

Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council Public Safety Committee

Wednesday, May 20, 2015 6:00 PM Town Hall Annex – Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

Rich Moravsik, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present at the meeting were Public Safety Committee members Rich Moravsik, Chair, Dean Antipas, Joe de la Cruz, and Harry Watson. Chairman Moravsik declared a quorum. Also present were Mayor Rita M. Schmidt, as well as Alan Ackley, and Ronald Yuhas, President and Vice President, respectively, of the Poquonnock Bridge Fire District Board of Directors.

3. CALENDAR & COMMUNICATIONS

No meeting was held in April due to lack of a quorum.

4. NEW BUSINESS

2015-0052 Poquonnock Bridge Fire District Issues

Chairman Moravsik explained the need to continue and expand on the issues last discussed in the March meeting of the committee.

Mr. Ackley and Mr. Yuhas reported that the Poquonnock Bridge Fire District promises to be in better financial shape this year, with only a 0.1 mill rate increase (from 5.9 to 6) and a surplus. The district does not, however, expect a surplus next year and, in fact, may experience a shortfall as great as \$1 million. The board would like to explore doing away with the existing pension system.

Mr. Ackley noted the decision that the district acted justifiably, that the 10-year collective bargaining agreement rescinded by the district's board September 6, 2012 was no longer in force (likely the decision in Poquonnock Bridge Fire District v. Connecticut Department of Labor, State Board of Labor Relations et al., Superior Court, judicial district of New London, Docket No. CV13-6022411S (Dec. 1, 2014) (Lee, J.), in

which the court ruled that the State Board of Labor Relations wrongly decided the union's grievance complaint and that the district board's September 6, 2012 rescission of the tentative successor collective bargaining agreement was in full force and effect).

Mr. Ackley further noted that the district intends to hire three firefighters back at some point, that the Chief and Deputy Chief are starting to work on bringing volunteers on board, and that overall morale has improved. In addition, the old fire station is almost completely decommissioned.

Committee members and guests discussed the possibility of the West Pleasant Valley and Center Groton fire districts turning over fire protection to the Poquonnock Bridge Fire District, much as West Pleasant Valley now contracts such services out to the City of Groton.

Committee members and guests discussed the formula currently used to determine the distribution of State and Town PILOT money to the fire districts, including its derivation.

Committee members and guests discussed what would be done, should it be mutually desired among the parties involved, to move toward a single fire district, either including or excluding the City of Groton.

Committee members and guests discussed the existence of district fire marshals in place of a town fire marshal. It was noted that delayed reviews of development and project plans could be having an effect on economic development in the town. Also discussed was the time each district devoted to plan review, without compensation. The Committee agreed to explore the concept of a town-wide fire marshal with the Town Council.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.