



# 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 Rita Schmidt**

**Representatives Joe Baril, Tom Barnhart, Lori Bartinik, Alicia Bauer, Genevieve Cerf, Michael Collins, Syma Ebbin, George Edwards Jr, Peter Fairbank, Robert Garcia, Patrice Granatosky, Dolores Harrell, Debra Jenkins, Carole McCarthy, Kevin McMahon, Richard Metayer, David Miner, Deborah Monteiro, James Moulding, Scott Newsome, Nora Patterson, Deborah Peruzzotti, Joy Plunket, Robert Post, Kevin Power, Don Pratt, Mary-Ellen Schefers, Eleanor Scussel, Jack Sebastian, Jennifer Smuts, Eleanor Steere, Fritz Stein, Joan Steinfeld, Irma Streeter, Mark Svencer, Patti Thunberg, Cheryl Tilney, Tom Vivirito, Robert Walker Sr, and John Wheeler.**

---

Wednesday, January 11, 2006

7:30 PM

Senior Center

---

#### Regular Meeting

---

#### A. ROLL CALL

*Moderator Rita Schmidt called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.*

*34 members were present and a quorum was declared.*

Members Present: Moderator Schmidt, Rep. Baril, Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Bartinik, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Cerf, Rep. Collins, Rep. Ebbin, Rep. Edwards, Jr., Rep. Fairbank, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Jenkins, Rep. Metayer, Rep. Miner, Rep. Monteiro, Rep. Moulding, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Patterson, Rep. Peruzzotti, Rep. Post, Rep. Power, Rep. Pratt, Rep. Schefers, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. Smuts, Rep. Steere, Rep. Stein, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Thunberg, Rep. Tilney, Rep. Vivirito, Rep. Walker, Sr. and Rep. Wheeler, Jr.

Members Absent: Rep. Garcia, Rep. Harrell, Rep. McCarthy, Rep. McMahon, Rep. Plunket, Rep. Scussel and Rep. Svencer

*Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent, Finance Director Sal Pandolfo, Treasurer Cindy Landry, Purchasing Agent John Piacenza, Parks and Recreation Director John Silsby, Parks Maintenance Supervisor William Beaman, Deputy Town Clerk Janet Downs and Assistant Town Clerk Sally Whitney.*

#### 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. Vivirito.*

#### C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 14, 2005

*A motion that the minutes be adopted was made by Rep. Miner, seconded by Rep. Baril and so voted unanimously.*

#### D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

*None*

#### E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

*The Moderator reported that Rep. Scussel will be out of town and unable to attend the January, February and March RTM meetings. Rep. Harrell is ill and Rep. McCarthy will be excused for the January and February meetings.*

*A memo was received from the Groton Public Schools Administration office announcing the special meetings of the Groton Board of Education for the purpose of reviewing the proposed budget for 2006-2007. The schedule was mailed to the RTM Education committee on January 4, 2006 and made available to all members at this meeting.*

**2006-0010**

**Economic Development Strategic Plan**

Review/Comments re Draft Economic Development Strategic Plan

**This matter was Referred to the RTM Community & Economic Development Committee, due back on**

February 7, 2006. The motion carried.

#### **Parks and Recreation Annual Budget Presentation**

*Parks and Recreation Director John Silsby invited members to attend the orientation session that is conducted for Parks and Recreation Commission members. This opportunity allows members to learn more about the department, programs and tours of the facilities and parks. Several members expressed interest if the session was offered on a Saturday morning.*

*Mr. Silsby stated a study of the Golf Course was completed in 2005 and the department is moving forward to implement some of the recommended changes. He stated that a marketing program account is included in this year's budget as a way to increase use and revenue received at the Golf Course.*

*In response to Rep. Walker, Mr. Silsby stated that a revenue deficit occurred in calendar year 2003 only and that 2005 revenues were up by 5% over 2004. He stated that Public Works provides facility maintenance only. He reported that no new staff has been hired and the number of employees has decreased. Mr. Silsby stated that the Golf Course debt is part of the annual budget as a scheduled expense for a specific number of years until the debt is paid off.*

*Mr. Silsby explained the duties of the Parks and Forestry Division. He stated that 85 locations consisting of cemeteries, major parks, skateboard park, ball fields, beach, Board of Education ball fields, trails and the new dog park are maintained by the division.*

*In response to members' questions, he stated that areas on the presentation maps and lists (distributed to members prior to the meeting) are constantly being revised. He stated that about 1/3 of the 80 acres of the open space in Deerfield subdivision are maintained by the department. The work consists of once-a-week mowing and maintaining the play areas and basketball court.*

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

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

*Mr. Vincent reported that the Fund Balance as of July 1, 2005 is approximately \$8.6 million; the General Contingency balance will be \$38,560 subsequent to the RTM approval of the transfers that are on the RTM agenda for this meeting; the Capital Reserve Fund balance is at \$3,300,163 showing an increase from \$3,284,637 due to interest earned.*

*Mr. Vincent requested that members read and save page 2 of the "Town Manager News" that was distributed this evening because the article "Flow of Funds for the School Projects" was in response to questions from last month. The article explains the process of submitting bi-monthly reports of actual and projected expenses to the State for which the Town is reimbursed. It also addresses the projected debt for the Town at various points in the process.*

