



Town of Groton, Connecticut

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Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk (860)441-6640
Town Manager
(860)441-6630

Meeting Minutes Town Council

Mayor Harry A. Watson, Councilors Peter J. Bartinik, Jr., Heather Sherman Bond, Catherine Kolnaski, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., John F. Scott, Paulann H. Sheets, James L. Streeter, and Elissa T. Wright.

Tuesday, November 21, 2006

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

Mayor Watson called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent, Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox, and Office Assistant Elga Concepcion.

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

Members Absent: Councilor Scott

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Salute to the Flag was led by Mayor Watson.

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

2006-0290 Proclamation Honoring Timothy D. Bates

Read

Councilor Kolnaski read the Proclamation which was presented at the Chamber of Commerce dinner on November 13.

IV. CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Jane Cofone, 18 Indian Avenue, is concerned about the animal shelter. She feels that the Town is capable of funding the building of a new shelter. Ms. Cofone noted that some citizens are willing to make personal donations towards this type of project.

John Sutherland, 32 Neptune Drive, discussed the revaluation process and assessment notices. He estimates that homeowners' assessments will increase by about 75% and property taxes by about 25% due to the shift in values from residential to commercial properties.

Wendy Eckholm, 165 Benham Road, stated that there is a State requirement which would preclude the Town's attempt to down-size the animal shelter. The size of a shelter is determined by the population which it services. Ms. Eckholm hopes that a Councilor has contacted Design Learned concerning the review of design plans which were drawn up several years ago.

V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

None.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

a. Approval of Minutes

2006-0292 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of November 8, 2006 are hereby accepted and approved.

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

b. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

2006-0288 Revaluation Phase In - Option 2

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

2006-0277 Grant for Holiday DUI Enforcement

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2006-0281 SI Financial Group Foundation Grant - Tercentennial Legacy Playground

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2006-0273 Adoption of 2007 Group I Regular Meeting Schedule

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2006-0274 Adoption of 2007 Group II Regular Meeting Schedule

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2006-0275 Adoption of 2007 Committee of the Whole Regular Meeting Schedule

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2006-0276 Adoption of 2007 Town Council Regular Meeting Schedule

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2006-0280 Signage on Private Property

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2006-0293 Establishment of School Design Committee - School Improvement Project Phase II

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2006-0296 Preliminary Design Development Work for Animal Shelter

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

c. Special Trust Fund Contributions

2006-0286 Special Trust Fund Contributions

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS

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

Various donations - \$448.49 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

Groton Utilities - \$1,108.49 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

Edward Lang - \$100.00 - Social Services Discretionary

Jean Simpson - \$60.00 - Social Services Discretionary

Alfred H. Gildersleeve - \$200.00 - Library Discretionary

Anonymous Donor - \$350.00 - Parks & Recreation Revolving

Various Donations - \$26.76 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

Groton Utilities - \$224.24 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

Gross, Roger & Sidney - \$50.00 - Social Services Discretionary

Elaine Kipp - \$100.00 - Social Services Discretionary

Mistick River B&PW Inc. - \$50.00 - Social Services Discretionary

Poquonnock Bridge Neighborhood - \$100.00 - Social Services Discretionary

Sacred Heart School - \$100.00 - Social Services Discretionary

Jean Simpson - \$35.00 - Social Services Discretionary

BJ's Charitable Foundation - \$5,000 - Parks & Recreation Revolving

Groton Artwaves, Inc. - \$400.00 - Library Discretionary

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

Passed The Consent Calendar

A motion was made by Councilor Bartinik, Jr., seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, 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)**Councilor Scott arrived at 8:00 p.m.**

Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Bartinik, Jr., Councilor Bond, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Scott, Councilor Sheets, Councilor Streeter and Councilor Wright

a. Town Councilors

Councilors received communications regarding the revaluation and animal shelter. A few of the Councilors attended the Submarine Veterans Day Memorial service.

Councilor Streeter attended the Maritime Symposium at the Avery Point campus. He met with representatives from Groton Ambulance and stated that the previous Tercentennial Committee has been discussing holding another fund-raising event for the Tercentennial Legacy Playground.

