



# Town of Groton, Connecticut

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## Meeting Minutes

### Town Council Committee of the Whole

*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, October 14, 2014

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

#### REGULAR MEETING

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

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

#### 2. ROLL CALL

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

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

#### 3. Calendar and Communications

*Councilor Cerf noted that there will be a software demo on Thursday, October 23rd at 12:30 p.m.*

#### 4. Approval of Minutes

##### 2014-0275 Approval of Minutes (Committee of the Whole)

##### RESOLUTION ACCEPTING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council Committee of the Whole meetings of September 9, 2014 and September 23, 2014 are hereby accepted and approved.

**A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor de la Cruz, to adopt with the following clarification in the September 9, 2014 minutes: Page 5, under 2014-0211 Line Clearance Trimming and Removals, Sandy Hollow Road, Councilor Cerf opposes the project because CL&P's program is not proactive in trimming the trees in a more aesthetic fashion.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

#### 5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

*Councilor Frink referenced an e-mail he sent to Councilors and the Town Manager about time management at the meetings. He suggested that less important things be referred to committees. Discussion followed on the number and length of meetings and importance of issues. Councilor Peruzzotti noted that the Council must agree on referrals and provide guidance for the Town Manager. She also suggested that Councilors read the information provided to them and ask appropriate questions to avoid discussions taking place when the information has already been provided by the Town Manager. Discussion followed on redirecting referrals in the future unless they are time-sensitive, and Councilors agreed to the procedure by consensus.*

#### 6. NEW BUSINESS

##### 2014-0236 FYE 2015 Fire District PILOT

**Discussed**

*- City of Groton*

*Mayor Marian Galbraith and City Fire Chief Nick DeLia were present. In response to Mayor Schmidt, Mayor Galbraith stated she would provide the City's Annual Report Calendar to Town Councilors.*

*In response to a question about the impact of the Poquonnock Bridge situation on the City, Mayor Galbraith provided a history of Poquonnock Bridge's request to use the City's tower ladder. The City still responds to mutual aid requests. The City received a letter from Poquonnock Bridge indicating they would be seeking additional aid, but the City responded that they are unable to provide more aid than what is in the mutual aid agreement. Chief DeLia noted that the requests for additional assistance have not included any reimbursement or compensation to the City.*

*Chief DeLia noted that approximately 65% of the City's calls are medical. City firefighters belong to a union, with contracts ranging from two to four years long. The City has a small contingent of volunteers (4 to 6). Chief DeLia explained the mutual aid system and the difference between mutual aid and automatic aid.*

*With respect to citizens in different fire districts paying different amounts for fire protection, Chief DeLia stated it is a cost issue based on individual communities' decisions about what level of service and initial risk they want. There are also differences in the types of uses and tax bases. When there is a confirmed incident, there is one mutual aid system, one radio system, and one incident command. All departments also drill together once a month and respond similarly. The difference between the departments is in the initial seven to ten minutes, which is where the analysis needs to be done.*

*Mayor Schmidt thanked Mayor Galbraith and Chief DeLia for attending.*

**2012-0050 Potential Disposition of William Seely School Property**

**A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Watson, to enter executive session at 6:40 p.m. to discuss #2012-0050 Potential Disposition of William Seely School and to invite the Town Manager, Mr. McCabe, and Mr. Mancuso to attend.**

**Councilor Flax noted receipt of a call from Gretchen Chipperini, and he suggested that Ms. Chipperini and the Town are in two different places.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**Discussed**

*The executive session ended at 7:08 p.m.*

**2014-0263 Mystic Indoor Sports - Request for Financial Incentive**

**Not Discussed**

**2014-0198 Noank School Public Gardens - Update**

**Discussed**

*At the last meeting, the Council reviewed and discussed a draft Memorandum of Understanding regarding the Noank School Public Gardens, which the Council asked staff to convert to a resolution for the Council's consideration. There are two possible approaches (formation of a task force or an advisory committee), but it appears the Council would be best served to initially establish a task force reporting to the Council. At some point in the future, the group can be turned into an advisory committee if warranted. Mr. Palm and Mr. Wright have also suggested appointees for a task force.*

*Councilor Frink cited the Jabez Smith House Committee description noting that he would like some language about what is being promoted by the task force. Councilor Flax suggested that the task force be given two years to establish operations. Discussion followed on the term of the task force.*

