



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 Jean-Claude Ambroise, Representatives Karin Adams, Scott W. Aument, Sr., Joseph Baril, Nancy E. Barnhart, Alicia Bauer, Genevieve Cerf, Susan Chase-Hildebrand, Michael Collins, Christine Conley, Susan Deane-Shinbrot, Luanne E. DeMatto, Nancy Driscoll, Dave Ferreira, Neal Gardner, Nancy E. Gilly, Patrice Granatosky, Lorraine M. Greubel, Karen Hatcher, Keith L. Hedrick, Conrad F. Heede, Lynn Crockett Hubbard, Rosanne E. Kotowski, Jim Loughlin, Jackie Massett, Bruce A. McDermott, Roscoe Merritt, Scott Newsome, Richard J. Pasqualini, Jr., Pam Ryley, Jack Sebastian, Dana S. Semeraro, Richard Semeraro, Joan Steinfeld, Irma Streeter, Mark Svencer, Archie C. Swindell, Lori A. Watrous, Amanda L. Whewell and Ivy R. Williams

Monday, April 29, 2013

7:00 PM

Groton Senior Center

ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING

A. ROLL CALL

Moderator Jean-Claude Ambroise called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

32 members were present, and a quorum was declared.

The Moderator reported that Reps. Barnhart, Gruebel and Swindell notified the Town Clerk of their absence.

Members Present: Moderator Ambroise, Rep. Adams, Rep. Aument, Rep. Baril, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Cerf, Rep. Chase-Hildebrand, Rep. Collins, Rep. Conley, Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. DeMatto, Rep. Driscoll, Rep. Ferreira, Rep. Gilly, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Hatcher, Rep. Hedrick, Rep. Heede, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Kotowski, Rep. Massett, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. D. Semeraro, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. R. Semeraro, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Svencer, Rep. Watrous and Rep. Williams
Members Absent: Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Gardner, Rep. Greubel, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Ryley, Rep. Swindell and Rep. Whewell

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Administrative Services Director Doug Ackerman, Interim School Superintendent John Ramos, Town Mayor Heather Somers, City Mayor Marian Galbraith, Board of Education Chairman Kristin Hoyt, Town Councilors, City Councilors, Board of Education members, City and Town staff, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher 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 led by Rep. Aument.

C. CALL OF THE MEETING

Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher read the Call of the Meeting.

2013-0079 Annual RTM Budget Meeting

RESOLUTION SETTING RTM BUDGET MEETING DATE ON THE FYE 2014 ANNUAL TOWN BUDGET

WHEREAS, Section 9.3.1 of the Groton Town Charter requires that the Town Council determine the date for the annual budget meeting of the Representative Town Meeting, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Annual Budget Meeting of the Representative Town Meeting will be held on Monday April 29, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. at the Groton Senior Center, Newtown Road, Groton, Connecticut.

D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

Moderator Jean-Claude Ambroise explained the conduct to be observed during citizen comments and clarified the responsibilities of the RTM in regard to approving the budget. He stated that

citizen comments will be limited to five minutes.

Kristine Meaney, 54 Nicholas Avenue, requested that the RTM approve the Board of Education (BOE) budget as submitted by the BOE. She feels that reductions will prevent staff from doing their jobs and affect student achievement.

Bill Jervis, a City Councilor, 75 Shennecossett Parkway, requested restoration of the funds cut by the Town Council from the City Police budget.

Julie Maisch, 60 Colony Road, requested continued support for the Eastern Connecticut Symphony. She feels it is a very important asset to the community.

Dave Scott, 191 Pequot Avenue, Mystic, spoke in support of fully funding the Mystic & Noank Library. He mentioned various programs that are provided for children and adults, and noted that many community groups use the facility for meetings.

City Mayor Marion Galbraith, 771 Shennecossett Road, addressed the reduction to the City Police by the Town Council, noting that the budget submitted was less than last year. Mayor Galbraith stated that she is always available to discuss and improve coordination of shared services. She does not feel that the Town Police department could provide the same service that exists for City residents. She believes that the reduction to the City is disproportionate and unfair.

Richard Voyer, 112 Russell Street, Mystic, requested that the RTM keep the tax rate down.

Andrea Wollensak, 10 Conrad Street, Mystic, supports the request for the Mystic & Noank Library. She wants her tax money to support the library, calling it a valuable resource to the community.

Mary Ann Little, 22 Pearl Street, Noank, asked for support of the BOE budget as presented. She feels it is a modest increase and that reductions will negatively impact students.

Connie Readett, 10 New London Turnpike, Mystic, supports the BOE budget. She feels it is important for the Town to support education so that families will want to live in Groton.

Beth Horler of Gales Ferry, president of Groton Education Association, spoke as an advocate for education and urged members to keep Groton schools great. She asked that the RTM approve the BOE's requested budget figure.

Deb Jenkins, 41 Burgess Place, disclosed that she is married to a City police officer and teaches at Fitch High School. She supports the City Police and Highway budgets as submitted. She asked for no reductions in public safety and BOE budgets.

Deborah Johnson, 196 Flanders Road, Mystic, requested that the RTM approve the Town Council figure for the BOE. She feels that a modest increase of 1.4 percent is acceptable to most residents.

Natalie Billing, 15 Ashby Street, Mystic, asked the RTM to consider whether voters would approve the budget at a public referendum. She noted that area towns which have budget referenda do not usually approve their budgets on the first vote. She provided several suggestions for reducing the budget that the RTM should consider.

Michael Hewitt, 10 Riverview Avenue, Noank, a member of the Mystic & Noank Library board, supports full funding of the Mystic & Noank Library. He agreed with the reasons cited by previous speakers.

Beth Tillman, 925 River Road, expressed gratitude for Groton's past support for the Eastern Connecticut Symphony. She asked the RTM to continue support for this important asset to the community and the region.

Ron Jenkins, 41 Burgess Place, disclosed that he is a City police officer and asked that the RTM support the City and BOE budgets as presented.

Alan Nordquist, 42 Somerset Drive, Mystic, cited reasons why the RTM should approve the CIP projects for an aquatic center and additional sports fields. He feels that both of these projects are important improvements which will affect the quality of life in Groton.

Hank Steinford, 32 Valley Road, a member of the Planning Commission, supports the additional CIP project for the demolition of Noank School. He asked for restoration of funds to the Public Works account, stating that public safety could be affected during storms. He feels that the Planning and Economic Development accounts should be fully funded to promote new development in Town.

Katrina Fitzgerald, 12 Overlook Avenue, Mystic, supports the BOE budget as presented. She feels that student achievement would be adversely affected by reductions.

Lisa Luck, 185 Brandegee Avenue, asked for support for the Parks & Recreation CIP's. She believes that these projects are needed and that they will help in the fight against obesity in our community and our schools.

Molly Ziegler, 63 Church Street, feels that supporting the BOE budget as requested is an important factor in maintaining the community as a desirable place to live. She supports the strings program in the schools and the Eastern Connecticut Symphony request.

Joan Smith, 58 Mohegan Road, president of Groton Open Space Association, stated that the association supports the funding for both Parks & Recreation CIP's. She noted that the improvements would promote both recreational and economic opportunities by attracting more visitors to our community.

Sue Sutherland, 32 Neptune Drive, a member of the Parks & Recreation Master Plan Committee, expressed sentiments similar to those of previous speakers in support of the Parks & Recreation CIP's.

Rob Zuliani, 23 Cushman Street, supports the City Police budget as requested. He stated that it is an all-inclusive figure that differs from the Town Public Safety budget which is not all-inclusive. He feels that an increase to the BOE budget is necessary and is similar to a cost of living increase. He believes that all three Groton libraries are essential to maintaining the quality of life in Groton.

Larry Grundy, 64 Kings Highway, president of the Fitch Marching Band, supports full funding for the BOE budget. He noted that the special education program is excelling at providing the necessary services for one of his children and he fears the impact if the BOE budget is reduced. He noted that the Fitch Marching Band will be performing this July in Washington, D.C. and he feels this is a great achievement for our community.

Mark McCormick, 43 Williams Street, Noank, supports the BOE budget and agrees with previous speakers who have cited numerous reasons for their support. He believes it is the best investment for the children of this community.

Frances Pan, 38 West Mystic Avenue, Mystic, supports funding the requests of all three libraries

and echoed the reasons previously stated. She noted that great libraries increase property values.

Larry Croxton, 3 Knoll Drive, feels that the BOE budget provides excellent educational services to all children, especially disadvantaged children. He asked for no reduction to the BOE budget.

June Evered, 86 Buddington Road, disclosed she is a member of the Parks & Recreation Commission. She agrees with the previous speakers in regard to the Parks & Recreation CIP's. She noted that Groton has the opportunity to increase revenue by building an aquatic center to serve the region. She feels that all the proposed CIP's are important to the master plan of our community.

Mike Doyle, 15 Elm Street, does not want any further cuts in the BOE budget. He believes that economic development is important to increase revenues and to encourage businesses and families to live in our community.

Town Mayor Heather Somers, 67 Ramsdell Street, explained the Town Council's philosophy on the budget this year. She noted that emotion must be removed and that the RTM needs to focus on what the Town can afford to pay, both this year and in the future. She reminded members to distinguish between what is necessary and what is nice to have when reviewing the budget.

Jon Heller, 19 Packer Lane, Mystic, stated that good schools keep real estate values up. He supports the BOE budget with a 1.4 percent increase. He requested that the RTM approve the CIP for professional services to develop a plan for future school facilities. He feels it is important to develop the right plan.

Town Councilor Bruce Flax, 632 Noank Road, Mystic, supports the reductions approved by the Town Council and explained his rationale for supporting them. He cited two items to achieve the modest cost cuts to the City budget: eliminating the Public Relations firm and cutting waste pick-up to two days. He expressed disappointment that the City did not return any of the FEMA reimbursement funds to the General Fund.

William Kelly, 61 Latham Street, president of the Little League Association, urged support for additional sports fields to allow everyone the opportunity to participate.

Matt Forde, 152 Daniel Brown Drive, Mystic, participates in the Groton Soccer Club which has seen a quadruple increase in participation over the last four years. He supports the CIP for additional sports fields.

Juliette Parker, 520F Shennecossett Road, disclosed she is a City employee and pays both City and Town taxes. She supports the City Police budget as presented. She feels that a reduction in the budget will reduce services and that the Town could not provide equal service to City residents. She believes that the Town and City should work together.

Jim Young, 27 Clipper Court, Mystic, supports the 1.4 percent increase in the BOE budget. He believes that taxes paid in Groton are fair in comparison to other towns in our region and that residents receive good value in the form of services.

Steven Gill, 75 Litton Avenue, supports the Town Council figure for the BOE. He asked that the RTM make no further reductions.

E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

Moderator Ambroise reported receiving several emails in regard to the budget.

F. BUDGET UPDATE/DISCUSSION

The Town Manager clarified the adjustments to the various accounts as approved by the Town

Council during its review of the budget. He noted that the summary spreadsheets incorporate all the changes to the budget which were made by the Town Council.

Rep. Sebastian stated that Town Charter Chapter 2.5 - Reaffirming the authority of the subdivision, should be reviewed before consideration of the budget.

Members discussed FEMA reimbursements, the budget review process by RTM committees, and whether detailed committee information could be provided to the RTM prior to the committee reports at the annual budget meeting.

In response to several emails concerning conflict of interest, Moderator Ambrose clarified that RTM Rule 8.1- Personal interest/Conflict of interest, was revised in September 2012. He stated that according to Connecticut General Statutes and several Town Attorney opinions, there is no conflict of interest with the RTM's current practices. He explained the Town Charter requirement that if any member has a financial interest, direct or indirect, in any contract, transaction, or decision of the RTM, he/she must disclose that interest so that it may be recorded in the record.

At 9:10 p.m., the Moderator recessed the meeting until May 1, 2013 at 7:00p.m.

Budget Session - Wednesday, May 1, 2013

Moderator Jean-Claude Ambrose called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

35 members were present, and a quorum was declared. (Rep. Hatcher arrived later in the meeting.)

The Moderator reported that Reps. Greubel and Swindell notified the Town Clerk of their absence and Reps. Hatcher, Hedrick and Pasqualini are expected to arrive late.

