



# Town of Groton, Connecticut

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

## Meeting Agenda

### Representative Town Meeting

*Moderator Kevin Power, Representatives Jean-Claude Ambroise, Joe Baril, Nancy E. Barnhart, Peter J. Bartinik, Jr., Alicia Bauer, Nancy E. Beckwith, Michael Collins, Nancy M. Congdon, Warren T. Cooper, Syma Ebbin, Peter Fairbank, Nancy E. Gilly, Patrice Granatosky, Dolores Harrell, Keith L. Hedrick, Damon Q. Helme, Lynn Crockett Hubbard, Michael Dean Johnson, Rosanne E. Kotowski, Elizabeth Luck, Jackie Massett, Carole McCarthy, Karen F. Morton, Scott Newsome, Dana C. Parfitt, Richard J. Pasqualini, Jr., Kristen L. Powers, Don Pratt, Betty A. Prochaska, Sandry Ramos-Morales, John F. Scott IV, Jack Sebastian, Dana S. Semeraro, Jennifer Smuts, Joan Steinfeld, Irma Streeter, Mark Svencer, Archie C. Swindell, and Robert A. Warn*

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Wednesday, February 17, 2010

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex-Community Room 1

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### Regular Meeting

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- A. ROLL CALL
- B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG
- C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 20, 2010
- D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

This is the portion of the RTM agenda where the RTM welcomes comments from citizens. Each presentation should be limited to ten minutes or less, and citizens should, if possible, submit written comments. Presentations should be limited to matters pertinent to Groton. The Moderator, or members through the Moderator, shall ask questions only in order to clarify the speaker's presentation. Responses may be given by the Moderator and/or by the Town Manager. Citizens should make their presentations from the lectern and state their names and addresses for the record.

- E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS
- F. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER:
  - 1. Financial report
  - 2. Monthly briefing
- G. LIAISON REPORTS
- H. COMMITTEE REPORTS
  - 1. FINANCE
    - a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Bartinik
  - 2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES
    - a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Pratt
  - 3. EDUCATION
    - a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Swindell
  - 4. RECREATION

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

**5. PUBLIC SAFETY**

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

**6. PUBLIC WORKS**

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

**2009-0282 Supplemental Appropriation for Handicap Ramp at Spicer House**

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION FOR A REPLACEMENT LIFT SYSTEM AT THE SPICER HOUSE**

WHEREAS, funds in the amount of \$25,000 were approved in FYE 2009 to replace the chair lift at the Spicer House, and

WHEREAS, the cost estimate to replace the lift has been revised to \$35,000, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council has reviewed alternatives to replacing the lift including construction of a handicap ramp at a higher cost, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council recognizes the need to provide handicap access to the Spicer House but would like to discuss alternate locations for the Parks and Recreation Department before making a more expensive capital investment in the Spicer House, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that \$10,000 be appropriated from the Capital Reserve Fund's fund balance to a FYE 2010 Capital Improvement Project (#50109) to install a replacement lift system at Spicer House (CIP #6A).

Refer to RTM.

**Legislative History**

<b>11/6/2009</b>	<b>Mayor</b>	<b>Referred</b>	<b>Town Council Committee of the W</b>
<b>12/8/2009</b>	<b>Town Council Committee of the Whole</b>	<b>Discussed</b>	

*The Town Manager explained that the chair lift at Spicer House has been a problem from a location and operational standpoint. Funds were previously approved to replace the lift, but upon further review, staff looked into constructing a handicap ramp at the front door instead. A supplemental appropriation is required to construct the ramp. The Town Manager noted that a supplemental appropriation would also be required to replace the chair lift. Councilor Monteiro expressed concern with the expense. Councilor Sheets expressed concern for the addition of the ramp to the historic structure. Discussion followed on ways to reduce the cost of the project including contracting with the City of Groton for concrete work.*

<b>1/12/2010</b>	<b>Town Council Committee of the Whole</b>	<b>Recommended for a Resolution</b>
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*Director of Public Works Gary Schneider provided background information on this request. The chair lift was originally installed in 1990 and there has been an increasing number of incidents of it not functioning. Installation of a handicap ramp was considered as an alternative to replacing the lift, which is located at the rear of the building. Cost estimates for the 30' long concrete ramp with metal railings and a replacement front door are close to \$75,000 including a parking area and walkway. Approximately \$20,000 is available from previously appropriated funds for the lift replacement. Staff is requesting a supplemental appropriation of \$55,000 for the handicap ramp. Another alternative is to replace the lift, which would require an additional \$10,000. Mr. Schneider noted that lighting at the rear of the Spicer House is inadequate. All Town buildings are handicap accessible. A wooden ramp would be about \$10,000 less, but would require more maintenance than concrete and concrete matches the existing stoop.*

*Jerry Lokken, Manager of Recreation Services, explained that very few people use the lift because of its unreliability and its counterintuitive location at the rear of the building. A large number of disabled persons*

are involved in the Town's recreation programs. Currently, staff conducts transactions for handicapped individuals out in the parking lot. It was noted that the chair lift can not be operated without a staff member to turn it on.