Councilor Wright received communications advocating early consultation with the Town Manager regarding budget preparation and opposing the liquefied natural gas facility proposed by Broadwater Energy. She had a discussion with a citizen pertaining to the concept of creating "Friends of the Animal Shelter". Responding to Councilor Wright, the Town Manager will provide an update on the status of the account which has been allocated for animal shelter donations.

Responding to Councilor Bond's request, the Town Manager will provide information relating to the effect of the last significant rainstorm on the sewer system. Councilor Bond provided an overview of the Town's tax deferral and abatement programs. She requested that the application forms for these programs be included with the mailing of all tax bills.

Councilor Kolnaski attended a meeting of the Ledge Light Health District Board of Directors on November 9. She attended the awards dinner for Attorney Tim Bates on November 13 and the Town Council Board of Education RTM Liaison Committee meeting on November 15. Councilor Kolnaski attended the Permanent School Building Committee meeting and the Groton Adolescent Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition (GASP) presentation of the 2006 Groton Youth Survey at the Groton Public Library on November 16.

Councilor O'Beirne met with the Ad-hoc Revaluation Study Committee and received a call concerning a holiday gift program for needy children. He opposes Councilor Bond's suggestion of including application forms with the tax bills and stated that sending 22,000 forms is "overkill".

Mayor Watson reviewed details of the holiday program and noted that donations may be made to Social Services. Questions concerning donations may be addressed by contacting their office at 441-6760. The Mayor distributed food baskets on November 17. He attended the GASP presentation on November 16 and spoke at Tim Bates' award dinner on November 15. The Mayor gave opening remarks at the Garde Arts Center on November 11. He attended the Community Coalition for Children on October 30 and spoke at the Poquonnock Bridge Baptist Church's 150th anniversary celebration on October 22. Mayor Watson gave a presentation on Groton's mentor program to the Groton Business Association. He attended the Martin Luther King dinner on October 19.

Councilor Scott attended the State Insurance Commissioner's meeting. At this time, the Commissioner is not discussing her upcoming decision regarding storm shutters and hurricane issues. He received a letter regarding the Mystic River and Groton Ambulance Associations.

b. Representative Town Meeting

No report.

c. Clerk of the Council

Town Clerk Tarbox stated that the recanvass in Groton was successful with only 1 vote missed out of over 10,000 votes. She has attended several Ad-hoc School Redistricting Committee meetings. The committee will be presenting recommendations to the Board of Education by mid December. The Town Clerk read a list of vacancies on Boards and Commissions in the Town, with emphasis on the Water Pollution Control Authority.

d. Town Manager

Town Manager Oefinger stated that there will be a presentation by the Southeastern Connecticut Homelessness Partnership on November 30. The Groton White Light Parade is scheduled for December 2. He provided an update on the Environmental Review Team and reminded viewers that Town offices will be closed on November 23 and 24 in observance of Thanksgiving Day. Group I, Group II and Committee of the Whole will be meeting next Tuesday.

e. Town Attorney

No report.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS**a. Community & Cultural Development - Chairman O'Beirne**

No meeting; no report.

b. Economic Development - Chairman Bond

No meeting; no report.

c. Education/Health & Social Services - Chairman Kolnaski

Councilor Kolnaski read the minutes of the meeting held on November 15, 2006 which are on file in the Town Clerk's office.

d. Environment & Recreation - Chairman Sheets

No meeting; no report.

e. Finance - Chairman Wright

No meeting; no report.

f. Personnel/Appointments/Rules - Chairman Scott

No meeting; no report.

g. Public Safety - Chairman Streeter

No meeting; no report.

h. Public Works - Chairman Bartnik

No meeting; no report.

i. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Watson

There was a Special Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting prior to tonight's Town Council meeting to discuss the Town Manager's evaluation.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Responding to Councilor O'Beirne, the Town Manager replied that there were only a few towns which have utilized the phase-in of a revaluation and the recurring concern is that people's expectations are not being met.

