



Town of Groton, Connecticut

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Meeting Minutes

Representative Town Meeting

Moderator Christine Conley, Representatives Karin Adams, Jean-Claude Ambroise, Joseph Baril, Alicia Bauer, Susan Deane-Shinbrot, Luanne E. DeMatto, John A. Espada, Robert M. Garcia, Patrice Granatosky, Dolores Harrell, Karen Hatcher, Conrad F. Heede, Lynn Crockett Hubbard, Matthew G. Longino, Jim Loughlin, Lisa M. Luck, Brandon Marley, Jackie Massett, Bruce A. McDermott, Roscoe Merritt, Scott Meyer, Douglas Monaghan, Kathy Neugent, Scott Newsome, Juliette M. Parker, Richard J. Pasqualini, Jr., Shawn Powers, John F. Scott IV, Jack Sebastian, Richard Semeraro, Bill Smith, Judith Strode, Mark Svencer, Archie C. Swindell, Fred Turnbull, Patricia Wagner, Richard Waselik, Lori A. Watrous, Ivy R. Williams and Jonathan E. Wilson

Wednesday, December 11, 2013

7:30 PM

Groton Senior Center

Regular Meeting

A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL BY TOWN CLERK

Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. 39 members were present and a quorum was declared.

Members Present: Moderator Conley, Rep. Adams, Rep. Ambroise, Rep. Baril, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. DeMatto, Rep. Espada, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Harrell, Rep. Hatcher, Rep. Heede, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Longino, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Luck, Rep. Marley, Rep. Massett, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Meyer, Rep. Monaghan, Rep. Neugent, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Parker, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Powers, Rep. Scott, Rep. Semeraro, Rep. Smith, Rep. Strode, Rep. Svencer, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Turnbull, Rep. Wagner, Rep. Waselik, Rep. Williams and Rep. Wilson
Members Absent: Rep. Sebastian and Rep. Watrous

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, State Senator Andrew Maynard, Mayor Rita Schmidt, Town Councilors Genevieve Cerf, Rich Moravsik, Heather Somers and Harry Watson, City Councilor Keith Hedrick, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Deputy Town Clerk Janet Downs.

B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Salute to the Flag was led by Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher.

C. ORGANIZATION OF TWENTY-NINTH RTM

1. Administration of oath to all representatives by Town Clerk

Town Clerk Moukawsher administered the oath of office to the 39 members present.

2. Adoption of Rules

2013-0277 Adoption of RTM Rules

RESOLUTION APPROVING ADOPTION OF RULES & PROCEDURES OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH RTM

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Rules and Procedures of the Twenty-eighth RTM are temporarily adopted as the Rules and Procedures of the Twenty-ninth RTM elected November 5, 2013.

A motion was made by Rep. Pasqualini Jr., seconded by Rep. Scott, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

3. Election of Moderator

The Town Clerk called for nominations for the office of Moderator.

The name of Christine Conley was placed in nomination by Rep. Granatosky.

A motion to close nominations was made by Rep. Harrell, seconded by Rep. Pasqualini and so voted unanimously.

The vote to elect Christine Conley as Moderator carried unanimously.

4. Presentation of gavel to Moderator

The Town Clerk presented the gavel to Moderator Conley.

5. Brief recess to allow Moderator to review correspondence, etc.

The meeting resumed after a brief recess.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 13, 2013

A motion that the minutes be approved was made by Rep. Ambrose, seconded by Rep. Baril. The vote on approval of the minutes carried 37 in favor, 2 abstentions. (Abstaining: Reps. Harrell and Monaghan.)

E. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

Town Councilor Heather Bond Somers, 67 Ramsdell Street, congratulated the representatives and thanked members, both past and present, for their service with the Town. She looks forward to working with the new RTM.

Town Councilor and former representative Genevieve Cerf, 17 Crescent Street, Groton Long Point, admitted that she already misses the RTM. She offered congratulations and expressed her eagerness to work with the RTM in a new capacity.

**F. APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY RULES & PROCEDURES COMMITTEE
2013-0278 Appointment of Temporary Rules & Procedures Committee**

APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY RULES & PROCEDURES COMMITTEE TO PREPARE RULES FOR THE TWENTY-NINTH RTM

The Moderator hereby appoints the following as a temporary Rules & Procedures Committee to review and recommend Rules and Procedures for the Twenty-ninth RTM:

1. Jean-Claude Ambrose, Chair
2. Susan Deane-Shinbrot
3. Luanne DeMatto
4. Conrad Heede
5. Kathy Neugent

This matter was Adopted.

G. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

*Reps. Sebastian and Watrous are unable to attend this meeting.
Superintendent McKenna is also unable to attend.*

Volunteers are needed to serve as the RTM's liaison to the following committees: Town Council; Town Council/City Council/Board of Education/RTM Liaison Committee; Energy, Efficiency and Conservation Committee; Economic Development Commission; School Planning Task Force; 2012 Plan of Conservation & Development and Municipal Coastal Program Steering Committee.

There has been interest in a joint Town Council/RTM meeting to discuss the budget. Although a preliminary date of December 16 was proposed, there was consensus among the members to wait until January.

Rep. Loughlin reiterated the request he made two years ago that members be issued Town email addresses.

Rep. Ambrose noted that the cost of new licenses prevented this from being done.

The Town Manager stated that the necessary licenses will be purchased if the RTM so desires.

Alternatively, it was recommended that each member set up a separate, dedicated email address

for receipt of RTM communications.

2013-0257 Resale of Town-Owned Property

RESOLUTION REGARDING THE SALE OF TOWN-OWNED PROPERTY

WHEREAS, in December 1994 the Town Council approved a process for the resale of Town-owned property acquired through a tax sale and/or foreclosure, and

WHEREAS, in November 2007 the Town Attorney reviewed the process relative to applicable State Statutes, Town Charter provisions, and ordinances, and

WHEREAS, modifications of the process are necessary to comply with the Town Attorney's findings, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council amends the Process for Resale of Town Owned Property as presented to the Committee of the Whole on November 12, 2013 and implements the procedure regarding resale of acquired property, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the sale of applicable properties be referred to the Planning Commission and RTM.

This matter was Referred to the RTM Community Development & Services Committee, due back on January 8, 2014.

This matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action.

This item was referred in error. No action is required by the RTM.

2013-0112 Further Redefinition of Voting Districts

FURTHER REDEFINITION OF VOTING DISTRICTS

This matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action.

H. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

1. Financial Report

Mr. Oefinger reported that the Fund Balance is approximately \$11.3 million as of June 30, 2013; the General Contingency balance is \$350,000; the Capital Reserve balance is approximately \$2.3 million.

2. Monthly Briefing

Mr. Oefinger highlighted items from the Town Manager's News, including holiday distributions. He acknowledged donations from local businesses, service organizations and Town employees.

I. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

None.

J. BUDGET DISCUSSIONS

Rep. Ambrose raised the question of the direction to be taken by the RTM in dealing with the budget and the surplus over the next two years. He stressed the RTM's responsibility in relation to the budget and asked if the Town Manager has been given any direction by the Town Council.

Town Manager Oefinger described Groton's budget process, including his role and his approach to the process. He discussed revenues and noted that the Town Operations budget has been reduced drastically in recent years. He welcomed RTM input, but added that direction to reduce the budget by an arbitrary percentage is not helpful. He would prefer guidance about what projects, programs and services to cut to achieve a reduction. Mr. Oefinger referred to his role in the budget process as outlined in the Town Charter, and asked that he be allowed to fulfill that role without the imposition of arbitrary restrictions.

Rep. Smith noted that he has served on the Plan of Conservation and Development Steering Committee, and suggested that the wishes and priorities of Groton's citizens must be given first consideration when determining a budget.

Rep. Pasqualini expressed the opinion that the Town Council and RTM lack the leadership to make any meaningful cuts to the budget, so that no significant changes can be made and nothing is accomplished. He cited waste in Town departments.

K. OTHER BUSINESS

2013-0293 Creation of a Groton RTM Economic Development Corporation

CREATION OF A GROTON REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

This matter was Referred to the RTM Community Development & Services Committee, due back on January 8, 2014.

Rep. Scott suggested that the Town needs creative ideas for dealing with the budget, and specifically for increasing revenues. He distributed material and made a Power Point presentation proposing the creation of a Groton Representative Town Meeting Economic Development Corporation to focus on all aspects of economic development in Groton. He laid out the details of the proposed corporation, including purpose, structure and cost. He cited the failure of Town and City governments to retain businesses and attract new ones to the area. Rep. Scott suggested that the RTM use Power of Initiative as permitted by the Town Charter to set the process in motion.

MOTION to suspend the rules to consider Item 2013-0293 CREATION OF A GROTON REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION under Power of Initiative was made by Rep. Scott, seconded by Rep. Massett.

The roll call vote to suspend the rules failed 18 in favor, 18 opposed, 3 abstentions. (This motion required a two-thirds vote of those present.) (In favor: Reps. Adams, Ambroise, Baril, DeMatto, Espada, Heede, Hubbard, Longino, Massett, McDermott, Meyer, Monaghan, Pasqualini, Scott, Strode, Turnbull, Wagner, Wilson. Opposed: Reps. Bauer, Deane-Shinbrot, Grantosky, Garcia, Harrell, Hatcher, Loughlin, Marley, Neugent, Newsome, Parker, Semeraro, Smith, Svencer, Swindell, Waselik, Williams, Conley. Abstaining: Reps. Luck, Merritt, Powers.)

Moderator Conley directed that the committee should meet on this item prior to the January meeting.

In response to Rep. Hatcher's request that this item also be referred to the Finance Committee, the Moderator noted that she would rather make the referral to one committee and refer it to a second committee at a later time if necessary.

L. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 8:48 p.m. was made by Rep. Harrell, seconded by Rep. Pasqualini and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk
Clerk of the RTM*

Janet L. Downs, Deputy Town Clerk