



Town of Groton, Connecticut
Town Council Committee of the Whole
Regular Meeting Minutes

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340

Town Manager: 860-441-6630

Town Clerk: 860-441-6640

Mayor Patrice Granatosky, Councilor David Atwater, Councilor André Bumgardner, Councilor Rachael Franco, Councilor Conrad Heede, Councilor Lian Obrey, Councilor Juliette Parker, Councilor Rita Schmidt, and Councilor Joe Zeppieri

Tuesday, June 26, 2018

6:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

134 Groton Long Point Road, Groton

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Granatosky called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Chair

Chair Patrice Granatosky

Members

Member David Atwater

Member Andre Bumgardner

Member Rachael Franco

Member Conrad Heede

Member Lian Obrey

Member Juliette Parker

Member Rita Schmidt

Member Joe Zeppieri

Town Manager

John Burt

Staff

Nicki Bresnyan

3. CALENDAR AND COMMUNICATIONS

Councilors reported on events and meetings that they attended, and communications they received.

Town Manager Burt provided his report to the Council concerning the new legislative management software, plans for Fitch Middle School, and issuance of the RFP for Groton Heights School.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilor Atwater noted a correction on page 2 of the May 16, 2018 minutes.

MOTION: To approve the Committee of the Whole minutes of May 16, 2018, May 22, 2018, June 5, 2018 and June 11, 2018.

Moved by: Parker, Juliette		Seconded by: Zeppieri, Joe		
Committee Members	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	RECUSE
Patrice Granatosky	X			
David Atwater	X			
Aundre Bumgardner	X			
Rachael Franco	X			
Conrad Heede	X			
Lian Obrey	X			
Juliette Parker	X			
Rita Schmidt	X			
Joe Zeppieri	X			
APPROVED				

5. NEW BUSINESS

- 5.a. 2018-1 Bill Memorial Library Neighborhood Assistance Act Program Application

MOTION: To recommend a resolution approving the Bill Memorial Library’s 2018 Neighborhood Assistance Act Program application.

Moved by: Bumgardner, Aundre		Seconded by: Heede, Conrad		
Committee Members	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	RECUSE
Patrice Granatosky	X			
David Atwater	X			
Aundre Bumgardner	X			
Rachael Franco	X			
Conrad Heede	X			
Lian Obrey	X			
Juliette Parker	X			
Rita Schmidt	X			
Joe Zeppieri	X			
APPROVED				

- 5.b. 2018-2 Cost of Living Adjustments for Retirees

The Committee recessed at 6:49 p.m. to reconvene the Town Council special meeting. The Committee of the Whole meeting was reconvened at 6:51 p.m.

Matt Sicilia of TPS Group was asked to provide an analysis of COLAs for retirees. Mr. Sicilia distributed information to the Town Council. Mr. Sicilia explained that his analysis is based on a 6.5% interest rate rather than the Hooker and Holcombe assumption of 7.5%. Mr. Sicilia reviewed his analysis in detail.

Cindy Landry, Director of Finance, explained that the actuary has recommended that the rate be reduced. The Retirement Board is aware of the recommendation and is trying to bring it down incrementally.

Mr. Sicilia responded to questions from Councilors. Ms. Landry noted that interest rate adjustments are made by the Retirement Board. Her personal recommendation would be to reduce the rate not more than a quarter of a percent at a time.

DISCUSSED

5.c. 2018-3 Retirement Plan Options

Matt Sicilia of TPS Group was asked to provide an analysis of retirement plan designs. He reviewed the information which was distributed to the Council during the discussion of COLAs for retirees. Two plan designs were presented that include both defined benefits and defined contributions. The objectives are more consistent budget figures, reducing risk and volatility, and cost containment. Mr. Sicilia explained a traditional annuity plan and cash balance plan.

Mr. Sicilia responded to questions from Councilors. Town Manager Burt noted that whatever plan the Council chooses it must be robust enough to negotiate with the unions. New options would only affect new employees. Existing employees would have the option of joining the new plan.