Members Present: Moderator Ambrose, Rep. Adams, Rep. Aument, Rep. Baril, Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Cerf, Rep. Chase-Hildebrand, Rep. Collins, Rep. Conley, Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. DeMatto, Rep. Driscoll, Rep. Ferreira, Rep. Gardner, Rep. Gilly, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Hatcher, Rep. Heede, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Kotowski, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Massett, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Ryley, Rep. D. Semeraro, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. R. Semeraro, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Svencer, Rep. Watrous and Rep. Williams

Members Absent: Rep. Greubel, Rep. Hedrick, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Swindell and Rep. Whewell

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Finance Director Sal Pandolfo and Finance staff, Administrative Services Director Doug Ackerman and Information Technology staff, Registrars of Voters Dave Rose and Kristen Venditti, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Assistant Town Clerk Sally Whitney.

G. COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Moderator stated that committee minutes will be approved at each budget session only for the accounts on that evening's schedule. He will update the bottom line budget figure prior to the beginning of each budget session.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Chairman Granatosky read the minutes of the meeting held on April 22, 2013. (Minutes are on file.)

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Driscoll and so voted unanimously.

Account 1001 - Legislative Policy

A motion for \$46,153 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

Rep. Watrous disclosed for the record that she is a Town employee.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$43,653 was made by Rep. Sebastian, seconded by Rep. Pasqualini.

This is the Manager's proposed figure.

In answer to members' questions, the Manager explained that the Town Council added \$10,000 to this account to cover the cost of unforeseen expenses such as BRAC or regional and community events in which the Town may want to participate. He stated that the RTM will have approved this expenditure even though the request may be under ten thousand dollars.

Chairman Granatosky explained that the committee figure sets aside less money for these unanticipated costs.

The vote on the amendment of \$43,653 was defeated 16 in favor, 18 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Adams, Aument, Cerf, Deane-Shinbrot, Ferreira, Gardner, Gilly, Hubbard, Kotowski, Loughlin, McDermott, Pasqualini, Sebastian, D. Semeraro, R. Semeraro and Ambroise.)

Discussion ensued on Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) dues, the use of Contingency to fund community events and the reduction of the Contingency account by the Town Council.

The vote on \$46,153 carried 22 in favor, 12 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Cerf, Deane-Shinbrot, Ferreira, Gardner, Gilly, Hubbard, Kotowski, McDermott, Pasqualini, Sebastian and D. Semeraro.)

Rep. Hatcher arrived at 7:40 p.m. 35 members were present.

Account 1006 - Legal Services

A motion for \$420,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by DeMatto.

Members discussed the increase in the cost of legal services and how to keep costs contained.

The Town Manager enumerated the various items that necessitate the use of legal services.

Moderator Ambroise announced that a referral has been received for fourth quarter transfers, including \$92,000 for legal services. This will come before the RTM at its June meeting. He reviewed the figures that were approved for the last three years and noted that last year legal services was reduced to \$362,950.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$362,950 was made by Rep. Kotowski, seconded by Rep. Gardner.

This is last year's figure.

Members discussed the circumstances under which the Town Attorney is contacted and the use of Contingency funds if a lower figure is approved.

The vote on the amendment of \$362,950 was defeated 9 in favor, 26 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Aument, Cerf, Deane-Shinbrot, Ferreira, Gardner, Kotowski, Loughlin, McDermott and R. Semeraro.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$399,245 was made by Rep. Aument, seconded by Rep. Adams.

Rep. Aument feels this figure is a compromise and that reductions to the budget are necessary.

The vote on the amendment of \$399,245 was defeated 12 in favor, 23 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Adams, Aument, Cerf, Deane-Shinbrot, Ferreira, Gardner, Gilly, Kotowski, McDermott, Sebastian, D. Semeraro and R. Semeraro.)

The vote on \$420,000 carried 30 in favor, 5 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Cerf, Deane-Shinbrot, Gardner and Kotowski.)

Account 1010 - Executive Management

A motion for \$433,159 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. DeMatto.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$423,454 was made by Rep. Pasqualini, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

This figure reduces non-union pay increases and professional development.

Members discussed non-union salary increases; sick incentive; sick and vacation allowance; vacation pay-out; and salary compensation for the new Assistant Town Manager.

The Town Manager stated that there is no salary adjustment included in this account to provide vacation pay-out, but if money is available, it would be paid under the non-union agreement. He also spoke about the Assistant Town Manager position.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Sebastian, seconded by Rep. Barnhart. The vote to move the question carried 29 in favor, 5 opposed, 1 non-voting. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Gardner, Kotowski, Steinfeld, and Ambroise. Non-voting: Rep. Collins.) (Rep. Collins had left the room prior to the vote and returned after the vote was taken.)

The vote on the amendment of \$423,454 was defeated 13 in favor, 22 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Adams, Aument, Cerf, Deane-Shinbrot, Ferreira, Gardner, Hatcher, Hubbard, Kotowski, McDermott, Pasqualini, D. Semeraro, and R. Semeraro.)

The Town Manager explained the differences between the non-union agreement and negotiated union contracts. He mentioned that 40 positions have been eliminated since 2005 through attrition and early retirement incentives and that significant changes have been made to benefits.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$428,159 was made by Rep. Gardner, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

This is a compromise between the main figure on the floor and the previous amended figure.

Members discussed the substantial contribution to the pension fund due to decreased interest revenue. There was a suggestion that this year's contribution be reduced until other Town revenues increase.

The vote on the amendment of \$428,159 was defeated 17 in favor, 18 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Adams, Aument, Barnhart, Cerf, Deane-Shinbrot, Ferreira, Gardner, Gilly, Hatcher, Hubbard, Kotowski, McDermott, Pasqualini, Sebastian, D. Semeraro, R. Semeraro, and Ambroise.)

The vote on \$433,159 carried 26 in favor, 9 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Cerf, Deane-Shinbrot, Gardner, Hatcher, Kotowski, McDermott, Pasqualini, and Ambroise.)

Account 1003 - Voter Registration

A motion for \$74,780 (the Town Council figure) was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

It was immediately noted that this figure was in error and was not the committee's recommended figure.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$103,861 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky,

seconded by Rep. Baril.

It was explained that the Town Council's reduction was due to confusion about this account.

Democratic Registrar Dave Rose explained the new unfunded State mandate for same day registration and noted that he does not have an exact figure for these costs.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$84,205 was made by Rep. Aument, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

Rep. Aument cited the difficult economic times.

Members discussed State mandates for municipal elections, the reduction in the number of voting districts and the cost of an election.

The vote on the amendment \$84,205 was defeated 3 in favor, 32 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Aument, Gardner and Kotowski.)

Discussion continued on election costs, the Town Council reduction and the requirement for same day registration.

MOTION TO TABLE was made by Rep. Gardner, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

Chairman Granatosky clarified that the requested budget figure does not take into account the new State mandate for same day registration.

The Moderator requested that the Registrars provide an estimated cost for same day registration prior to the last RTM budget session.

The motion to table was withdrawn by Rep. Gardner and the second was withdrawn by Rep. Kotowski.

The vote on the amendment of \$103,861 carried 33 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention. (Opposed: Rep. Kotowski. Abstaining: Rep. Gardner.)

Moderator Ambroise called for a brief recess at 9:00 p.m. The meeting resumed at 9:10 p.m.

Account 1005 - Town Clerk

A motion for \$374,849 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

The Town Clerk explained that the difference between the Manager and Council figures is due to the GMEA wage increase and the reduction to the Computer Replacement Fund.

The vote on \$374,849 carried 32 in favor, 2 opposed, 1 abstention. (Opposed: Reps. Kotowski and Ambroise. Abstaining: Rep. Watrous.)

Account 1011 - Information Technology

A motion for \$1,022,350 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

The Manager clarified that the adjustment for GMEA wage increases and the reduction to the Computer Replacement Fund were made at the end of the Council's deliberations. He noted that this impacts accounts in all departments.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$1,021,308 was made by Rep. Cerf, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

This figure eliminates the contribution to the Fleet Reserve Fund. Rep. Cerf noted that this item was on the list provided by the Town Manager to achieve a zero mill rate increase.

The vote on the amendment of \$1,021,308 was defeated 14 in favor, 21 opposed. (In Favor: Aument, Bauer, Cerf, Deane-Shinbrot, Ferreira, Gardner, Gilly, Hatcher, Kotowski, McDermott, Pasqualini, Sebastian, D. Semeraro and R. Semeraro.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$1,021,808 was made by Rep. Gardner, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

Discussion continued on the Fleet Reserve Fund.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Sebastian, seconded by Rep. Baril.

The vote to move the question carried 31 in favor, 4 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Gardner, Kotowski and Ambrose.)

The vote on the amendment of \$1,021,808 was defeated 12 in favor, 23 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Aument, Cerf, Deane-Shinbrot, Gardner, Hatcher, Gilly, Kotowski, McDermott, Pasqualini, D. Semeraro, R. Semeraro, and Ambrose.)

The vote on \$1,022,350 carried 29 in favor, 6 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Cerf, Deane-Shinbrot, Gardner, Kotowski and Pasqualini.)

Capital Item - Network Infrastructure Upgrade

A motion for \$105,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$25,000 was made by Rep. Kotowski, seconded by Rep. Aument.

Rep. Kotowski questioned why consultants are being paid when the Town has a professional IT staff.

The Moderator clarified that only \$10,000 will be used for consultant fees; the remaining \$95,000 is for equipment. He believes that there is some confusion with the CIP for Computer Technology Acquisition-Software System.

The vote on the amendment of \$25,000 failed 3 in favor, 32 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Aument, Gardner and Kotowski.)

The vote on \$105,000 carried 31 in favor, 4 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Deane-Shinbrot, Gardner and Kotowski.)

Capital Item - Computer Technology Acquisition-Software System

A motion for \$75,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. DeMatto.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$25,000 was made by Rep. Kotowski, seconded by Rep. Aument.

Rep. Kotowski believes that Town IT staff should do this work.

The Manager clarified the reasons for outsourcing the evaluation of software systems.

Members discussed cost savings that would be realized by regionalizing this system.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$0 was made by Rep. Ferreira, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

Rep. Ferreira feels that the Town should regionalize systems .

Administrative Services Director Doug Ackerman explained that this project is primarily for integration of the Town's internal systems as well as a system that may be used in conjunction with other agencies. He feels that this analysis is best done by individuals that are familiar with multiple systems and the latest technology.

Members discussed the cost estimate and the reasons for using a consultant.

Rep. Ryley left at 10:00 p.m. 34 members were present.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Conley, seconded by Rep. Ferreira. The vote on moving the question carried 31 in favor, 3 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Deane-Shinbrot, Kotowski and Ambrose.)

The vote on the amendment of \$0 was defeated 3 in favor, 30 opposed, 1 abstention. (In Favor: Reps. Ferreira, Gardner and Kotowski. Abstaining: Rep. Deane-Shinbrot.)

The vote on the amendment of \$25,000 was defeated 2 in favor, 31 opposed, 1 abstention. (In favor: Reps. Gardner and Kotowski. Abstaining: Rep. Deane-Shinbrot.)

The vote on \$75,000 carried 31 in favor, 2 opposed, 1 abstention. (Opposed: Reps. Gardner and Kotowski. Abstaining: Rep. Deane-Shinbrot.)

The Moderator requested consensus to continue reviewing accounts after 10:00 p.m. and noted that he will solicit consensus after each of the remaining accounts. There was consensus to continue.

Capital Item - Replacement Radio Control Console System

A motion for \$685,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. DeMatto.

Rep. Hubbard left at 10:11 p.m. 33 members were present.

Mr. Ackerman described the equipment to be installed and why it is necessary to replace it.

Members discussed the possibility of regionalizing dispatch services.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$0 was made by Rep. Pasqualini, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

Rep. Pasqualini feels that this expenditure should be delayed until more regionalization can be implemented.

Members discussed the fact that current equipment will not have technical support after 2014; the impact on emergency services; State grant funding; and the timeline for installation.

The vote on the amendment of \$0 was defeated 5 in favor, 27 opposed, 1 non-voting. (In Favor: Reps. Aument, Deane-Shinbrot, Gardner, Kotowski and Pasqualini. Non-Voting: Rep. DeMatto.) (Rep. DeMatto had left the room prior to this vote on and returned after the vote.)

Mr. Ackerman described the coordination of emergency dispatch services with the City of Groton.

The vote on \$685,000 carried 28 in favor, 5 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Deane-Shinbrot, Gardner, Kotowski, and Pasqualini.)

Rep. Sebastian left at 10:20 p.m. 32 members were present.

There was consensus among the remaining members to continue reviewing accounts.

Capital Item - Phone System

A motion for \$45,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. DeMatto.

Members discussed coordination between Town and BOE phone systems.

Mr. Ackerman reported that the Town's contract for phone service with AT&T has expired and that Internet service is provided by Thames Valley Communications.

