



# Town of Groton, Connecticut

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Town Clerk 860-441-6640  
Town Manager  
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## Meeting Minutes

### Town Council

**Mayor Heather Bond Somers, Councilors Dean G. Antipas, Bruce S. Flax, Bill Johnson, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Deborah L. Peruzzotti, Rita M. Schmidt, James L. Streeter, and Harry A. Watson**

Tuesday, February 7, 2012

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

#### REGULAR MEETING

#### I. ROLL CALL

*The meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m. by Mayor Somers.*

Members Present: Mayor Somers, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Streeter and Councilor Watson

*Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Office Assistant Lori Watrous.*

#### II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

*The Salute to the Flag was led by RTM Moderator Jean-Claude Ambroise.*

#### III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

##### 2012-0013 Proclamation Recognizing Ed Pasch

Read

*The proclamation was read by Councilor Watson.*

##### 2012-0044 Proclamation Recognizing Dollar Tree Store

Read

*The proclamation was read by Councilor Antipas.*

#### PUBLIC HEARING:

##### 2012-0009 FYE 2013 Budget

Heard at Public Hearing

*Mayor Somers called a recess for the Pre-Budget Public Hearing at 7:36 p.m.*

*Bill Fergusson, 118 Edgecomb Street, Mystic, Co-President of the Mystic & Noank Library Board, thanked the Council for its support this year to allow the library to remain open six days. He stated that the library serves all ages, is technologically current with offerings such as eBooks, and has a staff that truly cares. Mr. Fergusson remarked that steps are being taken to improve the building to limit some future expenses.*

*Eva Hildebrand, 4 Latham Street, Mystic, stated that a drainage ditch that was previously used for sewer runs through her yard. It has caused sink holes and flooding problems and she would like the Town to correct the situation.*

*The Town Manager noted that a CIP is being proposed for this project. He stated it is the Town's responsibility to fix this long-standing drainage issue.*

*Bill Gill, 140 Irving Street, Mystic, remarked that the Mystic & Noank Library is more than a building, it is a community center. If the budget gets reduced there may be cuts, and it would take a long time to reassemble a group of staff as valuable as the group that currently serve the library.*

*Jean-Claude Ambroise, 169 Shennecossett Parkway, RTM Moderator, urged the Council to reconsider the school administrators' contract that was recently approved, and not to pass the police contract on tonight's agenda. He feels that no employee paid by Groton taxpayers should receive a pay increase this year, and would like to see the contracts go into arbitration. He stated that a vast majority of arbitration rulings have been in favor of States and municipalities. Mr. Ambroise stated that all options need to be considered, including merging departments, increasing the use of technology, and decreasing the employee workforce.*

*Todd Brady, 17 Water Street, Mystic, a board member of the Mystic & Noank Library, stated that employees of the library have had no raises in three years. He noted that the library is actively researching new fund-raising strategies and redoubling its efforts to get Stonington to increase its funding for the library. He announced that the Mystic & Noank Library was recently awarded a matching grant for \$138,400 to restore and maintain the original library building. He thanked the Town for its continued financial support.*

*Scott Aument, 127 Rogers Road, believes it is time to take a critical look at what the Town really needs and what it can live without. He does not want the Town to over-extend itself and jeopardize its credit rating. If taxes continue to rise, it will drive businesses and citizens out of Groton. He stated that voters rejected Phase II because it was too expensive and too extravagant.*

*Connie Readett, 10 New London Road, Mystic, urged the Town to support the Mystic & Noank Library. She noted that the library has many programs, is used by citizens of all ages, and has a staff that cares enough to go the extra mile.*

*Andrea Wollensak, 10 Conrad Street, Mystic, stated that the Mystic & Noank Library is a valuable community resource and requested continued funding to enable the library to remain open six days a week. She listed many of the programs offered and noted that the library is not just a landmark building, it is a cornerstone of the community.*

*Bill Biden, 4 Latham Street, Mystic, attested to the drainage problems that Ms. Hildebrand remarked on earlier.*

*There being no further comments, Mayor Somers closed the Public Hearing at 7:59 p.m.*

#### **IV. RECEIPT OF CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS**

*Carl Peruzzotti, 69 Noble Avenue, Noank, stated that he came before the Council two months ago about his property assessment. He believes that his property assessment is too high and would like to know how the number was calculated. Mr. Peruzzotti did receive a letter reducing his assessment by \$5,000, but he would still like to know what the assessment figure is based on.*

*Julie Cagle, 40 Woodrow Avenue, Norwich, President of the Groton Education Foundation, stated that the foundation's goal is to award \$10,000 in grants this year. It will hold a fund-raiser, Groton's Dancing with the Stars on March 9, 2012. Among the contestants are the Town and City Mayors and other members of the community, including Councilors, BOE Members, and teachers. The Senior Class of Fitch Senior High School will also benefit from this fund-raiser.*

