

**CITY OF GROTON  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
MINUTES  
MONDAY, JUNE 24, 2013**

MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
7:30 PM

**Mayor Galbraith called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.**

**I. ROLL CALL**

Present: Mayor Marian Galbraith, Deputy Mayor William Jervis, Councilors Andrew Ilvento, Jay Dempsey, Stephen Sheffield, Keith Hedrick, Lawrence Gerrish, Finance Director Michael Hillsberg and City Clerk Debra Patrick.

**REFERRAL ITEM # 1 APPOINTMENTS**

**BRITTANY DUCLOS, PROBATIONARY POLICE OFFICER**

Mayor Galbraith gave a rundown of the business before them and asked for a motion to go into Executive Session.

**II. POSSIBLE EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Councilor Hedrick moved Councilor Ilvento seconded a motion to enter into Executive Session to include Police candidate Brittany Duclos, Police Captain Michael Guillot and HR Director Lorry Scheetz. Motion carried.

Executive Session commenced at 7:31 p.m.

Councilor Hedrick moved Councilor Gerrish seconded a motion to exit Executive Session.

Motion carried.

Executive Session ended at 7:36 p.m.

**III. COMMENTS FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Deputy Mayor Jervis moved Councilor Hedrick seconded a motion to move the name of Police candidate Brittany Duclos to the Mayor and Council meeting of July 1, 2013.

Motion carried.

**REFERRAL ITEM # 1 APPOINTMENTS**

**PAUL DUARTE, GROTON UTILITIES COMMISSION**

Mayor Galbraith spoke about the many attributes Mr. Duarte brings to the table as a Utilities Commissioner.

Councilor Gerrish moved Deputy Mayor Jervis seconded a motion to move the name of Paul Duarte to the Mayor and Council meeting of July 1, 2013.

Councilor Dempsey began his remarks with an apology to Mr. Duarte if he takes anything personally that he says.. He stated that they would be sending the wrong message to the taxpayers and feels it's time to change the commission and move in a different direction. He is not in favor of the reappointment of anyone to the Utilities Commission who kept the public in the dark about the debt.

Councilor Gerrish said he didn't believe this was the time of place to be assigning blame to an individual.

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Councilor Ilvento said it could be anyone before them at this time and it is unfortunate that it happens to be Mr. Duarte. He said there was a lot of effort put in by many people and the commission and the Council faced a difficult situation and made the decisions that had to be made no matter how unfortunate it was.

Deputy Mayor Jervis agreed with Councilor Gerrish and he said it is very difficult to find qualified people willing to serve. He feels that 10 years as a City Councilor and 4 years as a Utilities commissioner make him a qualified candidate.

Councilor Hedrick said he has some concerns that the information on the financial state of TVC wasn't brought to the Council sooner. He said it is possible all the individuals did not have the skill set required to lead the commission in the right direction. He agreed with Deputy Mayor Jervis that it is difficult to find people willing to serve and he agreed with Councilor Dempsey that it is unfortunate Mr. Duarte is the first to come before them. He feels they must properly vet candidates. Councilor Sheffield asked Councilor Dempsey what qualifications he would like to see in a candidate for this position or if he had anyone in mind.

Councilor Dempsey said he would like to see a detail oriented person who would ask questions and pay attention to the numbers. He would like to see more information shared with the taxpayers. He said we should be mindful of the amount of money involved. He feels we would be sending the wrong message to the taxpayers and we need to do better by them. He said the Town of Groton will be watching everything we do here.

Mayor Galbraith said Mr. Duarte is a detail oriented person and did ask lots of questions. She said he has the skill set you describe and the experience. He did that as a City Councilor and continued to as a Utilities Commissioner.

Councilor Dempsey stated that Mayor Galbraith told the taxpayers that she herself didn't know what the situation was for quite a while. He is still concerned about the huge losses and the fact the Utilities Commission didn't come forward.

Mayor Galbraith said it would have been wrong for the commissioners to discuss this since it was done in Executive Session. It would have been unethical and possibly illegal.

Councilor Dempsey said they spent 4 years protecting trade secrets in Executive Session that turned out to be worthless. The money lost could have been used for the upgrade to the PAF they will be discussing tonight.

Mayor Galbraith said they can't use Groton Utilities money for the PAF, it must be City funding. Councilor Ilvento said he can see both sides of the discussion.

Councilor Gerrish said this appointment shouldn't hinge on what happened to TVC. There has been a lot of good done at Groton Utilities. He said nothing criminal occurred and we have new leadership that will keep them informed.

Motion carried 5-1-0.

**REFFERAL ITEM # 472 PAF FACILITIES PLAN DISCUSSION**

Mayor Galbraith went over some of the background of the decision to seek input for a design plan and cost estimates for the project. She asked Rick Stevens, Manager, Groton Utilities Water Division to come forward to address the Council.

Councilor Dempsey said he was very impressed with the staff at the PAF and said they do so much with so little there.

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Mr. Stevens thanked Councilor Dempsey and said the staff was glad the Councilors took the time to tour the facility.

Councilor Hedrick had some questions regarding the cost estimates.

Mr. Stevens said they wouldn't have a firm understanding of the costs at this time but was able to clarify what Councilor Hedrick was looking for. He went over the reasons the UV disinfection upgrade is being recommended. He said they would like to do a pilot study over 2 years and are hopeful there will be a grant.

There was discussion regarding authorizing bonding the money and then going for the grant and how the bond money would not be drawn on until needed. There was discussion on whether the estimated costs were on target and the work being done in phases. They discussed having some work done by the City, moving forward with the design phase and get some firm engineering costs. There was discussion on separating the most immediate needs and how long it might take to identify those.

Mr. Stevens said he could come back in about 1 month.

Mayor Galbraith suggested they discuss it at the August 5<sup>th</sup> WPCA meeting since it is the week following the July Committee of the whole meeting.

Mr. Stevens agreed that would be the appropriate place to continue the discussion.

There was continued discussion regarding moving forward with emergent issues and how they would bond them.

Mr. Stevens said he would bring proposals and some prices to include some in-house work.

There was discussion that once there was more concrete information it would be put on the web site.

Councilor Gerrish said the tour of the facility was very helpful in him having a better understanding of the plans.

Mayor Galbraith and the Councilors thanked Mr. Stevens for coming tonight.

**REFERRAL ITEM # 471 DISCUSSION ON SALE OF CITY PROPERTY**

Mayor Galbraith said a family member of a retiring police officer would like to purchase the locker used by the officer to keep at their home as a remembrance. She asked Finance Director Hillsberg if there is a policy for this type of sale.

Mr. Hillsberg said this type of situation and property doesn't fall under the auction guidelines the City uses. He said there is no real monetary value to the locker.

There was discussion that the locker should just be given to the retiring officer providing it won't leave the department with a shortfall of lockers in the foreseeable future.

Councilor Hedrick moved Councilor Ilvento seconded a motion to move REFERRAL ITEM # 471 to give the locker to the retiring officer to the Mayor and Council meeting of July 1, 2013. Motion carried.

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**IV. ADJOURNMENT**

Councilor Ilvento moved Councilor Gerrish seconded a motion to adjourn. Motion carried.

**Mayor Galbraith adjourned the meeting at 8:27 p.m.**

**ATTEST:**

**APPROVED:**

**Debra Patrick  
City Clerk**