MOTION TO AMEND TO \$0 was made by Rep. Cerf, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

Rep. Cerf believes that the Town should use this account as an exercise in consolidating Town, City and BOE phone services by purchasing similar equipment.

IT Systems Administrator Dave Olsen explained the details of the system. He verified that there are analog phones at key locations and that there are generators in case the Town experiences a loss of power for an extended time period.

The vote on the amendment of \$0 was defeated 3 in favor, 29 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Cerf, Gardner and Kotowski.)

Members discussed the importance of coordinating a long-term plan with all districts and subdivisions for a unified system.

The Manager responded that timing the replacement of phone systems is a challenge. He noted that Groton does provide emergency dispatch service for the Town of Stonington.

The vote on \$45,000 carried 28 in favor, 4 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Cerf, Deane-Shinbrot, Gardner and Kotowski.)

There was no consensus to continue after this account.

The Moderator announced that the remaining accounts for this session will be rescheduled to another evening and that staff will be notified.

At 10:43 p.m. the Moderator recessed the meeting until May 6, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.

Budget Session - Monday, May 6, 2013

Moderator Jean-Claude Ambroise called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

31 members were present and a quorum was declared. (Reps. Cerf, Hatcher and Newsome arrived later in the meeting.)

The Moderator reported that Reps. Baril, Barnhart, Chase-Hildebrand, Greubel, Hedrick, Streeter and Swindell notified the Town Clerk of their absence.

The Moderator announced that the regular RTM meeting scheduled for Wednesday May 8 has been cancelled.

Members Present: Moderator Ambroise, Rep. Adams, Rep. Aument, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Cerf, Rep. Collins, Rep. Conley, Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. DeMatto, Rep. Driscoll, Rep. Ferreira, Rep. Gardner, Rep. Gilly, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Hatcher, Rep. Heede, Rep. Kotowski, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Massett, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Ryley, Rep. D. Semeraro, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. R. Semeraro, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Svencer, Rep. Watrous and Rep. Williams

Members Absent: Rep. Baril, Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Chase-Hildebrand, Rep. Greubel, Rep. Hedrick, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Swindell and Rep. Whewell

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Administrative Services Director Doug Ackerman, Finance Director Sal Pandolfo and Finance Department staff, Emergency Communications Manager Joe Sastre, Public Works Director Gary Schneider and Public Works staff, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Deputy Town Clerk Janet Downs.

Account 1012 - Human Resources

A motion for \$341,011 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

The vote on \$341,011 carried 21 in favor, 6 opposed, 1 non-voting. (Opposed : Reps. Aument, Gardner, Gilly, Kotowski, McDermott and Sebastian. Non-voting: Rep. Pasqualini.)

Rep. Cerf arrived at this point in the meeting. 29 members were present.

Account 6050 - Computer Replacement Fund

A motion for \$58,960 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Driscoll.

Mr. Oefinger explained that this account contains contributions for computer replacement for individual departments. No expenditures are made from this account, so reducing this figure will not reduce the mill rate.

The vote on \$58,960 carried 27 in favor, 2 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Gardner and Kotowski.)

Rep. Hatcher and Newsome arrived at this point in the meeting. 31 members were present.

Account 1014 - Emergency Communications

A motion for \$1,328,317 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Driscoll.

Mr. Oefinger explained that this is one of the accounts impacted by the reorganization, so it is difficult to compare with previous years. He addressed members' questions regarding splitting the cost of an employee between accounts.

The vote on \$1,328,317 carried 30 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention. (Abstaining: Rep. Kotowski.)

Account 1013 - Finance Administration

A motion for \$1,369,750 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Driscoll.

The increase from the Manager's figure is accounted for by GMEA wage increases and the reduction in computer replacement.

The vote on \$1,369,750 carried 27 in favor, 4 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Gardner, Kotowski and Pasqualini.)

Account 2120 - Revaluation Fund

A motion for \$5,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Driscoll.

The vote on \$5,000 carried 29 in favor, 2 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Gardner, Hatcher.)

Account 1070 - Insurance and Claims

A motion for \$538,784 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Driscoll.

Mr. Ackerman explained that this account contains \$30,000 for possible storm damage not covered by insurance. He noted that the cost of liability insurance has increased substantially over the past two years and that the predicted increase in cost is approximately 7.5 percent per year.

The vote on \$538,784 carried 26 in favor, 5 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Cerf, Gardner, Kotowski and Sebastian.)

Account 1071 - Self Funded Plans

A motion for \$8,300,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Adams.

At the request of Republican Floor Leader Jackie Massett, a recess was taken from 7:30 to 7:50 p.m. to allow both parties to caucus.

In response to members' questions, it was explained that the Town Council has already made cuts to this account amounting to \$226,000.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$8,100,000 was made by Rep. Aument, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

Mr. Aument did not specify where cuts should be made, stating that he is simply trying to reduce taxes.

Mr. Ackerman explained that reductions to this account would have to come from health insurance. He cautioned against using additional money from the fund balance and noted that he is afraid of fluctuations in the cost of insurance. Mr. Ackerman spoke about the return on the investments associated with this account. He reminded the members that the Town has an ordinance that requires the funding of retirement benefits at a certain level.

Mr. Oefinger added that the Town Council has already made all three of his suggested reductions to this account.

The vote on the amendment of \$8,100,000 failed 9 in favor, 22 opposed. (In favor: Reps. Aument, Cerf, Deane-Shinbrot, Gardner, Gilly, Hatcher, Kotowski, McDermott, and Sebastian.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$8,250,000 was made by Rep. Gilly, seconded by Rep. Gardner.

Rep. Gilly explained that this is simply a smaller cut, but a cut nonetheless.

Items discussed included the generous benefits enjoyed by Town employees, the need to reduce taxes, the Town's claims experience, coordination of plans with the Board of Education, and the Town's self-insuring practices. Also mentioned as reasons for reducing the budget were the possible loss of tax revenue due to the demolition of Pfizer Building 118 and reductions in State funding.

The vote on the amendment of \$8,250,000 failed 11 in favor, 20 opposed. (In favor: Reps. Adams, Aument, Cerf, Deane-Shinbrot, Gardner, Gilly, Hatcher, Kotowski, McDermott, Newsome and Sebastian.)

The vote on \$8,300,000 carried 24 in favor, 7 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Adams, Aument, Cerf, Deane-Shinbrot, Gardner, Gilly and Kotowski.)

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Chairman Collins read the minutes of the meetings held on April 9, April 15 and May 6, 2013. (Minutes are on file.)

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

It was noted that the committee voted for -0- for CIP 6K-Jabez Smith House; an incorrect number had been reported previously.

The vote on approval of the minutes carried unanimously.

Account 1035 - Public Works

A motion for \$6,431,201 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. DeMatto.

At the request of Republican Floor Leader Jackie Massett, a recess was taken from 8:50 to 9:05 p.m. to allow the Republican members to caucus.

Rep. Sebastian left during the recess. 30 members were present.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$6,295,445 was made by Rep. Gardner, seconded by Rep. Aument.

The amendment eliminates fleet replacement and longevity pay.

It was noted that longevity pay is contractual.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$6,331,130 was made by Rep. Conley, seconded by Rep. Adams.

This is the Town Council's figure and includes the GMEA pay increase and the reduction in computer replacement.

Items discussed were post-closure costs for the landfill and bulky waste site, expenses for vacant schools, replacement of a street sweeper, reductions in overtime, vehicle replacement and use of fleet vehicles.

In response to members' questions, Mr. Oefinger noted that there will likely be no savings from the demolition of Noank School. He would have to consult with Mr. Schneider as to where cuts should be made if this amendment passes, since this was not addressed by the Council.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Ferreira, seconded by Rep. Driscoll.

The vote on moving the question carried 23 in favor, 7 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Cerf, Deane-Shinbrot, Gardner, Kotowski, Newsome and Ambroise.)

The vote on the amendment of \$6,331,130 carried 24 in favor, 6 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. DeMatto, Driscoll, Granatosky, Heede, Massett and Merritt.)

Account 2020 - Sewer Operating Fund

A motion for \$6,044,183 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

Mr. Schneider reported that the increase over last year's figure is due to the decrease in flows from commercial customers and the fact that less can be applied from fund balance.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$6,004,642 was made by Rep. Cerf, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

The amendment reduces computer replacement and vehicle replacement.

Mr. Oefinger explained that vehicle replacement is always fully funded in this account.

The motion to amend and the second were withdrawn.

The vote on \$6,044,183 carried 27 in favor, 3 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Kotowski and Pasqualini.)

Account 2030 - Solid Waste Fund

A motion for \$2,548,129 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Conley.

Items discussed included revenue streams, the commercial collection rate, tipping fees, generation of electricity from trash, and fees paid for electricity by CL&P.

The vote on \$2,548,129 carried unanimously.

Account 6040 - Fleet Reserve Fund

A motion for \$1,395,591 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. DeMatto.

It was noted that a reduction in this account would have no effect on the mill rate and that reductions must be taken in individual accounts.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$1,195,591 was made by Rep. Cerf, seconded by Rep. Gardner.

This is the Town Council figure which eliminates the street sweeper.

Members and staff discussed the cost of the street sweeper, repairs, replacement of a 2011 vehicle, and re-purposing of vehicles.

The vote on \$1,195,591 carried 24 in favor, 6 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Collins, Conley, Driscoll, Granatosky, Merritt and Svencer.)

There was consensus to continue with consideration of accounts after 10:00 p.m.

Capital Item - Traffic Signal Replacement and Upgrade

A motion for \$25,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Steinfeld.

This amount will come from Capital Reserves and will be used for planning and engineering. Items discussed included savings and cost of operations for LED's, location of lights to be replaced, snow build-up on LED's, DOT guidelines, and the process for planning and engineering.

Rep. Ryley left during discussion of this account. 29 members were present.

The vote on \$25,000 carried 28 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Kotowski.)

Capital Item - Route 1 Claude Chester/Vergennes Court

A motion for \$118,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Steinfeld.

Members and staff discussed the delay in undertaking this project.

MOTION TO AMEND to -0- was made by Rep. Gardner, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

Rep. Gardner noted that this area has existed in its current state for a long time and that this is an opportunity to save taxpayer money.

It was explained that these are LoCIP funds.

The dangerous conditions of the road in this area were noted and the project was described, including moving the crosswalk. The timing of the project was discussed and Rep. Gardner requested statistics on the safety of the area before and after completion of the project.

The vote on the amendment of -0- failed 1 in favor, 28 opposed. (In favor: Rep. Gardner.)

The vote on \$118,000 carried 28 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Gardner.)

There was consensus to continue with consideration of accounts.

Capital Item - Reconstruction of Intersection Crystal Lake Rd/Military Highway

A motion for \$960,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Steinford.

Mr. Oefinger explained that this item is financed by federal and State funds with a ten percent match from Capital Reserve.

The vote on \$960,000 carried unanimously.

Capital Item - Local Drainage Improvements/New Installations

A motion for \$23,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Gardner.

MOTION TO AMEND to -0- was made by Rep. Kotowski, seconded by Rep. Aument.

Rep. Kotowski believes that this item can be deferred in the interest of lowering the mill rate.

Mr. Schneider explained that many of these drainage projects are small and that design and construction is done in-house. He also addressed questions about the severity of the problem and possible liability for the Town.

The vote on the amendment of -0- failed 3 in favor, 26 opposed. (In favor: Reps. Aument, Gardner and Kotowski.)

The use of different designs and materials to prevent drainage problems was discussed.

The vote on \$23,000 carried 28 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Kotowski.)

Capital Item - Judson Avenue Drainage

No action will be taken on this item; this project may be the subject of a bonding referendum.

There was no consensus to continue with consideration of accounts.

The Moderator announced that since the regular meeting scheduled for May 8 has been cancelled, the budget session will begin at 7:00 p.m. on that evening.

At 10:40 p.m. the Moderator recessed the meeting until May 8, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.

Budget Session - WEDNESDAY, May 8, 2013

Moderator Jean-Claude Ambroise called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

37 members were present, and a quorum was declared.

The Moderator reported that Reps. Greubel and Loughlin notified the Town Clerk of their absence.

Members Present: Moderator Ambroise, Rep. Adams, Rep. Aument, Rep. Baril, Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Cerf, Rep. Chase-Hildebrand, Rep. Collins, Rep. Conley, Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. DeMatto, Rep. Driscoll, Rep. Ferreira, Rep. Gardner, Rep. Gilly, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Hatcher, Rep. Hedrick, Rep. Heede, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Kotowski, Rep. Massett, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Ryley, Rep. D. Semeraro, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. R. Semeraro, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Svencer, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Watrous and Rep. Williams
Members Absent: Rep. Greubel, Rep. Loughlin and Rep. Whewell

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Finance Director Sal Pandolfo, Public Works Director Gary Schneider, Library Director Betty Anne Reiter, Bill Memorial Library Director Hali Keeler and board members, Mystic & Noank Library Director Lois Hiller and board members, Groton Ambulance President George Law, Mystic River Ambulance President Chris Clarkin, Town Mayor Heather Somers, City Mayor Marian Galbraith and City staff, Groton Long Point Association President John Tuohy board members, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Assistant Town Clerk Sally Whitney.