Councilor O'Beirne expressed concern with the cost of the ramp. Mr. Schneider noted the estimate is based on a contractor doing the work, but the Town could do some of the work to save money.

Councilor Flax also expressed concern with the cost of the ramp, but also with the location of Parks and Recreation at the Spicer House. He suggested it may be time to consider moving Parks and Recreation to a more central location.

Mr. Schneider noted the two Spicer properties were deeded to the Town in the 1960s. Mr. Spicer's will requires that the property be used for a public park and recreation area, and if it is not, the property reverts to the Nature Conservancy. Mr. Schneider noted that all buildings require maintenance and upkeep. The Town Manager noted that the Town does not have available office space to relocate Parks and Recreation. Noank School will become available when the Senior Center leaves, William Seely will be transferred to the Town in the near future, and Fitch Middle School may be available in five or more years. Ideally, Parks and Recreation should be co-located with other Town services or programming, but neither option is possible at this time.

Councilor Monteiro also expressed concerned with the cost. Councilor Sheets agreed with Councilor Flax. She suggested that the new senior center would be a good base of operations for Parks and Recreation. Councilor Peruzzotti agreed.

Mayor Streeter noted that he was personally stuck in the lift recently. He feels that Spicer House is a beautiful building and the ramp will make it ugly. He expressed his preference for replacing the lift rather than building a ramp. Mayor Streeter agreed that the Parks and Recreation staff deserve better facilities.

Councilor Kolnaski feels it is a great location for Parks and Recreation. She feels it is difficult to drive around the back of the building and feels the ramp should be installed at the front of the building.

<b>1/12/2010</b>	<b>Town Council Committee of the Whole</b>	<b>Motion</b>	
	<i>to Recommend for Resolution a supplemental appropriation of \$10,000 to replace the chair lift</i>		
<b>1/19/2010</b>	<b>Town Council</b>	<b>Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken</b>	
<b>1/19/2010</b>	<b>Town Council</b>	<b>Adopted and Referred</b>	<b>Representative Town Meeting</b>
	<i>Councilor O'Beirne will be voting against this resolution. He believes that a wooden ramp would be under \$10,000, versus \$35,000 for the proposed brick and concrete ramp.</i>		
<b>1/20/2010</b>	<b>Representative Town Meeting</b>	<b>Referred</b>	<b>RTM Public Works Committee</b>

**7. RULES & PROCEDURES**

**2010-0001 Rules for Twenty-Seventh RTM**

**RESOLUTION ADOPTING RULES FOR THE TWENTY-SEVENTH REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the rules of the Twenty-Seventh Representative Town Meeting as recommended by the Temporary Rules and Procedures Committee are hereby adopted.

**Legislative History**

**1/14/2010**      **RTM Rules & Procedures Committee**      **Recommended for Approval (RTM Ctee)**

**1/20/2010**      **Representative Town Meeting**      **Discussed**  
*A motion was made by Rep. Ambrose, seconded by Rep. Luck that this matter be Adopted.*

*Rep. Beckwith requested clarification of the recommendation to remove the words "if debate is desired by any member of the RTM" in section 7.3. She feels that the proposed change may create a situation in which the Moderator would have to wait ten minutes before allowing a motion to move the question. The Moderator stated that the committee felt it was understood that the Moderator would not accept a motion*

to move the question if members were desirous of continued discussion.

MOTION TO AMEND section 7.3 to re-insert the words "if debate is desired by any member of the RTM" after the word "made" was made by Rep. Beckwith and was seconded.

Rep. Steinfeld agrees with Rep. Beckwith that the original wording should be retained. She stated that she had expressed concern over removing the words in committee.

VOTE on Motion to Amend passed 27 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Smuts).

No vote was taken on the main motion. A vote on amending the rules will be taken at the February meeting.

