



# Town of Groton, Connecticut

## Meeting Minutes

### Representative Town Meeting

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

**Moderator Scott L. Newsome, Representatives Karin Adams, Robert Bailey, Jeanne Baker, Joe Baril, Alicia T. Bauer, Rafael Burgos, Jr., Clarence Casper, Bobbi Jo Cini, Christine Conley, Lynn Crockett Hubbard, Susan Deane-Shinbrot, Luanne DeMatto, Jim Evans, Thomas A. Frickman, Bob Garcia, Nancy Gilly, Matthew G. Longino, Jim Loughlin, Emily Maher, Brandon Marley, Jackie Massett, Lisa McCabe, Bruce A. McDermott, Roscoe L. Merritt, Jim Nault, Kathy Neugent, Lian Obrey, Juliette M. Parker, Richard J. Pasqualini, Jr., Carolann Quinn, Dutcha Sliker-Hersant, Joan Steinfeld, Irma J. Streeter, James L. Streeter, Archie Swindell, Patricia Wagner, Lori A. Watrous, Gary Welles, Ivy R. Williams, and Jonathan Wilson.**

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Wednesday, June 8, 2016

7:30 PM

Groton Senior Center

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#### REGULAR MEETING

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*Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.*

#### A. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Rep. Adams, Rep. Bailey, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Conley, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. Evans, Rep. Frickman, Rep. Sliker-Hersant, Rep. Gilly, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Maher, Rep. Massett, Rep. McCabe, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Nault, Rep. Neugent, Rep. Quinn, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Welles and Rep. Wilson

Members Absent: Moderator Newsome, Rep. Baker, Rep. Baril, Rep. Burgos, Jr., Rep. Casper, Rep. Cini, Rep. DeMatto, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Longino, Rep. Marley, Rep. Obrey, Rep. Parker, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Streeter, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Wagner, Rep. Watrous and Rep. Williams

*She stated that 23 members were present and a quorum was declared.*

*Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Town Mayor Bruce Flax, Planning and Development Director Jon Reiner, Assistant Director of Planning and Development Deborah Jones, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Town Clerk Office Assistant II Michael Thorpe.*

*Due to the absence of Moderator Scott Newsome, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher called for the election of a Moderator Pro Tempore.*

*Rep. McDermott made a motion to elect Rep. Christine Conley as Moderator Pro Tempore, seconded by Rep. Loughlin and so voted unanimously.*

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

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

#### C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING APRIL 28 2016

*A motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Wilson, seconded by Rep. Massett.*

*Rep. Welles requested to amend his statement on page 8 under Capital Item - North Stonington Road Bridge. He asked that the word "uses" be changed to "had used."*

*Moderator Pro Tempore Conley requested to amend her statement on page 32 under Golf Course Comfort Station. She asked the word "any" be changed to "more." She also made a clarification of her statement on page 14, Account 1006 - Legal Services. In reference to her statement that the Town Attorney's legal opinions are good but expensive. She clarified that the Town is billed in 6 minute increments.*

*Moderator Pro Tempore Conley announced that the Town Clerk's Office made an amendment on*

page 34 under Public Safety Committee. The date of the second meeting was changed from April 13, 2016 to May 4, 2016.

Moderator Pro Tempore Conley moved to approve the amended minutes.

The vote on approval of the amended minutes carried 22 in favor, 1 abstention. Abstaining: Rep. Swindell.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 11 2016**

A motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Rep. Adams, seconded by Rep. Deane-Shinbrot.

The vote on approval of the minutes carried 22 in favor, 1 abstention. Abstaining: Rep. Swindell.

#### **D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS**

None.

#### **E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS**

Moderator Pro Tempore Conley stated that Reps. Baker, Burgos, Casper, Cini, Newsome, Obrey, Parker, Pasqualini, Wagner and Williams notified the Town Clerk of their absence.

She mentioned the 4th of July Parade and if anyone is interested in participating to contact the Groton Parks and Recreation on or before June 10, 2016.

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

##### **1. Financial report**

Town Manager Mark Oefinger reported that the Fund Balance as of May 31, 2016 was approximately \$9.1 million. He reported that the General Contingency amount for FYE 2016 was appropriated at \$550,000 and pending transfers of \$212,704, 4th quarter transfers, will reduce the Contingency balance to zero. The Capital Reserve Fund balance as of May 31, 2016 is \$706,811. This increase is related to school building grant reimbursements of \$291,144 for Fitch Senior High School roof and Cutler Middle School portables.

