



Town of Groton, Connecticut

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Meeting Minutes

Town Council

Mayor Rita M. Schmidt, Councilors Dean Antipas, Genevieve Cerf, Joe de la Cruz, Bruce S. Flax, Bob Frink, Rich Moravsik, Deborah L. Peruzzotti and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, August 4, 2015

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 p.m. by Mayor Schmidt.

Members Present: Mayor Schmidt, Councilor de la Cruz, Councilor Flax, Councilor Frink, Councilor Moravsik, Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Watson

Members Absent: Councilor Antipas

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Salute to the Flag was led by Girl Scouts Julia Ferris, Allie Fetters, Emily Fetters, and Ona Parfitt.

Mayor Schmidt called for a moment of silence in memory of the tragic death of Public Works employee Al Smith. Mr. Smith passed away on August 4, 2015 from injuries sustained in an accident after a tree fell on the car he was driving.

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

Parks and Recreation Services Manager Jerry Lokken announced awards for the 2015 4th of July Parade. Mayor Schmidt presented the awards to the following recipients:

Best Use of The American Dream Theme: Girl Scouts Light House Service Unit; Julia Ferris, Allie Fetter, Emily Fetter, and Ona Parfitt accepted the award on behalf of the participants

Most Patriotic: U.S. Submarine Veterans; CDR Al Kinsel accepted the award on behalf of the SubVets

Best Costume: Model T (1912); Bill and Linda Lillie

Best Youth Participation Award: Dance Extension; Maggie Dennis accepted the award on behalf of the Dance Extension participants

Best Float: City of Groton Parks and Recreation; Val Koschmieder and Cydney Hall accepted the award on behalf of the City of Groton Parks and Recreation participants

Judges' Choice: Hall Communication Horses

IV. RECEIPT OF CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Mariellen French, 12 Little Gull Lane, Mystic addressed her concerns with the hiring of the new Chief of Police Louis J. Fusaro. Her full statement is on file in the Town Clerk's office.

V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Mayor Schmidt made the comment that in the United States a person is considered innocent until proven guilty.

Ms. French stated that in her experience, she has always found the Groton Town Police to be kind, caring, generous and helpful. She hopes that this will continue under the new Chief.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

a. Approval of Minutes

2015-0189 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of July 21, 2015 are hereby accepted and approved.

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

b. Administrative Items**2015-0186 Special Trust Fund Contributions**

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS

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

Howard Booth - \$25.00 - Library Renovation

The Anderson-Paffard Foundation, Inc. - \$10,000.00 - Library Renovation

Lori Lippmann - \$100.00 - Library Renovation

Charter Oak Federal Credit Union - \$1,000.00 - Library Renovation

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

c. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List**2015-0177 Town Manager Annual Evaluation (2015)**

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 Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Watson, to adopt the Consent Calendar, including all the preceding items marked as having been adopted on the Consent Calendar.

Mayor Schmidt thanked all the people for their generous donations to the Groton Public Library renovation project.

The motion carried unanimously

VII. COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS (Other than Committee Reports)**a. Town Councilors**

Councilor de la Cruz reported that as a result of the July 23, 2015 presentation, Shine a Light on Heroin, the Community Relations Committee is planning a visit to the Gloucester Police Department. They will use this opportunity to view the procedures practiced by the Gloucester Police Department to assist citizens struggling with drug addiction.

Councilors Frink, Moravsk and Watson attended the July 23, 2015 Shine a Light on Heroin presentation. They complimented the presenters and thanked Councilor de la Cruz and his wife for their continued efforts against drug addiction.

Mayor Schmidt reported that she attended the July 23, 2015 Shine a Light on Heroin presentation. She reported that Rocco Celtruda suggested that the new Middle School should be built to include a peaked roof. Mr Celtruda stated that the Town should provide more playing fields for athletes. She received a complaint from Mrs. Steinford regarding the poor condition of Crystal Lake Road and a complaint from Barbara Nelson that a group of Segway riders are using River Road. She asked if people are allowed to ride Segways on public roads.

Councilor Watson asked the Town Manager to provide an update on the long awaited Thomas Road project.

Councilor de la Cruz commented that a sidewalk is desperately needed on Thomas Road. He also announced that the July 23, 2015 Shine a Light on Heroin presentation will be aired on the Groton Municipal Television (GMTV) channel beginning on August 6, 2015. He believes that there will be ten airings of the program.

b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting

The Town Clerk reported that the next regular RTM meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 12, 2015 at 7:30 pm at the Groton Senior Center. She listed the items on the agenda as the Town Council referral 2015-0137 Adoption of an Ordinance Appropriating \$8,230,000 for Refurbishment of the Water Pollution Control Facility Effluent Pump Station and Rehabilitation of the Fishtown Road Pump Station and Authorizing the Issue of Bonds and Notes in the same Amount to Finance said Appropriation and the RTM Rules and Procedures report on a referral to consider using the Power of Initiative to propose an Ordinance to trigger a referendum if the RTM approves tax or budget increases greater than 2% .

