

TOWN OF GROTON
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
July 17, 2017
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

Chair Pro Tem Aument called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Chair Hauber, Chair Pro Tem Scott Aument, Commissioners Kathy Chase, Robert Frink, Patrice Granatosky, Rosanne Kotowski, and Jennifer White.

Members Absent: Commissioners Jane Dauphinais, Brandon Marley, Daniel Mello, Darcy Peruzzotti.

Commissioner Mello arrived at 6:32 p.m.

Chair Hauber noted that a draft report needs to be completed within sixteen months. She stated that if the Commission is not finished by the deadline, then the Town Council can re-appoint the Commissioners or appoint a new Commission.

II. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Chapter Nine

Commissioner Frink reviewed New Chapter IX Budget and Finance Sections 9.11.6 through 9.24.

Commissioner Frink made a motion, seconded by Commission Kotowski, to approve proposed Section 9.11.6: "Should either budget fail to be approved by a majority of those voting thereon, the Council shall, within seven days after a failed referendum, recommend a revised budget for each rejected budget, which may be less or greater than the failed budget, as the Council shall deem appropriate based on the results of the referendum.

9.11.6.1 When adjusting appropriations in the Town budget the Council shall confer with the Town Manager. When adjusting appropriations in the Board of Education budget the Council shall confer with the Board of Education. In either case the Council shall request financial recommendations from the Board of Finance.

9.11.6.2 When adjusting appropriations, the Town Council shall not alter estimates of revenue except for omissions, clerical errors, or revisions of revenue to be received from the state.

9.11.6.3 The Town Council shall automatically submit the revised budget(s) to referendum 14 days following the date the initial budget referendum was defeated.

9.11.6.4 At least five (5) days prior to additional referendum on a revised budget, the Council shall hold at least one public hearing upon five days' legal notice.

9.11.6.5 At least five (5) days prior to additional referendum on a revised budget, the Council shall publish only the details of the changes made to the previous budget using the same methods listed in section 9.11.3

9.11.6.6 Additional referenda, as required, will be held every other week on Tuesday thereafter until a budget is approved. Notice for subsequent referenda shall be advertised in a daily newspaper having a general circulation within the Town at least three (3) days prior to each such referendum.

9.11.6.7 (Motion 33) In case a budget is not approved by June 30, the previous year's budget shall be adopted until a new budget is approved."

In response to Commissioner Granatosky, Commissioner Frink noted that Section 9.11.6.2 specifies that aside from omissions, clerical errors, or revisions of revenue from the State, revenue estimates will not be altered to make the budget work. This would prohibit increasing revenue unfairly so the mill rate could be reduced.

In response to Commissioner Chase, Commissioner Frink clarified that if the referendum fails, then they cannot make it look like there is more money instead of cutting spending.

Commissioner White clarified that the referendum continues until the budget is approved.

The Commissioners discussed the noticing requirements for public hearings. Town Clerk Moukawsher reminded the Commission that a lot of work goes into a referendum.

The Commissioners discussed the following change to Section 9.11.6.4: "~~At least five (5) days p~~ Prior to additional referendum on a revised budget, the Council shall hold at least one public hearing upon five days' legal notice."

Commissioner Mello amended the motion, seconded by Commissioner Chase, to change Sections 9.11.6.4 and 9.11.6.5 as follows:

"9.11.6.4 At least five (5) days prior to additional referendum on a revised budget, the Council shall publish only the details of the changes made to the previous budget using the same methods listed in section 9.11.3.

9.11.6.5 ~~At least five (5) days p~~ Prior to additional referendum on a revised budget, the Council shall hold at least one public hearing upon five days' legal notice."

Commissioner Granatosky noted that she is voting against this because she is against a budget referendum.

The MOTION as amended:

9.11.6: "Should either budget fail to be approved by a majority of those voting thereon, the Council shall, within seven days after a failed referendum, recommend a revised budget for each rejected budget, which may be less or greater than the failed budget, as the Council shall deem appropriate based on the results of the referendum.

9.11.6.1 When adjusting appropriations in the Town budget the Council shall confer with the Town Manager. When adjusting appropriations in the Board of Education budget the Council shall confer

with the Board of Education. In either case the Council shall request financial recommendations from the Board of Finance.

9.11.6.2 When adjusting appropriations, the Town Council shall not alter estimates of revenue except for omissions, clerical errors, or revisions of revenue to be received from the state.

