



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, February 8, 2006

7:30 PM

Senior Center

Regular Meeting

A. ROLL CALL

*Moderator Rita Schmidt called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.
32 members were present and a quorum was declared.*

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

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent, Superintendent of Schools Dr. James Mitchell, Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds Wes Greenleaf, Director of Public Works Gary Schneider, Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox 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. Baril.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 11, 2006

A motion that the minutes be adopted was made by Rep. Steinfeld, seconded by Rep. Jenkins and so voted unanimously.

D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

None

E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

The Moderator reported that Reps. Edwards and Pratt were unable to attend.

2005-0307 Acceptance of Open Space at Fleet Bank Subdivision

This matter was Referred to the RTM Community & Economic Development Committee, due back on March 8, 2006. The motion carried.

Energy Conservation Plan Presentation

The Town Manager stated that Director of Public Works Gary Schneider and Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds Wes Greenleaf would provide the details of the energy conservation plans for the Town and public schools.

Mr. Schneider stated that over the last twenty-three years the mechanical equipment and boilers in town buildings have been replaced with "energy star" rated equipment and multiple units. This

has improved the efficiency of burning heating fuels and reduced the rate of fuel used. For example, 1 out of 4 smaller boilers may run at the Senior Center instead of 1 large boiler. He stated that all of the Town's main buildings have programmable thermostats with program settings for night time set-backs and evening meetings and that water heaters have been insulated with water heater blankets. He explained that in the newer buildings sensors now allow outside air intake only when needed due to high CO2 levels. Recirculating the air in the building allows for less cold air that has to be heated. The town vehicles now have idle time restrictions of 3 minutes or less and tire pressure is checked regularly to maintain maximum gas efficiency. He stated that energy efficient lights are used in all buildings. He reported that Town staff is auditing CL&P accounts for accuracy in regards to number of lights and locations.

Wes Greenleaf explained that over a period of 30 years a number of energy efficient changes have been instituted. In the 1970's the annual usage of oil was 800,000 gallons and the average for the last 6 years is 326,000 gallons. He cited that improvements such as switching to #2 fuel oil instead of heavy oil; installation of or maximizing roof insulation during roofing replacement; insulation of all pipes and the installation of new insulated windows at Pleasant Valley School. He is budgeting this year to replace the original single pane windows at Claude Chester. He stated that most of the oil burners have adjustable burn levels, night set back programs and day time temperature control at 68 degrees. He has an extensive, in-depth, preventative annual maintenance program that covers steam traps, rebuilding boiler components, boiler tune-ups, air handler equipment, and changing filters more frequently. He stated that all of these measures have contributed to better efficiency and cost savings. He stated that bus service is contracted out, but the fuel is provided by the Town. The Town switched to diesel buses five years ago and instituted a shut-down policy when buses are waiting at the schools. He stated that the buses must start their engines when students are boarding in order to operate the safety lights. He reported that in 2001, CL&P supported an energy conservation program that reduced kilowatt consumption from 5.4 million to 4.9 million kilowatts over the last five years by modification of light fixtures and automatic shut-off switches. He is hopeful that the Groton Utilities will be offering a program that will allow similar improvements in school buildings in that service district.

He reported that the new schools will be as energy efficient as possible. Ventilation controls with CO2 sensors will be installed in each room, along with a heat recovery system and maximum insulation.

Mr. Schneider and Mr. Greenleaf each agreed to provide graphs of electrical and fuel usage over the last several years as requested by Rep. Sebastian.

In response to Rep. Cerf, Mr. Greenleaf stated that consideration is given to the orientation of the school for maximum solar gain.

Mr. Schneider reported that the town has explored many types of alternative energy programs over his tenure. He stated one current program that is being reviewed is to run the generators in many of the town buildings during peak demand hours only when requested. This would lower demand on the power grid and the Town would receive a reduction in charges from CL&P. He also stated a grant to replace the Town's SUV's with hybrid vehicles is being reviewed.

In response to Rep. Ebbin, Mr. Greenleaf stated that geothermal systems were reviewed and it was decided that they are not practical. This review was done prior to the skyrocketing cost of fuel oil. He stated that a retrofit could be accomplished by tying into the existing system without major impact to the schools.

Mr. Schneider addressed Rep. Ebbin's concerns about the Jabez Smith House, stating that since it is a historical structure and that maintaining the integrity and historical significance is the priority, many energy conservation changes are not possible.

F. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER:

1. Financial report

Mr. Vincent reported that the Unreserved & Undesignated Fund balance as of July 1, 2005 is

approximately \$8.6 million; the General Contingency balance is \$38,560; the Capital Reserve balance is \$3,336,769.