#### **V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS**

*Councilor Streeter noted that the Groton Education Foundation fund-raiser will be a fun evening for a worthy cause, and Councilor Watson thanked the Groton Education Foundation for including the Senior Class in the fund-raiser.*

*In answer to Mayor Somers, Mr. Peruzzotti stated that he has gone before the Board of Assessment Appeals before, but he does not believe they have met yet this year. He stated that he would like to know the process used to arrive at his assessment value.*

*The Town Manager will arrange for the Assessor to get Mr. Peruzzotti the details of his assessment.*

*Councilor Flax asked if Mr. Ambrose had any examples of contract arbitration where the Town has won. Mr. Ambrose stated that he is a State employee and was told of an arbitration case in New York State which resulted in a 0% increase for three years. He will get further information and relay it to the Council.*

## VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

### a. Approval of Minutes

#### 2012-0041 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of January 17, 2012 are hereby accepted and approved.

**This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.**

### b. Administrative Items

#### 2012-0038 Special Trust Fund Contributions

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS

RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby accepts contributions to the Town as follows:

Charter Oak Federal Credit Union - \$500.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving  
 Kathleen Miner - \$250.00 - Social Services Discretionary  
 Groton Utilities - \$788.27 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program  
 Robert and Phyllis Boggs - \$9.28 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program  
 Nancy Jewett - \$300.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program  
 Lawrence and Beverly Lacerte - \$25.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program  
 Gerald and Elizabeth Newton - \$50.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program  
 Anne-Marie Quagliaroli - \$15.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program  
 Charles Rogers - \$25.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program  
 Lee Vincent - \$50.00 - Social Services Discretionary  
 George Marshall - \$100.00 - Social Services Discretionary  
 Jay and Cynthia Kane - \$800.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving  
 Shoreline Diving Services, Inc. - \$1,200.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving

**This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.**

### c. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

#### 2003-0198 Public Water & Sewer on Flanders Road/Industrial area

**This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.**

#### 2007-0238 Groton Heights School Reuse Task Force - Update

**This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.**

#### 2010-0242 Meeting with Commanding Officer of the Sub Base

**This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.**

#### 2011-0058 Town of Groton Facebook Page Postings

**This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.**

#### 2011-0162 City of Groton and Groton Long Point Highway Budgets

**This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.**

#### 2011-0165 Status of Mystic Education Center

- 2011-0175      This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.  
**October 2011 Revaluation - Update**
- 2011-0214      This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.  
**Zoning Commission Meeting Procedure Inquiry**
- 2011-0234      This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.  
**Historic District Commission Concerns**
- 2011-0240      This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.  
**Potential Sale of Town-Owned Land**
- 2012-0028      This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.  
**Police Union Working Agreement**
- 2012-0030      This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.  
**Appointment of Town Auditor**
- 2012-0032      This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.  
**2012 Rates for Shennecossett Golf Course and Amendment to Regulations for Parks and Recreation Facilities**
- 2012-0036      This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.  
**City of Groton FYE 2011 CIP Reallocation**
- 2012-0042      This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.  
**Public Hearing on the FYE 2013 Proposed Budget**
- 2012-0045      This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.  
**USS Groton Sail Committee**
- This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

**Passed The Consent Calendar**

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Streeter, to adopt the Consent Calendar, including all the preceding items marked as having been adopted on the Consent Calendar. The motion carried unanimously

**VII. COMMUNICATION REPORTS (Other than Committee Reports)****a. Town Councilors**

*Emails were received regarding Mystic & Noank Library.*

*Councilor Streeter attended a building razing at the Avery Point Campus. He announced that on March 22, 2012, there will be an event to honor Catherine Kolnaski.*

*Councilor Johnson and Councilor Peruzzotti attended an Economic Development Commission meeting.*

*Councilor Johnson attended a Rotary Club meeting.*

*Councilor Antipas and Mayor Somers attended the Grand Opening of the Dollar Tree Store.*

*Mayor Somers received calls regarding the Mystic & Noank Library. She met with Board of Education Chairman Kirsten Hoyt and toured Cutler and West Side Middle Schools. There will be a joint meeting of the Town Council and the Board of Education on February 11, 2012, at the Avery Point campus.*

*Councilor Schmidt received a request from a downtown Mystic merchant to establish an area for*

15 minute parking. She attended a meeting regarding elections at which Secretary of the State Denise Merrill presented her views on electronic voting and registration.

**b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting**

The Town Clerk stated that the next RTM meeting will be on February 8, 2012, at the Senior Center.