9.11.6.3 The Town Council shall automatically submit the revised budget(s) to referendum 14 days following the date the initial budget referendum was defeated.

9.11.6.4 At least five (5) days prior to additional referendum on a revised budget, the Council shall publish only the details of the changes made to the previous budget using the same methods listed in section 9.11.3

9.11.6.5 ~~At least five (5) days p~~ Prior to additional referendum on a revised budget, the Council shall hold at least one public hearing upon five days' legal notice.

9.11.6.6 Additional referenda, as required, will be held every other week on Tuesday thereafter until a budget is approved. Notice for subsequent referenda shall be advertised in a daily newspaper having a general circulation within the Town at least three (3) days prior to each such referendum.

9.11.6.7 (Motion 33) In case a budget is not approved by June 30, the previous year's budget shall be adopted until a new budget is approved."

Vote on the amended motion: PASSES

In favor: 7 (Hauber, Aument, Chase, Frink, Kotowski, Mello, White)

Opposed: 1 (Granatosky)

Abstained: 0

Commissioner Frink referenced proposed Section 9.12 Fixing the Tax Rate. He noted that the recommended budget goes to referendum, and the mill rate would be calculated based on the recommended budget. However, by the time the referendum is approved, things can change based upon information from the State.

Commissioner Kotowski noted that this would allow for raising taxes instead of spending less.

Commissioner Granatosky questioned why these changes need to be made.

Commissioner Frink stated that this language is more descriptive. He noted that the final referendum is always approved by the voters.

Commissioner Frink made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mello, to approve the following Section 9.12 Fixing the Tax Rate: "Within three (3) business days after a new Budget is adopted in accordance with section 9.11, the Council shall meet and, with due provision for estimated and uncollectible taxes, abatements and corrections, shall lay such tax on the last completed Grand List at a mill rate that shall be sufficient, with the income from other sources, to meet the estimated expenses of the Town for the next fiscal year. ~~The tax laid shall be based on facts known and estimates made at the time the Council acts and may be different from the mill rate estimated prior to the Annual Town Budget Referendum or~~

~~any subsequent referendum even though the budget adopted is the same as the budget recommended to the Annual Town Budget Referendum or any subsequent referendum. (NEWT)~~

Vote on the motion: PASSES

In favor: 7 (Hauber, Aument, Chase, Frink, Kotowski, Mello, White)

Opposed: 1 (Granatosky)

Abstained: 0

Commissioner Frink made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mello, to approve the proposed language for Section 9.13 Failure to Adopt a Recommended Budget:

“9.13.1 Should the Board of Finance fail to submit budget recommendations to the Council by March 31, the Council shall proceed at that time to establish a recommended budget.

9.13.2 Should the Council fail to adopt a recommended budget by April 30, the Town and Board of Education budgets, as adjusted by the recommendations of the Board of Finance, shall be the recommended budget for the Annual Budget Referendum.

9.13.3 Should the Board of Finance fail to submit budget recommendations to the Council by March 31, and the Council fails to adopt a recommended budget by April 30, the budget estimates submitted by the Town Manager as described in Section 9.8.1. shall be the recommended budget.”

Commissioner Granatosky noted that her concern is the Board of Finance adjusting the Board of Education’s budget with respect to Connecticut State Statutes.

Commissioner Frink agreed that the Town Charter will operate in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes.

Vote on the motion: PASSES

In favor: 7 (Hauber, Aument, Chase, Frink, Kotowski, Mello, White)

Opposed: 1 (Granatosky)

Abstained: 0

Commissioner Frink referenced proposed Section 9.14: Effect of Adoption of Town Budget

“The annual town budget adopted in accordance with the provisions of section 9.11, shall be deemed to constitute the appropriation for each item listed separately on the budget of each department, office, board, commission, committee, subdivision and agency and be the sum estimated in the budget to be expended by each such body, respectively, for such item. Following the adoption of a new budget in accordance with the provisions of section 9.11 the council shall cause to be prepared and published the annual town report which shall include the annual town budget.”

Commissioner Kotowski clarified that this includes the annual report in the Charter.

Commissioner Granatosky noted that aside from the fact that this includes the annual report, it is redundant to include in the Charter; it is not necessary because the budget is passed. She noted that this should not be tied to the adoption of the budget.

