



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 Christine Conley, Representatives Karin Adams, Jean-Claude Ambroise, Joseph Baril, Alicia Bauer, Jordan Brayman, Susan Deane-Shinbrot, Luanne E. DeMatto, John A. Espada, Robert M. Garcia, Patrice Granatosky, Conrad F. Heede, Lynn Crockett Hubbard, Rosanne Kotowski, Matthew G. Longino, Jim Loughlin, Lisa M. Luck, Brandon Marley, Jackie Massett, Bruce A. McDermott, Roscoe Merritt, Scott Meyer, Douglas Monaghan, Karen Morton, Kathy Neugent, Scott Newsome, Juliette M. Parker, Richard J. Pasqualini, Jr., Shawn Powers, Richard Semeraro, Bill Smith, Judith Strode, Mark Svencer, Archie C. Swindell, Fred Turnbull, Patricia Wagner, Lori A. Watrous, Ivy R. Williams and Jonathan E. Wilson

Wednesday, June 10, 2015

7:30 PM

Groton Senior Center

REGULAR MEETING

A. ROLL CALL

*Moderator Conley called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.
28 members were present and a quorum was declared.*

Members Present: Moderator Conley, Rep. Adams, Rep. Ambroise, Rep. Kotowski, Rep. DeMatto, Rep. Espada, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Heede, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Longino, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Massett, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Meyer, Rep. Monaghan, Rep. Morton, Rep. Neugent, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Powers, Rep. Semeraro, Rep. Smith, Rep. Strode, Rep. Turnbull, Rep. Wagner, Rep. Wilson and Rep. Brayman

Members Absent: Rep. Baril, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. Luck, Rep. Marley, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Parker, Rep. Svencer, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Watrous and Rep. Williams

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Finance Director Cindy Landry, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael Graner, Town Mayor Rita Schmidt, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Office Assistant II Michael Thorpe.

B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

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

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF

1. Budget meeting April-May 2015

*A motion to approve the minutes was made Rep. Garcia, seconded by Rep. Adams. The vote on approval of the minutes carried 27 in favor, 1 abstention.
(Abstaining: Rep. Kotowski.)*

2. Regular meeting May 13, 2015

A motion that the minutes be approved was made by Rep. Ambroise, seconded by Rep. Meyer. The vote on approval of the minutes carried 26 in favor, 2 abstentions. (Abstaining: Reps. Garcia and Kotowski.)

D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

None.

E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

Moderator Conley welcomed Rosanne Kotowski as the newest member of the RTM representing the 5th District.

Reps. Marley, Parker, Svencer, Watrous and Williams notified the Town Clerk that they were unable to attend tonight's meeting.

All are welcome to join in the fourth of July parade.

F. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

1. Financial report

Mr. Oefinger reported that the Fund Balance as of May 31, 2015 is approximately \$11.0 million: the General Contingency balance is \$288,630; the Capital Reserve balance is estimated at \$2,478,977 as of May 31, 2015.

2. Monthly briefing

The Town Manager highlighted various items from the Town Manager News including the Mystic Lions Club donation of \$11,750 which combined with a previously received donation of \$1,500 resulted in a total community award of \$13,250 to the Human Services department. He mentioned the Veteran's Memorial Tile Program is open to all veteran's, and the Flag Day celebration on Sunday June 14th at 12:00 p.m. at Liberty Pole Sqaure in downtown Mystic. He added that there was information provided about the Groton School Facilities in the frequently asked questions attachment of his newsletter and it is also on the Town website.

Responding to Rep. Ambroise, Mr. Oefinger stated he does not believe that the Town would be reimbursed for any Police expenses during President Obama's visit to the area for the Coast Guard graduation.

Responding to Reps. Morton and Smith, Mr. Oefinger stated that he was aware the State budget would reduce grant money in FY 2018 if the current Town budget is more than 2.5 % from the previous year. He added that the Town received approximately \$78,000 less than anticipated for this years larger grants.

G. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael Graner reported the town will receive an additional \$1,071,431.93 over the next year from the FY13&14 Impact Aid grant. He mentioned that the BOE budget has two accounts that were able to realize some significant savings. The energy account had savings of \$159,460, and the repair and maintenance account approximately \$143,000. The total savings of \$302,460 will be returned to the General Fund. He stated that they continue to have problems with the forms that are required to be filled out for Impact Aid grants, especially for Subase personnel and their dependents. He noted that they have a great relationship with the Subase and that he is currently in conversation with Congressman Courtney concerning this matter.

H. LIAISON REPORTS

Rep. McDermott reported for the Parks & Recreation/Trails Liaison. He reported that the Hartford Current had a recent article highlighting the National Trails Day and the Cross Town Trail held on June 6th. He added that the Town website had done an outstanding job promoting them.