2. Monthly briefing

The Town Manager updated the members on the budget process. He stated the deadline for sending the budget to the printer is March 4, and that the budget books should be available approximately March 15. The Council has a tentative public hearing date set for March 29. He announced that the Governor released her State budget that included elimination of the motor vehicle tax. He stated that historically, due to the timing of the budget process the Governor's proposed budget figures have been used in calculations for the Town budget. He stated that this year he is not certain that will be the case. He discussed the possible elimination of the Manufacturing and Equipment Exemption Program and the impact it would have on the Town's Grand List. He announced that a public information session on the Liquefied Gas Project is being held on February 18 at New London High School, and that the presentation on the updated draft of the Economic Development Strategic Plan will be March 30 at the Town Hall Annex.

In response to Rep. Cerf, Mr Vincent stated that the formula for calculating the State reimbursements is complex and difficult to explain. Many factors are used by the State, including the community's ability to pay. Recently, as the wealth of our town has increased, this has caused the State reimbursement levels to decrease.

The Town Clerk announced that the RTM budget books and related materials should be available in the office by March 20, 2006 for pickup by members. She anticipates scheduling a session to familiarize members with the budget process and with how the budget book is compiled prior to the Council public hearing. Possible dates are March 22 or 27.

G. LIAISON REPORTS

1. Town Council - Rep. Monteiro

Rep. Monteiro reported on the Committee of the Whole meetings held on January 12, 17 and 24, 2006 and the Council meetings on January 17, and February 7, 2006. She stated that the Council has passed a resolution to delay the implementation of the revaluation until the 2006 assessment year. Other actions taken by the Council were: approval of a resolution to transfer \$28,000 from the Community Events Fund and the Tercentennial Donation Fund to a fund to be established for the Tercentennial Legacy Playground; a resolution to relocate the playscape at Freeman Hathaway to the Mystic Academy Parklet; and numerous appointments and reappointments to various boards and commissions.

2. Economic Development Commission - Rep. Cerf

No report.

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

Rep. Patterson reported on the meeting held on January 18, 2006. She reported that Dr. Mitchell will be representing Groton on the Governor's Board for the Marine School to be built on the Spicer property. Students will be selected by lottery after the quota for each Town has been determined by the State. It was stated that academics should be considered as well. Rep. Patterson stated that student tuition will be paid directly out of the Education budget based on the expenditure cost per year for a high school student in Groton.

4. Permanent School Building Committee - Rep. Miner

Rep. Miner reported that Rick Norris, Project Manager for School Construction, has submitted site plans to the Planning Commission. He stated that Wes Greenleaf has been reviewing the possibility of including geothermal heat technology into the current and future projects. He reported that Wes Greenleaf has been working with the technology commission to include a fiberoptic wireless system in the new construction phase of Fitch Senior High School. The older parts of the school will remain hardwired.

Rep. Miner announced that the application for the second State Reimbursement of \$2.3 million

has been filed and that the first reimbursement has been received.

5. P.B.F.D. Consolidation Review Committee - Reps. Baril & Steinfeld

No report.

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

Rep. Peruzzotti reported that a presentation of the draft Economic Development Strategic Plan was given at the meeting held on January 19, 2006. The plan identified four goals: economic diversification, attracting tourism, enhancing quality of life and repositioning downtown.

7. Shellfish Task Force - Rep. Svencer

Rep. Svencer stated that he is unable to attend the meetings, since they are scheduled for the middle of the afternoon.

Mr. Vincent reported that there has been no meeting for the last several months and that there is no consistent meeting schedule.

H. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. FINANCE

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

No meeting, no report.

2. COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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

Chairman Vivirito read the minutes of the meeting held on January 30, 2006. (See attached minutes).

A motion to accept the minutes was made by Rep. Vivirito, seconded by Rep. Miner and so voted unanimously.

2006-0010 Economic Development Strategic Plan

Review/Comments re Draft Economic Development Strategic Plan

Deleted from Referral List - No further action

3. EDUCATION

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

Chairman Patterson reported on the special meetings for the Board of Education budget. The review of the budget was done line by line with much discussion. The Board of Education has asked Dr. Mitchell to provide a list of what will be cut from the budget to achieve a 4.5% increase instead of his proposed 5.2% increase.

A motion to accept the minutes was made by Rep. Ebbin, seconded by Rep. Baril and so voted unanimously.

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

No meeting, no report.

I. OTHER BUSINESS

In response to an inquiry by Rep. Monteiro, the Town Manager stated that the Town's web site is not a budget item, and that it is maintained by the IT staff with many hours outside of work provided by Lori Parker, the Manager of Information Technology .

The Town Clerk commented that Boards and Commissions expiration dates are often outdated since vacancies and reappointments are delayed until action is taken by the Council. She reported that she is working on streamlining the process for resignations, new appointments and reappointments. This is a current project and is still being revised, reviewed and formulated.

J. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 9:02 p.m. was made by Rep. Power, seconded by Rep. Baril and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Barbara Tarbox, Town Clerk
Clerk of the RTM*

Sally A. Whitney, Assistant Town Clerk