

MINUTES  
Town Council  
Town of East Greenwich  
Regular Meeting and Joint Meeting w/School Committee  
January 28, 2019 at 7:00 PM  
Swift Community Center, 121 Peirce Street, East Greenwich, RI 02818

(1) Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag

Town Councilors (5/5): Mark Schwager, President; Michael Donegan, Vice President; Caryn Corenthal, Renu Englehart and Michael Zarrella

Town Staff: Joseph Duarte, Acting Town Manager/DPW Director; Leigh Carney, Town Clerk; Andrew Teitz, Esq., Solicitor; Wendy Schmidle, Director of IT; Catherine Bradley, Director of Community Services and Parks; Col. Stephen Brown, Chief of Police; Capt. Stanley Cirella, Deputy Chief of Police; Thomas Mears, Acting Fire Chief

School Committee (7/7): Carolyn Mark, Chairwoman; Dr. Lori McEwen, Vice Chairwoman; Matt Plain, Alyson Powell, Anne Musella, Eugene Quinn, Jeff Dronzek

Others: Michael D'Amico, Consultant; Dr. Victor Mercurio, Superintendent; Matthew Oliverio, Esq, School Attorney; Carole Malaga, Stenographer

President Schwager called the meeting to order at 7:04pm. Following introductions, he led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Chairwoman Mark called the School Committee to order.

(2) Council President Announcements

None

(3) Public Comments (15 minute time limit for items NOT on the agenda)

Christopher Macri commented on proposing a ban on plastic bags and provided Council with information for their consideration.

Suzanne Cienki commented on the IRS penalties and MERS.

(4) Acknowledgements

- (a) Commendation for Guy Asadorian for serving five years on the Quonset Point Development Corporation Board

Mr. Asadorian was recognized for his service on the board and his involvement in the community.

- (b) Commendation for Christopher Russo for serving over five years on the Planning Board.

Mr. Russo was recognized for his service.

Motion to approve the acknowledgements made by Renu Englehart, seconded by Michael Donegan

Ayes: Corenthal, Donegan, Englehart, Schwager, Zarrella

Motion Carried 5 – 0

(5) Joint Meeting with School Committee

(a) FY 2019 Budget Projections Town and School

Mr. D'Amico began with projections for the Schools. Projected variances in expenditures and revenues were highlighted for each group department/function. Based on using six months of data through December 2018, he projected a surplus of approximately \$85,000. Based on median case scenario, he anticipates a balance budget with a small surplus. Discussion ensued.

Mr. D'Amico then presented projections for the Town. He addressed his concerns with tax revenue collections being behind based on previous years. Projected variances in revenues and expenditures were highlighted for each group department/function. He projected a \$1.4 million dollar deficit but emphasized that several departments are trending below budget and tax collections are anticipated to increase which could reduce the deficit to \$700-800K. Discussion ensued.

Public comments were accepted.

Bill Higgins, 88 Greenwich Boulevard, questioned the allocation of salaries/housing for previous Fire Chiefs/Deputies. Mr. D'Amico replied that housing probably hit Contingency and salary costs were minimal in FY19.

Charles Callanan, 30 Eldredge Avenue, asked if Mr. D'Amico agreed with making vertical cuts. Mr. D'Amico replied that he would look at everything on both revenues and expenditures. Outsourcing fire services was suggested.

Eric Jautais, 184 Hemlock Drive, questioned the secondary and tertiary ramifications related to outsourcing services. Mr. D'Amico replied he had no current data to report.

(b) Discussion of Consolidated Finance/Director of Administration Position

President Schwager provided a brief update on previous consolidation efforts which ended abruptly with the resignation of a single individual. He noted that at a previous joint meeting, there was interest on both sides to form a workgroup to further discuss the positions and functions that could be consolidated or should remain separate. He turned

the floor over to the School Committee to report on the outcome of their last meeting regarding the same.

Chairwoman Mark reported that the Committee consented to engage with the Town with the caveat that the group is dedicated to working on identifying not only the financial needs but also the administrative/operational functions as a whole to benefit needs on both sides. She offered the following suggestions for the group: broaden the scope to finance and administrative functions, co-leadership to set agendas, meet once before February 11<sup>th</sup> and the first order of business to be to draft a formal charge, including a proposed timeline for work, scope and work product and how to present. Discussion ensued. It was agreed that Human Resources should be considered as part of the administrative piece.

