



Town of Groton, Connecticut

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Meeting Minutes

Town Council

Mayor Heather Bond Somers, Councilors Dean G. Antipas, Bruce S. Flax, Bill Johnson, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Deborah L. Peruzzotti, Rita M. Schmidt, James L. Streeter, and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, March 6, 2012

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 8:16 p.m. by Mayor Somers.

Members Present: Mayor Somers, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Streeter and Councilor Watson

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Superintendent of Schools Paul Kadri, Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds Wes Greenleaf, Board of Education Chairman Kirsten Hoyt, Board of Education members, RTM Moderator Jean-Claude Ambroise, RTM members, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Office Assistant Lori Watrous.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Salute to the Flag was led by RTM Representative Jonathan Heller.

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

2012-0057 Proclamation Recognizing the Bill Memorial Library

Read

The proclamation was read by Councilor Antipas.

2012-0058 Proclamation Recognizing the Mystic Irish Parade Foundation

Read

The proclamation was read by Councilor Schmidt.

IV. RECEIPT OF CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Kevin Trejo, 536L Shennecossett Road, is disappointed that he does not have the financial information to go along with the plan he proposed to the Council and the Board of Education. Mr. Trejo's plan eliminates a building, along with its heating, electrical, and administrative costs. He requested the financial data from the school system, but has not received it yet. Mr. Trejo noted that if Fitch Middle School remains open as a swing space, there will be continued costs for oil and electricity.

Andrew Parrella, 790 Eastern Point Road, toured the middle schools and felt that most of the schools appeared to be in good condition. He is concerned that while Fitch, West Side, and Cutler Middle Schools felt solid, some areas have leaks. He stated that the Town needs to move forward with a decision regarding the middle schools, as there are items in the near future, such as Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), that will require attention.

Craig Koehler, 263 Brook Street, a former member of both the Redistricting Committee and the Phase II School Design Committee, urged the Council to approve the funding request for middle school consolidation. He believes that this is the best option, as Fitch Middle School is the oldest of the three middle schools and the one that needs the most repairs. It is too costly to maintain three middle schools, and he is worried about students if funds are not appropriated for this plan.

Joe Podurgiel, 70 Ocean View Avenue, Mystic, stated that when Phase II did not pass it was clear

that a plan was needed to move forward. A plan has been identified for middle school consolidation, its funding, and details of the work that needs to be completed. He recommends allocating the funds to move forward with the plan proposed by the Board of Education.

V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

None.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

a. Approval of Minutes

2012-0074 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of February 21, 2012 are hereby accepted and approved.

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

b. Administrative Items

Councilor O'Beirne highlighted various donations and thanked all who gave so generously.

2012-0061 Special Trust Fund Contributions

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS

RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby accepts contributions to the Town as follows:

Robert and Phyllis Boggs - \$10.72 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Anne-Marie Quagliaroli - \$15.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Groton Utilities - \$2,324.23 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Dr. Charles T. Barnum PTO - \$547.72 - Social Services Discretionary
Jacquelyn Harvey - \$15.00 - Social Services Discretionary
Charles Rogers - \$25.00 - Social Services Discretionary
Suzanne and Howard Tryon - \$500.00 - Social Services Discretionary
Lee Vincent - \$50.00 - Social Services Discretionary
Companion Animal Hospital - \$1,000.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Pfizer Foundation Matching Gifts Program - \$50.00 - Library Miscellaneous
Margaret and Frank Adams - \$100.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Mary Atha - \$50.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Lois Babcock - \$25.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Kevin Ball - \$20.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
K. E. Chester - \$10.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
David and Veronica Cousens - \$25.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Dwight and Barbara Dutton - \$50.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Linda Fox - \$10.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Bruno and Jane Giulini - \$25.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Lawrence and Beverly Lacerte - \$25.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Glifton Martelle - \$20.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
William Martin - \$10.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Donald O'Neil - \$20.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Herta Payson - \$100.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Thomas Powden - \$50.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Pauline Robillard - \$20.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Robert and Lynne Rogers - \$25.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
James and Ann Sailors - \$20.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Marilyn and John Turkowski - \$15.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Joseph Wallace - \$50.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Linda Westhusin - \$100.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
William White - \$10.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

c. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

2012-0068 Purchase of Parks and Recreation Software - Update

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.

2012-0048 Purchase of Spicer Properties, Thomas Road

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2012-0066 Board of Education Supplemental Appropriation Request

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2012-0067 Acceptance of Roads and Open Space in Great Brook Estates Resubdivision Phases II and III

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

Passed The Consent Calendar

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Streeter, to adopt the Consent Calendar, including all the preceding items marked as having been adopted on the Consent Calendar. The motion carried unanimously

VII. COMMUNICATION REPORTS (Other than Committee Reports)

a. Town Councilors

Councilors received emails and calls regarding the revaluation, the middle school consolidation and supplemental appropriation, Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) concerns, Council goals, and the budget.

