



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, Patrice Granatosky, Dolores Harrell, Karen Hatcher, Keith L. Hedrick, Conrad F. Heede, Lynn Crockett Hubbard, Michael Dean Johnson, Rosanne E. Kotowski, Jim Loughlin, Jackie Massett, Bruce A. McDermott, Roscoe Merritt, Scott Newsome, Richard J. Pasqualini, Jr., Betty A. Prochaska, 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

Wednesday, October 10, 2012

7:30 PM

Groton Senior Center

REGULAR MEETING

A. ROLL CALL

*Moderator Jean-Claude Ambroise called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.
31 members were present, and a quorum was declared.
(Rep. Deane-Shinbrot arrived later in the meeting.)*

The Moderator reported that Reps. Driscoll, Heede, Hubbard, Merritt, Prochaska, Watrous, and Dana and Richard Semeraro 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. Ferreira, Rep. Gardner, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Hatcher, Rep. Harrell, Rep. Hedrick, Rep. Kotowski, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Massett, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Ryley, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Svencer, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Whewell and Rep. Williams
Members Absent: Rep. Driscoll, Rep. Heede, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Johnson, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Prochaska, Rep. D. Semeraro, Rep. R. Semeraro and Rep. Watrous*

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Sean McKenna, Superintendent of Buildings & Grounds Wes Greenleaf and Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher.

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. Bauer.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 12, 2012

A motion that the minutes be approved was made by Rep. Pasqualini, seconded by Rep. Adams and so voted unanimously.

D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

None.

E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

None.

F. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

1. Financial report

Mr. Oefinger reported that the Fund Balance as of September 30, 2012 is approximately \$9.3 million; the General Contingency balance is \$444,400 after a transfer of \$5,600 to the Regional Probate Court; the Capital Reserve balance is approximately \$1.48 million. These figures are unaudited.

2. Monthly briefing

The Town Manager highlighted various items from the Town Manager's News, including upcoming events.

Mr. Oefinger informed the members that a special RTM meeting will need to be held before the end of the first week in November to vote on the re-authorization of bonds issued in 2007 for the Senior Center project. The Manager explained why the re-authorization is necessary and noted that if it is not approved, the amount of \$371,000 would have to come from Contingency or the General Fund.

Responding to Rep. Sebastian's inquiry as to what he is doing to save money, the Town Manager cited recent efforts at energy efficiency and the use of volunteers for work that would otherwise have to be done by Town staff. He noted that the Town Manager's News is not intended as a review of his actions on the budget.

Mr. Oefinger addressed Rep. Swindell's request for an update on the Pfizer buildings, noting that there are a number of interested parties, but no end-user at this time. Several developers have also expressed interest. The parties have met with the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). He added that the grand list value is \$2.1 million for one building alone.

G. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Assistant Superintendent Sean McKenna reported that the schools are making the transition from Dr. Collins to Dr. Ramos and that efforts are being made to find a replacement for Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds Wes Greenleaf. He reported that the current enrollment figure is 4,780 and noted that the transition from three to two middle schools is going smoothly. Hearings are being held to gather information for the upcoming redistricting. Mr. McKenna informed the members of upcoming events.

Rep. Sebastian asked Mr. McKenna what he is doing to save money. Moderator Ambrose suggested that a report be provided at a future meeting.

The Assistant Superintendent also addressed questions about enrollment trends, the upcoming band competition, portable classrooms, enrollment at the tech and magnet schools, and the progress on redistricting.

H. LIAISON REPORTS

None.

I. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. FINANCE - Chairman Granatosky

No meeting, no report.

2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES - Chairman Ferreira

No meeting, no report.

3. EDUCATION - Chairman Hedrick

Chairman Hedrick read the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, October 10, 2012. (Minutes are attached to the permanent record.)

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

2012-0275 **Reallocation of FYE 2013 CIP Funds to Mary Morrisson Asbestos Floor Tile Removal Project**

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE REALLOCATION OF \$110,000 WITHIN THE CAPITAL RESERVE FUND FROM THE PROJECT TO REPLACE BOILERS AT S. B. BUTLER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TO THE PROJECT TO REPLACE ASBESTOS FLOOR TILE AT MARY MORRISSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

WHEREAS, \$265,000 was approved in the FYE 2012 and FYE 2013 capital improvement budgets for a project to replace defective asbestos containing floor tile at Mary Morrisson Elementary School, and

WHEREAS, the cost to replace the tile exceeds the allocation by approximately \$101,975, and

WHEREAS, \$270,000 was approved in the FYE 2013 capital improvement budget to replace the boilers at S. B. Butler Elementary School, and

WHEREAS, the project at S. B. Butler is 98% complete with a surplus of at least \$130,000, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council authorizes the reallocation of \$110,000 from the S. B. Butler boiler replacement project (#5G) to the Mary Morrisson floor tile replacement project (#5B).

Refer to RTM under Rule 6.5.3.

