



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, 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, Kevin Trejo, Tom Vivirito, Robert Walker Sr, and John Wheeler.

Wednesday, September 13, 2006

7:30 PM

Senior Center

Regular Meeting

A. ROLL CALL

*Moderator Rita Schmidt called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.
30 members were present, and a quorum was declared.*

Members Present: Moderator Schmidt, Rep. Bartinik, Rep. Cerf, Rep. Collins, Rep. Fairbank, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Harrell, Rep. McCarthy, Rep. Metayer, Rep. Miner, Rep. Monteiro, Rep. Patterson, Rep. Peruzzotti, Rep. Plunket, Rep. Post, Rep. Power, Rep. Pratt, Rep. Scussel, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. Smuts, Rep. Stein, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Svencer, Rep. Thunberg, Rep. Tilney, Rep. Trejo, Rep. Vivirito and Rep. Wheeler, Jr.

Members Absent: Rep. Baril, Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Ebbin, Rep. Jenkins, Rep. McMahon, Rep. Moulding, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Schefers, Rep. Steere and Rep. Walker, Sr.

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent, Finance Director Sal Pandolfo, Public Works Director Gary Schneider, Assistant Public Works Director Carl Almquist, Assessor John Philip, Fuss & O'Neil consultant Peter Grose, 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. Thunberg.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 14, 2006

A motion that the minutes be adopted was made by Rep. Miner, seconded by Rep. Trejo and carried 27 in favor, 3 abstentions. (Abstentions: Reps. Fairbank, Scussel and Vivirito.)

D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

None.

E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

Moderator Schmidt reported that Reps. Ebbin, Moulding and Walker are unable to attend this meeting.

The Moderator announced that item 2006-0228 Water Pollution Control Facility Expansion Additional Funding was referred to the RTM under rule 6.5.3 on August 15, 2006. It was subsequently forwarded to the RTM Public Works Committee and is on the agenda tonight.

2006-0229 Noank Hatchery Property Deed Acceptance

This matter was Referred to the RTM Community & Economic Development Committee, due back on October 11, 2006. The motion carried.

F. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER:

1. Financial report

Mr. Vincent reported that the Unreserved & Undesignated Fund balance as of July 1, 2006 is approximately \$9.7 million; the General Contingency balance is \$350,000 dollars; the Capital Reserve balance is \$4,483,156 dollars. He stated that the increase for Capital Reserve balance is due to closed out projects and interest earned.

Mr. Vincent informed the members that the Town will have a new voting facility for the blind at each polling place this November. He stated that all other Groton residents will be using the old lever voting machines this fall.

2. Monthly briefing

In response to Rep. Sebastian, the Town Manager provided an update on the status of all three school building projects.

Mr. Oefinger invited the members to attend Citizenship Day on Monday, September 18, 2006, and the Tercentennial Playground spaghetti supper fund raiser at the Senior Center on September 22, 2006.

Mr. Oefinger expressed his appreciation on behalf of the Town for all of the participants and volunteers for the re-enactment celebrating the 225th Anniversary of the Battle of Fort Griswold and Burning of New London that took place over Labor Day weekend.

He reported that the traffic light at the top of Fort Hill should be activated in October.

Mr. Oefinger requested interested members to contact his office for a tour of the Noank Hatchery building prior to accepting the conveyance of the property at next month's meeting. He noted that the Noank Shellfish Co-operative is available for a presentation to the entire RTM or the committee at the next meeting.

In response to Rep. Cerf, Mr. Vincent noted a few details of the hatchery lease, the restrictions on use contained in the deed and how routine and long term maintenance will be handled.

G. LIAISON REPORTS**1. Town Council - Rep. Monteiro**

Rep. Monteiro reviewed the business conducted at the meetings of the Town Council and Committee of the Whole on August 15 and 22, and September 5 and 12, 2006. She noted that the Committee of the Whole will hold a special meeting on September 19 to discuss other referral items including FYE 2008 budget discussion with the RTM and budget guidelines for FYE 2008.

2. Economic Development Commission - Rep. Cerf

Rep. Cerf reported that the last two scheduled meetings did not have a quorum. She stated that the final report of the steering committee is now available.

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

No meeting, no report.

