



# Town of Groton, Connecticut

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

## Meeting Minutes - **Draft**

### Representative Town Meeting

**Moderator Natalie B. Billing, Representatives Karin Adams, Jean-Claude Ambroise, Joe Baril, Nancy E. Barnhart, Alicia Bauer, Nancy E. Beckwith, Laurie Kim Briggs, Genevieve Cerf, Michael Collins, Warren T. Cooper, Nancy S. Driscoll, Syma Ebbin, June Evered, Peter Fairbank, Jonathon Foisy, Irene B. Garagliano, Robert Garcia, Patrice Granatosky, Dolores Harrell, Wendy L. Hellekson, Lynn Crockett Hubbard, James Loughlin, Lisa M. Luck, Jackie Massett, Carole McCarthy, Richard Metayer, Betsy Moukawsher, Scott Newsome, Deborah Peruzzotti, Kevin Power, Betty A. Prochaska, Don Pratt, Jack Sebastian, Jennifer Smuts, Eleanor Steere, Joan Steinfeld, Irma Streeter, Mark Svencer, Cheryl Tilney and Robert A. Warn**

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Wednesday, August 19, 2009

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex-CR 1

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#### Regular Meeting

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#### A. ROLL CALL

*Moderator Natalie Billing called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.*

*24 members were present, and a quorum was declared.*

*The Moderator reported that Reps. Adams, Barnhart, Bauer, Cerf, Foisy, Garagliano, Peruzzotti, Power, Streeter and Warn called to say they are unable to attend this meeting.*

*Members Present: Moderator Billing, Rep. Ambroise, Rep. Baril, Rep. Beckwith, Rep. Briggs, Rep. Collins, Rep. Cooper, Rep. Driscoll, Rep. Ebbin, Rep. Evered, Rep. Fairbank, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Harrell, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Luck, Rep. Massett, Rep. McCarthy, Rep. Moukawsher, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. Smuts, Rep. Steinfeld and Rep. Svencer*

*Members Absent: Rep. Adams, Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Cerf, Rep. Foisy, Rep. Garagliano, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Hellekson, Rep. Metayer, Rep. Peruzzotti, Rep. Power, Rep. Pratt, Rep. Prochaska, Rep. Steere, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Tilney and Rep. Warn*

*Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent, School Superintendent Paul Kadri, Groton City Mayor Dennis Popp, City Planner Barbara Goodrich, Representatives from Milone and MacBroom, Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox, and Assistant Town Clerk Sally Whitney.*

#### B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

*The members observed a moment of silence followed by the Salute to the Flag.*

#### C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF July 15, 2009

*A motion that the minutes be adopted was made by Rep. Sebastian, seconded by Rep. Luck.*

*Rep. Steinfeld requested that the Town Clerk's comments regarding Freedom of Information be reflected on page 3.*

*The vote on approving the minutes as amended carried 17 in favor, 7 abstaining. (Abstaining: Reps. Beckwith, Fairbank, Harrell, Hubbard, Massett, Smuts, Svencer.)*

#### D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

*None.*

#### E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

*None.*

#### F. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER:

##### 1. Financial report

*Mr. Vincent reported that the Unreserved & Undesignated (preliminary and unaudited) Fund*

balance as of July 1, 2009 is approximately \$11.1 million; the General Contingency balance is \$350,000; the Capital Reserve Fund balance is \$1,040,890. Mr. Vincent noted that the decrease in the Capital Reserve Fund balance is a result of the approval of \$72,000 for the Bridge Street Streetscape Project and the use of \$700,000 to fund FYE 2010 capital projects and \$495 in miscellaneous revenue that was received.

## 2. Monthly briefing

The Town Manager provided a summary of Town Operations savings from FYE 2009. He reported that a saving of \$191,000 was realized from Debt Service since fewer bonds were issued in October 2008. He mentioned that the Town received an additional \$915,000 in revenue from various sources that was not anticipated. He noted that the increase of \$2,024,000 to the Town's Fund Balance is very fortunate in light of the continuing uncertainty and poor outlook for State revenue to be received for the current fiscal year.