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

*Mr. Oefinger reviewed the time frames for the revaluation based on the signing date of the Grand List. He informed the members that the Committee of the Whole voted to delay the revaluation for a year, and that final action will be taken at next Tuesday's Council meeting. He stated that \$362,000 will have been spent for the revaluation effective October 1, 2005 and that the delay would impact the Town with an additional \$150,000-\$200,000 cost for additional work that would have to be done. He stressed that a decision has to be made as soon as possible in order for the Assessor to sign a Grand List.*

*The Manager remarked that no changes will be made to the Town's voting machines this year since the State has revoked the mandate until the certification requirements for replacement voting machines are satisfied.*

*The Town Manager announced that work is progressing on the budget; the submittal deadline for Department Heads is January 13, after which an internal review will be completed during the next month. Budget books should be available by the middle of March.*

*He announced that area Legislators are meeting with the Council on January 17 at 6:00 p.m. at the Town Hall Annex to discuss any issues and concerns the Council may have. He stated that property tax reform will probably be the primary issue.*

*In response to members' questions, Mr. Vincent pointed out that formal action by the Council to delay the revaluation by one year would need to have a vote of 5 members in favor of the delay.*

*Mr. Oefinger stated that preliminary information on the revaluation has been disseminated on the Town's web site, by residential notices, and to both local newspapers. He reported that Groton benefits by the fact that 25% of the Grand List is made up from commercial values, but that residential values have grown proportionally more than commercial values. The Manager stated it is his opinion that the revaluation should go forward.*

*Rep. Cerf restated in her own words the reasoning of the Council for a possible delay of implementation of the 2005 revaluation.*

*Rep. Collins stated that in his opinion, real estate market values may flatten out but will not decrease significantly.*

*Rep. Monteiro agreed that residential values may level off and are not escalating as they have in the past several years. She commented that a delay could actually cause some residential assessments to increase further.*

## **G. LIAISON REPORTS**

### **1. Town Council - Rep. Monteiro**

*Rep. Monteiro stated that Eileen Duggan has been appointed as the new Town Attorney. She suggested that members could view last night's COW meeting on cable channel 2.*

### **2. Economic Development Commission - Rep. Cerf**

*There was no meeting, but Rep. Cerf stated that a meeting is scheduled next week.*

### **3. Town Council/Board of Education Liaison Committee - Rep. Patterson**

*Rep. Patterson reported that a meeting is scheduled for January 18, 2006 at the School Administration Building. She announced that she distributed a copy of a memo from the Groton Public Schools Administration Office announcing the special meetings of the Groton Board of Education for the purpose of reviewing the proposed budget for 2006-2007.*

### **4. Permanent School Building Committee - Rep. Miner**

*Rep. Miner reported that a great deal of work has been accomplished, involving numerous meetings and the filing of applications for the different segments of design. The project remains on schedule.*

*He stated that Jeter, Cook and Jepsen, now known as JCJ Architecture, gave a presentation concerning the timeline on all the Phase One projects. This presentation covered the specifics of each building being renovated or built, the specific idiosyncrasies of each site, demolition at the Northeast Academy site, and the possible existence of tidal wetlands to the west of Main's Plaza strip mall near the Catherine Kolnaski School.*

*Rep. Miner reported that the Fitch High School project has received approval from the Inland Wetlands Agency to go ahead with design specifications and that the Board of Education voted to accept the three design resolutions proposed.*

### **5. P.B.F.D. Consolidation Review Committee - Rep. Baril**

*No meeting, no report.*

### **6. Economic Development Strategic Planning Steering Ctee - Reps. Fairbank and Peruzzotti**

*No meeting, no report. The Moderator state that the next meeting is scheduled for January 19, 2006.*

### **7. Shellfish Task Force - Rep. Svencer**

*No meeting, no report.*

## **H. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **1. FINANCE**

#### **a. Chairman's notes of the business of the Town - Chairman Granatosky**

*Chairman Granatosky read the minutes of the meeting held January 11, 2006. (See attached minutes.)*

*A motion to accept the minutes was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Smuts and so*

*voted unanimously.*

**2005-0291 Contingency Transfer - BAN/Bond Costs**

RESOLUTION APPROVING A CONTINGENCY TRANSFER FOR ADDITIONAL SHORT AND LONG TERM DEBT

WHEREAS, additional bond anticipation notes (BANs) for the Pleasant Valley Road South Improvements and school building project as well as general obligation bonds were issued on those projects and other public works projects in August 2005, and

WHEREAS, the Town was required to pay down a portion of the BANs that were more than two years old and the first interest payment on the bonds is due in February 2006, both of which were not estimated in the FYE 2006 Budget, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby approves the use of \$254,440 of the funds appropriated to the General Contingency account for interest, paydown and related bond/BAN costs to Debt Service (Account 1076).