*The Town Manager reviewed the history of the Noank School Public Gardens proposal and the progression from a proposed lease with a 501(c)(3) organization to a task force reporting to the Town Council.*

**Recommended for a Resolution.**

*A motion was made by Councilor Frink, seconded by Councilor de la Cruz, to amend the motion to establish the task force for one year. Discussion followed on when the time limit would start.*

*The motion to amend failed by the following vote:*

*In favor: 2 - Councilor de la Cruz, Councilor Frink*

*Opposed: 6 - Mayor Schmidt, Councilor Moravsik, Councilor Watson, Councilor Flax, Councilor Cerf, Councilor Antipas*

*Abstained: 1 - Councilor Peruzzotti*

*A motion was made by Councilor Antipas, seconded by Councilor Watson, to amend the motion to establish the task force for a two year period beginning January 1, 2017.*

*The motion to amend carried by the following vote:*

*In favor: 7 - Mayor Schmidt, Councilor Moravsik, Councilor Watson, Councilor Flax, Councilor Cerf, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Peruzzotti*

*Opposed: 2 - Councilor de la Cruz, Councilor Frink*

**The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Votes:** In Favor: 8 - Mayor Schmidt, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Cerf, Councilor de la Cruz, Councilor Flax, Councilor Moravsik, Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Watson  
Opposed: 1 - Councilor Frink

**2014-0279 Appointment of Members to Noank School Public Gardens Task Force/Committee****Recommended for a Resolution**

*Town Manager Oefinger asked the Council if they would like to talk with some of the suggested task force members who were present. Councilor Cerf instead asked for additional information in writing on the suggested appointees. It was noted that a task force is appointed directly by the Council rather than going through the normal appointment process and the Personnel Committee.*

**2014-0274 Assistant Animal Control Officer Position****Discussed**

*Acting Police Chief Steve Smith explained the difficulty in retaining part-time animal control personnel. The Town previously had a full-time Assistant Animal Control Officer (AACO) that was cut as a result of budget issues. However, the Town has been training people to state mandated levels only to have them leave for full-time positions in other communities.*

*Acting Chief Smith is proposing eliminating two of three part-time AACO positions and replacing them with one full-time position. With the staffing problems, kennel hands and volunteers from the Groton Animal Foundation have been assisting with feeding and cleaning, and police officers have been paid overtime to help when there are no other options.*

*Councilor Moravsik asked for statistics to justify the request. Acting Chief Smith explained that the workload changes with the number of animals. Groton also provides kennel support for other towns on a mutual aid type basis. Councilor Frink pointed out that Animal Control also does enforcement.*

*Town Manager Oefinger reiterated that the proposal would result in an equivalent number of employees. While part-time AACOs seemed like a good idea at the time, the Town has not been able to retain them.*

*Acting Chief Smith explained that the change will result in a \$19,000 shortfall (\$27,664/year for two part-time positions versus \$46,604/year for a full-time position, not including benefits). In the*

current budget year, the shortfall will be covered by salary savings from vacant positions.

In response to Councilor Flax, Acting Chief Smith noted that initial training for an AACO is 80 hours, and then 10 hours annually. The Town has lost three AACOs in a little over a year.

**A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor de la Cruz, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.**

Councilor Moravsik stated he would not support the resolution because he wants to see the statistics first.

**The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Votes:** In Favor: 8 - Mayor Schmidt, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Cerf, Councilor de la Cruz, Councilor Flax, Councilor Frink, Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Watson  
Opposed: 1 - Councilor Moravsik

**2014-0281 Port Security Grant**

**Discussed**

Acting Chief Steve Smith explained that this grant for maintenance of the marine group was received last year as well. No matching funds are required.

**A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Moravsik, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.**

Councilor Cerf stated she would not vote in favor because she wants a detailed list of the training received by officers for the boat.

**The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Votes:** In Favor: 8 - Mayor Schmidt, Councilor Antipas, Councilor de la Cruz, Councilor Flax, Councilor Frink, Councilor Moravsik, Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Watson  
Opposed: 1 - Councilor Cerf

**2014-0278 Poquonnock Plains Park Temporary Lighting**

**Discussed**

Jerry Lokken, Manager of Recreational Services, and Rob Marquis, president of the Groton Mystic Youth Football League, were present. Groton has been selected by the Southern New England Youth Football Conference to host its super bowl at Poquonnock Plains Park. The games could potentially go past sunset and would require lighting of the field. The Parks Rules require the Town Council to approve lighting at the park.