The Manager announced that the Animal Shelter ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled for August 27, 2009, and the dedication of a memorial commemorating the life of John Ledyard, "The Traveler" is scheduled for September 14, 2009 at the Bill Memorial Library. He noted that 36 Town employees who have 25 or more years of service were recognized at a ceremony on August 11, 2009 in conjunction with Connecticut Conference of Municipalities. He noted that the combined total of completed years of service was 1,051.

Mr. Oefinger mentioned that the new Jabez Smith House Curator, Michael Fitzgerald, has instituted new monthly programs and has planted flax, herb and vegetable gardens that will contribute to current and future programs. He announced that Colonial Heritage Days are scheduled for October 10 and 11, 2009. Demonstrations of weaving, spinning and cooking, as well as tours of the house, gardens and military encampments are planned.

## 3. School Superintendent

Mr. Kadri provided an extensive summary of the projects that have been completed over the last three months. He reported that the Board of Education (BOE) was able to return \$374,000 to the Town General Fund. He stated that the security assessment of all school facilities has been done by the Town of Groton Police Dept. and the final report will be completed in the near future. He announced that the BOE is in the process of hiring a new Business Manager, a Pleasant Valley School Principal, and a junior level office grant writer for Central Administration.

In response to Rep. Ambrose, Mr. Kadri explained the "No Child Left Behind" law and the effect when a school is identified as "in need of improvement". He mentioned that one of his priorities is to improve the method that identifies students in need, and to have a system to gauge student improvement throughout the school year.

## G. LIAISON REPORTS

None.

## H. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### 1. FINANCE

#### a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Granatosky

No meeting, no report.

### 2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES

#### a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Peruzzotti

No meeting, no report.

### 3. EDUCATION

#### a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Fairbank

No meeting, no report.

### 4. RECREATION

#### a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Power

*No meeting, no report.*

## 5. PUBLIC SAFETY

### a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Pratt

*No meeting, no report.*

## 6. PUBLIC WORKS

### a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Collins

*Chairman Collins read the minutes of the meeting held on August 5, 2009. (Minutes are attached.) Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Fairbank and so voted unanimously.*

**2009-0178**

### **Adoption of Ordinance on Thames Street Rehabilitation Project**

**A motion was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Moukawsher, that this matter be Adopted.**

*In response to Rep. Sebastian, the Town Manager stated that some details, including which municipality will be responsible for overseeing the project, have not been finalized. Mr. Oefinger would prefer that the City of Groton take the lead since the project involves a number of utility concerns.*

*Rep. Sebastian believes it is important that the voters know who is going to be responsible. The Town Manager expects that both the Town and the City will work cooperatively. He will discuss the issue with the City Mayor and further information will be included in the Explanatory Text.*

*Rep. Ambrose asked about the ultimate goal of rehabilitating Thames Street. Chairman Collins explained that safety is a main concern to prevent more failures of the retaining walls along Thames Street. He mentioned that about 200 feet had collapsed about three years ago. The work involved is for complete road replacement, new drainage system, and replacement of deteriorated sidewalks. He noted that Thames Street is one of the main access routes to Electric Boat and Pfizer.*

*Mayor Popp noted that Thames Street has been identified for economic development by both the Town and the City.*

*Groton City Planner Barbara Goodrich reported that Thames Street is a focus for economic development. The street has reached the point where it is going to fail. By replacing drains and the road, and installing new lighting, it will improve the area for residents, business owners, and pedestrian and vehicular traffic. This project will start the growth of short- and long-term economic development of the Thames Street area.*

*Rep. Luck stated that she supports the project. She is a resident of Thames Street and knows personally of the road conditions and safety issues of the road. She encourages the members to approve this project tonight and will continue to encourage voters to vote in favor at the November referendum.*

*In response to Rep. Cooper, City Mayor Popp reviewed the projected timeline of the project if approved at the November 2009 referendum. Construction should start in Spring 2011 and take two construction cycles.*