Refer to RTM

**A motion was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Steinfeld, that this matter be Adopted.**

*In response to questions, Mr. Oefinger stated that the Contingency Account is not intended as a savings account. He explained that at the time the FYE 2006 budget was developed, the Town was not sure of the amount of money that would be issued for short or long term debt; therefore no funds were included for this purpose.*

*Mr. Pandolfo stated the payment is due in February and cannot be split.*

*Rep. Miner reminded members that the Town is obligated for this payment, and that the reason for the short-term borrowing was the convergence of several projects which was not anticipated last year at budget time.*

**The motion carried unanimously.**

**2005-0292 Contingency Transfer - Increased Fuel Costs**

RESOLUTION APPROVING A CONTINGENCY TRANSFER FOR INCREASED FUEL COSTS

WHEREAS, the Approved Budget for FYE 2006 included an increase of 35% for Town fuel purchases, but the actual increase we have experienced is considerably greater than even the budget estimate, and

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton participates in a purchasing consortium of 40 municipalities and school districts that has now locked in the best prices that they could obtain, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the amount of \$56,000 be transferred from General Contingency (Account 1074) to Public Works (1035) and that an amount of \$1,000 be transferred from contingency to Legislative Policy (Account 1001).

Refer to RTM.

**A motion was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Walker, Sr., that this matter be Adopted.**

*The Town Manager responded to members' questions about a fuel conservation plan for vehicles and buildings. He noted a few of the policies that are in force and will provide more details at the next meeting. He stated that the Board of Education has also done a conservation review and can be asked to report on their plan at the next meeting.*

*Rep. Smuts stated that an increase for fuel costs in the current budget year had been included, but that prices have climbed higher than projected.*

The motion carried unanimously.

## 2. COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### a. Chairman's notes of the business of the Town - Chairman Vivirito

*No meeting, no report.*

## 3. EDUCATION

### a. Chairman's notes of the business of the Town - Chairman Patterson

*No meeting, no report.*

## 4. HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

### a. Chairman's notes of the business of the Town - Chairman Wheeler

*No meeting, no report.*

## 5. RECREATION

### a. Chairman's notes of the business of the Town - Chairman Power

*No meeting, no report.*

## 6. PUBLIC SAFETY

### a. Chairman's notes of the business of the Town - Chairman Pratt

*No meeting, no report.*

## 7. PUBLIC WORKS

### a. Chairman's notes of the business of the Town - Chairman Collins

*No meeting, no report.*

## 8. RULES & PROCEDURES

### a. Chairman's notes of the business of the Town - Chairman Stein

*Minutes of the committee meeting were read and accepted at the December RTM meeting.*

### 2005-0303 Rules for Twenty-Fifth RTM

#### RESOLUTION ADOPTING RULES FOR THE TWENTY-FIFTH RTM

BE IT RESOLVED, that the rules of the Twenty-Fifth Representative Town Meeting as recommended by the Temporary Rules and Procedures Committee are hereby adopted.

**A motion was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Smuts, that this matter be Adopted.**

*The proposed changes amend Section 3.3.1 to read, "In the absence of the Moderator for the 25th RTM, The Moderator Pro Tem shall be the minority floor leader. If the Moderator and the Moderator Pro Tem are both absent, then Rule 3.3 shall apply." The amendment also calls for removal of Section 5.1 which is redundant with 5.2D, and amends Section 6.7 to substitute "Point of Order" for "Point of Information."*

The motion carried unanimously.

## I. OTHER BUSINESS

*Rep. Patterson requested Dr. Mitchell, Wes Greenleaf and JCJ Architects be invited to the February meeting to inform the members about the differences between the Catherine Kolnaski School and Northeast Academy.*

*Rep. Cerf made a request to establish an ad hoc committee that would be a bipartisan, proactive subcommittee of the RTM to engage in the following activities: conduct a study of the revaluation and its effects; develop and implement a plan for appealing to the State to help mitigate the effects of revaluation and achieve Statewide tax reform; gain support both within the community and from surrounding towns to bring a focused message to the State.*

*Rep. Vivirito requested that the State Legislators be invited to an RTM meeting to initiate a dialog and to encourage them to act in Hartford.*

*Rep. Granatosky strongly opposes the forming of another RTM committee. She would be in favor of placing this item on the February agenda for discussion. She stressed that she is opposed to having a small group of members speak for the entire RTM and questions the legalities connected with this issue.*

*Rep. Miner pointed out to the members that the State Legislators are meeting with the Council next week.*

*The Manager suggested that next week's meeting with the Legislators is a public meeting but not an open forum and that it may be difficult to schedule all the Legislators for an additional meeting with the RTM.*

*Rep. Vivirito stated he felt that next week's meeting with the Legislators would suffice.*

*The Town Manager addressed Rep. Cerf's concerns about not televising the meeting between the Council and Legislators by stating the policy for televising meetings is very specific and restricted by budget constraints. He stated he will bring her concerns to the Mayor.*

#### **J. ADJOURNMENT**

*A motion to adjourn at 9:30 p.m. was made by Rep. Walker, seconded by Rep. Steinfeld and so voted unanimously.*

*Attest:*

*Barbara Tarbox, Town Clerk  
Clerk of the RTM*

*Sally A. Whitney, Assistant Town Clerk*