

**CITY OF GROTON
SPECIAL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES
MONDAY, APRIL 6, 2015**

MUNICIPAL BUILDING
6:30 PM

Mayor Galbraith called the meeting to order at 6:30 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 Ron Yuhas and City Clerk Debra Patrick.

Referral Item # 538 CITY BUDGET PRESENTATIONS

Mayor Galbraith went over the packets distributed, City of Groton budget FY 15-16 and the CIP. She noted the decrease in the budget of \$17,161.00 and said with the reduced funding from the State, the decrease in the grand list and interest income and the increases in medical benefits it is remarkable to come in lower. She said this will require a modest mill rate increase of .34%. She went over the necessary steps that will allow them to reach this budget including reducing trash pick-up to once a week, a reduction in staff for sanitation and charging for bulky waste pick-up. She said the Groton Utilities return to the City will increase by 15%.

Human Resources

Human Resources Director Lorry Scheetz stated she decreased her budget as much as possible and noted where she was able to reduce her budget.

There was some discussion on the reduction for phone lines and the associated costs.

Mayor Galbraith went through the HR budget page by page and asked if there were any questions for Ms. Scheetz.

Councilor Dempsey asked where the increases came from.

Mr. Yuhas said it was due to increases in medical benefits.

There was discussion on where funding for each department is listed and who pays the larger portion of HR and the percentage of time working with GU versus City. There was further discussion on savings on phone lines and bundling cell phones.

They thanked Ms. Scheetz for her time.

Planning Department

Planner, Barbara Goodrich noted she was able to cut 10% and where she made those cuts. She said the only increase over last year was for benefits. She noted the funding she had been allocating over the past few years for the Zoning Regulations is no longer being set aside. She said a consultant has been hired and has begun work on the revisions.

There was discussion on the Mother Baily House and how they have to determine a use for it and then decide on how to fund it.

They thanked Ms. Goodrich for her time.

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General Government

Mayor Galbraith presented the General Government budget. She went over where cuts were made in the Legislative Policy cost center by 50% funding only CCM participation for the Councilors. She said the Boards & Commissions funding is for the annual actuarial for the Retirement Board and to fund the Economic Development Commission. She said in Citizen's Participation there is \$10,000.00 for City Day and \$7,480.00 to finish the Summer In The City current contract. She said there is no funding for 2016, if the allocated funds are not expended it may be used for spring of 2016. She reviewed the administration budget that covers the City Clerk, the Mayor and her Administrative Assistant including benefits, contractual services and professional development. She said the records Clerk position was removed. She said there is no funding for an election due to it being an off year.

Councilor Dempsey asked if we really spend over \$174,000.00 for recording documents.

Mayor Galbraith said that cost center is a combination of costs for administration including legal fees, copier costs, office expenses, advertising and all City publications for the City Clerk and the Mayor's Administrative Assistant. She said the benefits are under General Support.

There was some discussion on the legal fees and how they are spread out amongst the various departments.

Finance Department

Finance Director Ron Yuhas went over his budget and noted there was .68% increase due to the retirement of an employee that will result in overtime once a new employee is hired to allow them to become acclimated. He said as with all departments medical benefits are up. He reviewed cost centers and noted where there were increases/decreases.

Councilor Dempsey asked how medical benefits can go up that much.

Mr. Yuhas explained they had been using fund balance reserves to help fund the medical and must stop doing that in order to build it back up again since we are self-funded.

There was discussion on how this is allocated, how medical costs are not just for current employees but retirees as well.

Councilor Ilvento thanked Mr. Yuhas for all of his hard work identifying areas where changes needed to be made and implementing those changes.

CIP Discussion

Mayor Galbraith said it is a 5 year plan. She said the money initially allocated for the Colonel Ledyard building that hasn't been spent yet can be diverted to other capital projects with Council approval. She reviewed the municipal building improvements that are in this plan.

There was a discussion the wastewater improvements and a reduction of \$15,000.00 for SCADA.

There was discussion of the Highway projects that was presented to the Council previously including equipment and seawall and drainage repairs. They discussed the road improvements that will be covered under the Town of Groton Road Bond.

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II. POSSIBLE EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

III. COMMENTS FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

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

Mayor Galbraith adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

**Debra Patrick
City Clerk**