The Mayor made the following referrals:

2006-0297 Town Clerk Compensation

TOWN CLERK COMPENSATION

This matter was Referred to the Town Council Committee of the Whole. The motion carried.

2006-0298

Steamboat Wharf Dredging Request

STEAMBOAT WHARF DREDGING REQUEST

This matter was Referred to the Town Council Public Works Committee. The motion carried.

2006-0299

Homeless Shelter Needs

HOMELESS SHELTER NEEDS

This matter was Referred to the Town Council Committee of the Whole. The motion carried.

2006-0302

Town's Representation on Groton Ambulance Board of Directors

TOWN'S REPRESENTATION ON GROTON AMBULANCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

This matter was Referred to the Town Council Public Safety Committee. The motion carried.

Councilor Streeter requested a referral to the Public Safety Committee to discuss the Town's representation on the Groton Ambulance Board of Directors.

X. NEW BUSINESS

2006-0277

Grant for Holiday DUI Enforcement

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A GRANT APPLICATION FOR SEASONAL PREVENTION OF MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton customarily makes use of Federal highway safety funds to allow the Town to provide additional police presence and public safety efforts to assist motorists and prevent fatalities arising from alcohol-impaired driving, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager may apply for a grant of \$37,800 which, along with a 25% matching Town contribution of \$12,600 from the existing budget, will allow for a DUI enforcement program costing a total of \$50,400 during the Thanksgiving and Christmas/New Year's holiday seasons.

A motion was made by Councilor Sheets, seconded by Councilor Scott, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2006-0281

SI Financial Group Foundation Grant - Tercentennial Legacy Playground

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A GRANT APPLICATION FOR THE TERCENTENNIAL LEGACY PARK

WHEREAS, the Groton Town Council has agreed by resolution to pursue grants and other contributions, in cooperation with the Groton Parks Foundation, that will support the construction of a Tercentennial Legacy Playground (TLP) that will be accessible to all children, regardless of cognitive or physical limitations, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager, Mark R. Oefinger, is authorized to apply for a grant of \$10,000 from the SI Financial Group Foundation.

A motion was made by Councilor Scott, seconded by Councilor Bond, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

A single vote was taken adopting next year's schedule for the following regular meetings: Group I, Group II, Committee of the Whole, and Town Council.

2006-0273

Adoption of 2007 Group I Regular Meeting Schedule

RESOLUTION APPROVING 2007 GROUP I COMMITTEES REGULAR MEETING

SCHEDULE

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby approves the Group I Committees meeting schedule for 2007 as follows:

Tuesday, January 9, 2007
Tuesday, January 23, 2007

Tuesday, February 13, 2007
Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Tuesday, March 13, 2007
Tuesday, March 27, 2007

Tuesday, April 10, 2007
Tuesday, April 24, 2007

Tuesday, May 8, 2007
Tuesday, May 22, 2007

Tuesday, June 12, 2007
Tuesday, June 26, 2007

Tuesday, July 10, 2007
Tuesday, July 24, 2007

Tuesday, August 14, 2007
Tuesday, August 28, 2007

Tuesday, September 11, 2007
Tuesday, September 25, 2007

Tuesday, October 9, 2007
Tuesday, October 23, 2007

Tuesday, November 13, 2007
Tuesday, November 27, 2007

Tuesday, December 11, 2007
Wednesday, December 26, 2007

All meetings begin at 6:00 p.m. in Community Room 3, Town Hall Annex 134 Groton Long Point Road - the Second and Fourth Tuesday of each month, except as noted.

