

**CITY OF GROTON
SPECIAL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES
MONDAY, APRIL 10, 2017**

**MUNICIPAL BUILDING
6:30 PM**

Mayor Galbraith called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Marian Galbraith, Councilors Jill Rusk, Stephen Sheffield, Conrad Heede, Lawrence Gerrish, Finance Director Ron Yuhas and City Clerk Debra Patrick. Deputy Mayor Keith Hedrick arrived at 6:43 p.m. Excused: Councilor Andrew Ilvento.

REFERRAL ITEM # 632 REGIONAL INTERCONNECTION

Mayor Galbraith invited Groton Utilities Commissioners Shirley Dunbar-Rose, Jeff Godley and Ed DeMuzzio to join them at the table.

Mayor Galbraith said after the City was informed they had been rejected for the loan forgiveness there were ongoing meetings and discussions with Lori Mathieu and Cam Walden of the DPH.

She said they were told that if the City could commit to regional interconnections and supporting consolidation of some smaller service areas they could be considered eligible for a 14 million grant in aid (loan forgiveness) that would require the City to only spend 2 million. The remaining 12 million of the grant would then go towards the WTP project as loan forgiveness. She said there is a very short turn around time for this with a letter of intent required for the bond commission meeting in May.

Ray Valentini, Operations Manager GU Water Division distributed copies of the map outlining the area where the interconnection would be needed.

Rick Stevens, Manger, GU Water Division commended Mayor Galbraith for her efforts to secure additional funding. He went over what has been done to date stating it has been vetted by COG. Mr. Valentini went over the area where the interconnection would be made and noted other areas where additional interconnections could be done in the future.

Mr. Stevens said the engineering is complete and there is support for this in the region. He said they will move forward with the WTP project and work with the state on this grant. He said he expects the approval from the DPH to award the contract to RH White, the contract is being confirmed with legal to ensure everything is in order. He said there is a link he will email to the Councilors that goes into great detail the qualifications and requirements for this grant.

Mayor Galbraith reiterated the 2 million, from non bonded capital, would go towards the connection for Ledyard-Preston and any other emergency interconnections from there down to us. She said the letter of intent would indicate that phase 1 would be to provide the emergency interconnections due to water usage issues and phase 2 would be to consolidate some of the smaller service areas.

Councilor Heede had questions regarding any impact on water supply and sales.

Mayor Galbraith said we would sell the water and that we had the supply for it.

GUC members present agreed the grant was beneficial and the interconnection is a great idea and

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had a few questions on clarification regarding the area of the interconnection and whether the City can meet all the conditions.

Mr. Steven said they can meet all the conditions and requirements including the water to be sold. There was further discussion on the requirements that were added on and the other interconnections that would be made as needed, that the 2 million would not be spent until we had written confirmation on the grant.

Mayor Galbraith said they would vote on a letter of support at the April 17, 2017 Mayor and Council meeting that would include language pending approval by the GUC at a special meeting April 19, 2017. She said Lori Mathieu would be at the April 17th meeting to answer questions. She said there were so many meetings and phone calls to get to this point and is appreciative of all the hard work put in.

REFERRAL ITEM # 633 CITY BUDGET PRESENTATIONS

General Government

Mayor Galbraith went over the proposed budget cost centers.

Legislative Policy noting a decrease of \$15.00 (6.25%) for travel to the CCM Conference.

Boards & Commissions an increase of approximately \$7,000.00 for an RFP for an Investment Advisor for the pension plan as the group the City has been using left Wells Fargo . She said it is 1/3 of the cost, GU electric and water also pick up 1/3 each.

Councilor Sheffield asked if this was a 1 time fee.

Finance Director Yuhas said it is and the last time this was done was 10 years ago.

There was some discussion on why it is being done at this time and that Hooker & Holcomb will run the RFP process to ensure the City hires the right firm for its needs.

Councilor Sheffield asked who they have been using and who they are going to go with.

Mayor Galbraith said they have been with GYL Financial Synergies.

Director Yuhas said the RFP process is ongoing and he should have the first round of recommendations this week.

Citizens Participation has a reduction of \$2,500.00 for City Day and reduction of \$500.00 for Beautification/Community Events due to some of the Summer In The City events being taken over by Parks & Recreation. They will take over the City Wide Yard Sale and the calendar.

Administration has increase of 1.87% due to an increase in the Mayor's salary to bring it closer to the salaries of department heads but not exceeding them. She said there are also increases in salary for the City Clerk and the Administrative Assistant to the Mayor a decrease in Contractual Services and an increase in Workers Compensation. Also reflected in there is an increase that will be seen in all areas of the budget for the pension. The change in the retirement contribution due to the change in the assumption.

Health Service is the payment to LLHD which is reimbursed by the Town of Groton.

Human Resources Director Yuhas went over the cost center noting an increase of 2.06% due to salaries and pension costs, with a decrease in operating expenses.

Councilor Gerrish asked how long we have had an HR Department, he said in the past each department did their own hiring.