2013-0119 FYE 2013 Fourth Quarter Transfers

FYE 2013 FOURTH QUARTER TRANSFERS

This matter was Referred to the RTM Finance Committee, due back on June 12, 2013.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE (continued)

Capital Item - Fishtown Road Improvements

A motion for \$45,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Steinfeld.

Chairman Collins noted the reasons for the proposed improvements to this road.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$0 was made by Rep. Gardner, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

Rep. Gardner feels this project could be delayed to avoid raising taxes.

Mr. Schneider explained the impact of flooding in this area. He noted that the number of flood events has increased and stated that federal and State grants will be pursued once the analysis is completed and the project is ready to move forward.

Members discussed the severity and number of flood events; the impact of flooding; emergency response delays; in-house engineering; the estimated cost of the entire project; and the possibility of bonding of this item with the Judson Avenue project.

The Manager noted that the Town Environmental Planner provided the estimated cost of the analysis. He stated that Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and the Army Corps of Engineers will be involved in this project.

The vote on the amendment of \$0 was defeated 2 in favor, 35 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Gardner and Kotowski.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$35,000 was made by Rep. Gardner, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

Rep. Gardner stated he is not confident of the estimated figure for the planning and engineering.

The vote on the amendment of \$35,000 was defeated 5 in favor, 32 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Aument, Cerf, Gardner, Kotowski and McDermott.)

The vote on \$45,000 carried 35 in favor, 2 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Gardner and Kotowski.)

Capital Item - Replacement Sidewalk Construction

A motion for \$0 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Aument.

The vote on \$0 carried 35 in favor, 2 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Sebastian and Steinfeld.)

Capital Item - New Sidewalk Construction-Route 1, Mystic

A motion for \$80,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Driscoll.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$0 was made by Rep. Svencer, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

The Manager noted that these are LoCIP funds and explained the LoCIP program. He reminded the members that cutting this item will not reduce taxes.

The motion and second for the amendment were withdrawn.

Discussion centered on the location of existing sidewalks in Mystic, the time line of the project and the impact on downtown Mystic businesses.

The vote on \$80,00 carried 32 in favor, 5 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Gardner, Granatosky, Kotowski and Swindell.)

Capital Item - Spicer House-Parks & Recreation Office

A motion for \$40,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Adams.

It was noted that these are LoCIP funds.

The vote on \$40,000 carried 35 in favor, 2 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Gardner and Kotowski.)

Capital Item - Police Station

No action will be taken on this item; this project may be the subject of a bonding referendum.

Capital Item - Town Hall

A motion for \$0 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Kotowski and so voted unanimously.

Capital Item - Groton Public Library

A motion for \$45,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

The chairman explained what work will be planned, engineered and completed.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$0 was made by Rep. Kotowski, seconded by Rep. Gardner.

The Manager explained the budget process for CIP's and added that those projects included on the FYE2014 CIP list are the items he considers essential.

The vote on the amendment of \$0 was defeated 5 in favor, 32 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Aument, Cerf, Deane-Shinbrot, Gardner and Kotowski.)

Items discussed were the humidity and heat loads within the building.

The vote on \$45,000 carried 34 in favor, 3 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Cerf, Gardner and Kotowski.)

Capital Item - Town Hall Annex Complex-Annex

A motion for \$65,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

It was noted that these are LoCIP funds.

Members discussed the age and condition of the boiler, mechanical warranties and the Town Council's reduction to this account.

The vote on \$65,000 carried 36 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Kotowski.)

Capital Item - Jabez Smith House

A motion for \$12,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. DeMatto.

The motion and second were withdrawn because the figure was not the one cited in the committee report.

A motion for \$0 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Gardner.

It was noted that the termite infestation was treated, but repairs are needed to prevent further structural damage.

A motion to amend to \$12,000 was made by Rep. Cerf, seconded by Rep. Granatosky.

Rep. Cerf feels that this is a valuable asset that needs to be preserved.

The historical significance of this site and the Town's obligations as stipulated in the deed were discussed. Many members feel it is important for the Town to honor its duty as caretaker and to prevent future damage to any structures located on the property.

The vote on \$12,000 carried 32 in favor, 5 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Deane-Shinbrot, Gardner, Kotowski and Ambroise.)

Capital Item - Golf Course Facilities-Maintenance Building

A motion for \$35,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Conley.

It was stated that these are LoCIP funds.

MOTION TO AMEND to -0- was made by Rep. Kotowski, seconded by Rep. Aument.

Rep. Kotowski feels this is not an essential item and that the golf course should be totally self-sufficient.

Members discussed the options for using LoCIP funds.

The Manager described this item and noted the specific safety issues that this project would

resolve.

The vote on the amendment of \$0 was defeated 18 in favor, 19 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Aument, Barnhart, Cerf, Deane-Shinbrot, Ferreira, Gardner, Gilly, Hatcher, Heede, Kotowski, McDermott, Newsome, Pasqualini, Ryley, D. Semeraro, R. Semeraro, Swindell and Williams.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$25,000 was made by Rep. Swindell, seconded by Rep. Aument.

Rep. Swindell feels that the golf course should share the cost for equipment and building improvements.

The Manager clarified that the golf course is self-sufficient as to operating expenses and explained why this item is being included in the Town's CIP program.

POINT OF ORDER was raised by Rep. Gardner, citing RTM Rule 8.5 Decorum in debate. He stated that he takes issue with the Town Manager's tone.

The Moderator ruled that the point of order was not well taken.

Rules and Procedures Committee Chair Jackie Massett concurred with the decision of the Moderator.

Rep. Kotowski referred to the procedure for appealing the Moderator's decision.

Democratic Floor Leader Patrice Granatosky called for a caucus at 8:25 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 8:45 p.m.

Items discussed included funds returned to the Town for the last three years; safety procedures for the storage of chemicals; the environmental impact of chemicals currently stored on the site; the use of LoCIP funds for this project; and economic and quality of life issues associated with the golf course.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. McDermott, seconded by Rep. Driscoll.

The vote on moving the question carried 33 in favor, 4 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Kotowski, Newsome, Swindell and Ambrose.)

The vote on the amendment of \$25,000 was defeated 12 in favor, 25 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Adams, Aument, Cerf, Ferreira, Gardner, Gilly, Hubbard, Kotowski, McDermott, Newsome, R. Semeraro and Swindell.)

The vote on \$35,000 carried 30 in favor, 7 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Cerf, Gardner, Hatcher, Kotowski, R. Semeraro and Swindell.)

Capital Item - Construction of Permanent Vehicle Wash Facility

A motion for \$25,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Steinfeld.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$0 was made by Rep. Aument, seconded by Rep. Gardner.

Rep. Aument noted that this project failed at a previous referendum and could be delayed.

Damage to the existing building where vehicles are washed was discussed. Other items mentioned were compliance issues for waste water; energy and water usage; the estimated cost of the

project; and generation of revenue by allowing use of the facility by subdivisions and other towns.

Public Works Director Gary Schneider explained that the existing building was not designed for interior washing of vehicles and cited the damage to the building. He noted the reasons for having an interior wash facility for Town vehicles.

The vote on the amendment of \$0 carried 20 in favor, 17 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Baril, Bauer, Chase-Hildebrand, Collins, Conley, Driscoll, Gilly, Granatosky, Heede, Massett, Newsome, Ryley, Sebastian, Steinfeld, Swindell, Watrous and Williams.)

Capital Item - Treatment Facility

A motion for \$800,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. DeMatto and so voted unanimously.

Capital Item - Vacated School Properties

A motion for \$370,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

Members discussed the Town Council's addition of this CIP to the FYE2014 budget and possible uses for the land. Many members questioned rushing into the demolition without an established reuse plan in place. Other items mentioned were maintenance costs, Noank zoning regulations, impact on neighbors, creation of open space, and possible revenue generation from reuse.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$0 was made by Rep. Newsome, seconded Rep. Hubbard.

Rep. Newsome feels that this project is being rushed. He favors delaying one year to review the issue and to establish a proper plan for reuse.

The Manager and Mr. Scheinder explained the costs for demolition and cited the fact that the work needs to be done by a licensed demolition contractor.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Conley, seconded by Rep. Pasqualini.

The vote on moving the question carried 32 in favor, 5 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Kotowski, Newsome, Swindell and Ambrose.)

The vote on the amendment of \$0 carried 32 in favor, 5 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Bauer, Collins, Merritt, Steinfeld and Ambrose.)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES

Chairman Ferreira read the portion of the minutes of the meeting held on April 22, 2013 that pertain to the accounts for this budget session. (Minutes are on file.)

Motion to approve the partial minutes was made by Rep. Ferreira, seconded by Rep. Adams and so voted unanimously.

Account 1063 - Groton Public Library

A motion for \$1,696,662 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Ferreira, seconded by Rep. D Semeraro.

The Moderator noted that this figure reflects the GMEA wage increase and the decrease to the computer replacement fund.

The vote on \$1,696,662 carried 36 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Swindell.)

Account 3310 - Connecticut Fund

A motion for \$59,788 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Ferreira, seconded by Rep.

Adams and so voted unanimously.

Account 10650 - Mystic & Noank Library

A motion for \$170,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Ferreira, seconded by Rep. Hatcher.

The Chairman noted that the committee approved the Town Council's figure which was a reduction to the request.

The vote on \$170,000 carried 35 in favor, 2 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Barnhart and Newsome.)

Account 10651 - Bill Memorial Library

A motion for \$20,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Ferreira, seconded by Rep. Hatcher and so voted unanimously.

Total for Account 1065 - Other Libraries: \$190,000

Rep. Ryley left at 9:58 p.m. 36 members were present.

FINANCE COMMITTEE (continued)

Chairman Granatosky read the minutes of the meeting held on April 11, 2013 (Minutes are on file.)

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Hedrick and so voted unanimously.

Account 10260 - Groton Ambulance

A motion for \$81,950 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Adams.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$106,955 was made by Rep. Baril, seconded by Rep. DeMatto.

The Moderator explained that the Town Council reconsidered this account and increased the figure to include bundled billing subsequent to the RTM Finance Committee meeting.

Robert Holdsworth, billing consultant for both ambulance services, explained bundled billing as it pertains to ambulance and regional paramedic services. He explained his fees and the federal and State legislative actions that created bundled billing by local ambulance services.

Members discussed the impact of bundled billing, allowable reimbursement rates for Medicare/Medicaid and TriCare, and the number of calls for Groton and Stonington.

Mr. Kersey, manager of the paramedic program at Lawrence & Memorial Hospital, clarified the difference between paramedics and emergency medical technicians and reviewed the criteria used to dispatch them.

Discussion continued on consultant fees, collection rates, and unfunded mandates for municipalities.

Rep. Deane-Shinbrot left at 10:37 p.m. 35 members were present.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Hatcher, seconded by Rep. Ferreira.

The vote to move the question carried 29 in favor, 6 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Kotowski, McDermott, Newsome, Swindell and Ambroise.)

The vote on the amendment of \$106,955 carried 24 in favor, 11 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Adams, Aument, Barnhart, Gardner, Hubbard, Kotowski, McDermott, D. Semeraro, R. Semeraro, Streeter)

and Watrous.)

Account 10261 - Mystic River Ambulance

A motion for \$ 37,500 was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Adams.

Chairman Granatosky noted that this is the Town Council's figure. The Town Council reconsidered this account and removed bundled billing because it was not included in the original request. She explained that the committee approved a figure prior to the reconsideration which exceeded what would be allowed by the Town Charter.

The Town Manager noted that a supplemental appropriation could be requested for the bundled billing expense and clarified the oversight in the original budget request.

The vote on \$37,500 carried unanimously.

Total for Account 1026 - Ambulance Services: \$144,455

There was consensus to continue consideration of accounts.

Rep. Pasqualini left at 10:45 p.m. 34 members were present.

Account 10900 - City of Groton Police

A motion for \$2,301,288 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$2,067,909 was made by Rep. Aument, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

Rep. Aument suggested that the reduction could be made to dispatch and Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB).

Members discussed formulating a plan for duplicate services, improved communications between City and Town officials, the police study, and the percentage of funds that the Town contributes to the City police budget.