##### **2. Monthly briefing**

Town Manager Mark Oefinger highlighted items from the Town Manager's Monthly News report. He reported on the status of the Streetlight Conversion Project. He stated that Tanko Lighting completed their inventory and inspection of 1501 Town-owned street lights in the Eversource service area. The inventory and inspection included the Town's municipal parking lots and park lighting in the Groton Utility area. He mentioned that during the month of June, all dogs over the age of six months, must be licensed with proof of a current rabies vaccination in the State of Connecticut. He explained that milling and paving project being conducted by the Connecticut DOT on Fort Hill Road, from South Road to Ring Drive, should be completed by June 15, 2016. He announced that the Groton Community Meals started offering an evening meal on June 6th from 6:00 p.m to 7:00 p.m. at the Groton Senior Center. They will be serving dinner on the 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th Mondays of each month. On the 3rd Monday of every month, the meal will be served at the Faith Lutheran Church from 6:00 p.m to 7:00 p.m. He referred to attachment 6 of the Town Manager's News is a letter from the Groton Ambulance Association notifying various entities that they will begin charging for standby service beginning September 1, 2016. He also referred to attachment 7 of the Town Manager's News, explaining that it is a comparison by function for the FYE 2016 Adopted/Adjusted Budget to the Adopted FYE 2017 Budget.

Responding to Rep. Neugent, Town Manager Mark Oefinger stated that the newly appointed members of the Charter Revision Commission will be issued Town email addresses and posted on the Town website. Any ideas or comments are welcome to be sent to any or all members of the Commission.

Responding to Rep. McDermott, Town Manager Mark Oefinger reported that the developer of the William Seely School property was still in discussions with the adjacent property owner. He stated that there is more interest in residential use rather than commercial use of the property. Planning and Development Director Jon Reiner added that no permits have been pulled for any projects on this property and that the developer is weighing his options.

In response to Rep. Swindell's question about the Groton Heights School property, Town Manager Mark Oefinger stated that the standard objective is to sell the property. Planning and Development Director Jon Reiner noted that there will be a meeting in the next couple of weeks to look at the environmental studies that had been completed for this property. He mentioned the \$15,000 that was recently approved in the budget to assist in marketing and selling Town-owned vacant properties. He added that his department is actively looking at disposing these properties and that he will provide updates to the RTM in the near future.

Moderator Pro Tempore Conley mentioned that she had heard from several local business owners concerning the commercial refuge collection litigation. She stated that they had received their refund checks and were very appreciative.

#### **G. REPORT ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Director of Planning and Development Jon Reiner addressed the RTM. He outlined the agenda for the 2016 Plan of Conservation and Development Public Hearing to be held on June 29, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. in Community Room 1 at the Town Hall Annex. He updated members on development activities in the Town of Groton. Among items discussed were new business, business expansion and future projects.

Responding to numerous questions, Director Reiner clarified that the Plan of Conservation and Development addresses the Town of Groton, including Noank. The U.S. Navy Base, City of Groton and Groton Long Point have their own Plan of Conservation and Development. He added that it is a 10 year planning document that lays out a vision for the Town. The plan proposes projects, studies and regulations to implement said vision. He acknowledged that one of the many broad themes of the plan were to promote walkable developments and to allow more types of housing.

Responding to Rep. McDermott, Director Reiner stated that they have been in contact with the Airport Corporation concerning the Plan of Conservation and Development. He stated that it is unknown at this time if any new carriers to provide commercial transportation will be coming to the airport in Groton.

#### **H. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

None.

#### **I. LIAISON REPORTS**

None.

#### **J. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

##### **1. FINANCE - Chairman Quinn**

Chairman Quinn read the minutes of the meeting held on June 8, 2016. The minutes are on file in the Town Clerk's office.

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Quinn, seconded by Rep. McCabe and so voted unanimously.

**2016-0105**

**FYE 2016 Fourth Quarter Transfers**

RESOLUTION FOR FYE 2016 FOURTH QUARTER TRANSFERS

transfers from the Contingency function during the year and

WHEREAS, the Town Charter also provides for the transfer of funds from one departmental function to another departmental function during the last three months of the fiscal year, and

WHEREAS, transfers are necessary and represent unforeseen or unexpected expenditures at the time the FYE 2016 budget was adopted, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that transfers totaling \$212,704 be transferred from Contingency (#1074) to the following General Fund departments/functions and transfers of \$10,000 or more are referred to the RTM for approval:

Legal Services (#10060 5290) @ \$197,704;  
For costs associated with miscellaneous litigation

Insurance & Claims (#10706 5154) @ \$15,000;  
For increase in unemployment costs

