



# Town of Groton, Connecticut

## Meeting Minutes

### Town Council Committee of the Whole

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

**Mayor Harry A. Watson, Councilors Peter J. Bartinik, Jr., Natalie Burfoot Billing, Heather Sherman Bond, Catherine Kolnaski, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Paulann H. Sheets, Thomas J. Skrmetti, and Elissa T. Wright.**

Tuesday, August 9, 2005

7:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

#### REGULAR MEETING

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

*Mayor Watson called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.*

#### 2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Bartinik, Jr., Councilor Bond, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Sheets, Councilor Skrmetti and Councilor Wright  
Members Absent: Councilor Billing

*Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent and Executive Assistant Nicki Bresnyan.*

#### 3. Calendar and Communications

*Mayor Watson received a letter from the Board of Education's attorney noting that labor negotiations with teachers are beginning on August 16th, and a Councilor is invited to observe. Councilor Bond expressed interest in being part of a team of observers from the Council. Councilor Bartinik stated he would attend the first meeting.*

*Councilor Sheets asked for an appointment today with Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox to apologize for a statement she made at a meeting on July 19th suggesting that the Town Clerk had deleted words from an amended motion. Councilor Sheets stated she made a big mistake and she made a heartfelt apology, which was graciously accepted by the Town Clerk.*

*Town Manager Mark Oefinger requested a referral to the Community and Cultural Development Committee concerning the 225th Anniversary of the Battle of Fort Griswold.*

*The Town Manager reviewed referrals that have been made since the last meeting that appear on tonight's Group and Committee agendas.*

*The U.S. Submarine Veterans will hold a memorial service and bridge dedication ceremony this Sunday, August 14th at 2:00 p.m. at the Sub Vets Memorial on Bridge Street.*

*A special meeting of the GRRRA was scheduled for August 16th at 6:00 p.m.*

*The Town Manager distributed a letter from the Town Attorney concerning the Resolution in Aid of Title for Five Town-Owned Properties and the action recently taken by the Council.*

*Town Manager Oefinger also noted receipt of an e-mail from Councilor Billing regarding the bus ordinance.*

#### 4. Approval of Minutes

##### 2005-0218 Approval of Minutes (Committee of Whole)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council Committee of the Whole of June 21, 2005 and

July 12, 2005 are hereby accepted and approved.

**Discussed**

*Councilor Sheets asked for clarification of the reference to "PLAs" (Project Labor Agreements) in Public Communications.*

**A motion was made by Councilor Bartinik, Jr., seconded by Councilor Skrmetti, to adopt as modified.**

**The motion carried unanimously.**

**5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

*None*

**6. NEW BUSINESS**

**2005-0219 Setting Referendum Date and Form of Question for Fort Hill Homes Sewer Rehabilitation Project Ordinance**

**Recommended for a Resolution**

*Setting of the referendum date for this project will be considered by the RTM tomorrow evening. The Town Clerk is responsible for preparation of the explanatory text. Town Clerk Tarbox noted that she distributed a revised recommended resolution on this item.*

**A motion was made by Councilor Bond, seconded by Councilor Skrmetti, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.**

**Councilor Sheets questioned the plan to expand the treatment plant at the same time we are reducing the flow to the plant with this project and future projects to rehabilitate sewer pipes. She asked if the need to expand still exists.**

**Town Manager Oefinger noted that infiltration is an issue dealing with peak flows, and the plant is not built to peak flows. The upgrades to the treatment plant will improve water treatment and deal with an underlying need to increase capacity, which has little to do with the infiltration issue. The Water Pollution Control Authority has reviewed this issue and recommended both projects.**

**Councilor Wright requested a referral to the Committee of the Whole regarding the Town of Stonington accessing the Town's sewer system.**

**Councilor Skrmetti would also like to talk to the City of Groton about working together to eliminate the treatment plant on the Thames River. Councilors agreed that this could be included in the referral.**

**The motion carried unanimously.**

**2005-0220 Resolution Authorizing Preparation of Explanatory Text for Fort Hill Homes Sewer Rehabilitation Project Ordinance**