**c. Clerk of the Council**

No report.

**d. Town Manager**

The Town Manager noted that the Joint Town Council/Board of Education meeting on February 11, 2012, will be open to the public. He distributed a memo from Finance Director Sal Pandolfo that was prepared for the RTM Finance Committee outlining what it would take for the Town to reach a zero tax increase budget. Based on certain assumptions, it would require \$7.6 million less in income from taxes. Therefore, \$7.6 million would need to be cut from the budget. Mr. Oefinger also highlighted some of the items from the Weekly Status Report.

**e. Town Attorney**

No report.

**VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**a. Community & Cultural Development - Chairman Schmidt**

Councilor Schmidt read the minutes of January 24, 2012, which are on file in the Town Clerk's office.

**b. Economic Development - Chairman Johnson**

Councilor Johnson reported on the meeting held on January 24, 2012.

**c. Education/Health & Social Services - Chairman Watson**

No meeting, no report.

**d. Environment/Energy - Chairman Peruzzotti**

No meeting, no report.

**e. Finance - Chairman O'Beirne**

No meeting, no report.

**f. Personnel/Appointments/Rules - Chairman Flax**

No meeting, no report.

**g. Public Safety - Chairman Streeter**

Councilor Streeter reported on the meeting held on January 24, 2012.

**h. Public Works/Recreation - Chairman Antipas**

No meeting, no report.

**i. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Somers**

Mayor Somers stated that the resolutions on tonight's agenda are a result of the Committee of the Whole meeting. The Committee of the Whole also had a special meeting to establish goals.

**IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

In answer to Councilor Flax, the Town Manager stated that four departments are on Facebook; except for Emergency Management, there has not been much activity. He noted that previously there was a link to agendas, but the link seems to have disappeared. Mr. Oefinger remarked that there is no dedicated staff to populate Facebook, and if Facebook continues to be used it would need to be populated daily.

**X. NEW BUSINESS**

**2012-0028 Police Union Working Agreement**

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT WITH GROTON POLICE UNION, LOCAL #428 COUNCIL #15, AFSCME, AFL-CIO

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton and the Groton Police Union, Local #3428, Council #15, AFSCME, AFL-CIO reached a tentative agreement on a successor collective bargaining agreement for the period July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2014, and

WHEREAS, the bargaining unit membership voted to approve the agreement, and

WHEREAS, approval is recommended by the Town's negotiators, therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Groton Town Council hereby approves the expenditure of funds necessary to implement the agreement between the Town of Groton and the Groton Police Union, Local#3428, Council #15, AFSCME, AFL-CIO.

**A motion was made by Councilor Johnson, seconded by Councilor Flax, that this matter be Adopted.**

*RTM Moderator Jean-Claude Ambrose found two articles regarding contract arbitration on the Internet. One article stated that a certain union received a 0% increase rather than 3%, but the other article cited a contract that was increased in its 2nd and 3rd years.*

**The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Votes:** In Favor: 7 - Mayor Somers, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Schmidt and Councilor Streeter  
Opposed: 1 - Councilor Antipas  
Abstain: 1 - Councilor Watson

**2012-0030 Appointment of Town Auditor**

RESOLUTION APPOINTING THE TOWN AUDITOR

WHEREAS, Connecticut state law requires municipalities to appoint an independent auditor to account, verify and correct the Town's accounting records, and

WHEREAS, the Town's contract with the current auditing firm, Blum Shapiro of West Hartford, expired upon completion of the FYE 2011 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, and

WHEREAS, staff is satisfied with the work that Blum Shapiro has performed for the Town for the last seven years and feels their knowledge of the Town of Groton and its financial practices is desirable, and

WHEREAS, if hired, Blum Shapiro has stated there will be no price increase in the first year of the contract, a 1% increase in the second year, and a 1% increase in the third year, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the firm of Blum Shapiro & Company, P.C. is hereby appointed as the Auditor to the Town of Groton for the three fiscal years, FYE 2012 through FYE 2014, with the Town to have the option of extending that selection and contract for an additional two fiscal years.

**A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Watson, that this matter be Adopted.**

*Mayor Somers stated that she will not support this resolution, since she believes that it is important to competitively bid.*

**The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Votes:** In Favor: 7 - Councilor Antipas, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Streeter and Councilor Watson  
Opposed: 2 - Mayor Somers and Councilor Schmidt

2012-0032

**2012 Rates for Shennecossett Golf Course and Amendment to Regulations for Parks and Recreation Facilities**

RESOLUTION SETTING 2012 RATES FOR THE SHENNECOSSETT GOLF COURSE AND APPROVING REVISED REGULATIONS FOR PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

WHEREAS, the Golf Advisory Board and the Parks and Recreation Commission have endorsed a number of changes to the fees for the Shennecossett Golf Course 2012 playing season, and

WHEREAS, additional recommendations include extending the weekend rate to include Friday and modifications to the Regulations for Parks and Recreation Facilities reflecting the changes, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the municipal golf course rates for the 2012 playing season shall be the rates as attached to this resolution, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves the revised Regulations for Parks and Recreation Facilities as noted above and endorsed by the Parks and Recreation Commission at their December 2011 meeting.