Refer to RTM

**This matter was Adopted.**

**2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES - Chairman Conley**

*No meeting, no report.*

**3. EDUCATION - Chairman Neugent**

*No meeting, no report.*

**4. RECREATION - Chairman Wilson**

*No meeting, no report.*

**5. PUBLIC SAFETY - Chairman McDermott**

*No meeting, no report.*

**6. PUBLIC WORKS - Chairman Deane-Shinbrot**

*No meeting, no report.*

**7. RULES & PROCEDURES - Chairman Massett**

*Chairman Massett read the minutes of the meeting held on June 8, 2016. The minutes are on file in the Town Clerk's office.*

*Rule 3.7 & 3.7.1 were discussed at this meeting and it was determined that because the City of Groton is part of the Town of Groton there was no need to include additional language for this distinction.*

*A motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Massett, seconded by Rep. Adams and so voted unanimously.*

*Chairman Massett read the minutes of the second portion of the meeting held on June 8, 2016. The minutes are on file in the Town Clerk's office.*

*Chairman Massett stated that Rule 6.4.1.2 was discussed at this meeting and because the Freedom of Information Act covers this how minutes are recorded for the public, it was determined that there was no need for a change at this time.*

*A motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Massett, seconded by Rep. Hubbard and so voted unanimously.*

Chairman Massett explained that because there was not a quorum at the meeting a vote was not taken. She requested that the referrals be brought before the body of the RTM for a decision.

Moderator Pro Tempore Conley stated that the RTM could vote on this referral.

Chairman Massett made a motion not to amend the RTM Rules and to close the referral, seconded by Rep. Adams.

Rep. Wilson made an amendment to the motion on the floor to accept the changes, seconded by Rep. Merritt.

Reps. Gilly and McDermott suggested that the rules be left alone at this time.

Ex-officio Member Mayor Bruce Flax stated that the Town encompasses 9 Fire Districts, the City of Groton, Groton Long Point, Noank and Mystic and everyone who resides in these areas are part of the Town of Groton. He stated that adding language to separate one from another may complicate things.

The vote on the first amended motion failed 1 in favor, 22 opposed. In favor: Rep. Wilson.

The vote on the motion not to amend the RTM Rules and to close referral 2016-0066 carried unanimously.

2016-0066

**Recommended Changes to the Rules of the 30th RTM**

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

**K. BUDGET DISCUSSIONS**

Rep. McDermott stated that the RTM had recently gone through a difficult budget session where there were long nights and many roll call votes taken. He noted that in a few neighboring states, their Representative Town Meeting uses an electronic voting system. He added that he had conducted some research and determined that the cost for a reliable system would be approximately \$2,500.00. He feels this would be a positive addition to the RTM. He would like a referral to the Rules and Procedures Committee for their recommendation.

Moderator Pro Tempore Conley referred this matter to the Rules and Procedures Committee.

Rep. McDermott mentioned that he watched the tape of the Town Council Committee of the Whole Meeting held on May 24, 2016. He voiced his concerns over comments made by some of the Councilors and the Town Manager relating to the RTM. He stated that the RTM carried out their duties in a very serious and thoughtful manner when it came to this year's budget sessions. He added that the RTM should establish a Task Force to initiate a process for dialogue between the RTM and the Town Council before next year's budget session's begin.

Moderator Pro Tempore Conley stated that she would report to Moderator Newsome to set up a meeting.

Rep Nault also voiced his concerns over the comments voiced by the Town Council Committee of the Whole Meeting held on May 24, 2016. He noted that the RTM did a good job getting all points of view across before making any decisions concerning the budget. He acknowledged that he was not happy with a tax increase but had it not been for the RTM the increase would have been much more. He continued to say that any negative comments should be disregarded and that the RTM should move forward with a positive attitude and continue to do what is best for the Town of Groton. He also mentioned that at a recent public hearing for the Charter Revision Commission, many residents asked the commission to look at ways to reduce future tax increases.

**2016-0165 RTM Electronic Voting**

RTM Electronic Voting

Referred

**L. OTHER BUSINESS**

*Rep. Wilson thanked Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher for her compliment regarding the method that he used for writing the referrals that he had submitted. He reminded everyone to register their dogs this month.*

*Moderator Pro Tempore Conley offered congratulations to Rep. Gilly for earning her degree in Accounting and to Rep. Maher for earning her degree at the UCONN School of Business.*

**M. ADJOURNMENT**

*A motion to adjourn was made by Rep. Wilson, seconded by Rep. Adams and so voted unanimously. Moderator Pro Tempore Conley adjourned the meeting at 8:48 p.m.*

*Attest:*

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk  
Clerk of the RTM*

*Michael Thorpe, Town Clerk Office Assistant II*