City Mayor Marian Galbraith and City Police Chief Tom Davoren clarified that the City police budget is one percent less than last year and contains the entire cost attributable to the Police Department. The Mayor identified the shared services between the City and the Town as animal control, marine boat patrol, and the police canine unit.

Rep. Adams left at 11:05 p.m. 33 members were present.

Discussion ensued on the topics of comparable police statistics; FEMA reimbursement funds; the obligation for police protection to City and Groton Long Point (GLP) residents; and consolidation. It was noted that City residents pay additional taxes which support 50 percent of the police budget.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Svencer, seconded by Rep. Collins.

The vote to move the question carried 26 in favor, 7 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Gardner, Kotowski, McDermott, Newsome, Swindell and Ambroise.)

The vote on the amendment of \$2,067,909 was defeated 6 in favor, 26 opposed, 1 abstention. (In favor: Reps. Aument, Gardner, Kotowski, McDermott, D. Semeraro and R. Semeraro. Abstaining: Rep. Steinfeld.)

The vote on \$2,301,288 carried 26 in favor, 6 opposed, 1 abstention. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Gardner, Kotowski, McDermott, D. Semeraro and R. Semeraro. Abstaining: Rep. Steinfeld.)

Rep. Chase-Hildebrand left at 11:48 p.m. 32 members were present.

Account 10901 - City of Groton Highway Maintenance

A motion for \$2,097,998 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. DeMatto.

This motion was withdrawn and it was clarified that by State law, the RTM must approve the Town Council figure.

A motion for 1,854,828 was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. DeMatto.

The Town Manager and City Mayor explained the proceedings for mediation on the reduction made to this account.

Members discussed mediation, the Town Council's logic for the reduction, a possible supplemental appropriation, and opposition that has been expressed to the decrease.

The vote on \$1,854,828 carried 13 in favor, 10 opposed, 9 abstentions. (Opposed: Reps. Baril, Bauer, Cerf, Collins, Driscoll, Granatosky, Gilly, Massett, Merritt, and Newsome. Abstaining: Reps. Barnhart, Conley, DeMatto, Gardner, Hatcher, Hedrick, Hubbard, Steinfeld and Svencer.)

Account 10904 - City of Groton Street Lighting

A motion for \$116,162 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Conley.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$90,100 was made by Rep. Gardner, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

Rep. Gardner feels that the number of street lights is excessive.

Reducing the number of streets lights was discussed.

Reps. Aument and Gilly left at 12:06 p.m. 30 members were present.

The vote on the amendment of \$90,100 was defeated 3 in favor, 27 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Gardner, Kotowski and McDermott.)

The vote on \$116,162 carried 28 in favor, 2 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Gardner and Kotowski.)

Total for Account 1090 - City of Groton: \$4,272,278

There was consensus to continue with consideration of the remaining accounts.

Reps. Granatosky, Hatcher and Kotowski left at 12:12 p.m. 27 members were present.

Account 10910 - Groton Long Point Police

A motion for \$250,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Steinfeld.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$0 was made by Rep. R. Semeraro, seconded by Rep. McDermott.

Rep. R. Semeraro feels that the Town can provide equivalent police patrol services to GLP. He does not support three separate police departments.

Members reiterated that a plan should be in place before reducing or eliminating funding for police services to either the City or GLP. Also discussed were the significantly lower crime rates in this area and the fact that equal coverage could be provided by the Town Police.

GLP President John Tuohy reported on the history of funding for GLP police and the reductions in the Town's contribution for police services. He cited several legal opinions that have been previously obtained.

The vote on the amendment of \$0 was defeated 1 in favor, 25 opposed, 1 non-voting. (In Favor: Rep. R Semeraro. Non-Voting: Rep. Collins)

The vote on \$250,000 carried 23 in favor, 2 opposed, 1 abstention, 1 non-voting. (Opposed: Reps. D. Semeraro and R. Semeraro. Abstaining: Rep. Ferreira. Non-Voting: Rep. Collins.)

Account 10911 - Groton Long Point Highway Maintenance

A motion for \$242,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

The vote on \$242,000 carried 25 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention. (Opposed: Rep. Newsome. Abstaining: Rep. Conley.)

Account 10912 - Groton Long Point Street Lighting

A motion for \$13,789 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. DeMatto and so voted unanimously.

Total for Account 1091 - Groton Long Point: \$505,789

At 12:37 a.m., the Moderator recessed the meeting until May 13, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.

Budget Session - Monday, May 13, 2013

Moderator Jean-Claude Ambroise called the meeting to order at 7:01p.m.

32 members were present, and a quorum was declared.

The Moderator reported that Reps. Barnhart, Driscoll, Ferreira, Greubel and Ryley notified the Town Clerk of their absence. Rep. Hedrick arrived late.

Members Present: Moderator Ambroise, Rep. Adams, Rep. Aument, Rep. Baril, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Cerf, Rep. Chase-Hildebrand, Rep. Collins, Rep. Conley, Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. DeMatto, Rep. Gardner, Rep. Gilly, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Hatcher, Rep. Hedrick, Rep. Heede, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Kotowski, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Massett, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. D. Semeraro, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. R. Semeraro, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Svencer, Rep. Watrous and Rep. Williams
Members Absent: Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Driscoll, Rep. Ferreira, Rep. Greubel, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Ryley, Rep. Swindell and Rep. Whewell

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Finance Director Sal Pandolfo, Administrative Services Director Doug Ackerman, Town Police Chief Michael Crowley, Deputy Chief Steve Smith, Captain Steven Sinagra, Parks & Recreation Director Mark Berry and Parks & Recreation staff, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Assistant Town Clerk Sally Whitney.

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Chairman Pasqualini read the minutes of the meeting held on April 25, 2013. (Minutes are on file.)

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Pasqualini, seconded by Rep. Aument and so voted unanimously.

Account 1024 Public Safety

A motion for \$6,602,191 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Pasqualini, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$6,683,718 was made by Rep. Baril, seconded by Rep. Pasqualini.

Rep. Baril stated that this is the Town Council figure and that he does not support any reduction

in public safety.

Police Chief Michael Crowley addressed the misconceptions regarding the cost of providing police coverage to Groton Long Point if funding had been eliminated for GLP police. He stated that community policing in the Poquonnock Bridge District was eliminated several years ago. He mentioned that the increases for wages and fuel are out of his control. He noted that since 2007 the number of officers has decreased by four and that there is no network officer for Poquonnock Bridge or Navy housing.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$6,630,552 was made by Rep. Cerf, seconded by Rep. Gardner.

This figure represents a reduction to the Fleet contribution without eliminating personnel or affecting services.

Discussion continued about patrol service costs for GLP, staffing levels, and fleet replacement.

Republican Floor Leader Jackie Massett requested a caucus at 7:28 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 7:45 p.m.

Discussion ensued regarding comparable staffing levels and crime statistics in other Connecticut towns.

Chief Crowley explained that demographics, industrial development, tourism and an interstate highway running through our community impact how police services are provided. He believes in being proactive rather than reactive.

Rep. Granatosky explained the merits of Fleet funding to avoid spikes in the budget.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Conley, seconded by Rep. Granatosky.

The vote to move the question carried 22 in favor, 9 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Baril, Deane-Shinbrot, DeMatto, Gardner, Kotowski, Loughlin, Steinford and Ambroise.)

The vote on the amendment of \$6,630,552 was defeated 10 in favor, 21 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Aument, Adams, Cerf, DeMatto, Gardner, Gilly, Hubbard, Kotowski, McDermott and Streeter.)

Rep. Baril stated that the elimination of community policing in Poquonnock Bridge has resulted in an increase in drug trafficking and other crimes in that neighborhood. He is concerned about police response to hot-line calls.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$6,510,970 was made by Rep. D. Semeraro, seconded by Rep. Aument.

Rep. Semeraro disagrees with the two percent wage increase and the Fleet Fund contribution.

Discussion continued about mutual aid provided to GLP, the number of current vacancies in the department, how patrol areas are established, and response times to police calls.

The Chief noted that crime decreased significantly when bike patrols and network officers were assigned to specific areas and with the implementation of the Neighborhood Revitalization Zone. He stated that a proactive approach is initiated when there is an increase in crime activity such as neighborhood larcenies, vandalism or drug trafficking.

Rep. Gardner asked Chief Crowley about police response based on Rep. Baril's comment.

Rep. Baril took exception to Rep. Gardner's interpretation of his comments.

POINT OF ORDER was raised by Rep. Aument that no one was speaking for Rep. Baril.

Moderator Ambroise ruled that the point of order was well taken and noted that members should not address individual comments with a rebuttal, but should address their comments to the Moderator.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Baril.

The vote on moving the question carried 25 in favor, 6 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Adams, Aument, Deane-Shinbrot, Gardner, Kotowski and Ambroise.)

The vote on the amendment of \$6,510,970 was defeated 11 in favor, 20 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Aument, Cerf, Chase-Hildebrand, Deane-Shinbrot, Gardner, Hatcher, Heede, Kotowski, McDermott, D. Semeraro and R. Semeraro.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$6,642,955 was made by Rep. Aument, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

Rep. Aument stated that this figure is a compromise between the Town Council figure and the committee's recommendation. He noted that information concerning the Governor's proposed budget is getting worse and that reductions are needed in this budget and the next.

The vote on the amendment of \$6,642,955 carried 21 in favor, 10 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Bauer, Conley, Granatosky, Hatcher, McDermott, Merritt, Pasqualini, Sebastian, Williams and Ambroise.)

RECREATION COMMITTEE

Chairman Streeter read the minutes of the meeting held on April 11, 2013. (Minutes are on file.) Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Streeter, seconded by Rep. Baril and so voted unanimously.

Account 1064 - Parks & Recreation

A motion for \$1,834,684 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Streeter, seconded by Rep. Adams.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$1,815,040 was made by Rep. Pasqualini, seconded by Rep. Aument.

Rep. Pasqualini objects to the partial allocation of the Golf Course Superintendent's salary to this account and feels that the salary is significantly higher than a comparable private sector position.

The Manager explained that due to reorganization, a position was retitled and a vacant maintenance supervisor position was eliminated, achieving personnel cost savings for both the golf course and Parks & Recreation.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$1,734,684 was made by Rep. Kotowski, seconded by Rep. Gardner.

Rep. Kotowski feels that having a Parks & Recreation Department is not essential.

Members suggested relocating staff from Spicer House to the Senior Center and reusing Spicer House to generate revenue by renting it for special events.

The Manager explained the supervisory duties of the Golf Course Superintendent in order clarify the reasons for the salary allocation.

Parks & Recreation Director Mark Berry explained the renovations that would be necessary prior to renting Spicer House for private events and added that no funds are available. He noted that activity fees collected are deposited into Account 3240- Recreation & Senior Activities.

The vote on the amendment of \$1,734,684 was defeated 8 in favor, 23 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Aument, Cerf, Deane-Shinbrot, Gardner, Hatcher, Kotowski, D. Semeraro and R. Semeraro.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$1,784,684 was made by Rep. Gardner, seconded by Rep. Heede.

In response to Rep. Kotowski's comment that Parks & Recreation is not essential, Mr. Berry enumerated the benefits to the community from the programs that are provided. He noted that it helps promote public safety by keeping youths engaged in healthy and safe activities. Most programs cover their own costs, but summer camp is subsidized. The subsidy for summer camp was established many years ago so that families who otherwise could not afford summer camp would have summer activities for their children.

Rep. Hedrick arrived at 9:05 p.m. 32 members were present.

Items discussed were yearly tax increases; the change in the director's salary from the previous year; provision of programs at a reasonable cost; the variety of programs offered; the quality of life in the community; and the reasons for three separate accounts for Parks & Recreation, Golf Course and Recreation & Senior Activities.

Mr. Berry identified numerous services that would be eliminated if the reduction is approved.

The Town Manager explained why the special revenue fund was created and described how it functions.

Some members noted that their constituents would not want services or programs eliminated. They feel that Parks & Recreation is important to maintain the community's quality of life and to attract new residents.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. McDermott, seconded by Rep. Chase-Hildebrand.

The vote to move the question carried 28 in favor, 4 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Gardner, Kotowski and Ambrose.)

The vote on the amendment of \$1,784,684 was defeated 4 in favor, 28 opposed. (In Favor: Rep. Aument, Gardner, Kotowski and R. Semeraro.)

The Town Manager explained the decrease from last year's figure.

A suggestion was made to investigate whether maintenance for abandoned cemeteries could be done by local historical societies.