(c) Creation of Town Council/School Committee Consolidation Advisory Work Group

Solicitor Teitz recommended the formation of a Town Council subcommittee and a School Committee subcommittee which can work together. Attorney Oliverio advised Chairwoman Mark to formalize their intent to create a subcommittee to work with the Town by taking a vote. The joint subcommittee would act as a public body and be subject to the Open Meetings Act.

Motion to create an advisory work group to include up to three (3) members of the School Committee members and the Superintendent and up two (2) members of the Town Council and the Town Manager for the purpose of exploring financial and administrative functions between the Schools made by Dr. Lori McEwen, seconded by Jeff Dronzek

Ayes: Mark, McEwen, Dronzek, Musella, Plain, Powell, Quinn

Motion Carried 7 - 0

Chairwoman Mark appointed Dr. Lori McEwen, Jeff Dronzek and Anne Musella to the advisory work group.

(d) Appointment of Town Council/School Committee Consolidation Advisory Work Group

Motion to designate Caryn Corenthall and Renu Englehart as members of the advisory work group made by Michael Zarrella, seconded by Renu Englehart

Ayes: Corenthall, Donegan, Englehart, Schwager, Zarrella

Motion carried 5 – 0

(e) School Committee Supplemental Appropriation Request for FY 2019

President Schwager reported that on January 14<sup>th</sup>, the Town Council voted to allocate \$262K to the School Committee's current year budget despite lacking information on the

projections for FY19. The School Committee had requested to have additional discussion once the information had been presented. The floor was given to the School Committee.

Dr. Mercurio reported on how the School Committee voted to spend the additional funds: \$146K to facilities/safety, \$65K behavioral analyst and \$51K to office of teaching and learning. He added that several staffing positions in Technology remain unfilled.

Chairwoman Mark respectfully requested Councilors to consider the balance of the supplemental appropriation they submitted in the amount of \$433K.

Lengthy discussion followed on safety/security needs and the use of fund balances on both sides. Councilors voiced their concerns about approving additional appropriations in light of the current financial situation.

Public comments were taken.

Bill Higgins, 88 Greenwich Boulevard, commented on the use of operational funds for security instead of state bond money from November with reimbursement. Chairwoman Mark addressed his concerns and suggested a future discussion.

Robert Vespia, 155 Shippeetown Road, commented on the projected deficit for FY 2019 and planning for FY 2020.

Motion to deny the balance of the supplemental request as requested made by Renu Englehart, seconded by Michael Donegan

Further Council discussion ensued.

Ayes: Corenthal, Donegan, Englehart, Schwager, Zarrella

Motion Carried 5 – 0

Motion to adjourn the School Committee made by Matt Plain, seconded by Dr. Lori McEwen

Ayes: Mark, McEwen, Dronzek, Musella, Plain, Powell, Quinn

Motion Carried 7 - 0

(f) Public Comments (for items related to Joint Meeting)

See above.

(6) Town Council Minutes

(a) December 18, 2018 (Special Session)

Motion to approve made by Michael Zarrella, seconded by Michael Donegan

Ayes: Corenthal, Donegan, Englehart, Schwager, Zarrella

Motion Carried 5 – 0

(7) Public Hearing

- (a) Application for a NEW Class BV Alcoholic Beverage License with Victualing for HVA, Inc. d/b/a Supreme Pizza and Subs, 2706 South County Trail.

The applicant, Alexandros Papadopoulos, spoke briefly about the business proposal and plans to manage parking.

No public comments.

Motion to approve subject to meeting all legal requirements made by Michael Zarrella, seconded by Caryn Corenthal

Ayes: Corenthal, Donegan, Englehart, Schwager, Zarrella

Motion Carried 5 – 0

- (b) Application for an Alcoholic Beverage License Upgrade from a Class BVL (Limited Beverage) to a Class BV (Full Beverage) for Chacon Pizza Restaurant d/b/a Frank and John's Pizza, 186 Main Street.

The owner, Luz Chacon, stated she has been operating for seven months and business is good. She is looking to offer customers more options.

No public comments.

Motion to approve subject to all legal requirements made by Michael Zarrella, seconded by Michael Donegan

Ayes: Corenthal, Donegan, Englehart, Schwager, Zarrella

Motion Carried 5 – 0

(8) Consent Calendar

- (a) Application for Class F Alcoholic Beverage License for International Brotherhood of Police Officers (Local #306) for a Beer and Wine Tasting Fundraiser being held at the Varnum Memorial Armory, 6 Main Street on February 16, 2019.
- (b) Application for RENEWAL of Private Detective License for Kevin Hopkins, 250 Chestnut Drive, East Greenwich, RI.

