

MINUTES
Town Council
Town of East Greenwich
Regular Meeting/Joint Meeting w/School Committee
February 11, 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 Council (5/5): Mark Schwager, President; Michael Donegan, Vice President; Renu Englehart, Caryn Corenthel and Michael Zarrella

Town Staff: Joseph Duarte, Acting Town Manager/Director of Public Works; Leigh Carney, Town Clerk; Michael Ursillo, Esq., Solicitor; Wendy Schmidle, IT Director; Catherine Bradley, Community Services and Parks Director

School Committee (6/7): Carolyn Mark, Chairwoman; Matthew Plain, Alyson Powell, Eugene Quinn, Anne Musella and Jeff Dronzek (Excused: Dr. Lori McEwen, Vice Chairwoman)

Others: Matthew Oliverio, Esq., Attorney for School Committee; Dr. Victor Mercurio, Superintendent; Michael D'Amico, Consultant

President Schwager called the meeting to order. Following introductions, Chairwoman Mark called the School Committee to order and introduced members.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag was recited by the assembly.

(2) Council President Announcements

Representative Justine Caldwell was acknowledged in the audience.

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

Charles Callanan, 30 Eldredge Avenue, questioned if the Town had a Social Media policy and voiced his concerns about fire department training records. He also commented on a Letter to the Editor written by Councilor Corenthel.

(4) Joint Meeting with School Committee

(a) Update from Consolidated Advisory Workgroup

President Schwager explained the Budget Schedule for FY 2020.

Mr. Dronzek read the workgroup's charge aloud and explained what transpired during their first meeting. Input was received from Mr. D'Amico. He stated that a recommendation would be presented mid-March and that the process may reveal other areas to consolidate. Following brief comments by Ms. Musella and Councilor Corenthel, Chairwoman Mark questioned the process moving forward. Mr. Dronzek repeated the formal charge. Discussion ensued on financial benefits and other areas being looked at for consolidation such as technology.

Motion to approve the charge and scope of work and timeline for the advisory group made by Michael Donegan, seconded by Renu Englehart

Ayes: Corenthal, Donegan, Englehart, Schwager, Zarrella

Motion Carried 5 – 0

Motion to approve the charge and scope of work and timeline for the advisory group made by Matt Plain, seconded by Anne Musella

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

Motion carried 6 – 0

- (b) Pre-budget meeting between School Committee and Town Council; Council to present estimate of revenues for FY 2020 and School to present estimate of total expenditures, projected enrollments, with resultant staff and facility requirements and any necessary or mandated changes in school programs or operations per RIGL 16-2-21 and 16-2-21.3.

Mr. Duarte noted that estimated revenues have not changed since the last joint meeting. MUNIS reporting for FY19 will be completed next week and work will begin on building FY20. Nothing new was reported on tax collections.

Chairwoman Mark noted that estimated expenditures have not changed since the last joint meeting; however, significant changes to RIDE's state aid estimates are expected. Dr. Mercurio reported that the new state aid projections have decreased an additional \$200K for a total decrease of approximately \$600K from last year. Enrollment projections were presented and a RIDE survey was completed related to pre-school programs. He noted that rental opportunities during transitional periods for families are in high demand.

Lengthy discussion ensued on the funding formula, supporting legislation pushing back at the General Assembly, tax levy variations and special needs funding. Enrollment projections were further explained by Dr. Mercurio and how they affect transportation and affordable housing developments to be considered. It was suggested that Planning should report housing statistics to NESDEC. Pre-K enrollment was revisited. Debate continued about disputing and auditing State Aid calculations and funding. Additional comments were made about NESDEC projections not including pre-K and the Town's Affordable Housing requirements. Ms. Powell spoke about her own research on the funding formula and how the Town's ability to raise revenue and affordable housing percentages can affect the calculations. Mr. Quinn added that the formula also uses what is called categorical funding (special needs) but data appears to be two years old.

- (c) Public Comment (limited to Joint Meeting topics)

Robert Vespia, 155 Shippeetown Road, questioned the timing of the creation of the funding formula and the 4% tax cap levy at the State level. Discussion ensued.

Bill Higgins, 88 Greenwich Boulevard, commented on the Governor's budget for all day pre-K funding (which is not included in the School's budget) and the financial impacts of students from low-income families. Discussion ensued on implementation of all day pre-K.

Jerry Zarrella, Jr., 815 South Road, commented on potential revenue streams from the school side and FY18 Master Plan numbers. Discussion ensued on ad hoc revenue committee.

President Schwager noted that collaborative work will continue with the Consolidated Advisory Workgroup and a Capital Expenditure Plan. The School Committee will present their budget during the Public Hearing on May 15th.

Motion to adjourn the School Committee at 8:45pm made by Matt Plain, seconded by Alyson Powell

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

Motion carried 6 – 0

(5) Town Council Minutes

(a) January 10, 2019 (Special Meeting)

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

Ayes: Corenthal, Donegan, Englehart, Schwager, Zarrella

Motion Carried 5 – 0

(6) Consent Calendar

(a) Application for Class F1 Alcoholic Beverage License for Beyond Wrestling LLC to hold a Professional Wrestling Event at the Varnum Armory, 6 Main Street, on February 24, 2019

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

Ayes: Corenthal, Donegan, Englehart, Schwager, Zarrella

Motion Carried 5 – 0

(7) Public Comments (30 minute time limit)

None

(8) Council Comments

Councilor Englehart commented on the potential for land donations to the Land Trust.

VP Donegan suggested that the Land Trust and the Town Solicitor work together to understand any legal issues related to land acquisitions.

President Schwager asked the Clerk to make a note for Council to addressing those issues at a future meeting.

(9) Executive Session

- (a) Closed pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a) (2) pertaining to the approval of the Executive Session minutes from January 10, 2019.
- (b) Closed pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a) (2), sessions pertaining to litigation, specifically to discuss proposed litigation concerning the national, state and local opioid epidemic.
- (c) Closed pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a) (1) for the purpose of discussing the job performance, character or physical or mental health of a person or persons; specifically to review the legal services agreement with Ursillo, Teitz & Ritch, Ltd. (notice provided).
- (d) Closed pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a) (2) pertaining to collective bargaining to discuss labor negotiations for all union contracts.

Motion to convene into Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a) (2) pertaining to the approval of the Executive Session minutes from January, 10, 2019 and sessions pertaining to litigation, specifically to discuss proposed litigation concerning the national, state and local opioid epidemic and sessions pertaining to collective bargaining to discuss labor negotiations for all union contracts; and pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a) (1) for the purpose of discussing the job performance, character or physical or mental health of a person or persons, specifically to review the legal services agreement with Ursillo, Teitz & Ritch, Ltd. (notice provided) made by Michael Donegan, seconded by Michael Zarrella

Ayes: Corenthall, Donegan, Englehart, Schwager, Zarrella

Motion Carried 5 – 0

Council reconvened into Open Session.

Action was taken to approve the Executive Session minutes from January 10, 2019 and to approve the service agreement with Ursillo, Teitz & Ritch, Ltd. No other action was taken.

Motion to seal the Executive Session minutes made by Michael Donegan, seconded by Michael Zarrella

Ayes: Corenthall, Donegan, Englehart, Schwager, Zarrella

Motion Carried 5 – 0

(10) Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 11:15pm made by Michael Zarrella, seconded by Michael Donegan

Ayes: Corenthall, 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

DRAFT