



City of Groton, Connecticut

Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 19, 2022

City Municipal Building
295 Meridian Street
Groton, CT 06340

Council Chambers

7:30 PM

Mayor Keith Hedrick, Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot, Councilor Rashaad Carter, Councilor Lisa McCabe, Councilor Paul Norris, Councilor Christine Piazza, Councilor Stephen Sheffield, City Clerk Edward Jacome

Mayor Keith Hedrick called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Keith Hedrick, Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot, Councilor Rashaad Carter, Councilor Lisa McCabe, Councilor Paul Norris, Councilor Christine Piazza, Councilor Stephen Sheffield and City Clerk Edward Jacome

Excused: Finance Director Ron Yuhas

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Mayor Hedrick led the Salute to the Flag

Mayor Hedrick entertained a motion to suspend the rules to move the executive session under new business up and enter into executive session with the Mayor and Council, Chief of Police Eric Jenkins and applicant with subsequent R-22-09-109.

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Depot, second by Councilor Norris.

All in favor. Motion carried. 6-0-0

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Enter into Executive Session pursuant to CGS 1-200 (6)(A)

-To discuss personnel – Police Department

The executive session began at 7:33 p.m.

The executive session ended at 7:45 p.m.

R-22-09-109 RESOLUTION THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF BENJAMIN CLARK AS A PROBATIONARY POLICE OFFICER GRADE “D”, IN THE CITY OF GROTON POLICE DEPARTMENT, WAIVE THE RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT AND THAT THE APPOINTMENT BE EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 19, 2022

WHEREAS, the City of Groton Police Department has patrol officer vacancies in the Police Department; and

WHEREAS, Benjamin Clark was selected as an applicant from a Police Officer candidacy list established by the Law Enforcement Council of Southeastern Connecticut; and

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 19, 2022**

WHEREAS, Benjamin Clark has passed an oral interview panel, the background investigation, polygraph, physical agility, psychological and medical testing; and

WHEREAS, Benjamin Clark has met the required entry standards established by the Police Officer Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.) Council, for admission to the Police Academy, and it would be beneficial for the City of Groton to hire him; and

WHEREAS, Benjamin Clark desires to serve as a patrol officer with the City of Groton Police Department;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council approve the appointment of Benjamin Clark as a probationary Police Officer Grade “D”, in the City of Groton Police Department, waive the residency requirement and that the appointment be effective September 19, 2022.

Motion to approve made by Councilor Norris, second by Deputy Mayor Depot.

Chief of Police Eric Jenkins introduced Benjamin Clark for consideration as a City of Groton Police Officer.

Deputy Mayor Depot inquired about the wording of the resolution where the residency requirement is waived.

Mayor Hedrick clarified that this is in the event that Benjamin Clark decided to move elsewhere.

All in favor. Motion carried. 6-0-0

Benjamin Clark is sworn in by City Clerk Edward Jacome.

Mother, Mrs. Clark pinned Benjamin Clark with his family present.

Benjamin Clark thanked Chief Jenkins and the Mayor and Council for the opportunity to serve the City of Groton. He also thanked his family for the support on this journey.

Mayor Hedrick recessed for pictures.

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS AND MEMORIALS

Proclamation for Constitution Week

Mayor Hedrick read Constitution Week Proclamation.

IV. RECEIPT OF CITIZEN’S PETITIONS/COMMENTS

Receipt of Citizens’ Petitions is the portion of the Council meeting where the Council welcomes comments from citizens. To address the Council, please sign the sheet on the table at the front of the meeting room. When you are recognized, please approach the podium. Clearly state your name and address. Each presentation should be limited to five (5) minutes or less, and citizens should, if possible, submit emailed or written comments. Presentations should be related to matters pertinent to the City of Groton. City Councilors will only ask questions in order to clarify the speaker's presentation and can respond during the Responses to Citizens’ Petitions portion of the meeting.

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 19, 2022**

Ian Thomas, 24 Jefferson Drive – spoke on the issues of Branford Manor and the default option. He also stated his support for changing to the November election and suggested the possible use of a referendum.

Portia Borderlon, 24 Jefferson Drive – disclosed that she is a Groton Town Councilor. She stated her support for changing to the November election. She also stated her frustration with Branford Manor citing multiple correspondence.

V. RESPOND TO CITIZEN’S PETITIONS/COMMENTS

Deputy Mayor Depot – stated in regards to the Nov/May election discussion she is not making any decision solely based on feedback from the political parties. However, she stated they are a good resource based on their community involvement. She also stated if there are any suspicions that remediation is not following guidelines to contact the City of Groton Building Inspector.

Mayor Hedrick – stated that on August 30th and 31st there were inspections done by Ledge Light and the City of Groton Building Inspector and the results have been codified and sent out. He stated that he is continuing to work with Branford Manor and Related to have issues identified and remediated. He recommended reaching out to residents regarding feedback for the Nov/May election topic as he has been doing, and the feedback he has received was keeping the elections in May.

Councilor McCabe – stated based on her discussions with residents on the Nov/May election topic residents are concerned with a sense of self unique with the city.