Commissioner White stated that the report compares the upcoming fiscal year’s budget to the previous year’s; hopefully this will generate a discussion about the budget.

Commissioner Frink suggested leaving this in the draft report; let the Town Council react to it.

Commissioner Frink amended the language for Section 9.13. Commissioner Frink made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mello, to approve the following language for proposed Section 9.13: "The annual town budget adopted in accordance with the provisions of section 9.11, shall be deemed to constitute the appropriation for each item listed separately on the budget of each department, office, board, commission, committee, subdivision and agency and be the sum estimated in the budget to be expended by each such body, respectively, for such item. Following the adoption of a new budget in accordance with the provisions of section 9.11 the council shall cause to be prepared and published the ~~annual town report which shall include the~~ annual town budget."

Vote on the motion: PASSES

In favor: 7 (Hauber, Aument, Chase, Frink, Kotowski, Mello, White)

Opposed: 1 (Granatosky)

Abstained: 0

Commissioner Frink made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kotowski, to approve proposed Section 9.15: Reducing Approved Appropriations

"9.15.1 Appropriations adopted in accordance with section 9.11 may be reduced during the fiscal year by the Council if either of the following two conditions is met;

9.15.1.1 By resolution of the Council that revenues estimated in the adopted budget have not been received or are not likely to be received and as a result an Emergency or Supplemental Appropriation is or may be required to maintain authorized spending levels.

9.15.1.2 The Manager certifies that reductions are needed, citing the consequences if not done.

9.15.2 When reducing appropriations in the Town budget the Council will confer with the Town Manager. When reducing appropriations in the Board of Education budget the Council will confer with the Board of Education. In either case the Council shall request financial recommendations from the Board of Finance. Reductions shall be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Council no later than 60 days after the conditions of 9.15.1.1 or 9.15.1.2 are established, provided that no such action shall be required if the conditions initiating the reduction should cease to exist during the 60 day period.

9.15.3 The Council shall hold at least one Public Hearing on items to be reduced.

9.15.4 When the reductions are approved by the Council the combined Town and Board of Education budgets shall be deemed to be adopted, and together including any Emergency and / or Supplemental appropriation, shall constitute the revised approved Town Council budget for the current fiscal year. When a budget is revised, upon its approval, the prior approved Town Council budget shall be deemed to be superseded.

9.15.5 If the transfer of funds from one department to another is required in the budget reduction process, the Section 9.19.5.1 requirement that these transfers only occur in the last three months of the year is waived.

9.15.6 Any budget approved in this section shall meet the requirements of section 9.2 and will have the effects described in Section 9.14."

Commissioner Granatosky recommended eliminating 9.15.1.2 because the Council would be taking information from the town Manager. She questioned the fourth-quarter transfer provision waiver; she would like those transfers in the fourth-quarter.

Commissioner Frink noted that when the status of revenue is known, then there are sixty-days to approve the transfers. He noted that currently, money can be transferred from one department to another in the fourth-quarter.

Commissioner White questioned what would prevent taking money from the Senior Center, as an example, and transferring it to another department.

Commissioner Frink noted that there could be changes in State revenues, and this gives you flexibility to adjust to changes in revenue within the sixty-day period.

Commissioner Mello moved the question, seconded by Chair Hauber: FAILS

In favor: 4 (Hauber, Aument, Chase, Mello)

Opposed: 4 (Frink, Granatosky, Kotowski, White)

Abstained: 0

Commissioner Frink amended the motion, seconded by Commissioner Mello, to eliminate Section 9.15.5. He noted that this would prohibit the transfer of funds if and when they are needed.

Commissioner White noted that she is afraid that everyone will vote for the “feel good” things, and then those funds would be transferred to other departments.

The Commissioners discussed the State of Connecticut’s finances.

The MOTION as amended:

9.15: Reducing Approved Appropriations

“9.15.1 Appropriations adopted in accordance with section 9.11 may be reduced during the fiscal year by the Council if either of the following two conditions is met;

9.15.1.1 By resolution of the Council that revenues estimated in the adopted budget have not been received or are not likely to be received and as a result an Emergency or Supplemental Appropriation is or may be required to maintain authorized spending levels.