Councilor Schmidt noted that the Avery Memorial Association in Groton was one of six museums in Connecticut to receive an award from the Connecticut Humanities Council.

Councilor Peruzzotti toured the middle schools and attended a Town Council/Board of Education/RTM Liaison Committee meeting.

Councilor Watson participated in Read Across America Day'by reading Green Eggs and Ham at the Catherine Kolnaski Magnet School. He noted that there will be a public information session regarding a Town-wide Blight Ordinance on March 8, 2012.

Mayor Somers noted that the revaluation process will be discussed at the next Committee of the Whole meeting. She stated that, at her request, she received information from the Board of Education regarding the cost for Mr. Trejo's consolidation plan, noting that it would be \$50,000 plus continued transportation costs. The Mayor remarked that the Board of Education's plan to consolidate the middle schools will save approximately \$12 million over four years.

Councilor Flax attended the Board of Education meeting.

Councilor Streeter attended an event at the Bill Memorial Library to celebrate winning the 2012 Excellence in Public Library Service Award. In his role as Town Historian, Councilor Streeter will be a guest lecturer at Fitch Senior High School to speak about local history. He noted that he is currently writing a book on the history of Robert E. Fitch Senior High School.

b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting

The Town Clerk stated that the next RTM meeting will be on March 14, 2012, at the Senior Center.

c. Clerk of the Council

The Town Clerk noted that the Public Hearing on the FYE 2013 Proposed Budget will be March 29, 2012, at the Senior Center. Ms. Moukawsher is part of the planning committee for an event to

honor Catherine Kolnaski on March 22, 2012.

d. Town Manager

The Town Manager stated that the Jabez Smith House will host an event on March 18, 2012, with guest speaker Steve Jones, author of "An Island Cabin." Mr. Oefinger noted that the Committee of the Whole meeting on April 24, 2012, will need to be rescheduled due to the presidential preference primary.

e. Town Attorney

No report.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Community & Cultural Development - Chairman Schmidt

No meeting, no report.

b. Economic Development - Chairman Johnson

No meeting, no report.

c. Education/Health & Social Services - Chairman Watson

No meeting, no report.

d. Environment/Energy - Chairman Peruzzotti

No meeting, no report.

e. Finance - Chairman O'Beirne

No meeting, no report.

f. Personnel/Appointments/Rules - Chairman Flax

No meeting, no report.

g. Public Safety - Chairman Streeter

No meeting, no report.

h. Public Works/Recreation - Chairman Antipas

No meeting, no report.

i. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Somers

No report.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

X. NEW BUSINESS

2012-0048 Purchase of Spicer Properties, Thomas Road

Discussed

The Town Manager met with the Attorney Callahan and staff from Planning and Development. The purchase agreement is almost done, and the Town will be asking DEEP for an extension of the grant award. Normally there is earnest money when entering into a purchase agreement, and the Town Manager recommended \$1,000. This item will be placed on the Committee of the Whole agenda.

2012-0066 Board of Education Supplemental Appropriation Request

RESOLUTION APPROVING AN FYE 2012 CAPITAL RESERVE PROJECT ENTITLED "MIDDLE SCHOOL MODIFICATIONS"

WHEREAS, the Groton Board of Education, through a vote on December 19, 2011, determined that the Groton School District would be best served with a consolidation of the middle schools from three to two beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, and

WHEREAS, in order to implement the proposed consolidation plan, portable classrooms will need to be installed and other improvements made at both Carl C. Cutler and West Side middle schools, and

WHEREAS, cost estimates have been prepared by Board of Education staff with the assistance of outside consultants, and

WHEREAS, the Superintendent of Schools has advised that the latest cost estimate for the total needed improvements is \$1,385,800, and

WHEREAS, it has been agreed that any state reimbursements for this project returned to the Town will be split evenly between the Board of Education and the Town, and

WHEREAS, both the Board of Education and Town of Groton agree that any cost reductions to this project will be equally shared by both the Board of Education and the Town of Groton, and

WHEREAS, the purchase and architectural design for two double portable classrooms at Carl C. Cutler Middle School is estimated to cost \$688,820, and

WHEREAS, the purchase and architectural design for one double portable classroom unit at West Side Middle School is estimated to cost \$376,280, and

WHEREAS, remaining costs associated with the project at West Side and Carl C. Cutler middle schools is estimated to cost \$320,700, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that an FYE 2012 Capital Reserve Project entitled "Middle School Modifications" is approved in the amount of \$1,385,800 with said amount to be funded as follows:

- \$700,000 from Board of Education funds;
- \$200,000 from the FYE 2012 General Fund Contingency; and
- \$485,800 from the Capital Reserve Fund.