4. Permanent School Building Committee - Rep. Miner

Rep. Miner reported that work has commenced at both elementary school projects, specifically the abatement and demolition work at Northeast Academy, and the site work at Catherine Kolnaski School. He mentioned that delays have occurred at the Northeast Academy site due to water issues. The first water issue is being resolved by designing a dry hydrant which will be reviewed by the Inlands Wetlands Agency. This change will require the Town to obtain permission from abutting property owners to use a pond that will provide the backup water supply for fire protection. The second delay is the discovery of oily water at the site. The water is being tested and if positive results are received, specific disposal methods for the ground water excavated during construction will have to be developed.

Rep. Miner reported that the bids for the Fitch High School Addition and Renovation Project have come in \$1,180,000 dollars under the estimate. The bids are now being reviewed.

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

No meeting, no report.

6. Shellfish Task Force - Rep. Ebbin

Rep. Granatosky read the minutes of the meeting held on August 27, 2006 for Rep. Ebbin who was absent.

The Task Force decided to focus its future efforts on the issues of runoff from development in upland areas of the Poquonnock River, increased surface drainage into Groton's estuary areas, and the effects from runoff and drainage to the coastal environment.

The Task Force also discussed the status of the Fort Hill Sewer Rehabilitation Project; a process in which the Town could ensure that all houses that have access to the Town sewer system are actually hooked-up; and a process by which faulty septic systems would be identified, repaired or replaced with sewer hook-up.

H. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. FINANCE

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

Chairman Granatosky read the minutes of the meeting held on September 13, 2006. (Minutes are attached.)

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

2006-0215 Supplemental Appropriation for the Revaluation Fund

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN FYE 2007 SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION FOR THE REVALUATION FUND

WHEREAS, the Town Council elected to exercise the local option provided by CGS 12-621 and postponed the 2005 revaluation until October 2006, and

WHEREAS, the contract signed with the revaluation company, Tyler/CLT, on May 17, 2006 did not include the field review of all real estate parcels, as we had performed that task during the 2005 revaluation process, and

WHEREAS, an appropriation of \$179,475 was approved for the Revaluation Fund by the Town Council and Representative Town Meeting during the FYE 2007 budgetary deliberations for the 2006 revaluation, and

WHEREAS, recent state legislation now requires that a field review be conducted and as defined by the new law requires the examination of each parcel of real property by a review appraiser in its neighborhood setting, and

WHEREAS, in order to be in compliance with state law, staff requested and Tyler/CLT provided information that the new legislation would increase the cost of the 2006 revaluation by \$27,400, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that an FYE 2007 supplemental appropriation of \$27,400 from the Revaluation Funds' fund balance be approved for the Revaluation Fund and referred to the Representative Town Meeting.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2. COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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

No meeting, no report.

3. EDUCATION

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

Chairman Patterson read the minutes from the meeting held on August 21, 2006. (Minutes are attached.)

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

Rep. Patterson stated that as a result of this meeting and discussion with the Moderator, the Board of Education (BOE) will be invited to the regular October meeting as a special agenda item for open dialogue concerning the school budget. It was requested that all questions be submitted prior to the meeting so the BOE and Superintendent can be properly prepared.

4. HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

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

No meeting, no report.

5. RECREATION

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

No meeting, no report.

6. PUBLIC SAFETY

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

No meeting, no report.

7. PUBLIC WORKS

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

Chairman Collins read the minutes of the meeting held on August 30, 2006. (Minutes are attached.)

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

2006-0228 Water Pollution Control Facility Expansion - Additional Funding

RESOLUTION APPROVING ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION AND EXTENDING APPROPRIATION FOR ADDITIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE WATER POLLUTION CONTROL FACILITY.