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

### I. OTHER BUSINESS

#### 2009-0190 Preliminary RTM Budget Discussion

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

##### Legislative History

##### 11/18/2009 Representative Town Meeting Discussed

Rep. Sebastian reviewed a spreadsheet that he prepared and provided to all members in their monthly packets. The memo addresses the grand levy over the last ten years. He noted that he based his spreadsheet on figures provided by the Finance Director. He feels that the RTM is responsible for the Grand Levy because the RTM approves the Town spending each year. He commented that the RTM is the last defense for holding the line against budget and tax increases. He stated that he has received comments from residents who are concerned about the increase in taxes each year, especially individuals on fixed incomes. He suggested that the RTM needs to discuss now what next year's budget bottom line should be at the end of the 2010 budget deliberations.

Rep. Massett stated that every year there are requests for no tax increase. She clarified that past and current Town Managers have asked the RTM to suggest what services should be reduced or eliminated. She feels the RTM needs to think about making those type of suggestions to the Manager.

Rep. Smuts agreed with Rep. Sebastian. She noted that in addition to debt service, there are other items that the RTM has no control over, such as contracts and salaries. She feels the RTM needs to have a list of items or services which are within its control to help identify the items that the public is willing to have reduced or eliminated. She cited as possible examples a reduction in the library hours, or in police response time. She feels there are many things in the budget that citizens enjoy but that it is the job of the RTM to make the difficult decisions that result in reduced or eliminated services.

Rep. Ebbin stated that she read in the newspaper about the recent BOE teacher contract negotiations that included no wage increase for 2010. She commented that since the RTM has no involvement with contract negotiations for Town employees, the Council should follow this direction with Town employee contracts. She feels it is important to be equitable with teachers and Town employees. She does not want the teachers to be the only ones penalized by the current economic situation.

Rep. Cooper agreed with Rep. Sebastian and stated for the record that he does not want an increase in the budget this year.

The Town Manager responded to Rep. Sebastian's remarks concerning the grand levy, debt service and inflation levels. He stated that many factors have influenced the budget over the last ten years. He mentioned that the phase-in of the last revaluation adversely affected many residents and benefited others, and that the decrease in revenues from outside sources has increased dependency on local property tax. These issues have a far greater influence on the increase in taxes than the growth of the budget. He feels it is essential to identify the services that are important for the Town, since traditional revenue sources are no longer keeping pace or are being eliminated. He noted that in the past he has presented a reduced or level budget, and that the Council or RTM has added money back for services they did not want eliminated.

Rep. Peruzzotti commented that she was impressed with the reorganization and reduction to the library's budget last year. She feels that all Department Heads should be encouraged to make similar changes this year.

In response to Rep. Sebastian, the Town Manager distributed a spreadsheet comparing changes in the Consumer Price Index to changes in the adopted budget minus debt service over the past ten years. He responded to Rep. Peruzzotti that the library situation was a unique opportunity to reorganize and make changes to operations. He noted that every vacant position is scrutinized and the affected department is reviewed to see if changes, reorganization, or elimination of the position is possible. He confirmed that no job is automatically filled. He stated that he does not foresee a large number of retirements this budget year, nor does he anticipate an opportunity for reorganization similar to that at the library. He mentioned that Rep. Sebastian is suggesting a 0% tax levy budget for 2010 which would significantly affect the Town and most likely cause layoffs which most members do not support.

**12/16/2009 Representative Town Meeting Discussed**

Rep. Sebastian observed that the RTM approves expenditures and has no input on the income to the Town. He feels that it would not be unreasonable if the RTM had consensus to recommend a zero tax increase. He stated that many residents will not receive Social Security increases and that Medicare costs are increasing. He suggested that the Town Manager and Superintendent provide the lowest estimate possible for State and Federal Revenue and propose a budget that does not raise taxes.

**1/20/2010 Representative Town Meeting Discussed**

Rep. Ambrose stated his concerns on the long-term situation of declining revenue sources. He reminded members of the anticipated loss of federal stimulus funds in the near future and how it will impact the budget. He feels the RTM needs to address how to sustain the budget. He suggested that members need to anticipate future budget shortfalls to avoid large increases and start making adjustments now.

**2010-0027 Possible Changes to 2010 RTM Meeting Schedule**

**POSSIBLE CHANGES TO 2010 RTM MEETING SCHEDULE**

**Legislative History**

**1/20/2010 Representative Town Meeting Referred**

**Representative Town Meeting**

Rep. Beckwith requested a referral to discuss changing the location and dates of the RTM 2010 regular meeting schedule when the renovations of the Senior Center are completed.  
Moderator Power acknowledged that this will appear on the February agenda.

**J. ADJOURNMENT**