c. Clerk of the Council

The Town Clerk reported that she received the official notice of Genevieve Cerf's resignation from the Town Council. She received an emailed notice from the Groton Democratic Town Committee that suggests Patrice Granatosky to fill the vacancy. She reported that she received an application from Michele Fitzpatrick to be appointed to the Conservation Commission. The Groton Democratic Town Committee suggested that the Town Manager approve this appointment. She announced that Party Endorsements by major parties for Municipal Office have been made and she will distribute the endorsed list after the Primary Petition deadline of August 12, 2015.

d. Town Manager

Town Manager Mark Oefinger gave a report on the tragedy that befell Public Works employee Al Smith. He will notify the Town Council of any arrangements for Mr. Smith. He announced that there will be grief counseling offered to employees. He discussed a few items that will be on the next COW agenda. He explained the necessary resolution for the State Library Construction Grant Contract that will be voted on tonight.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Community Relations - Chairman de la Cruz

No meeting, no report.

b. Finance - Chairman Frink

Councilor Frink reported that the committee met on July 21, 2105. He stated that the Committee is working to put together a meeting with the Superintendent of Schools and the Board of Education later this month to discuss the FYE 2017 budget.

c. Personnel & Appointments - Chairman Flax

Councilor Flax reported that the committee met on August 4, 2015 at 6:00 pm. The committee unanimously approved reappointments of Robert Occhialini to the Shellfish Commission, John Casey to the Housing Authority, and William Gaynor from an alternate member to a regular member on the Harbor Management Commission.

d. Rules - Chairman Frink

No meeting, no report.

e. Public Safety - Chairman Moravsik

No meeting, no report.

f. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Schmidt

Mayor Schmidt reported that the Committee of the Whole met and approved the items that are on tonight's agenda. In addition, they had an update on the request from Aquarian Water Company regarding the placement of a water tower on the Northeast Academy property.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

2015-0177 Town Manager Annual Evaluation (2015)

RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE TOWN MANAGER'S COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, the Town Council is required to review the performance of the Town Manager on an

annual basis, and

WHEREAS, Town Councilors have reviewed the performance of Town Manager Mark R. Oefinger for the period of July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015, and

WHEREAS, the Town Manager's overall performance for July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015 was rated as "exceeds expectations" (4.63 out of 5), now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager shall receive a 2.0% salary increase retroactive to July 1, 2015.

A motion was made by Councilor de la Cruz, seconded by Councilor Frink, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

Councilor Watson made a motion to suspend the rules in order to place Resolution 2015-0190 on the agenda. The motion was seconded by Councilor Moravsik and so voted unanimously.

2015-0190

Connecticut State Library Construction Grant Contract

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH THE CONNECTICUT STATE LIBRARY FOR A STATE PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT

WHEREAS, on June 17, 2014 the Town Council authorized Town Manager Mark R. Oefinger to submit an application to the Connecticut State Library Board for a construction grant to expand the local history room at the Groton Public Library, and

WHEREAS, the State Bond Commission approved the construction grant on July 28, 2015, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council must authorize the official who signs the contract with the Connecticut State Library, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that Town Manager Mark R. Oefinger is empowered to execute and deliver in the name and on behalf of the Town of Groton a certain contract with the Connecticut State Library, State of Connecticut, for a State Public Library Construction Grant.

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

The motion carried unanimously

X. OTHER BUSINESS

Mayor Schmidt made a motion to suspend the rules in order to nominate Patrice Granatosky to fill the vacancy on the Town Council. The motion passed by a vote of 5 in favor and 2 opposed, Councilors Flax and Peruzzotti.

Discussion followed with Councilor Flax expressing his reservations with appointing a proactive City of Groton resident while the Town Council is in negotiation with the City of Groton over the approved 2016 City Highway budget. He is concerned that executive sessions may be compromised and that he is looking for a guarantee of anonymity. He agrees that Ms. Granatosky is knowledgeable with the ways of Town government and that he respects her. He would like the opportunity to discuss these issues with Ms. Granatosky at a later date.

Mayor Schmidt has asked the Town Attorney to clarify any obligation to recuse for Councilors who reside in the City and Groton Long Point.

Councilor Moravsik stated that he believes Ms. Granatosky to be an excellent candidate and that she will conduct business properly. He stated that the issues with respect to the City Highway budget are not suppressed information. Much of the information that has been shared should be available to the public.

Mayor Schmidt reminded Councilors that executive sessions are to be kept confidential until a resolution is made.

Councilor Peruzzotti agrees that Ms. Granatosky is knowledgeable on Town business, but she hopes that Councilors will be forthcoming with their thoughts in executive sessions.

Councilor Watson explained his view and he stated his support for appointing Patrice Granatosky.

Councilor Frink stated that he has observed Ms. Granatosky working by the book while she was on the RTM and will support her appointment.

Councilor de la Cruz echoed Councilor Frink's comments and stated that he served with Ms. Granatosky on the RTM where she demonstrated knowledge with protocol. He is looking forward to working with her on the Town Council.

The Mayor called for a vote and so taken. The motion carried unanimously.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Watson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti and so taken at 8:15 p.m.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk
Clerk of the Council*