**Recommended for a Resolution**

*See discussion under Referral 2005-0219.*

**1999-0206 Noank Hatchery Proposal**

**Discussed**

*Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent noted that upon transfer of the property, the Town must immediately lease the property to the Hatchery Cooperative. He would recommend two referrals to the Planning Commission under CGS 8-24: 1) acceptance of the property; and 2) the lease of the property to the Cooperative. Once the Planning Commission has acted, the Town Council would also approve a resolution accepting the property. The consensus of the Committee was to recommend the referrals for resolutions. Mayor Watson requested a copy of the most recent draft of the lease be distributed to the Council.*

*Councilor Skrmetti asked for an update on the Allyn/Bohlander property.*

**2003-0016 BRAC-2005/Update****Discussed**

*Councilor O'Beirne explained that the SUBASE Realignment Coalition is reviewing various scenarios and gathering data. Presentations have been made to BRAC staff and Commissioners. Important dates are August 23-26, when the BRAC Commission is expected to receive its staff's recommendations and vote on the Department of Defense recommendations. Eight commissioners will vote on Sub Base New London; five votes are needed to take Groton off the list. The President can accept or reject the Commission's recommendations, which are due to him by September 8th. If accepted, Congress can let the list stand or pass a joint resolution to disapprove the entire recommendation.*

**2003-0177 Renovations & Additions to Groton School Facilities - Phase I****Discussed**

*There will be a joint meeting of the Permanent School Building Committee, Board of Education and Town Council on August 18th to bring everyone up to speed on the school renovation project, which is on schedule. The Town Manager noted that Director of Public Works Gary Schneider was present to review the archeological and environmental reports on the King and High School properties if the Council so desired, but there was no further discussion.*

**2004-0328 Bus Ordinance - Update****Discussed**

*Town Manager Oefinger distributed copies of two draft ordinances prepared by the Town Attorney, one clarifying the definition of destination buses versus tourism buses and another outlawing buses completely.*

*Town Manager Oefinger then paraphrased the comments contained in Councilor Billing's e-mail supporting the version clarifying the types of buses allowed, and limiting the size of the bus rather than the number of passengers.*

*Town Attorney Mike Carey reviewed his memo dated August 4, 2005 outlining the two ordinances. The goal of the revised ordinances is to eliminate ambiguity in the types of buses, with one prohibiting bus traffic completely and the other allowing limited bus traffic. Mr. Carey suggested that the goal in 1982 was to stop tour buses that stop along the road and provide commentary on historic homes. Mr. Carey wanted to differentiate between that type of tour bus and a tour bus that visits the Mystic area and stops at various destinations. The next attempt at clarification addresses destination-oriented buses. Mr. Carey noted Stonington's ordinance, which gives the legislative body in that town broad oversight and also allows suspension of the ordinance for special events.*

*The Traffic Authority has reviewed this item, and will be meeting with the Town Engineer and discussing the issue further on August 25th. The Authority will do a fairly comprehensive traffic engineering study.*

*Councilor O'Beirne suggested that the proposed definition for destination-oriented buses would still allow a bus to "wander around" Noank, and he suggested that the wording include a reference to utilizing the "most direct path". He asked if there is a standardized measurement for number of passengers. The Town Manager explained that the existing ordinance addressed the industry standard in 1982, but the number of passengers is no longer relevant to the size of the vehicle.*

*Councilor Skrmetti feels the original ordinance was designed to address the nuisance to residents and invasion of their privacy, but now the concern seems to be safety. Councilor Sheets noted that the ordinance does include a reference to danger to pedestrians. Councilor Bond feels it would be*

*prudent to wait for the Traffic Authority review to determine if there is a safety issue. The Council agreed by consensus.*

**7. Consideration of Committee Referral Items as per Town Council Referral List**

*None*

**8. OTHER BUSINESS**

*None*

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

*A motion was made by Councilor Skrmetti, seconded by Councilor Bond, to adjourn at 8:06 p.m.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*