**A motion was made by Councilor Schmidt, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, that this matter be Adopted.**

**The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Votes:** In Favor: 8 - Mayor Somers, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Streeter and Councilor Watson  
Abstain: 1 - Councilor O'Beirne, Jr.

2012-0036

**City of Groton FYE 2011 CIP Reallocation**

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REALLOCATION OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FUNDS FOR PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION IN THE CITY OF GROTON

WHEREAS, the City of Groton requested \$551,695 in the FYE 2011 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for pavement management program implementation and specifically identified roads for repaving in the Groton Estates development, and

WHEREAS, the project funding was reduced to \$250,000 during the budget approval process, and

WHEREAS, the City has indicated that it would not be cost effective to do a partial repaving project in the established Groton Estates neighborhood, and

WHEREAS, the City has requested that the \$250,000 be reallocated to other street pavement projects, specifically West Elderkin Avenue and Mitchell Street from Baker Avenue to Park Avenue and one or two adjoining roads if there are remaining funds, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council authorizes the reallocation of the funding (\$250,000) for pavement management program implementation in the City from the roads in Groton Estates (identified in Project 1)A2) of the FYE 2011 to FYE 2016 Capital Improvement Program) to West Elderkin Avenue and Mitchell Street from Baker Avenue to Park Avenue, along with adjoining roads if there are funds remaining.

**A motion was made by Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., seconded by Councilor Streeter, that this matter be Adopted.**

*Councilor Watson stated that it is admirable to have the transparency.*

*The Town Manager noted that the City still wants to pave Groton Estates, but it would not be prudent to do a partial project.*

**The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Votes:** In Favor: 8 - Mayor Somers, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Streeter and Councilor Watson  
Abstain: 1 - Councilor O'Beirne, Jr.

**2012-0042 Public Hearing on the FYE 2013 Proposed Budget**

## RESOLUTION SETTING PUBLIC HEARING DATE ON FYE 2013 PROPOSED BUDGET

RESOLVED, that the Groton Town Council will hold a public hearing on the FYE 2013 Proposed Budget, pursuant to Section 9.3.1 of the Town Charter, on Thursday, March 29, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. at the Groton Senior Center, Newtown Road (Route 117), Groton, Connecticut.

**A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, that this matter be Adopted.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2012-0045 USS Groton Sail Committee**

## RESOLUTION REAUTHORIZING A COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF ACQUIRING THE SAIL OF THE USS GROTON

WHEREAS, the Town Council approved a Resolution Authorizing a Committee to Study the Feasibility of Acquiring the Sail of the USS Groton on September 4, 2007, and

WHEREAS, the Committee was never appointed or convened, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Mayor shall appoint a committee to study and make recommendations to the Town Council concerning the feasibility, cost, permitting requirements, and logistics of obtaining the USS Groton's sail and propeller, and to make recommendations concerning one or more appropriate locations for their permanent display. Membership on the committee may include, but not be limited to, the Town Council, Groton Sub Base, Electric Boat, Nautilus Chapter of Subvets, and the Submarine Force Museum.

**A motion was made by Councilor Streeter, seconded by Councilor Schmidt, that this matter be Adopted.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**XI. OTHER BUSINESS****2012-0050 Potential Disposition of William Seely School Property**

## POTENTIAL DISPOSITION OF WILLIAM SEELY SCHOOL PROPERTY

*Councilor Johnson requested a referral to the Economic Development Committee for the disposition of William Seely School.*

**2012-0051 Joint Meeting with Stonington Board of Selectmen (2012 Standing Referral)**

## JOINT MEETING WITH STONINGTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN (2012 STANDING REFERRAL)

*Councilor Flax suggested having a meeting with Stonington Selectmen regarding the Mystic & Noank Library.*

**2012-0043 Energy, Efficiency and Conservation Committee Membership Modification**

## ENERGY, EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP MODIFICATION

*Mayor Somers suggested reviewing the guidelines of the Energy, Efficiency and Conservation Committee to streamline its membership.*

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

*A motion to adjourn at 8:58 p.m. was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti and so voted unanimously.*

*Attest:*

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk  
Clerk of the Council*

*Lori Watrous, Office Assistant*