



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes - Draft

Town Council Committee of the Whole

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Mayor James L. Streeter, Councilors Bruce S. Flax, Bill Johnson, Catherine Kolnaski, Deborah B. Monteiro, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Deborah L. Peruzzotti, Paulann H. Sheets, and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, March 8, 2011

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

SPECIAL MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Streeter called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Streeter, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Sheets

Members Absent: Councilor Monteiro and Councilor Watson

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Executive Assistant Nicki Bresnyan.

Legislators: State Representative Edward Moukawsher, State Representative Elissa Wright, State Senator Andrew Maynard

3. NEW BUSINESS

2011-0065 Meeting with State Legislators

Discussed

Mayor Streeter asked the three state legislators for any information on the state budget.

Representative Wright noted that the Governor's FY2012-FY2013 budget attempts to hold municipal aid steady, but of course the final budget depends on revenues. She noted that there are a number of controversial new taxes proposed and no answers are expected until mid-April. Representative Wright explained that she has spoken to OPM Secretary Barnes about Groton's situation with the MM&E being an anomaly based on misinformation. Representative Moukawsher stated he is also pursuing the issue.

Discussion followed on the proposed elimination of MM&E funds.

With respect to the Governor's proposal for vocational technical schools, Senator Maynard noted the details are sketchy at this time. There have been no capital improvements to Grasso Tech in some time so there are questions about those potential costs and administration. The Governor's proposal would not become effective until 2015. Senator Maynard feels that are too many questions associated with the proposal and he does not expect it to survive.

With respect to new school construction reimbursement, Representative Moukawsher stated that the Governor proposes to reduce reimbursement rates which are based on the municipality's wealth. Groton ranks 95 out of 169 towns and receives a higher rate of reimbursement; New London ranks 158 out of 169. Under the Governor's proposal, Groton would lose \$11,250 out of \$100,000 according to Representative Moukawsher. Councilor O'Beirne noted that much of the cost of the Phase II school program would not be reimbursable. The new reimbursement rate would be approximately 59% and would go into effect for any construction not started by April 1, 2012.

Councilor O'Beirne questioned the status of the Minimum Budget Requirement. The legislators

indicated they would get additional information on the status of the legislation. In the Governor's budget, education is level funded.

With respect to the local conveyance tax, it is expected to be extended.

Discussion turned to Library funding (Connecticard and Connecticar). Senator Maynard indicated there is an effort to preserve the funding, but something in the budget has to give. He feels the funding is likely to be restored because of the recognized value of the programs.

On the state's taxation of the commercial solid waste program, Senator Maynard noted that this issue appears to be headed for the courts. No relief from the Department of Revenue Services is expected.

Representative Wright stated that recent legislation provides a framework for more interlocal and collaborative opportunities for towns.

Representative Moukawsher noted that union concessions are a big part of the state's budget and if they do not happen, there will be an impact.

Town Manager Oefinger reviewed issues of concern raised by Town staff.

2011-0066 Montville Request Regarding Pending Legislation

Discussed

The Town Manager explained that Montville is looking for support with regard to an ongoing legislative issue, and the Town Manager had hoped to discuss this issue with the legislators before they left the meeting. Discussion of this item was postponed to a later date.

4. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, to adjourn the meeting at 7:09 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.