Councilor Carter – stated that he understands the concern of loss of identity for the city, but we will remain the City of Groton. The residents he has been talking to are in support of November elections as this would simplify logistics and provide cost savings.

Councilor Piazza – expressed her concern with the pace of remediation moving slowly. She also inquired about the Branford Manor residents being displaced and if they all located within the city. Mayor Hedrick stated that they try to keep them within the school limits. Councilor Piazza also suggested a survey for the Nov/May election topic.

Councilor Sheffield – stated that changing the election to November would not challenge the autonomy of the city as there would still be two ballot distinguishing the city and the town.

Councilor Norris – thanked the speakers for attending and reserved his comments for next week.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor and Council, September 6, 2022

Motion to approve made by Councilor Norris, second by Deputy Mayor Depot.

All in favor. Motion carried. 6-0-0

VII. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS

Councilor Norris – Group I Economic Development met on September 12, 2022 and discussed the business grant, short term goals for Thames Street and the tagline survey.

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 19, 2022**

Councilor McCabe – Group I Public Works met on September 12, 2022 and discussed clarifying the trash ordinance and snow removal procedure.

Councilor Sheffield – None

Councilor Piazza – None

Councilor Carter – None

Deputy Mayor Depot – Attended the project announcement for Groton Sail. Group I Public Safety met September 12, 2022 and discussed items tied with the Economic Development group.

Mayor Hedrick – Poquonnock Road is still under construction for the next five to six weeks.

Farmer Market is still going on until mid-October then it will switch to indoors at the Municipal Building Auditorium. The city is proceeding forward with the Costa Property as the letter was sent out starting the sixty day clock.

VIII. COMMITTEE REFERRALS

None.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

R-22-09-110 RESOLUTION THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL WAIVE THE BID PROCESS AND AUTHORIZE A PURCHASE ORDER TO AXON ENTERPRISE, INC., 17800 N. 85TH STREET, SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA FOR THE AXON ENTERPRISE BODY CAMERA SOFTWARE SUPPORT AND STORAGE IN THE AMOUNT OF NINETEEN THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED FIFTY-SIX DOLLARS AND ZERO CENTS (\$19,356.00) TO BE PAID FROM FY23 POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATING FUNDS

WHEREAS, the purchase of the Axon body cameras and software was approved on August 5, 2019 under Resolution R-19-8-113; and

WHEREAS, Axon Enterprise, LLC is a sole source expenditure for the software system for the Police Department; and

WHEREAS, the annual software support is from September 1, 2022 through August 31, 2023

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council waive the bid process and authorize a purchase order to Axon Enterprise, Inc., 17800 N. 85th Street, Scottsdale, Arizona for the Axon Enterprises Body camera software support and storage in the amount of Nineteen Thousand Three Hundred fifty-Six Dollars and Zero Cents (\$19,356.00) to be paid from FY22 Police Department Operating funds.

Motion to approve made by Councilor McCabe, second by Councilor Norris.

Chief of Police Eric Jenkins explained that this is the purchase of body cameras and this is the fourth payment of the five year payment program.

Councilor Piazza inquired about where the storage of the body cams are located.

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 19, 2022**

Chief Jenkins explained that once the body cams are used after a shift they are placed in a docking station where they then upload the footage to the cloud. The retention of footage is based on classification.

All in favor. Motion carried. 6-0-0

R-22-09-111 RESOLUTION THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL AUTHORIZE THE ACCEPTANCE OF A GRANT-IN-AID AWARD FROM THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2,700,000.00 (TWO MILLION SEVEN HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS AND NO CENTS) FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF THE SHORE AVENUE SEAWALL AND THAT MAYOR KEITH HEDRICK BE AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS

WHEREAS, the City of Groton was awarded \$2,700,000.00 in grant-in aid funding for the Shore Avenue Seawall replacement project; and

WHEREAS, the project work will include removal and replacement of approximately 350' of seawall and adjacent roadway, pre & post construction assessments of adjacent eel grass beds, installing water handling cofferdam system to allow removal of existing seawall and installing upland dewatering area for duration of the project;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council authorize the acceptance of a grant-in-aid award from the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection in the amount of \$2,700,000.00 (Two Million Seven Hundred Thousand Dollars and No Cents) for the replacement of the Shore Avenue Seawall and that Mayor Keith Hedrick be authorized to execute any and all documents.

Motion to approve made by Deputy Mayor Depot, second by Councilor Sheffield.

Public Works Director Bill Robarge explained this is for the acceptance of the grant in the amount of \$2,700,000.00 for the Shore Avenue Seawall, which includes bidding, construction administration and inspections. Mayor Hedrick clarified the final cost of the project is still to be determined. In addition, there are still ARPA funds set aside by the Town of Groton that could be used.

All in favor. Motion carried. 6-0-0

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Councilor McCabe, second by Councilor Piazza.

All in favor. Motion carried. 6-0-0

Mayor Hedrick adjourned the meeting at 8:52 p.m.