9.15.1.2 The Manager certifies that reductions are needed, citing the consequences if not done.

9.15.2 When reducing appropriations in the Town budget the Council will confer with the Town Manager. When reducing appropriations in the Board of Education budget the Council will confer with the Board of Education. In either case the Council shall request financial recommendations from the Board of Finance. Reductions shall be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Council no later than 60 days after the conditions of 9.15.1.1 or 9.15.1.2 are established, provided that no such action shall be required if the conditions initiating the reduction should cease to exist during the 60 day period.

9.15.3 The Council shall hold at least one Public Hearing on items to be reduced.

9.15.4 When the reductions are approved by the Council the combined Town and Board of Education budgets shall be deemed to be adopted, and together including any Emergency and / or Supplemental appropriation, shall constitute the revised approved Town Council budget for the current fiscal year. When a budget is revised, upon its approval, the prior approved Town Council budget shall be deemed to be superseded.

~~9.15.5 If the transfer of funds from one department to another is required in the budget reduction process, the Section 9.19.5.1 requirement that these transfers only occur in the last three months of the year is waived.~~

9.15.5 Any budget approved in this section shall meet the requirements of section 9.2 and will have the effects described in Section 9.14.”

Vote on the amended motion: PASSES

In favor: 7 (Hauber, Aument, Chase, Frink, Kotowski, Mello, White)

Opposed: 1 (Granatosky)

Abstained: 0

Commissioner Frink reviewed proposed section 9.16 Emergency Appropriations.

Commissioner Frink stated that there could be more than one emergency a year. He noted that the definition of a public emergency could be included in the Charter.

Commissioner Frink amended the language of 9.16.2 to remove “or taxpayer.”

Commissioner Frink made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mello, to approve 9.16:
“9.16 (9.7) Emergency Appropriations.

9.16.1 An "Emergency Appropriation" is an appropriation required for an unforeseen or extraordinary event or threat to the lives, health or property of citizens or the Town.

9.16.2 The Council may make Emergency appropriations not exceeding ~~fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000.00)~~ one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) ~~in any one fiscal year. may be made upon the recommendation of the Town Manager and~~ by a vote of not less than seven (7) members of the Council; ~~for the purpose of meeting a public emergency threatening either the lives, health or property of citizens;~~ provided a public hearing, at which any elector ~~or taxpayer~~ of the Town shall have an opportunity to be heard, shall be held prior to making such appropriations. ~~notice of which hearing shall be given in a local daily newspaper having circulation in the Town not more than ten (10) days nor less than five (5) days prior to such hearing.~~ Such hearing and notice of hearing may be waived if the Council by an affirmative vote of not less than eight (8) of its members shall decide that a delay in making the emergency appropriation would jeopardize the lives or health or property of citizens.

9.16.3 In addition to the above appropriation, ~~upon the recommendation of the Town Manager,~~ the Council may also make an emergency appropriation for similar purposes not exceeding ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) without any such hearing and notice upon the affirmative vote of not less than six (6) of its members.

9.16.4 In the absence of an available unappropriated and unencumbered surplus in the general fund to meet such appropriations, additional means of financing shall be provided in such a manner, consistent with the provisions of the Connecticut General Statutes and of this Charter, as may be determined by the Council. The methods of financing may include, without limitation, issuing notes or bonds of the Town or laying a special tax on the Grand List last completed. The Finance Director shall prepare a Financial Impact Statement for requests for such financing methods.”

Commissioner White questioned the \$50,000 appropriation limit; she noted that she would support \$100,000.

The Commissioners discussed the reasons for increasing the appropriation limit to \$100,000.

Commissioner Mello amended the motion, seconded by Commissioner Frink, to change \$50,000 to \$100,000 in Section 9.16.2.

Chair Pro Tem Aument noted that there is a contingency fund. He noted that if something catastrophic happens, then he is willing to support \$100,000.

Commissioner Mello moved the question, seconded by Commissioner Frink: passed unanimously

Vote on the amendment by Commissioner Mello: PASSES

In favor: 6 (Hauber, Aument, Frink, Granatosky, Mello, White)

Opposed: 2 (Chase, Kotowski)

Abstained: 0

Vote on the amended motion: PASSES

In favor: 7 (Hauber, Aument, Frink, Granatosky, Kotowski, Mello, White)

Opposed: 1 (Chase)

Abstained: 0

Commissioner Frink made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kotowski, to approve proposed Sections 9.17 and 9.18:

“Sec. 9.17 Tax Bills. It shall be the duty of the Tax Collector to prepare and mail to each taxpayer, before the date when taxes are due and payable, a tax bill the form of which shall be acceptable to the Commissioner of Revenue Services.

