussed**

*The executive session ended at 9:48 p.m. and the Committee recessed until 9:55 p.m.*

**2017-0285****Building Permit Fees****Discussed**

*John Reiner, Director of Planning and Development Services, and Kevin Quinn, Manager of Inspection Services, presented the request to increase building permit fees. The ordinance allows*

*the Town Council to adopt new fees by resolution. Mr. Reiner presented a chart showing current vs. proposed permit fees. Groton's planning fees are consistent with surrounding communities, but the building fees are lower. Mr. Reiner estimated a 20% or greater increase in revenue (approximately \$60,000). Staff does not feel that lower fees necessarily provide a competitive advantage.*

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

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2017-0294 Appointment of Town Council Personnel and Appointments Committee by Mayor Recommended for a Resolution**

*Mayor Granatosky asked for volunteers for the Personnel and Appointments Committee. Councilors Schmidt, Heede, and Moravsik were appointed.*

*Councilor Heede requested and the Mayor granted a referral on the Town Council Appointments Policy to the Personnel and Appointments Committee.*

**2017-0290 Town Attorney Appointment**

**Discussed**

*Councilor Moravsik expressed a desire to develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Town Attorney, noting that the current Town Attorney is welcome to respond.*

**A motion was made by Councilor Moravsik, seconded by Councilor Schmidt, Town Manager Burt stated he will work with the Purchasing Agent to develop the RFP. He would want a firm with a number of attorneys with different specialties. The Town Council has 120 days to select a firm.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**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 Parker, seconded by Councilor Heede, to adjourn the meeting at 10:06 p.m.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*