Motion to approve the Consent Calendar made by Renu Englehart, seconded by Caryn Corenthall

Ayes: Corenthall, Donegan, Englehart, Schwager, Zarrella

Motion Carried 5 – 0

(9) Unfinished Business (Discussion/Action)

- (a) Annual Renewal of Alcoholic Beverage Licenses with Virtualing, Entertainment and Outdoor Sidewalk Service (as applicable) for the period December 1, 2018 through November 30, 2019 for Feast Sandwich, 431 Main Street and Kai Bar, 232 Main Street (continued from January 14, 2019).

Solicitor Teitz reported that Kai Bar has not received zoning approval for outdoor sidewalk service. The license was renewed under the existing LLC. He suggested allowing an extension through mid-February to allow for State clearance on the transfer. No action taken.

Solicitor Teitz reported that Feast Sandwich is also lacking approval from the State. The applicant filed for a temporary restraining order at Kent County Superior Court to prohibit the Town from revoking the license. He spoke with the Judge and did not object to the order which is scheduled to be heard on February 4<sup>th</sup>. It was suggested to postpone to Council's next meeting on February 4<sup>th</sup>. Discussion ensued on the requirements for obtaining a Certificate of Good Standing, Solicitor Teitz' authority to act in court and the consequences of issuing a license without State clearance.

Motion to continue the approval of Feast Sandwich to February 4, 2019 made by Michael Zarrella, seconded by Mark Schwager

Ayes: Corenthall, Donegan, Englehart, Schwager, Zarrella

Motion Carried 5 – 0

(10) New Business (Discussion/Action)

- (a) Appointment to the Quonset Point Development Corporation Board for a three-year term to expire January 28, 2022.

Motion to Jeffrey Cianciolo to the Quonset Point Development Corporation Board for a 3-year term to expire January 28, 2022 made by Michael Zarrella, seconded by Michael Donegan

Ayes: Corenthall, Donegan, Englehart, Schwager, Zarrella

Motion Carried 5 – 0

- (b) Appointment of Tree Warden for 2019

Mr. Duarte commented on the duties of the Tree Warden and recommended reinstating the existing Tree Warden, Michael Schreffler who owns East Greenwich Tree Service.

Motion to appoint Michael Schreffler as the Tree Warden for 2019 made by Michael Zarrella, seconded by Caryn Corenthal

Ayes: Corenthal, Donegan, Englehart, Schwager, Zarrella

Motion Carried 5 – 0

(11) Public Comments (30 minute time limit)

No public comments.

(12) Council Comments

Councilor Corenthal commented on out-sourcing services and asking the State for more money for education.

Councilor Englehart commented on the raises approved at the last meeting which were approved by last Council and not acted upon.

Motion made to postpone the Executive Session made by Michael Zarrella.

Motion was withdrawn.

(13) Executive Session

- (a) Closed pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a) (1) pertaining to the approval of the Executive Session minutes from December 18, 2018.
- (b) Closed pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a) (2) pertaining to collective bargaining or litigation regarding possible Caruolo Act Lawsuit.
- (c) Closed pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a) (2) pertaining to collective bargaining or litigation to discuss labor negotiations.

Motion to convene into Executive Session per RIGL 42-46-5 (a) (2) pertaining to collective bargaining or litigation regarding possible Caruolo Act Lawsuit made by Renu Englehart, seconded by Michael Donegan

Ayes: Corenthal, Donegan, Englehart, Schwager, Zarrella

Motion Carried 5 – 0

Motion to continue Items (13) (a) and (c) to February 4th made by Renu Englehart, seconded by Michael Donegan



Ayes: Corenthal, Donegan, Englehart, Schwager, Zarrella

Motion Carried 5 – 0

Council reconvened into Open Session.

Motion to seal the Executive Session minutes and made by Michael Zarrella, seconded by Caryn Corenthal

Ayes: Corenthal, Donegan, Englehart, Schwager, Zarrella

Motion carried 5 – 0

No action was taken.

(14) Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Michael Zarrella, seconded by Michael Donegan

Ayes: Corenthal, Donegan, Englehart, Schwager, Zarrella

Motion Carried 5 – 0

Submitted By:

Leigh A. Carney, CMC  
Town Clerk

Approved By Town Council:  
(PENDING)

**AUDIO FILE AVAILABLE IN TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE**