



Town of Groton, Connecticut

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk (860)441-6640
Town Manager
(860)441-6630

Meeting Minutes

Town Council

Mayor Harry A. Watson, Councilors Dean Antipas, Kathryn M. Brown-Tracy, Bruce S. Flax, Catherine Kolnaski, Deborah B. Monteiro, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Rita M. Schmidt, and Paulann H. Sheets

Tuesday, September 1, 2009

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m. by Mayor Watson.

Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Brown-Tracy, Councilor Flax, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr. and Councilor Schmidt

Members Absent: Councilor Antipas, Councilor Monteiro and Councilor Sheets

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent, Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox, and Office Assistant Lori Watrous.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Salute to the Flag was led by former Town Councilor Ed Eckelmeyer.

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

None.

IV. RECEIPT OF CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Ed Eckelmeyer, 75 High Street, Noank, noted that previously the division of proceeds from class fees for programs offered through the Parks and Recreation Department was:

Town - \$5 for each resident/\$15 for each non-resident

Coach/Instructor - the remainder of the class fee

Mr. Eckelmeyer stated that in the current budget the Town now receives 25% of each class fee, with the remainder going to coaches/instructors. He believes this decreased payment to coaches/instructors was an "unintended consequence" of enacting the Town's Special Revenue Fund.

V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

The Town Manager was asked to provide some samples of past and present salaries of coaches/instructors so that Councilors can get a better grasp of the situation.

The Town Manager stated that this is not a case of "unintended consequences". Prior to the change in the budget, the division of the class fees was disproportionate because the Town pays for space, insurance, lights, promotion, and marketing for the classes and programs offered by the Parks and Recreation Department. He will prepare a report.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

a. Approval of Minutes

2009-0219 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of August 25, 2009 are hereby accepted and approved.

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

b. Administrative Items

2009-0216 Special Trust Fund Contributions

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS

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

Various Donations - \$703.93 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

City of Groton Matching Funds - \$28.93 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

2009-0221 Tax Refund

RESOLUTION APPROVING TAX REFUND

WHEREAS, the following, for the reason indicated, has overpaid taxes in the amount specified, and

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector has recommended the amount be refunded, be it

RESOLVED, that the tax refunds indicated below are hereby approved.

Parker Hanafin Corporation - \$6,520.00

Somerset Capital Group LTD - \$3,244.82

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

c. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List**2009-0152 Town Manager Annual Evaluation**

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

2009-0183 FYE 2009 CAFR

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

2009-0209 Reauthorization of Lily Lane Trail Grant

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

2009-0211 Property Maintenance Code Board of Appeals

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

2009-0212 Transfer of Vehicle to Board of Education

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

2009-0215 Setting the Form of the Question and Referendum Date for the Thames Street Rehabilitation Ordinance

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

2009-0218 Justice Assistance Grant (JAG)

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 Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Flax, 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**

Councilor Kolnaski attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Animal Shelter. She noted that the Groton Animal Foundation is offering "Tribute Plaques" which will be placed in the foyer for a \$30 donation. Councilor Kolnaski also mentioned the Animal Welfare League's "Shake, Waggle & Roll" on September 6, 2009, and the "Diaper Bank" being set up by the United Way Gemma

Moran Food Center.

Mayor Watson met with Bob Congdon, President of Groton Long Point Association, who expressed an interest in meeting with the Council regarding budget, police, and highway issues. The Mayor attended a Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority meeting, the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Animal Shelter, a Council of Governments meeting, and a Mayor's Lunch at the SubBase. He also met the new principal at Fitch Senior High School.

b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting

No report.

c. Clerk of the Council

The Town Clerk noted that there has been quite a bit of interest in the discount prescription program. An informational brochure for the program can be obtained at the Town Hall.

d. Town Manager

The Town Manager distributed materials regarding the State budget and noted that, according to an impact assessment done by CCM, there will be \$750,000 less in State funding. Mr. Oefinger noted that the additional information requested by the Department of Energy (DOE) for the Town's grant appeal has been provided. The Town Manager stated that there was a fire at Country Glen Apartments today in which six units were seriously damaged and an entire building evacuated. There were no fatalities, but some individuals were treated for smoke inhalation at the emergency room. On the weekend there was also a fire at the transfer station in a metal dumpster. Mr. Oefinger noted that there will be a dinner to benefit the Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship Trust Fund on October 15, 2009, and a fund raiser to benefit the Covenant Shelter and the New London Homeless Hospitality Center on September 11, 2009. He stated that there is no business for Group I or Group II next week. Councilors decided unanimously to cancel the Committee of the Whole meeting on September 8, 2009, noting that there may be a special Group II scheduled for September 15, 2009.

e. Town Attorney

No report.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Community & Cultural Development - Chairman Brown-Tracy

No meeting, no report.

b. Economic Development - Chairman Flax

No meeting, no report.

c. Education/Health & Social Services - Chairman Kolnaski

No meeting, no report.

d. Environment/Energy - Chairman Sheets

No meeting, no report.

e. Finance - Chairman Schmidt

No meeting, no report.

f. Personnel/Appointments/Rules - Chairman O'Beirne

No meeting, no report.

g. Public Safety - Chairman Monteiro

No meeting, no report.

h. Public Works/Recreation - Chairman Antipas

No meeting, no report.

i. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Watson

The Committee of the Whole met and discussed the items on tonight's agenda.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

X. NEW BUSINESS

2009-0152 Town Manager Annual Evaluation

RESOLUTION ADOPTING TOWN MANAGER'S COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, the Town Council has reviewed the performance of the Town Manager and rates his performance as midway between exceeds expectations and outstanding, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager shall receive an annual increase in salary of 2.5% effective July 1, 2009, which effectively increases his annual salary from \$127,000.00 to \$130,175.00.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2009-0183 FYE 2009 CAFR

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER TO EXECUTE THE ENGAGEMENT LETTER FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2009 AUDIT

WHEREAS, current standards for the financial auditing of government bodies call for two way communications before the commencement of a financial audit, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council has held its annual pre-audit discussion with the engagement partner of the auditing firm Blum Shapiro to agree on the scope and methods for the audit, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager may execute the engagement letter with Blum, Shapiro for the FYE 2009 combined audit of the Town's finances.

A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Brown-Tracy, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2009-0209 Reauthorization of Lily Lane Trail Grant

RESOLUTION REAUTHORIZING A GRANT APPLICATION FOR PHASE TWO OF THE LILY LANE TRAIL

WHEREAS, a grant application for \$50,000 for the second phase of the Lily Lane Trail was authorized by the Town Council and submitted to the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in September, 2008, and

WHEREAS, the grant was not funded by DEP with FY 2009 funds, due primarily to the insufficiency of the funds in total, and

WHEREAS, DEP has invited the Town to renew its grant application for consideration in the FY 2010 funding, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager may submit a grant application and/or other documents requesting a FY 2010 grant of \$50,000 from DEP.

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2009-0211 Property Maintenance Code Board of Appeals

RESOLUTION TO PREPARE AMENDMENT OF AN ORDINANCE IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH A BOARD OF APPEALS FOR A NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION ZONE

WHEREAS, a Property Maintenance Code for the Fort Hill Homes Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) was enacted in accordance with the powers granted in the NRZ Strategic Plan Ordinance (Groton Ordinance Sections 9-216 to 9-220), and

WHEREAS, the Property Maintenance Code provided for an appeals process, and

WHEREAS, the existing NRZ ordinance provides that the Town may provide for ordinance modifications or adoption of further ordinances to assist the NRZ in the implementation of its plans, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager may instruct the Town Attorney to prepare an ordinance to designate the Town of Groton Building Code Board of Appeals to serve as the Board of Appeals for the NRZ Property Maintenance Code.

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

Councilor O'Beirne will oppose this resolution due to procedure. He stated that the Town is driving the situation, and he would have liked the request to come from the NRZ.

Councilor Kolnaski stated that members of the NRZ will be able to speak at a public hearing on the proposed ordinance amendment.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 5 - Mayor Watson, Councilor Brown-Tracy, Councilor Flax, Councilor Kolnaski and Councilor Schmidt
Opposed: 1 - Councilor O'Beirne, Jr.

2009-0212 Transfer of Vehicle to Board of Education

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER TO TRANSFER OWNERSHIP OF A SURPLUS PICKUP TRUCK TO THE GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

WHEREAS, the Town's fleet manager has replaced a ten-year old pickup truck and would normally send the old truck into the Town's surplus vehicle auction, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education has in the past made successful use of Town trucks that had become less than fully reliable to provide auxiliary snow plowing capacity for Fitch High School, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager may transfer a 1998 GMC 3/4-ton, 4-wheel drive pickup truck to the Groton Board of Education.

A motion was made by Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2009-0215 Setting the Form of the Question and Referendum Date for the Thames Street Rehabilitation Ordinance

RESOLUTION SETTING THE FORM OF THE QUESTION AND THE REFERENDUM DATE FOR THE THAMES STREET REHABILITATION ORDINANCE

WHEREAS, the Town Council and the Representative Town Meeting of the Town of Groton have approved an "Ordinance Appropriating \$10,725,000 for Thames Street Rehabilitation and Authorizing the issue of Bonds and Notes in the Same Amount to Finance Said Appropriation", now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the ordinance be submitted for approval or rejection at a referendum to be held Tuesday, November 3, 2009. Voters approving the ordinance will vote "Yes" and those opposing the ordinance will vote "No", and be it further

RESOLVED, that the form of the Question shall be:

"SHALL THE ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$10,725,000 FOR THAMES STREET REHABILITATION AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF BONDS AND NOTES IN THE SAME AMOUNT BE APPROVED?"

and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Town Clerk is hereby directed to issue any and all warnings, publish all such notices, and file all such statements and reports concerning said referendum as provided by law, which notices shall include a summary of the ordinance.

A motion was made by Councilor Brown-Tracy, seconded by Councilor Schmidt, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2009-0218

Justice Assistance Grant (JAG)

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT APPLICATION

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton has made good use of federal grants through the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program (JAG), and

WHEREAS, a non-matching grant of \$30,000 is available to the Town of Groton which will allow every patrol car to carry an automated external defibrillator (AED), and

WHEREAS, police officers have been and will be trained in the use of AEDs for the most prompt life saving response, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager may apply for a Justice Assistance Grant of \$30,000.

A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Brown-Tracy, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 8:09 p.m. was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Brown-Tracy and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Barbara Tarbox, Town Clerk
Clerk of the Council*

Lori Watrous, Office Assistant