A motion was made by Rep. Hedrick, seconded by Rep. Massett, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 27 - Moderator Ambrose, Rep. Adams, Rep. Aument, Rep. Baril, Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Cerf, Rep. Chase-Hildebrand, Rep. Collins, Rep. Conley, Rep. DeMatto, Rep. Ferreira, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Hatcher, Rep. Harrell, Rep. Hedrick, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Massett, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Ryley, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Svencer, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Whewell and Rep. Williams
Opposed: 3 - Rep. Gardner, Rep. Kotowski and Rep. Sebastian
Non-voting: 1 - Rep. Deane-Shinbrot

4. RECREATION - Chairman Streeter

No meeting, no report.

5. PUBLIC SAFETY - Chairman Pasqualini

No meeting, no report.

6. PUBLIC WORKS - Chairman Collins

*Chairman Collins read the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, October 10, 2012.
(Minutes are attached to the permanent record.)*

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

2012-0245 Recent Increase in Landfill Fees

Recent Increase in Landfill Fees

Deleted from Referral List - No further action

This item was deleted by the Moderator.

2012-0158 Services Shared Between Towns

SERVICES SHARED BETWEEN TOWNS

Deleted from Referral List - No further action

This item was deleted by the Moderator.

2011-0184 Feasibility Study of Consolidation of Various Town & BOE Departments

FEASIBILITY STUDY OF CONSOLIDATION OF TOWN & BOE HUMAN RESOURCES,
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & FINANCE DEPARTMENTS

Deleted from Referral List - No further action

This item was deleted by the Moderator.

7. RULES & PROCEDURES - Chairman Massett

No meeting, no report.

8. CONSOLIDATION - Chairman Pasqualini

No meeting, no report.

J. BUDGET DISCUSSIONS

Rep. Sebastian reported that he was approached by a Groton businessman who is dissatisfied with the performance of Groton officials and who would like the right to vote on the budget. Rep. Sebastian suggested that the taxpayers should be asked if they would like to have this right.

In regard to budget deliberations, Rep. Kotowski asked the question, "Should we compromise or protect the status quo?" She suggested that a reasonable compromise would be a zero tax increase budget.

Several members expressed concern and confusion about the Town's policy for encumbering funds. A number of members were especially concerned about funds reallocated by the Council to pay for parking in downtown Mystic during the Streetscape project. Mr. Oefinger answered the members' questions on these topics and directed their attention to a memo regarding policy and procedures for encumbrances that was mailed to a group of RTM members who requested that information. He noted that the memo will be sent to all members.

Rep. McDermott requested that the budget book include outstanding encumbrances and columns for actual spending for the previous three years.

Responding to Rep. Swindell's request for a "best estimate" of income during consideration of the budget, Mr. Oefinger cited ever-changing estimates in State funding. He noted that both he and Finance Director Sal Pandolfo tend to estimate conservatively. He also noted that last year, income was \$500,000 more than the estimate.

In response to Rep. Pasqualini, the Town Manager noted that there is no "plan B" in case the Town loses \$1 million in revenue from Pfizer. The Town would have to find alternative funding sources or cut programs. The current focus should be on finding someone to use the property. He suggested that Groton needs to diversify and expand its tax base and noted that the Town has missed several opportunities for economic development.

Rep. Deane-Shinbrot arrived at 8:49 p.m.

Rep. Sebastian left at 9:00 p.m.

K. OTHER BUSINESS**2012-0280 2013 RTM Meeting Schedule****RESOLUTION APPROVING 2013 RTM MEETING SCHEDULE**

WHEREAS, Freedom of Information Statutes require filing a calendar-year schedule of meetings with the Town Clerk, and

WHEREAS, the Representative Town Meeting has met regularly on the second Wednesday of each month, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Representative Town Meeting hereby approves the meeting schedule for 2013 as follows:

Wednesday, January 9, 2013
Wednesday, February 13, 2013
Wednesday, March 13, 2013
Wednesday, April 10, 2013
Wednesday, May 8, 2013
Wednesday, June 12, 2013
Wednesday, July 10, 2013
Wednesday, August 14, 2013
Wednesday, September 11, 2013
Wednesday, October 9, 2013
Wednesday, November 13, 2013
Wednesday, December 11, 2013 and
Wednesday, January 8, 2014

All meetings will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the Groton Senior Center, 102 Newtown Road, Groton, CT 06340.

A motion was made by Moderator Ambroise, seconded by Rep. Pasqualini Jr., that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 30 - 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. Ferreira, Rep. Gardner, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Hatcher, Rep. Harrell, Rep. Hedrick, Rep. Kotowski, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Massett, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Ryley, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Svencer, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Whewell and Rep. Williams
Non-voting: 1 - Rep. Sebastian

In response to Rep. Conley, the Town Manager noted that the old Masonic Lodge at Burnett's Corners is still scheduled for demolition.

Congratulations were offered to Moderator Ambroise who received the Vocational Teacher of the Year Award from the Connecticut Correctional System and to Rep. Swindell who received the 2012 Community Service Award from Groton Utilities.

L. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 9:08 p.m. was made by Rep. Barnhart, seconded, and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk
Clerk of the RTM*

Sally A. Whitney, Assistant Town Clerk