Sec. 9.18 Assessment and Collection of Taxes. Except as specifically provided in the Charter, the assessment of property for taxation and the collection of taxes shall be carried on as provided in the Connecticut General Statutes.”

Vote on the motion: Passes unanimously

Commissioner Frink made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mello, to approve proposed Section 9.19.1 Expenditures and Accounting:

General

“No purchase shall be made by any department, Agency, Board, Commission, or officer of the Town other than the Board of Education, the Probate Court, except through the Purchasing Agent and such purchases shall be made under such rules and regulations as may be established by the Council.

Each order drawn upon the Treasurer shall state the department, commission, board or officer or the appropriation against which it is to be charged.

The Director of Finance shall record the amounts of authorized purchases and contracts for future purchases as encumbrances against the appropriation from which they are to be paid.”

Vote on the motion: Passes unanimously

Commissioner Frink made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mello, to approve 9.19.2 Approvals:

Commissioner Granatosky noted that the first paragraph could be eliminated.

Commissioner Frink noted that the first paragraph is for spending money; the second paragraph is for paying that bill.

In response to Commissioner Kotowski, Commissioner Frink clarified that as soon as you receive permission to spend the money, it is encumbered.

In response to Commission Granatosky, Commissioner Frink noted that the Board of Education has its own finance department.

Commissioner White recommended moving the first paragraph to 9.19.2.1 Restrictions on Purchasing.

Commissioner Granatosky made an amendment to the motion, seconded by Commissioner Mello, to retain Sections 9.10.2 and 9.10.3 of the current Charter.

Commissioner Frink stated that in Sections 9.10.2 and 9.10.3 there is nothing about encumbrances, the contract needing to be signed by the Manager or Purchasing Agent, the availability of funds for the contract, and then encumbering the funds for the contract.

Commissioner White made a second amendment, seconded by Commissioner Chase, to move the paragraphs to reflect the following:

9.19.2 Approvals

9.19.2.1 Restrictions on purchasing. Purchases shall be made under such rules and regulations as may be established by the Council, subject to the provisions of Connecticut General Statutes. No contract, work order, purchase order or other authorization to spend money by any department, office, board, commission, committee or agency, except the board of education, shall be valid until it has been endorsed by the manager or purchasing agent to the effect that there is an unexpended and unencumbered balance of an appropriation applicable thereto sufficient to meet the estimated cost thereof, provided that the board of education shall set up its own system of budgetary control. It shall further be the duty of the manager or purchasing agent after endorsing such authorization to spend money to encumber immediately the appropriation in question with such estimated cost.

9.19.3 Method of making Payments.

The Director of Finance shall prescribe the time at which and the manner in which persons receiving money on account of the Town shall pay the same to the Town Treasurer. No voucher, claim or charge against the Town shall be paid until the same has been audited by the Director of Finance or the Director's agent and approved by him/her for correctness and legality. Checks shall be drawn by the Director of Finance for the payment of approved claims which shall be valid only when countersigned by the Treasurer. The Council may make provision, by resolution, for other town officials, or town or Board of Education employees to sign and countersign checks in the absence or inability to act of either the Director of Finance or the Treasurer, or both, subject to such conditions as the Council may impose."

Commissioner Mello stated that the simpler the better; including more language rather than less could be confusing.

In response to Commissioner Mello, Commissioner Kotowski noted that hopefully there will be an Ethics Commission to ensure this is followed.

Vote on second amended motion: PASSES

In favor: 6 (Hauber, Aument, Chase, Frink, Kotowski, White)

Opposed: 2 (Granatosky, Mello)

Abstained: 0

Commissioner Frink made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kotowski, to approve proposed Section 9.19.4 Council Approval Before Exceeding Budgetary Item:

~~"The several departments, commissions, officers and boards of the Town shall not involve the Town in any obligation to spend money for any purpose in excess of the amount appropriated therefor until the matter has been approved and voted by the Council. and each order drawn upon the Treasurer shall state the department, commission, board or officer or the appropriation against which it is to be charged.~~

~~When any department, commission, board or officer shall desire to secure a transfer of funds in its or his/her appropriation from funds set apart for one specific purpose to another, before incurring any expenditure therefor, such department, commission, board or officer shall make application to the Town Manager whose duty it shall be to examine into the matter, and upon approval of the Council such transfer may be made but not otherwise."~~

In response to Commissioner Granatosky, Commissioner Frink noted the language that was struck appears, or will appear, in other parts of this Charter. He reviewed proposed Section 9.19.5.