Rep. Massett stated that Dr. Graner had already discussed what was said at the last meeting for the BOE Town Council RTM City Council Liaison.

I. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. FINANCE - Chairman Granatosky

*Chaiman Granatosky read the minutes of the meeting held on June 3, 2015.
(Minutes are attached to the permanent record.)*

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Granatosky seconded by Rep. DeMatto and so voted unanimously.

2015-0095 FYE 2015 Fourth Quarter Transfers

RESOLUTION FOR FYE 2015 FOURTH QUARTER TRANSFERS

WHEREAS, the Town Charter provides for supplemental appropriations to Adopted Budgets and 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 and a supplemental appropriation are necessary and represent unforeseen or unexpected expenditures at the time the FYE 2015 budget was adopted, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that transfers totaling \$288,630 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:

Human Services (#10511-5609) Evictions @ \$2,989;
for unreimbursed relocation costs of City residents

Legal Services (#10060-5290) @ \$175,000;
for costs associated labor negotiations and Pettini lawsuit

Regional Agencies (#10071-5230) @ \$1;
Agency billed more than budgeted amount

Finance (#10130 5109) @ \$15,600;
For accumulated leave payment due to employee retirement & resignation

Public Works Snow/Ice Control (#10356 various) \$95,040;
For additional costs associated with materials and supplies, overtime, allowances & increased utilities related to the extreme winter weather; and be it further

RESOLVED, that a supplemental appropriation of \$286,936 from the General Fund unassigned fund balance be made to the following function and referred to the RTM for approval:

Public Works Snow/Ice Control (#10356 various);
For additional costs associated with materials and supplies, overtime, allowances & increased utilities related to the extreme winter weather.

A motion was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. DeMatto, that this matter be adopted.

The motion carried 26 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention. (Opposed: Rep. Ambroise. Abstaining: Rep. Granatosky.)

2015-0150 City of Groton Highway Maintenance FYE2016 Account 10901

CITY OF GROTON HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE FYE2016

Rep. Marley did not attend the meeting so discussion of his referral is postponed until the next Finance Committee meeting.

2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES -Chairman Semeraro

No meeting; no report.

3. EDUCATION - Chairman Swindell

No meeting; no report.

4. RECREATION - Chairman Svencer

No meeting; no report.

5. PUBLIC SAFETY - Chairman Pasqualini

No meeting; no report.

6. PUBLIC WORKS - Chairman Heede

No meeting; no report.

7. RULES & PROCEDURES - Chairman Ambroise

No meeting; no report.

J. BUDGET DISCUSSIONS

Rep. Ambroise talked about a recent article in the New London Day that there was a significant revenue shortfall in Groton. He voiced his concern about the transfer of funds to numerous accounts and nothing being done to offset the loss of over 2 million dollars in revenue due to the loss of Pfizer Bldg. 118. He urged the RTM to work together to be more fiscally responsible.

In response Mr. Oefinger stated the 4.1% increase was mainly because of the shortfall in Impact Aid. He noted that we need to re-think our funding strategy and make a collective decision on Fleet purchases. He continued to say that over the last two years the average mil/rate increase was 1.1% due to last years tax cut.

Moderator Conley addressed the RTM concerning the revenue shortfall and said that she had contacted Town Mayor Rita Schmidt. She asked the Mayor if the Town Council could suspend their rules and open accounts. She added that the RTM would be ready, willing and able to hold a special meeting if necessary.

Mayor Schmidt responded that she appreciated Moderator Conley's interest, but due to the Town Charter, the Council was unable to make any changes to the expenditure budget.

Responding to Rep. Massett, Mr. Oefinger clarified the eligibility requirements for the Special Needs Fund.

K. OTHER BUSINESS

2015-0174 Resolution for a Town Wide Budget Referendum

RESOLUTION FOR A TOWN WIDE BUDGET REFERENDUM

Rep. Kotowski addressed the RTM and stated she believes the budget process is not working. The 4.1% increase for this year is not reasonable and the BOE budget increase year after year, with the student body declining, is not sustainable. She requested a referral to the Rules & Procedures Committee to research and possibly develop a resolution. The resolution should state that every year after the Town Council sets the mil/rate, if taxes are increased by more than 2%, there shall be a budget referendum held on the 3rd week of June with a date TBD.

Moderator Conley assigned the referral to the Rules & Procedures Committee to report back in July.

In response to Rep. Loughlin, Mr. Oefinger acknowledged that the lawsuit dealing with the Mystic Streetscape project is currently under arbitration.

L. ADJOURNMENT

The Moderator adjourned the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

Attest:

Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk, Clerk of the RTM

Michael Thorpe, Town Clerk Office Assistant II