The vote on the amendment of \$1,815,040 was defeated 16 in favor, 16 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Baril, Bauer, Conley, DeMatto, Gilly, Granatosky, Hedrick, Heede, Masett, Merritt, Sebastian, Steinfeld, Streeter, Svencer, Williams and Ambrose.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$1,820,966 was made by Rep. Adams, seconded by Rep. Aument.

The vote on the amendment of \$1,820,966 carried 22 in favor, 10 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Bauer, Chase-Hildebrand, Gilly, Granatosky, Heede, Sebastian, Steinfeld, Svencer, Streeter and Ambrose.)

Account 2010 - Golf Course Fund

A motion for \$1,180,203 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Streeter, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

The vote on \$1,180,203 carried 25 in favor, 7 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Cerf, Deane-Shinbrot, Gardner, Kotowski, Loughlin and Pasqualini.)

Account 3240 - Recreation & Senior Activities

A motion for \$973,849 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Streeter, seconded by Rep. DeMatto.

Items discussed were the operational cost increase for the Senior Center kitchen; professional/technical services; materials and supplies; and hours of operation for the Senior Center fitness center.

The vote on \$973,849 carried 29 in favor, 3 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Gardner and Kotowski.)

*Democratic Floor Leader Patrice Granatosky requested a caucus at 9:48 p.m.
The meeting reconvened at 10:00 p.m. 32 members were present.*

Capital Item - Facilities Improvements

A motion for \$50,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Streeter, seconded by Rep. Adams.

The vote on \$50,000 carried 28 in favor, 4 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Baril, DeMatto, Gardner and Kotowski.)

Capital Item - Trail Improvement Program

A motion for \$0 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Streeter, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$30,000 was made by Rep. Cerf, seconded by Rep. Baril.

Rep. Cerf commented that this is a recreational activity enjoyed by all ages and that the improvements are needed.

Moderator Ambrose noted that this is a restoration of funds and a two-thirds vote is necessary for passage.

Several members agreed with Rep. Cerf, but felt that this project could be delayed to save taxpayers' money.

Mr. Berry verified that trail improvements were rated second as a priority behind an aquatic center based on the 2009 resident survey which was part of the Master Plan assessment.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$15,000 was made by Rep. McDermott, seconded by Rep. Gardner.

Rep. McDermott stated that he is the RTM liaison on the Trails Coordinating Task Force. He feels that some funds should be approved.

Items discussed were grant funds earmarked for FYE2015, the impact of reducing funds for FYE2014, and the site that work would be delayed if funding is reduced.

The Manager explained how he assigned LoCIP funds for FYE2013 CIP projects.

The vote on the amendment of \$15,000 was defeated 7 in favor, 25 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Baril, Bauer, Cerf, Chase-Hildebrand, McDermott, Sebastian, and Streeter.)

The vote on the amendment of \$30,000 was defeated 11 in favor, 21 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Baril, Bauer, Cerf, Collins, Gilly, Loughlin, McDermott, Merritt, Sebastian, Steinfeld and Williams.)

The vote on \$0 carried 21 in favor, 11 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Baril, Bauer, Cerf, Collins, Gilly, Loughlin, McDermott, Merritt, Sebastian, Steinfeld, and Williams.)

Capital Item - Open Space Acquisition and Development

A motion for \$25,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Streeter, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$0 was made by Rep. DeMatto, seconded by Rep. Gilly.

The Town Manager reported that this fund has a zero balance and explained that this money is used to match State funding and grants or as a down payment to obtain an option for land purchases. He stated that the Spicer Property was purchased using the remaining funds in this account. He added that the Fusconi property was purchased with a State grant. He noted that there are some properties identified in the Town's Master Plan but there are currently no plans to act on them. He feels that replenishment of this account is important in order to have money available.

The vote on the amendment of \$0 carried 19 in favor, 13 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Adams, Bauer, Collins, Conley, Granatosky, Heede, Loughlin, Sebastian, Steinfeld, Streeter, Svencer, Williams and Ambroise.)

Capital Item - Golf Course Improvement Plan

A motion for \$50,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Streeter, seconded by Rep. Adams.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$25,000 was made by Rep. Aument, seconded by Rep. Gardner.

Rep. Aument stated that this is a luxury item for the community and that this is a reasonable reduction.

Golf Course Superintendent Eric Morrison outlined the details for this project that would be completed in accordance with the Master Plan. He identified how the project would be scaled back if the reduction is approved.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$0 was made by Rep. Kotowski, seconded by Rep. Gardner.

Rep. Kotowski stated that the golf course should be self-sufficient and not supported by taxpayer funds.

Mr. Oefinger spoke about the cost allocation for services that are provided by other departments and noted how he applies the returned funds at the end of a fiscal year toward these expenses.

Some members suggested that the golf course is an asset, but that taxpayer support needs to be reduced.

The vote on the amendment \$0 was defeated 6 in favor, 26 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Aument, Baril, Gardner, Kotowski, D. Semeraro and R. Semeraro.)

The vote on \$25,000 carried 25 in favor, 6 opposed, 1 abstention. (Opposed: Reps. Bauer, Collins, Heede, Merritt, Streeter and Williams. Abstaining: Rep. Kotowski.)

Capital Item - Aquatics Center

A motion for \$60,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Streeter, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$0 was made by Rep. DeMatto, second by Rep. Aument.

In response to members, the Town Manager and Mr. Berry explained why the Mystic Oral School pool is no longer available for use, noting that the Town Council decided not to pursue purchasing the facility from the State. Also emphasized were the reasons to analyze costs and determine the type of pool facility the community wants. It was noted that there are significant differences between a therapeutic pool and a recreational pool.

Members discussed the operational and maintenance costs of a pool; accessibility of pools at Avery Point and Mystic YMCA; the troubled economy; liability costs; and the fact that this is a luxury item that can be delayed.

The vote on the amendment of \$0 carried 31 in favor, 1 abstention. (Abstaining: Rep. Merritt.)

Capital Item - Park Improvement Plan

A motion for \$30,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Streeter, seconded by Rep. Heede.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$15,000 was made by Rep. Adams, seconded by Rep. Gardner.

Rep. Adams feels this is an area that can be reduced.

Mr. Berry explained that the reason for contributing to CIP accounts is to avoid drastic increases in any one budget year. He spoke about the ADA requirements that must be met.

The Manager corrected the CIP description of this project to indicate that the funds for FYE2014 are to implement the project and complete physical improvements as identified in the Master Plan.

Mr. Berry confirmed that the assessment is being done in the current fiscal year. The assessment will identify, prioritize and estimate the costs for completion to meet ADA requirements, replace equipment, and provide maintenance for a number of years.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$0 was made by Rep. Kotowski, seconded by Rep. Aument.

Rep. Kotowski stated that Parks & Recreation personnel should be able to identify the ADA requirements and maintenance issues.

The vote on the amendment of \$0 was defeated 7 in favor, 25 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Aument, Deane-Shinbrot, DeMatto, Gardner, Kotowski, McDermott, and D. Semeraro.)

Mr. Berry stated that new ADA regulations were approved and the Town does not have an employee with current ADA certification. The consultant will identify the ADA issues for all park facilities so that the Town will be compliant with the new regulations. Future maintenance projects will also be identified.

The Manager concurred with the Moderator that the analysis will be completed in FYE2013. FYE2014 funds will allow the purchase of construction materials and supplies. Parks & Recreation staff will complete the work. He noted that it is the Town's intent to have an employee

become ADA certified. He reported that LoCIP funds could potentially be used for a specific project once the comprehensive assessment is completed.

The vote on the amendment of \$15,000 carried 23 in favor, 8 opposed, 1 abstention. (Opposed: Reps. Bauer, Collins, Gilly, Heede, Merritt, Streeter, Svencer and Williams. Abstaining: Rep. Kotowski.)

Rep. Dean-Shinbrot left at 11:08 p.m. 31 members were present.

Capital Item - Noank Dock

A motion for \$20,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Streeter, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

The vote on \$20,000 carried 29 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention. (Opposed: Rep. Kotowski. Abstaining: Rep. Gardner.)

At 11:10 p.m., the Moderator recessed the meeting until May 15, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.

Budget Session - Wednesday, May 15, 2013

Moderator Jean-Claude Ambroise called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.
37 members were present.

The Moderator reported that Rep. Greubel notified the Town Clerk of her absence. Rep. Hubbard arrived late.

Members Present: Moderator Ambroise, Rep. Adams, Rep. Aument, Rep. Baril, Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Cerf, Rep. Chase-Hildebrand, Rep. Collins, Rep. Conley, Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. DeMatto, Rep. Driscoll, Rep. Ferreira, Rep. Gardner, Rep. Gilly, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Hatcher, Rep. Hedrick, Rep. Heede, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Kotowski, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Massett, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Ryley, Rep. D. Semeraro, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. R. Semeraro, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Svencer, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Watrous and Rep. Williams
Members Absent: Rep. Greubel, Rep. Pasqualini Jr. and Rep. Whewell

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Finance Director Sal Pandolfo, Administrative Services Director Doug Ackerman, Human Services Director Marge Fondulas, Interim School Superintendent Dr. John Ramos, Assistant Superintendent Sean McKenna, Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds Bill Robarge, Board of Education Business Manager Carolyn Dickey, Board of Education members, Town Councilor Harry Watson, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Assistant Town Clerk Sally Whitney.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES COMMITTEE (continued)

Chairman Ferreira read partial minutes of the April 17, 2013 meeting pertaining to the accounts scheduled for this budget session. (Minutes are on file.)

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Ferreira, seconded by Rep. Adams and so voted unanimously.

Account 1051 - Human Services

A motion for \$582,392 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Ferreira, seconded by Rep. Hatcher.

Human Services Director Marge Fondulas answered questions relating to previous staff reductions, the economic impact on requested services, and the increased workload on staff. She praised her staff for always going above and beyond to assist the individuals that are in need of their services.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$573,998 was made by Rep. Adams, seconded by Rep. Gilly.

Rep. Adams stated this is the Town Manager's figure.

The motion and second were withdrawn, since the figure placed on the floor was incorrect.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$573,958 was made by Rep. Adams, seconded by Rep. Barnhart. This is the Town Manager's figure.

The Moderator and Town Manager clarified that the Manager's proposed budget figure did not reflect the GMEA wage increase or the Town Council's reduction to computer replacement.

Members observed that this department serves residents of our community who are in need of assistance in difficult economic times.

Ms. Fondulas stated that if the amended figure is approved, staff would be eliminated since she has no other options.

The vote on the amendment of \$573,958 was defeated unanimously.

The vote on \$582,392 carried 35 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Gardner.)

Account 7320 - Human Services Assistance Fund

A motion for \$40,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Ferreira, seconded by Rep. Adams.

The vote on \$40,000 carried 35 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Gardner.)

Account 1054 -Health/Service/Cultural Agencies

A motion for \$1,620,357 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Ferreira, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

Chairman Ferreira stated that the committee moved one figure for Health/Service/Cultural Agencies. He explained that the difference between the Manager's figure and the Council's figure was a slight adjustment made by the Visiting Nurse Association to their original request for School Health.

The vote on \$1,620,357 carried 34 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention. (Opposed: Rep. Gardner. Abstaining: Rep. Swindell.)

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Chairman Hedrick read the minutes of the meeting held on April 23, 2013. (Minutes are on file.) Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Hedrick, seconded by Rep. Massett and so voted unanimously.

Rep. Hubbard arrived at 7:30 p.m. 37 members were present.

Account 1080 - Education Services

A motion for \$73,662,715 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Hedrick, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

The Moderator quoted RTM Rule 8.1-Personal interest/Conflict of interest.

The following disclosures were made: the Moderator's wife works for the Board of Education (BOE); Rep. Deane-Shinbrot works for BOE administration; Rep. Chase-Hildebrand is a retired teacher but receives no pension or benefits from the BOE; Rep. Svencer's wife works for the BOE; Rep. Ryley is employed by the BOE as a middle school teacher.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$73,300,000 was made by Rep. Sebastian, seconded by Rep. Aument.

Rep. Sebastian justified his reduction by noting legal costs and salaries for two superintendents last year until the situation with the former superintendent was resolved. He does not support having assistant principals.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$72,721,298 was made by Rep. Kotowski, seconded by Rep. Adams.

Rep. Kotowski stated that this is last year's figure with the addition of \$75,000 in PILOT funds. She reviewed a memo from the BOE that outlined the effects of a zero increase budget. She feels that the cost for the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IB) is prohibitive. She asked how the salaries were funded for two superintendents and noted that enrollment is declining.

Interim Superintendent Dr. John Ramos stated that funds from unfilled positions were used for the salaries and addressed the concern about decreasing enrollment.