**A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor de la Cruz, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.**

Mr. Marquis explained that the temporary lights will be rented by the league. Mr. Lokken noted that Parks and Recreation is also working with the league on a new scoreboard, which is unrelated to the super bowl. Mr. Marquis stated that for the super bowl, the games should be done by 5:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Lokken stated that Parks and Recreation will notify abutting property owners of the temporary lighting for the event.

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2014-0006 Revised Position Descriptions (2014 Standing Referral)**

**Discussed**

Doug Ackerman, Assistant Town Manager, noted the retirement of a PC/Network Support Specialist in the Information Technology (IT) division, which prompted a review of the division's needs. It has been decided that the position can be replaced with a lower level Office Technician who could provide more administrative support in IT. The job description has been updated to reflect current needs.

description for Office Technician.

The motion carried unanimously

**2014-0265 Supportive Housing Program Grant**

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

**2014-0277 Local Prevention Council Grant for Ledge Light Health District**

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

**2013-0156 Town Manager Annual Evaluation (2013)**

A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Cerf, to enter executive session at 8:22 p.m. to discuss 2013-0156 Town Manager Annual Evaluation (2013) and 2014-0155 Town Manager Annual Evaluation (2014), and to invite the Town Manager to attend.

The motion carried unanimously

**Discussed**

*The executive session concluded at 8:43 p.m.*

*Mayor Schmidt reported on the results of the executive session and the Town Council's decision to grant Town Manager Mark Oefinger a 2.5% increase for FYE 2014 and a 2% increase for FYE 2015.*

A motion was made by Mayor Schmidt, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

**2014-0155 Town Manager Annual Evaluation (2014)**

**Recommended for a Resolution**

*Mayor Schmidt expressed the Council's heartfelt thanks to the Town Manager for all that he does.*

**2014-0264 Legislative Initiatives - Review of Request for Qualifications (RFQ)**

**Discussed**

*Jon Reiner, Director of Planning and Development, explained that he has some experience in his previous position with conducting a community market analysis. Councilors were provided with excerpts from North Kingstown reports. Mr. Reiner suggested that the first question is "What is the Council looking for?"*

*Councilor Frink stated the purpose is crystal clear. The Town has already done a community analysis as part of its Plan of Conservation and Development process. Councilor Frink described his concept of the effort in greater detail.*

*Councilor Cerf suggested that Mr. Reiner has some good ideas and a real market analysis is required. She reiterated a desire to have Mr. Reiner provide input into the RFQ. Councilor de la Cruz agreed, noting the need for an outside view of the Town.*

*Mr. Reiner explained that in North Kingstown they conducted an eight year planning effort, but the market study identified the town's assets and provided the backup information (marketing infrastructure) that developers appreciate. The entire effort cost slightly over \$100,000.*

*Councilor Peruzzotti expressed support for Mr. Reiner's approach and stated she looks forward to new ideas and perspectives.*

*Councilor Flax asked if recommendations have been implemented in North Kingstown and if so, how were they paid for and sold to the community. Mr. Reiner explained that the marketing study provides the rationale for investments. In response to Councilor Flax's concern with utilizing consultants, Mr. Reiner stated that the Town does not have the expertise on staff to do such a study, and he agreed that consultants must be used strategically.*

*Councilor Moravsik suggested that Mr. Reiner review the presentation by Goman and York at the March 25th Committee of the Whole meeting.*

*Mr. Reiner indicated that he would assist in preparation of the RFQ and development of the scope of work. With respect to the audit of the Zoning Regulations and streamlining the process, Mr. Reiner suggested that effort would cost \$15,000 to \$20,000.*

*Town Manager Oefinger confirmed the Council's concurrence that staff will finalize the RFQ and advertise it.*

**7. Consideration of Committee Referral Items as per Town Council Referral List**

*None.*

**8. OTHER BUSINESS**

*Town Manager Oefinger noted that staff never received any information about a referral Councilor Frink has said he made on September 20th (a Saturday) about the Police Study. Mayor Schmidt stated she would look for the referral request that Councilor Frink said he e-mailed to her.*

*In response to a request from Councilor Moravsik, the Town Manager stated that before the Groton Long Point Bridge project can proceed, the Council must provide direction on utilities and the height of the bridge.*

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

*A motion was made by Councilor Frink, seconded by Councilor de la Cruz, to adjourn the meeting at 9:23 p.m.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*