The consensus of the Committee was to have staff explore the options presented. Mr. Sicilia distributed a cash balance plan presentation and annual benefit statement to Councilors for information purposes.

Mayor Granatosky thanked Mr. Sicilia for his presentation.

DISCUSSED

5.d. 2018-4 Request to Fill Financial Assistant II Position in Finance (Payroll)

The committee recessed at 7:56 p.m. and reconvened at 8:02 p.m.

Cindy Landry, Director of Finance, noted the retirement of a Financial Assistant II. The position's primary duties are payroll and pension processing, and many other duties within the department including revenue collection. Justification was provided to the Council.

The Town Manager and Town staff met with Board of Education representatives about combining payroll operations. There is no ability for the Board of Education to take over the duties of the Town's position. The Town Manager recommended filling this position.

The Council had no objection to filling the position.

APPROVED

5.e. 2018-5 Request to Fill Municipal Video Technician Position in Library

Town Manager Burt noted that the GMTV Technician is leaving the position. Two people handle videotaping of all of the meetings and other GMTV productions. Staff has discussed the impacts of eliminating the position and feels the position should be filled.

The consensus of the Council was to fill the position.

APPROVED

5.f. 2018-6 Calvin Burrows Field Fees

Mark Berry, Director of Parks and Recreation, explained that Parks and Recreation

implemented tournament fees for Little League to cover utility costs and field improvements. The policy was developed a year ago as the result of a Lacrosse tournament and unanswered questions. The policy was approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission in February.

John Grossman, representing Groton Little League, complimented Parks and Recreation. As a group, Groton Little League put field lights up at a cost of \$100,000. They offered to host a tournament in the middle of July. Mr. Grossman asked that the fee be waived for the tournament. Money raised by the league goes for scholarships and capital improvements for the field.

Mr. Berry noted that the original fee of \$1,800 was reduced to \$635 for Groton Little League.

Mr. Berry and Mr. Grossman answered questions from Councilors. Councilors expressed their positions on the waiver of the fees. Town Manager Burt stated that the Town Council has the ultimate authority on fees.

MOTION: To waive the fees for the Groton Little League for 2018.

Moved by: Obrey, Lian		Seconded by: Heede, Conrad		
Committee Members	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	RECUSE
Patrice Granatosky	X			
David Atwater	X			
Aundre Bumgardner	X			
Rachael Franco	X			
Conrad Heede	X			
Lian Obrey	X			
Juliette Parker		X		
Rita Schmidt		X		
Joe Zeppieri		X		
APPROVED				

5.g. 2018-7 Adoption of An Ordinance to Establish Hours of Operations for B.Y.O.B. Establishments

The Town Manager noted that the 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. timeframe was a placeholder so he would suggest changing the ordinance language to 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. to address a brunch held by a local establishment.

Councilor Atwater questioned liability for establishments and Town Attorney Eileen Duggan stated that liability only applies when the establishment is serving the alcohol. In response to Councilor Obrey, it was noted that the ordinance would be enforced through the Police Department. Councilor Obrey asked if the ordinance would apply to fundraising events at churches. Town Attorney Duggan stated it would not be a concern, but she will get back to the Town Manager if it is an issue.

A motion was made by Councilor Zeppieri, seconded by Councilor Parker, to amend the ordinance, Section 4.a., to read “No alcoholic liquor may be consumed on the premises of such BYOB Establishments between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m.”

Discussion followed on the applicability of the ordinance to churches.

Town Manager Burt recommended removing section 4.b. of the ordinance regarding gambling at BYOB establishments.

Councilor Franco expressed concern with events such as weddings held at various public/community facilities. She suggested moving the time to midnight.

A motion was made by Councilor Franco, seconded by Councilor Zeppieri, to amend the ordinance, Section 4.a. to read "...between 12:00 midnight and 10:00 a.m."

A motion was made by Councilor Zeppieri, seconded by Councilor Parker to add a section, 4.f. to exempt charitable and religious organizations if they host no more than six events per year.