In response to Commissioner Granatosky, Commissioner Frink stated that the Town Council can act, or not act, on the recommendation of the Board of Finance.

Commissioner Chase noted that a recommendation is an opinion.

Commissioner Kotowski stated that having three people approve it is two more than what happens now because right now it is only the Town Manager.

The Commissioners discussed possible language for "recommendation" of the Board of Finance.

Vote on the motion to approve proposed Section 9.19.4: PASSES**In favor: 6 (Hauber, Aument, Chase, Frink, Kotowski, White)****Opposed: 1 (Granatosky)****Abstained: 1 (Mello)**

Commissioner Frink made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kotowski, to approve proposed Section 9.19.5: Transfer of Funds

9.19.5.1 Transfer of Funds Between Departments : “Upon the request and certification that the transfer is necessary by the Town Manager, but only within the last three (3) months of the fiscal year, the Council may by resolution transfer any unencumbered appropriations, balance or portion thereof from one department, commission, board or office to another.

In no instance shall appropriations for debt service or other statutory charges be transferred to other purposes. Transfers of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) or less can be made with the approval of the Board of Finance. Transfers of more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) shall require a recommendation from the Board of Finance and a resolution approving the transfer by the Town Council. ~~become effective only after they have been adopted by the RTM by the vote of the majority of those present and entitled to vote at such meeting.~~

9.19.5.2 Transfer of Funds within a Department. Transfer of unencumbered funds from one item of a department budget to another item of the same budget require a recommendation from the Board of Finance and must be voted on and approved by the Council except that a transfer may be made by a department head with the approval of the manager and the Board of Finance subject to the following guidelines;

(1) Such transfers shall be limited to the amount of ~~twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000.00)~~ ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for any single transfer.

~~(2) No transfers will be made to hire additional staffing that has not been properly authorized by the council.~~

(3) Transfers will not be made to purchase major pieces of equipment such as vehicles and machinery, or items specifically deleted by the council.”

In response to Commissioner Granatosky, Commissioner Frink clarified that 9.19.5.2 (1)(2)(3) are exceptions that do not need Town Council approval.

Commissioner Granatosky noted that a lot of this does not belong in the Charter; the Charter is a large, broad document. She noted that you should trust your elected officials or vote them out.

In response to Commissioner White, Commissioner Kotowski agreed that it may not be as difficult to convene the Board of Finance as it is the RTM to review \$10,000.

Commissioner Frink amended the motion, seconded by Commissioner Kotowski, to change 9.19.5.2 (1) to \$10,000.

Commissioner Granatosky questioned if the Town Council has to approve positions, so why include that in this part of the Charter.

Commissioner Frink noted that a position could be approved but not filled.

Commissioner White made a second amendment to the motion, seconded by Commissioner Mello, to remove 9.19.15.2 (2). She noted that hiring decisions are not for the Charter.

Vote on second amended motion: PASSES

In favor: 7 (Hauber, Aument, Chase, Frink, Kotowski, Mello, White)

Opposed: 1 (Granatosky)

Abstained: 0

The Commissioners discussed the second amended motion.

Commissioner Mello made a motion to reconsider, seconded by Chair Hauber, to approve proposed Section 9.19.5.

Vote to reconsider: PASSES

In favor: 5 (Hauber, Chase, Kotowski, Mello, White)

Opposed: 2 (Aument, Frink)

Abstained: 1 (Granatosky)

Commissioner Frink made a motion, seconded by Commissioner White, to approve proposed Section 9.19.5 with the following changes: 9.19.5.2 (1) Such transfers shall be limited to the amount of) ~~twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000)~~ ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for any single transfer; eliminate 9.19.5.2 (2) ~~No transfers will be made to hire additional staffing that has not been properly authorized by the Council. (as previously amended by Commissioner White).~~

Vote on the motion: PASSES

In favor: 7 (Hauber, Aument, Chase, Frink, Kotowski, Mello, White)

Opposed: 1 (Granatosky)

Abstained: 0

Commissioner Granatosky made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Mello: FAILS

In favor: 3 (Hauber, Granatosky, Mello)

Opposed: 5 (Aument, Chase, Frink, Kotowski, White)

Abstained: 0

Commissioner Frink made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kotowski, to approve proposed Section 9.19.6 Supplemental Appropriations.