Rep. Williams disclosed that she is a retired teacher.

Items discussed were the number of administrative and teacher positions, SAT scores, and enrollment figures.

Dr. Ramos explained the costs associated with special education students and the number of students attending outside magnet schools or special facilities. He noted that enrollment decreases affect many grades across the entire district and consequently do not allow a decrease in the number of teachers. He addressed the new unfunded State mandate concerning teacher evaluations and confirmed that evaluations must be done by a certified administrator, principal or vice-principal. He stated that the school district could investigate regionalizing curriculum development and noted that professional development has already been regionalized. Dr. Ramos reviewed how reductions were made in order to maintain magnet school transportation in the current budget. He cautioned that for the last several years the BOE has sustained the budget by utilizing federal and State funds; these funds are decreasing dramatically and the difference must come from local revenue.

Rep. Swindell disclosed that he receives health benefits due to the fact that his late wife was employed by the school system. He stated that changes are necessary to teacher contracts in order to restrain wage increases, to equalize wages with the private sector, and to change the laws relating to binding arbitration. He feels that teacher-to-student ratio is affected by the numerous small schools in our district and agrees that regional curriculum development is important.

Discussion continued on the definition of quality education in today's society. It was suggested that unions are hurting the country by their insistence on advantageous contractual benefits.

The vote on the amendment of \$72,721,298 was defeated by 10 in favor, 26 opposed, 1 abstaining. (In Favor: Adams, Aument, Cerf, Gardner, Gilly, Hubbard, Kotowski, McDermott, Sebastian and R. Semeraro. Abstaining: Rep. Deane-Shinbrot.)

Members discussed the cost of the IB program and the effects if the program were eliminated. Some members feel this is an important program and suggested regionalizing it to generate revenue and increasing the availability of the program to all high school grades. Also noted were the exemplary services provided in Groton schools, the unfunded mandates that continue to be approved, and the increased costs to fund special education requirements.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Streeter, seconded by Rep. Merritt.

The vote on moving the question was defeated 23 in favor, 14 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Baril, Collins, Deane-Shinbrot, Gardner, Hedrick, Kotowski, Loughlin, Newsome, Sebastian, D.

Semeraro, Steinfeld, Swindell and Ambrose.) (A two-thirds vote was required.)

BOE Business Manager Carolyn Dickey explained the costs for bus transportation and the method used to calculate the number of buses required.

Rep. Massett requested that a roll call vote be taken on any further figures for this account.

Democratic Floor Leader Patrice Granatosky requested a caucus at 8:55 p.m. The meeting resumed at 9:18 p.m.

Rep. Streeter left during the caucus. 36 members were present.

Members expressed concerns about the continuing decrease in federal and State funding and suggested that a modest increase is necessary after three years of zero increase budgets.

The vote by ROLL CALL on the amendment of \$73,300,000 was defeated 11 in favor, 25 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Adams, Aument, Cerf, Deane-Shinbrot, Gardner, Gilly, Hubbard, Kotowski, McDermott, Sebastian, and R. Semeraro. Opposed: Reps. Baril, Barnhart, Bauer, Chase-Hildebrand, Collins, Conley, DeMatto, Driscoll, Ferreira, Granatosky, Hatcher, Hedrick, Heede, Loughlin, Massett, Merritt, Newsome, Ryley, D. Semeraro, Steinfeld, Svencer, Swindell, Watrous, Williams, and Ambrose.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$73,312,712 was made by Rep. Aument, seconded Rep. Gardner.

Rep. Aument feels that the budget should be reduced to a level that residents can afford. He expressed concern about declining revenues. He supports the Town Council's suggestion to investigate consolidating BOE and Town phone and IT services.

In response to Rep. Granatosky, Moderator Ambrose declared that the amendment for \$73,312,712 was a frivolous motion. He explained that his decision was based on the overwhelming opposition to the last amended figure of \$73,300,000 and the fact that \$12,712 is an insignificant difference based on the total figure for this account.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$73,500,715 was made by Rep. Gardner, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

Rep. Gardner feels that the RTM has undone all the Town Council's efforts to reduce the FYE2014 budget.

The vote by ROLL CALL on the amendment of \$73,500,715 was defeated 9 in favor, 27 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Adams, Aument, Cerf, Gardner, Gilly, Hubbard, Kotowski, McDermott, R. Semeraro. Opposed: Reps. Baril, Barnhart, Bauer, Chase-Hildebrand, Collins, Conley, DeMatto, Deane-Shinbrot, Driscoll, Ferreira, Granatosky, Hatcher, Hedrick, Heede, Loughlin, Massett, Merritt, Newsome, Ryley, Sebastian, D. Semeraro, Steinfeld, Svencer, Swindell, Watrous, Williams, and Ambrose.)

The vote by ROLL CALL on \$73,662,715 carried 28 in favor, 7 opposed, 1 abstention. (In Favor: Reps. Baril, Barnhart, Bauer, Cerf, Chase-Hildebrand, Collins, Conley, DeMatto, Driscoll, Ferreira, Gilly, Granatosky, Hatcher, Hedrick, Heede, Loughlin, Massett, Merritt, Newsome, Ryley, Sebastian, D. Semeraro, Steinfeld, Svencer, Swindell, Watrous, Williams, and Ambrose. Opposed: Reps. Aument, Deane-Shinbrot, Gardner, Hubbard, Kotowski, McDermott, and R. Semeraro. Abstaining: Rep. Adams.)

Capital Item - School Facilities Initiative

A motion for \$125,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Hedrick, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

Moderator Ambroise stated that \$55,000 from an unused CIP will be reappropriated and incorporated into this account.

The Town Manager explained the complexity of funds in this account.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$50,000 was made by Rep. Cerf, seconded Rep. Kotowski.

Rep. Cerf stated that the reasons for the failure of the Phase II school referendum should be identified. In addition, before proceeding with planning, it should be determined what voters will support.

The Moderator noted that the School Planning Task Force is developing a survey to query residents on all aspects of the future development of Town schools.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$0 was made by Rep. Aument, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

Rep. Aument stated that the survey to determine what residents will support should be completed before any funds are appropriated.

Members discussed the use of funds from FYE2013, the reappropriation of funds from another CIP, and the FYE2014 request. Some members felt that this project is being rushed and that the survey should be completed before any further planning is done.

The Town Manager explained the use of CIP funds and the requirements for the State application, including a referendum approved by the voters prior to submittal of the application for State reimbursement. He estimated the time line for completion of school facilities construction and renovation.

Members started discussing the current number of vacant schools and the desire to develop plans for these buildings to generate revenue.

POINT OF ORDER was raised by several members concerning discussion of vacant schools.

The Moderator stated that the point was well taken and asked the members to focus their comments on the amendment on the floor.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Conley, seconded by Rep. Adams.

The vote on moving the question carried 31 in favor, 5 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Gardner, Kotowski, Newsome and Ambroise.)

The vote on the amendment of \$0 was defeated 3 in favor, 32 opposed, 1 abstention. (In Favor: Reps. Aument, Gardner and Kotowski. Abstaining: Rep. Hatcher.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$250,000 was made by Rep. DeMatto, seconded by Rep. Massett.

Rep. DeMatto believes that the school facility initiative should move forward and that funds are in place to act quickly.

Members expressed concerns about rushing forward without the survey results.

The vote on the amendment of \$250,000 was defeated 7 in favor, 27 opposed, 2 abstentions. (In Favor: Reps. DeMatto, Driscoll, Gilly, Massett, Sebastian, Williams and Ambroise. Abstaining: Reps. Hatcher and Merritt.)

Discussion continued on the first amended figure of \$50,000. Discussion included renovation costs; State reimbursement for new construction; improved energy efficiencies; improved security; and the level of funding necessary to develop a plan.

The vote on the amendment of \$50,000 was defeated 8 in favor, 27 opposed, 1 abstention. (In Favor: Reps. Aument, Cerf, Deane-Shinbrot, Gardner, Kotowski, McDermott, Newsome, Sebastian. Abstaining: Rep. Hatcher.)

The Town Manager and the Moderator reviewed the sources of funding for the main motion of \$125,000.

The vote on \$125,000 carried 33 in favor, 3 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Aument, Gardner and Kotowski.)

Capital Item - Asbestos Removal

Chairman Hedrick announced that the BOE has withdrawn this CIP from the FYE2014 budget.

Capital Item - Energy Efficiency Measures

A motion for \$83,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Hedrick, seconded by Rep. DeMatto.

Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds Bill Robarge explained the savings that will be realized by installing sensors and efficient, lower wattage fluorescent lighting.

Members commented that they support energy savings and that the new lights will provide a good return on investment .

The vote on \$83,000 carried 34 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention. (Opposed: Rep. Kotowski. Abstaining: Rep. Gardner.)

Capital Item - Security Enhancements - All Schools

A motion for \$110,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Hedrick, seconded by Rep. Massett and so voted unanimously.

At 10:41 p.m., the Moderator recessed the meeting until May 20, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.

Budget Session - Monday, May 20, 2013

Moderator Jean-Claude Ambroise called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

33 members were present, and a quorum was declared.

The Moderator reported that Reps. Aument, Barnhart, Greubel, Pasqualini and Streeter notified the Town Clerk of their absence. Reps. Chase-Hildebrand, Hedrick, McDermott, Newsome and Watrous arrived later in the meeting.

Members Present: Moderator Ambroise, Rep. Adams, Rep. Baril, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Cerf, Rep. Chase-Hildebrand, Rep. Collins, Rep. Conley, Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. Driscoll, Rep. Ferreira, Rep. Gardner, Rep. Gilly, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Hatcher, Rep. Hedrick, Rep. Heede, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Kotowski, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Massett, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Ryley, Rep. D. Semeraro, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. R. Semeraro, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Svencer, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Watrous and Rep. Williams

Members Absent: Rep. Aument, Rep. Barnhart, Rep. DeMatto, Rep. Greubel, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Streeter and Rep. Whewell

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Finance Director Sal Pandolfo, Administrative Services Director Doug Ackerman, Planning & Development Director Michael Murphy and staff, Probate Judge Nick Kepple, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Assistant Town Clerk Sally Whitney.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES COMMITTEE

Chairman Ferreira read the portion of the minutes of the meetings held on April 17 and April 22, 2013 that pertain to the accounts for this budget session. (Minutes are on file.)

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Ferreira, seconded by Rep. Adams and so voted unanimously.

Account 1007- Regional Agencies

A motion for \$131,125 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Ferreira, seconded by Rep. Adams.

The vote on \$131,125 carried 26 in favor, 2 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Gardner and Kotowski.)

Account 1046 - Planning & Development Services

A motion for \$1,151,201 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Ferreira, seconded by Rep. Adams.

Members discussed the staff reductions in relation to the department's workload, zoning enforcement, and the effects of a slow economy.

The Manager noted that this department is responsible for economic growth and development.

Rep. Newsome arrived at 7:17 p.m. 29 members were present.

The Town Manager reported that the GMEA wage increase and the reduction in computer replacement were included in the Town Council figure. Operating expenses have been reduced and four divisions--Economic Development, Inspection Services, Planning, and Community Development--were combined into one department in the 1990's. He advised members that the reduction included in the committee's recommended figure would result in elimination of personnel.

Chairman Ferreira noted that the committee figure equates to a ten percent reduction and the elimination of one position.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$1,225,485 was made by Rep. Massett, seconded by Rep. Steinfeld.

This is the Town Council figure.

Rep. Watrous arrived at 7:27 p.m. 30 members were present.

POINT OF ORDER was raised by RTM Rules & Procedures Chair Jackie Massett in regard to the comments being made by Rep. Sebastian that about the Planning Director.

Moderator Ambrose ruled that the point of order was well taken and cautioned Rep. Sebastian to observe the rules of decorum.

Discussion continued on the Mystic Streetscape, salaries for Planning & Development employees, the number of employees, building activity, permits, and land use fees.

Manager of Inspection Services Kevin Quinn reported on the number of building permits for the last two years. Mr. Quinn identified the differences between building permits and land use applications.

Planning Director Michael Murphy clarified the number of personnel and corrected misinformation in regard to the Mystic Streetscape project. He distributed a summary of building activity for 2012-2013.

Rep. Chase-Hildebrand arrived at 7:40 p.m. 31 members were present.

Mr. Murphy explained the duties of the Inspectors and Planners and noted their ability to maximize the grants and reimbursements received by the Town. He feels that Groton is a leader in development, growth and energy efficiency.

Concerns were expressed about the decline in the Grand List, enforcement of the NRZ Ordinance, oversight for inspections, continuing economic growth, and marketing to encourage future development. Some members suggested that the department should do more with less.