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton (the "Town") approved Ordinance No. 233 at referendum on November 5, 1996, which appropriated \$10,388,000 and authorized borrowing in the same amount for additions and improvements to the Water Pollution Control Facility; and

WHEREAS, the Town approved Ordinance No. 242 at referendum on May 23, 2000, which appropriated an additional \$5,112,000 for the project and included in the project facilities to remove nitrogen from the wastewater and authorized borrowing in the same amount, for an aggregate appropriation and borrowing authorization of \$15,500,000;

WHEREAS, the State authorized in Section 40 of Public Act No. 04-1, May 2004 Special Session, an additional grant in the amount of \$2,000,000 for the Town's Water Pollution Control Facility additions and improvements;

WHEREAS, the Town appropriated an additional \$2,000,000 for the Water Pollution Control Facility additions and improvements to be funded from such State grant, for an aggregate appropriation of \$17,500,000;

WHEREAS, Section 8.4.5 of the Charter provides that any appropriation for construction or other permanent improvement which has not been completely expended at the end of five years from the date thereof shall thereupon lapse;

WHEREAS, the Town Manager has reported that the additions and improvements to the Water

Pollution Control Facility for which said appropriation was made cannot reasonably be completed, and the entire amount of said appropriation cannot be expended by the end of five years from the effective date of the last appropriating resolution and has recommended that said appropriation be extended by reappropriating that portion of the \$17,500,000 which has not been expended on the effective date of this resolution;

WHEREAS, the aggregate appropriation is not sufficient to complete the project based on the bidding process undertaken this calendar year, and failure to rebid the project and start construction this calendar year may result in the loss of State grants and loans for the project;

WHEREAS, the Water Pollution Control Authority has recommended that the Town authorize additional funding in the amount of \$3,400,000 for the project, to be funded from balances in the Sewer Operating Fund and the Water Pollution Control Authority's portion of the Capital Reserve Fund, including amounts previously appropriated for certain projects for fiscal years 2005-2006 and 2006-2007;

WHEREAS, the Director of Finance has certified that an additional appropriation of \$3,400,000 may be funded from balances in the Sewer Operating Fund and the Water Pollution Control Authority's portion of the Capital Reserve Fund, including amounts previously appropriated for certain projects for fiscal years 2005-2006 and 2006-2007; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the Town to continue the Town's Water Pollution Control Facility additions and improvements.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

(a) That any portion of said \$17,500,000 aggregate appropriation which has not been expended on the effective date of this resolution shall be extended and reappropriated, provided that the total amount expended as of the effective date of this resolution, pursuant to said appropriation under Ordinance No. 233 and Ordinance No. 242 and the resolution appropriating the \$2,000,000 State grant, plus the portion which is reappropriated shall not exceed \$17,500,000; and

(b) That an additional \$3,400,000 is hereby appropriated for the Water Pollution Control Facility Project approved in Ordinance No. 233 and 242, and that said additional appropriation be funded from (1) fund balances in the Sewer Operating Fund in the amount of \$1,932,000 to be transferred to the Water Pollution Control Authority's portion of the Capital Reserve Fund, (2) rescinding the appropriations from the Water Pollution Control Authority's portion of the Capital Reserve Fund of \$350,000 for HVAC Improvements in fiscal year 2005-2006 and \$700,00 for installation of a second generator with associated electrical components in fiscal year 2006-2007 and applying such \$1,050,000 resulting balance to the Water Pollution Control Facility Project; and (3) from \$418,000 of other fund balances from the Water Pollution Control Authority's portion of the Capital Reserve Fund.

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

In response to Reps. Cerf and Trejo, the Town Manager and the Public Works Director addressed questions on the capacity of the facility and delays on the implementation of the project. The Manager provided a brief history of this project, and the reasons for delays since 2004. He stated that the Town will lose state funding and the favorable interest rate of 2% from the State if the project is not ready to proceed by the end of the calendar year. Mr. Schneider provided a time line that will meet the end of the year deadline.

In response to Rep. Plunket, the Deputy Town Clerk explained that a roll call vote is necessary since this item is related to a bonding ordinance.

The motion carried unanimously

8. RULES & PROCEDURES

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

No meeting, no report.

I. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Vincent informed the members that an article by the Mayor on recycling is appearing in the September 14 issue of the Mystic River Press.

Rep. Cerf commended the Town on a job well done regarding the recent Hazardous Waste Collection Day and on-going recycling operation.

J. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 8:50 p.m. was made by Rep. Smuts, seconded by Rep. Miner and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Janet L. Downs, Deputy Town Clerk
Deputy Clerk of the RTM*

Sally A. Whitney, Assistant Town Clerk