Refer to RTM under Rule 6.5.3.

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, that this matter be Adopted and referred under Rule 6.5.3 to the Representative Town Meeting, due back on March 14, 2012.

The Town Manager noted that the project is a proposed CIP for the current fiscal year. He outlined the scope of the project and sources of funding, noting that there will be approximately \$380,000 left in the Capital Reserve account if the project is approved. The funding request will be referred to the RTM and the Planning Commission under CGS Section 8-24.

Councilor O'Beirne will not support this motion. In addition to the reasons he voiced in previous meetings, he noted that the cost of the Board of Education's maintenance department time/overtime for this project is not reflected in the \$1,385,800 figure. The costs for staff time and building material costs should be added to formulate a total cost for the project prior to the Council voting on it.

Councilor Streeter is concerned that the Council has not received a detailed contingency plan in case funding is not approved. In the interest of Groton's school children and in view of the proposed savings under this plan, he will vote in favor.

Councilor Flax remarked that when an alternative plan or idea is presented, it should be accompanied by detailed supporting data. If the Town chose an alternative plan and it didn't

work, there would be no time to develop a plan for the start of the next school year. Savings will be realized if Fitch Middle School is closed; a portion of the portables is reimbursable from the State; and Councilor Flax is confident that in three to five years a plan for Groton's schools will be in place. He will support this resolution.

Councilor Johnson does not believe that this is the least expensive plan, but is glad that the Board of Education will be providing some of the funding. He will support this resolution.

Councilor Schmidt will support this resolution, stating that it would be detrimental to the children of Groton if it fails.

In answer to Councilor Antipas' questions, Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds Wes Greenleaf stated that he is sure that reimbursement for the portables will be about 57%. The additional parking and kitchen equipment will be permanent changes and the health suite will probably be permanent, but the guidance area will be modified in the future when changes are made for security. At the time that the portables are no longer needed for the middle schools, they will replace older units at other schools throughout the Town.

Councilor Antipas noted that this is a short-term plan, and wishes that alternatives had been found.

Councilor Peruzzotti toured the middle schools and saw what structural changes will be made. She believes that a lot of thought has gone into the plan and does not think that it is excessive. She will support the resolution.

Councilor O'Beirne requested an estimated cost for the maintenance personnel.

Superintendent Kadri noted that the maintenance crews have more to do than time to do it in, and they are assigned the highest priority at the time. Mr. Greenleaf noted that maintenance costs will come from his existing budget.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Flax.

VOTE on Motion to Move the Question failed 2 In Favor, 7 Opposed. (In Favor: Watson and Schmidt)

Councilor Streeter stated that he received an email from State Representative Wright that indicated that Groton's reimbursement rate for new portables would be 57.5% for the 2011-2012 fiscal year. Rep. Wright noted that if the portables were leased they would not be eligible for any reimbursement.

The Town Manager noted that the portables that will be purchased are double portables with two classrooms in each structure.

Mayor Somers remarked that the plan is not perfect, but the Town will save \$10 million in four years. The alternative plan presented by Mr. Trejo would need analysis, and the transportation costs would outweigh the benefits. She fully supports this resolution, stating that the Town needs to move forward.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 8 - Mayor Somers, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Streeter and Councilor Watson
Opposed: 1 - Councilor O'Beirne, Jr.

Suspension of the Rules

A motion to suspend the rules to consider a resolution referring middle school modifications to the planning commission was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti and so voted unanimously.

2012-0078 Referral of Middle School Modifications to Planning Commission Under CGS Sec. 8-24

RESOLUTION REFERRING MIDDLE SCHOOL MODIFICATIONS TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION UNDER CGS SECTION 8-24

WHEREAS, the Town Council has approved a FYE 2012 Capital Reserve Project entitled "Middle School Modifications," now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council refers the Middle School Modifications project to the Planning Commission under CGS Section 8-24.

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, that this matter be Adopted and Referred to the Planning Commission.

The motion carried unanimously

2012-0067 Acceptance of Roads and Open Space in Great Brook Estates Resubdivision Phases II and III

ACCEPTANCE OF ROADS AND OPEN SPACE IN GREAT BROOK ESTATES RESUBDIVISION PHASES II AND III

WHEREAS, the Great Brook Estates Resubdivision was approved by the Planning Commission on May 10, 2005, and

WHEREAS, on February 14, 2012 the Planning Commission recommended acceptance of the public improvements in Phases II and III including the remaining portion of Great Brook Road, Mountain Laurel Road, Charlton Lane and Open Space Lots B and C totaling 34.4 acres, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby accepts the roads and open space associated with Phases II and III of the Great Brook Estates Resubdivison.

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Schmidt, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 9:36 p.m. was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Flax and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk
Clerk of the Council*

Lori Watrous, Office Assistant