There was discussion that the department was started about 12 years ago and due to the many labor law changes, FMLA and collective bargaining contracts it is an essential function.

Mayor Galbraith said GU picks up about 85% of the costs.

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Councilor Heede asked what drive the OT costs, aren't these salaried positions.

Mayor Galbraith said the HR Director is salaried but the assistant is hourly.

Director Yuhas said there is a decrease of \$1,000.00 in OT.

Finance Department Director Yuhas noted an increase of 3.91%. He said in the past 2 budgets due to a resignation and a retirement newly hired personnel brought their costs down but now with contractual and step increases for the newer employees there is an increase.

Councilor Heede asked if we generally bring in new hires at a lower rate of pay.

Mayor Galbraith said yes, due to the collective bargaining agreement.

Planning & Zoning City Planner Barbara Goodrich said there is an increase of 1.68% for legal fees and salary. She said there is a decrease in the funding set aside for the POCD. She said it was revised recently and much of it can be retained in the next revision.

Councilor Rusk asked where the funding for the part time employee will come from.

Mayor Galbraith said it will come from the EDC account.

Ms. Goodrich said the EDC for FY17 was \$38,500.00 and approximately \$30,000.00 will be rolled over to the FY18 budget of \$53,500.00 since the position has not yet been filled. She said they had tendered an offer but it was rejected. She said applicants are reluctant to take a part time position that doesn't have benefits with no clear plan for when it might become full time. She provided copies of the EDC budget to the Councilors. She went over the proposed salary increase to \$40,000.00 for the part time person and said the increase and perhaps offering a benefits menu may make the position more attractive to candidates. She said operating expenses are up to provide furniture and equipment for the new hire and professional development remains the same. She went over the 3 sub committees the EDC, the function of the committees and the funding for them.

Councilor Rusk asked for clarification of where the funding comes from.

Mayor Galbraith said it comes from the 50/5 generators which funds the Economic Development & Beautification Fund.

Sanitation Public Works Director Tim Umrysz said there is an increase of .66% which is a decrease of \$87,774.00 in the FY16 budget after dropping to a once a week pickup.

Councilor Gerrish asked if the savings was directly related to the once a week pickup.

There was some discussion that some of the savings was due to attrition.

Councilor Heede asked if the cost of recycling has gone up.

Director Umrysz said the cost for bulky waste pickup is built in to this.

Director Yuhas said he could break it out for them.

Councilor Gerrish asked if we received any rebates for recycling.

Director Umrysz said we did not because we don't drive it all the way to Willimantic. The costs to bring it there could be prohibitive.

There was discussion on the costs of recycling and bulky waste, separation of recycling items, the drop from 5 days to 4 for recycling pickup, whether the City would ever have equipment that would pick up trash and recycling at the same time and that they are picked up separately.

Councilor Rusk asked if the savings of \$8,000.00 is worth having a Blight Officer and charging for bulky waste pickup.

There was discussion on what the Blight Officer has been doing to improve conditions in the City and the chronic offenders he has dealt with.

Councilor Gerrish asked if there has been significant savings in the sanitation budget because of it.

Director Umrysz said there isn't a lot of difference.

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There was further discussion on the schedule of pick up for sanitation, recycling, and bulky waste, whether the change to charging is advantageous to the City and that less bulky waste is being picked up.

Building Maintenance Director Umrysz said there is a decrease of 17.32% due to a reduction of a full time person to part time and turning the boiler off at Colonel Ledyard School. He said there is a part time position that was funded for the current FY that has not been hired yet.

Director Yuhas explained they had reduced the funding for a Highway Department employee to do building maintenance from full time to part time based on the actual time used this FY.

Councilor Rusk asked why we have full time custodians if we only need part time.

Mayor Galbraith said we have full time custodians, the part time person was for a Highway Department employee to do work such as cement repairs in front of the building.

Councilor Rusk asked who did the custodial work.

Mayor Galbraith said the 2 full time custodians, 1 works at the operations building and 1 here. She said if there was a part time person to do more cleaning the full time custodian could spend more time on maintenance.

Councilor Heede asked what the \$50,000.00 under contractual services was for if our estimated costs for FY 17 are just over \$35,000.00.

Director Umrysz said it includes the company that works on our fire alarm system, fire extinguishers and first aid boxes.

Director Yuhas said he could get a complete list for them.

Councilor Rusk asked why fund the full \$50,000.00 if you didn't need it this year.

Director Umrysz said they need to fund it so any contractual work can be done when needed.

Councilor Sheffield asked what happens to nay funds in excess at the end of the FY.

Director Yuhas said it goes to the General fund balance.

II. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilor Heede moved Councilor Sheffield seconded a motion to enter into Executive Session Pursuant to CGS 1-200(6)(A) to discuss personnel to include Police Chief Davoren and Deputy Police Chief Guillot.

Motion carried.

Executive session commenced at 7:49 p.m.

Executive Session ended at 8:38 p.m.

III. COMMENTS FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

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IV. ADJOURNMENT

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

Mayor Galbraith adjourned the meeting at 8:39 p.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

**Debra Patrick
City Clerk**