Mr. Murphy addressed questions on the procedure for encumbrances. He added that the Strategic Plan addresses the future of development in Groton and identifies the support services that are necessary.

Moderator Ambrose requested that Mr. Murphy provide a presentation during the summer to discuss planning and economic development.

Several members praised the department for overseeing the revitalization of Fort Hill Homes and enforcing the blight ordinance. They expressed concern that reductions to this account would compromise the improvements in this neighborhood.

POINT OF ORDER was raised by Rep. Kotowski that positive comments from the members should be restrained as are negative comments.

The Moderator ruled that the point of order was not well taken and referred to RTM Rule 8-Decorum and Debate. The comments in question do not refer to an individual but to the result of reducing this account by \$75,000 and eliminating one employee.

Members continued their review of the performance of the Department of Planning & Development. A suggestion was made to receive a quarterly building activity summary.

The Planning Director explained that Groton has a limited number of sites available for extensive development and that utilities must be extended to new areas to promote future development. He spoke about the reuse of vacant buildings and the expansion of Wal-Mart and Fairview Estates on their existing sites.

The vote on the amendment of \$1,225,485 was defeated 12 in favor, 19 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Baril, Bauer, Driscoll, Ferreira, Heede, Massett, Merritt, Steinfeld, Svencer, Swindell, Watrous and Williams.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$1,213,838 was made by Rep. Williams.

The Moderator ruled that this amendment was frivolous since it differed from the previous figure by only \$11,000.

The Town Manager urged members not to approve the committee's figure, stating that he feels it is not in the best interest of the community. He explained the changes made to this department to streamline and improve efficiency, including the incorporation of Economic Development and Community Development into Planning. He feels that the proposed reduction would affect both economic and building growth in the community and would force the elimination of at least one position.

The vote on \$1,151,201 carried 17 in favor, 14 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Baril, Bauer, Driscoll, Ferreira, Heede, Massett, Merritt, Newsome, Steinfeld, Svencer, Swindell, Watrous, Williams and Ambrose.)

Capital Item - Energy Efficiency Measures

A motion for \$30,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Ferreira, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$0 was made by Rep. Kotowski, seconded by Rep. Gardner.

Members discussed the return on investment for upgrading light fixtures and controls in Town Hall and reuse of these fixtures if renovations are done at Town Hall or Fitch Middle School.

The Manager stated that the savings will pay for this upgrade in three years. He noted that the analysis of the Town Hall renovation as compared to new construction was eliminated from this budget. He reported that Fitch Middle School is still under the control of the Board of Education.

The vote on the amendment of \$0 was defeated 2 in favor, 29 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Gardner and Kotowski.)

The vote on \$30,000 carried 29 in favor, 2 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Gardner and Kotowski.)

Capital Item - Flanders Road Utility Installation

No action will be taken on this item; this project may be the subject of a bonding referendum.

Capital Item - Economic Assistance Fund

A motion for \$50,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Ferreira, seconded by Rep. Adams.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$0 was made by Rep. D. Semeraro, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

Rep. Kotowski feels this is not the year to add funds to this account. This reduction would not affect personnel.

The vote on the amendment of \$0 was defeated 11 in favor, 20 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Adams, Deane-Shinbrot, Ferreira, Gardner, Gilly, Granatosky, Hatcher, Heede, Kotowski, D. Semeraro and R. Semeraro.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$25,000 was made by Rep. Gardner, seconded by Rep. Hatcher.

Rep. Gardner noted that this figure is a compromise.

The Town Manager cited past projects that benefited from these funds and explained that this is a useful tool when negotiating with businesses to develop or renovate existing sites in Groton. He feels it is important to have funds available so that projects that qualify can move forward quickly.

The vote on the amendment of \$25,000 was defeated 14 in favor, 17 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Chase-Hildebrand, Conley, Deane-Shinbrot, Ferreira, Gardner, Gilly, Granatosky, Hatcher, Kotowski, D. Semeraro, R. Semeraro, Swindell, Watrous and Ambroise.)

The vote on \$50,000 carried 25 in favor, 6 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Ferreira, Gardner, Hatcher, Kotowski, D. Semeraro and R. Semeraro.)

The Moderator called a recess at 8:44 p.m. The meeting resumed at 9:02 p.m. 31 members were present.

FINANCE COMMITTEE (continued)

Chairman Granatosky read the portion of minutes of the meeting held on April 22, 2013 that pertain to the accounts for this budget session. (Minutes are on file.)

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Adams and so voted unanimously.

Rep. McDermott arrived at 9:08 p.m. 32 members were present.

Account 1092 - Fire Districts PILOT

A motion for \$246,012 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Adams.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$125,000 was made by Rep. Kotowski, seconded by Rep. Gardner.

Rep. Kotowski stated that this item was on the Town Manager's list of proposed reductions to achieve a zero mill rate increase.

The Town Manager explained the distribution of funds to the fire districts. He noted that the current budget proposed by the Governor maintains level funding for the PILOT program.

Rep. Hedrick arrived at 9:10 p.m. 33 members were present.

The vote on the amendment of \$125,000 was defeated 4 in favor, 28 opposed, 1 abstention. (In Favor: Reps. Baril, Gardner, Kotowski and R. Semeraro. Abstaining: Rep. Hedrick.)

Members discussed the wisdom of cutting these funds without a plan.

MOTION TO AMEND TO \$91,462 was made by Rep. Baril, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

Rep. Baril feels that the Poquonnock Bridge District apparently does not need the funding, since they approved a significant reduction to their budget.

The Town Manager and Town Clerk agreed that funds could be reduced, but suggested that a specific statement should be made to specify that the reduction eliminates PILOT funds for Poquonnock Bridge.

The vote on \$91,462 was defeated 9 in favor, 23 opposed, 1 abstention. (In Favor: Reps. Baril, Deane-Shinbrot, Gardner, Gilly, Kotowski, Loughlin, McDermott, D. Semeraro and R. Semeraro. Abstaining: Rep. Merritt.)

The vote on \$246,012 carried 29 in favor, 3 opposed, 1 abstention. (Opposed: Reps. Gardner, Gilly and Kotowski. Abstaining: Rep. Merritt.)

Account 1077 - Contributions to Other Funds

A motion for \$200,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Driscoll.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$0 was made by Rep. D Semeraro, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

Rep. Kotowski feels that this contribution is not essential, noting that it was included on the Town Manager's list of accounts to limit the increase in the mill rate.

Members discussed the impact on the Revaluation Fund and Fleet Reserve Fund if this account is reduced.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$35,000 was made by Rep. Cerf, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

Rep. Cerf believes that money for the Revaluation Fund is necessary, since it is a statutory

requirement to complete a revaluation every five years. She opposes additional money being approved for the Fleet Reserve Fund.

Members discussed yearly approval of funds for vehicle replacement in lieu of the yearly contribution to the Fleet Reserve Fund.

The vote on the amendment of \$35,000 was defeated 8 in favor, 25 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Deane-Shinbrot, Ferreira, Gardner, Hatcher, Kotowski, D. Semeraro, R. Semeraro and Ambroise.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$100,000 was made by Rep. Adams, seconded by Rep. Hubbard.

Rep. Adams expressed agreement with comments made by Rep. Cerf, but stated that this amendment is an attempt to reach a compromise.

The vote on the amendment of \$100,000 carried 17 in favor, 16 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Baril, Bauer, Conley, Collins, Driscoll, Granatosky, Hedrick, Loughlin, Massett, Merritt, Ryley, Sebastian, Steinfeld, Svencer, Swindell and Williams.)

Account 1076 - Debt Service

A motion for \$4,427,687 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. D. Semeraro and so voted unanimously.

Account 2060 - Mumford Cove

A motion for \$21,078 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Svencer and so voted unanimously.

Account 4010 - Groton Sewer District

A motion for \$1,181,810 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Driscoll.

The vote on \$1,181,810 carried 31 in favor, 2 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Gardner and Kotowski.)

Account 1074 - Contingency

A motion for \$350,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

Moderator Ambroise noted that the committee's recommendation is a restoration to the Town Manager's figure and would need a two-thirds vote.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$250,000 was made by Rep. Kotowski, seconded by Rep. D. Semeraro.

Rep. Kotowski stated that this is one of the items identified for reduction by the Town Manager to achieve a zero mill rate increase.

Members discussed several accounts that were reduced even though it had been noted that additional appropriations from Contingency would probably be necessary. Some members suggested that it would not be wise to reduce Contingency when several requests for additional appropriations are anticipated. Other items discussed were the impact of Storm Sandy on the Contingency Fund and procedures for emergency funding.

The Town Manager explained the operation of the Contingency Fund and noted that rather than accumulating, unexpended money is returned yearly to the General Fund. In response to several comments, the Manager explained the Town's policy for maintaining and using Fund Balance. He commented on how using Fund Balance affects the Town's bond rating.

Other items discussed were the legal costs for mediation with the City of Groton and the amount of Contingency transfers for the union and non-union wage increases.

The vote on the amendment of \$250,000 was defeated 11 in favor, 22 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Cerf, Chase-Hildebrand, Deane-Shinbrot, Ferriera, Gardner, Hatcher, Kotowski, McDermott, Ryley, D. Semeraro and R. Semeraro.)

The vote on \$350,000 carried 26 in favor, 7 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Ferreira, Gardner, Hatcher, Kotowski, D. Semeraro and R. Semeraro.)

Account 5010 - Capital Reserve Fund

A motion for \$2,419,000 was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

Finance Director Sal Pandolfo explained the purpose and operation of this account as well as the formula used to determine the correct figure.

The vote on \$2,419,000 carried 30 in favor, 2 opposed, 1 abstention. (Opposed: Reps. Gardner and Kotowski. Abstaining: Rep. Williams.)

Account 1075 - Capital Reserve Contribution

A motion for \$2,000,000 was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Adams.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$1,500,000 was made by Rep. Kotowski, seconded by Rep. Gardner.

Rep. Kotowski stated that this reduction is based on the Manager's list of possible items to be reduced in order to limit the mill rate increase.

The Town Manager stated that the list was produced in response to the RTM's request for items that could be reduced or eliminated in order to limit the mill rate increase, but that he does not recommend these reductions. He explained that the elimination of funding for these accounts would create a budget under which the taxpayers are paying yearly for items rather than planning for the future.

Rep. Ryley left at 10:04 p.m. 32 members were present.

Members discussed the purpose of this account.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$1,619,000 was made by Rep. Cerf, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

Rep. Cerf feels that the RTM has worked hard to reduce capital expenditures and does not favor increasing the Capital Reserve Fund.

Mr. Pandolfo quoted from the Groton Town Code of Ordinances regarding the allocation to the Capital Reserve Fund.

Members discussed the expenditures and revenue contributions that affect this fund.

The Town Manager strongly urged members to support the Town Council figure. He voiced concern that the RTM is moving toward creating budgets that will have yearly spikes in expenditures and use more funds from Capital Reserve.

Moderator Ambroise requested that Rep. Svencer temporarily act as Moderator to allow him to take part in the debate from the floor.

Rep. Ambroise expressed concern with many statements made about the goals of the RTM. He

assured both the members and the public that it is not the RTM's intent to make arbitrary cuts in order to reduce taxes. It is the RTM's responsibility to review the budget and to approve or reduce expenditures by a majority vote. He stressed the importance of making yearly contributions to this account as a means of investing in the future of the community.

Members noted that their actions on the budget have been based on requests from their constituents to reduce expenditures while maintaining the current level of taxation or achieving only a modest increase.

The vote on the amendment of \$1,619,000 was defeated 13 in favor, 18 opposed, 1 abstention. (In Favor: Reps. Ambroise, Cerf, Ferreira, Deane-Shinbrot, Gardner, Gilly, Hatcher, Kotowski, McDermott, Newsome, Sebastian, D. Semeraro, and R. Semeraro. Abstaining: Rep. Williams.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$1,800,000 was made by Rep. Cerf, seconded by Rep. Kotowski.

This is a compromise figure.

Members discussed the merits of the proposed amendment.

The vote on the amendment of \$1,800,000 carried 18 in favor, 13 opposed, 1 abstention. (Opposed: Reps. Adams, Baril, Bauer, Chase-Hildebrand, Collins, Driscoll, Granatosky, Heede, Hubbard, Loughlin, Massett, Merritt and Steinfeld. Abstaining: Rep. Williams.)

H. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 10:31 p.m. was made by Moderator Ambroise, seconded by Rep. Svencer and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk
Clerk of the RTM*

Sally A. Whitney, Assistant Town Clerk