*Rep. Evered will support the project. She feels it will significantly improve access into the City from I-95.*

*Rep. Sebastian requested that the Explanatory Text contain information on why the Town of Groton is bonding this project that is within the City of Groton. He feels it will be helpful to all Town residents to understand why all residents of Groton will be paying for the project.*

*The Moderator noted that the explanatory text provides extensive information on any item going to referendum. She stated it is the job of the Town to educate the public, but it is the job of individuals to solicit support.*

*The Town Clerk mentioned that she is in the process of discussing the Explanatory Text with Public Works Director Gary Schneider and the City of Groton before finalizing the information that will be provided in the explanatory text. It was noted that the Town is ultimately responsible for all roads.*

*Rep. Moukawsher will support this project. She feels that all residents support schools and sewers that they do not use, and that roads are no different.*

*The Moderator explained the difference between the RTM's responsibility for Legislative Ordinances and Bonding Ordinances. She requested that Electric Boat be contacted about beautification along their property that borders Thames Street .*

*Chairman Collins noted that the extensive length of retaining walls on the both waterfront and land sides of the road is a major factor contributing to the cost of this project. He pointed out that the foundations of ten houses are supporting the road. He clarified that all sidewalks and curbing will be rebuilt and that existing granite curbing and brick crosswalks will be reused.*

**The motion carried unanimously**

## **7. RULES & PROCEDURES**

### **a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Evered**

*Chairman Evered read the minutes of the meeting held on July 30, 2009. (Minutes are attached.) Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Evered, seconded by Rep. Massett and so voted unanimously.*

### **2009-0180 Method of RTM Adjournment**

#### **METHOD OF RTM ADJOURNMENT**

#### **Deleted from Referral List - No further action**

*Moderator Billing clarified that the Committee is not recommending any changes to the rules. She commented that she did extensive research in Robert's Rules and the RTM Rules concerning adjournment and speaking. The Moderator explained that a Motion to Adjourn is not debatable, but a member can be recognized for a question, announcement or comment on another subject while the motion is on the floor. She emphasized there are differences between debating, making a comment, and asking a question. She noted that the Moderator can adjourn the meeting by simply saying, "Seeing no further business, the meeting is adjourned." She acknowledged that no one wants to take away the members' right to a motion to adjourn if the body does not want to discuss a subject raised by one of the members. She stated that she agrees with the Committee recommendation not to add anything to the existing rules.*

*Rep. Evered encouraged any member who is re-elected in November to volunteer for the Temporary Rules Committee which will review Rules for the Twenty-Seventh RTM.*

### **2009-0181 RTM Time Limits for Speakers**

#### **RTM TIME LIMITS FOR SPEAKERS**

#### **Deleted from Referral List - No further action**

## **I. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **2009-0190 Preliminary RTM Budget Discussion**

#### **PRELIMINARY BUDGET DISCUSSION FOR RTM'S FY2011 BUDGET PROCESS**

*Rep. Sebastian stated that elections are three months away but he feels that the current RTM*

*needs to act like a board of directors to start reviewing and deciding on budget goals for next year. He stated that he does not want taxes to increase next year except for debt service.*

*The Town Manager responded to questions from Rep. Collins, and updated members on the status of the Mystic Streetscape project, the Chipperini property on Library Street, and the Central Hall property. He explained the archeological work that is going on in downtown Mystic, and that the streetscape project should start next spring.*

*In response to Rep. Baril, the Town Manager stated next week's agenda for the Town Council Committee of the Whole includes an item to discuss establishing an appeals board for the Neighborhood Revitalization Zone.*

*Rep. Evered praised the superior paving work on Gungywamp Road by the Town of Groton Public Works Department.*

**J. ADJOURNMENT**

*The Moderator adjourned the meeting at 9:17 p.m.*

*Attest:*

*Barbara Tarbox, Town Clerk  
Clerk of the RTM*

*Sally A. Whitney, Assistant Town Clerk*