In response to Commissioner Kotowski Town Clerk Moukawsher stated that unencumbered funds go back to the General Fund.

In response to Commissioner White, Commissioner Frink noted that that these are the tools to use to react to a loss of revenue.

Commissioner Granatosky stated that the original language in the Charter is okay; this level of detail does not belong here. She questioned how large the supplemental appropriation would be that would result in the individual's tax bill increasing by one-hundred dollars.

Commissioner Frink noted that you do not want the Town to fall apart; he took this from the homeowners' perspective and comfort level.

The Commissioners discussed the Town's finances as they relate to cuts from the State and median home prices in Groton.

Commissioner Granatosky amended the motion, seconded by Commissioner Mello, to eliminate 9.19.6.4 and 9.19.6.5. She stated that there is too much detail. She noted that for one-hundred dollars, there would be a referendum that could cost \$25,000. She questioned at what point this becomes counterproductive.

Commissioner Frink noted that this works for a draft report. He noted that the voters have approved the budget; at some point you need to go back to the voters.

Commissioner Kotowski stated that this is the level of detail that will, hopefully, result in a reduction of spending and not an increase in taxes.

Commissioner White suggested a flat rate appropriation, or a percentage deviation from the original budget, as triggers for referendum.

In response to Commissioner Granatosky, Commissioner Frink suggested adjusting the language to Section 9.16.6.3.

Commissioner Granatosky stated that the Commission needs calculations behind the rationale for this Section.

Chair Pro Tem Aument stated that he does not have a full grasp on one-hundred dollars.

Commissioner Mello made a motion, seconded by Commissioner White, to table the vote on 9.19.6 to the next meeting: PASSES

In favor: 5 (Hauber, Aument, Granatosky, Mello, White)

Opposed: (Chase, Frink, Kotowski)

Abstained: 0

Commissioner Kotowski requested that Commissioner Frink request a response from Finance Director Cindy Landry regarding the details of the \$100.

Commissioner Frink made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kotowski, to approve proposed Section 9.19.7: Contingency Account: "No expenditure may be charged to the contingency account, but the Council, after receiving a recommendation from the Board of Finance, may transfer funds in the contingency account to any other account. ~~Transfers of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) or more shall become effective only after they have been adopted by the RTM by the vote of the majority of those present and entitled to vote at such meeting.~~"

In response to Commissioner Mello, Commissioner Frink stated that the \$10,000 was in reference to the RTM, and there is not RTM. He noted that the Board of Finance makes recommendations, and the Town Council would authorize the expenditure.

The Commissioners discussed giving the Board of Finance power beyond recommendations.

Commissioner Frink amended the motion, seconded by Commissioner Kotowski, to amend the language: "No expenditure may be charged to the contingency account, but the Council, after receiving a recommendation from the Board of Finance, may transfer funds in the contingency account to any other account. Transfers of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) or more shall become effective only after they have been adopted by the Board of Finance ~~RTM~~ by the vote of the majority of those present and entitled to vote at such meeting."

Commissioner White questioned what would happen if there was an expenditure of \$5,000 in one week and then \$6,000 the following week. She recommended removing the ten thousand dollar (\$10,000) limit so that any amount of money would need to be approved.

Commissioner Granatosky noted that because this is in the Contingency Account, the amount of money is capped.

Vote on the motion as amended: FAILS

In favor: 4 (Aument, Frink, Kotowski, Mello)

Opposed: 4 (Hauber, Chase, Granatosky, White)

Commissioner Frink stated that he is happy with the Board of Finance making a recommendation.

The Commissioners discussed the term "recommendation." The Commissioners questioned what would happen if there is no recommendation.

Commissioner Fink made a motion to table, seconded by Commissioner Chase. 9.19.7: PASSES

In favor: 5 (Hauber, Chase, Frink, Mello, White)

Opposed: 3 (Aument, Granatosky, Kotowski)

Abstained: 0

III. ADJOURMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Mello, seconded by Commissioner Granatosky. Chair Pro Tem Aument adjourned the meeting at 9:01 p.m.