Discussion followed on the various proposed modifications to the ordinance. Town Manager Burt noted the ordinance can be amended at the Town Council meeting since the changes have been discussed by the Committee of the Whole. Councilor Franco asked for clarification on the fines, and Town Manager Burt explained that fines can be applied to either an individual or an entity as defined in the ordinance. Councilor Heede asked for input from the Chief of Police on the proposed changes.

A motion was made by Councilor Heede, seconded by Councilor Parker to postpone action on the motions to a definite time, specifically the next Committee of the Whole meeting on July 10, 2018.

The motion carried unanimously.

POSTPONED

5.h. 2018-8 Setting the Referendum Date and Form of the Question for Charter Revisions

Mayor Granatosky noted that the ballot question has been developed by the Town Attorney for the November referendum.

MOTION: To recommend a resolution setting the referendum date and form of the question for Charter revisions.

Moved by: Obrey, Lian		Seconded by: Heede, Conrad		
Committee Members	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	RECUSE
Patrice Granatosky	X			
David Atwater	X			
Aundre Bumgardner	X			
Rachael Franco	X			
Conrad Heede	X			
Lian Obrey	X			
Juliette Parker	X			
Rita Schmidt	X			
Joe Zeppieri	X			
APPROVED				

5.i. 2018-9 Merritt Property Update (Potential Executive Session)

MOTION: That the members of the Town Council, Town Manager John Burt, School

Superintendent Mike Graner, Board of Education President Kim Watson, Public Works Director Gary Schneider, Town Sustainability Project Manager Rick Norris, Permanent School Building Committee Chairperson Robert LaFrance, and Town Attorney Eileen Duggan to into executive session at 9:06 p.m. pursuant to General Statutes Section 1-200(6)(B) for the purpose of discussing potential or pending claims and/or litigation concerning construction of the middle school on the Merritt property.

Motion made by Councilor Atwater, seconded by Councilor Heede. The motion carried unanimously.

The executive session concluded at 10:13 p.m.

MOTION: That the Committee of the Whole authorize the Director of Public Works to move forward with the initial and existing plan for the consolidated middle School.

Moved by: Heede, Conrad		Seconded by: Zeppieri, Joe		
Committee Members	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	RECUSE
Patrice Granatosky	X			
David Atwater	X			
Aundre Bumgardner	X			
Rachael Franco	X			
Conrad Heede	X			
Lian Obrey	X			
Juliette Parker	X			
Rita Schmidt	X			
Joe Zeppieri	X			
APPROVED				

5.j. 2018-10 Sale of Town-Owned Property (Potential Executive Session)

MOTION: That the members of the Town Council Committee of the Whole, Town Manager John Burt, and Planning and Development Services Director Jon Reiner for into executive session at 10:19 p.m. pursuant to General Statutes Section 1-200(6)(D) for the purpose of discussing the lease, sale or purchase of real estate concerning Town-owned properties.

Motion made by Councilor Obrey, seconded by Councilor Heede. The motion carried unanimously.

The executive session ended at 11:01 p.m.

MOTION: To authorize the Town Manager to enter into an agreement with a commercial broker for the William Seely School as discussed in the Executive Session with funds to come from the Economic Assistance Fund. Proceeds of the sale of the William Seely School property will first be used to reimburse those funds used from the Economic Assistance Fund.

Moved by: Parker, Juliette		Seconded by: Bumgardner, Aundre		
Committee Members	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	RECUSE
Patrice Granatosky	X			

David Atwater	X			
Aundre Bumgardner	X			
Rachael Franco	X			
Conrad Heede	X			
Lian Obrey	X			
Juliette Parker	X			
Rita Schmidt	X			
Joe Zeppieri		X		
APPROVED				

6. REVIEW OF AGENDA ITEMS - None

7. OTHER BUSINESS

Mayor Granatosky announced the appointment of Councilor Zeppieri to the Personnel and Appointments Committee. Pending Miscellaneous and Ad Hoc Committee appointments to be considered at the next Committee of the Whole meeting are Councilor Bumgardner to Southeast Area Transit (SEAT) and James Loughlin (replacing Councilor Zeppieri) to the Cable TV Advisory Committee.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 p.m.