A motion was made by Mayor Watson, seconded by Councilor Bond, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2006-0274

Adoption of 2007 Group II Regular Meeting Schedule

RESOLUTION APPROVING 2007 GROUP II COMMITTEES REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby approves the Group II Committees meeting schedule for 2007 as follows:

Tuesday, January 9, 2007
Tuesday, January 23, 2007

Tuesday, February 13, 2007
Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Tuesday, March 13, 2007
Tuesday, March 27, 2007

Tuesday, April 10, 2007
Tuesday, April 24, 2007

Tuesday, May 8, 2007
Tuesday, May 22, 2007

Tuesday, June 12, 2007
Tuesday, June 26, 2007

Tuesday, July 10, 2007
Tuesday, July 24, 2007

Tuesday, August 14, 2007
Tuesday, August 28, 2007

Tuesday, September 11, 2007
Tuesday, September 25, 2007

Tuesday, October 9, 2007
Tuesday, October 23, 2007

Tuesday, November 13, 2007
Tuesday, November 27, 2007

Tuesday, December 11, 2007
Wednesday, December 26, 2007

All meetings begin at 6:00 p.m. in Community Room 1, Town Hall Annex, 134 Groton Long Point Road - the Second and Fourth Tuesday of each month, except as noted.

A motion was made by Mayor Watson, seconded by Councilor Bond, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2006-0275

Adoption of 2007 Committee of the Whole Regular Meeting Schedule

RESOLUTION APPROVING 2007 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby approves the Committee of the Whole meeting schedule for 2007 as follows:

Tuesday, January 9, 2007
Tuesday, January 23, 2007

Tuesday, February 13, 2007
Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Tuesday, March 13, 2007
Tuesday, March 27, 2007

Tuesday, April 10, 2007
Tuesday, April 24, 2007

Tuesday, May 8, 2007
Tuesday, May 22, 2007

Tuesday, June 12, 2007
Tuesday, June 26, 2007

Tuesday, July 10, 2007
Tuesday, July 24, 2007

Tuesday, August 14, 2007
Tuesday, August 28, 2007

Tuesday, September 11, 2007
Tuesday, September 25, 2007

Tuesday, October 9, 2007
Tuesday, October 23, 2007

Tuesday, November 13, 2007
Tuesday, November 27, 2007

Tuesday, December 11, 2007
Wednesday, December 26, 2007

All meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. in Community Room 1, Town Hall Annex, 134 Groton Long Point Road - the Second and Fourth Tuesday of each month, except as noted.

A motion was made by Mayor Watson, seconded by Councilor Bond, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2006-0276

Adoption of 2007 Town Council Regular Meeting Schedule

RESOLUTION APPROVING 2007 TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby approves the Town Council meeting schedule for 2007 as follows:

Tuesday, January 2, 2007
Tuesday, January 16, 2007

Tuesday, February 6, 2007
Tuesday, February 20, 2007

Tuesday, March 6, 2007
Tuesday, March 20, 2007

Tuesday April 3, 2007
Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Tuesday, May 1, 2007
Tuesday, May 15, 2007

Tuesday, June 5, 2007
Tuesday, June 19, 2007

Tuesday, July 3, 2007
Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Tuesday, August 7, 2007
Tuesday, August 21, 2007

Tuesday, September 4, 2007
Tuesday, September 18, 2007

Tuesday, October 2, 2007
Tuesday, October 16, 2007

Wednesday, November 7, 2007
Tuesday, November 20, 2007

Tuesday, December 4, 2007
Tuesday, December 18, 2007

All meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. in Community Room 1, Town Hall Annex, 134 Groton Long Point Road - the First and Third Tuesday of each month, except as noted.

A motion was made by Mayor Watson, seconded by Councilor Bond, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2006-0293

Establishment of School Design Committee - School Improvement Project Phase II

RESOLUTION TO RE-ESTABLISH A SCHOOL DESIGN COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, Phase I of the School Improvement Project has been approved by the voters, has successfully been bid, and is currently under construction, and

WHEREAS, funds were set aside in the FYE 2007 budget to review the Phase II and Phase III recommendations found in the previously completed School Design Committee report, and

WHEREAS, a former School Design Committee greatly assisted the Town Council and the Board of Education in developing a comprehensive school improvement program, including recommendations for phasing, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council wishes to re-establish a School Design Committee with members/appointments selected from the Town Council (2); City Council (1); RTM (2); Board of Education (2); Permanent School Building Committee (1); Planning Commission (1); and the public (2), with staff assistance being provided by Town and school staff, and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Groton Town Mayor is authorized to make final appointments to the Committee once nominations are received from the above-noted boards/committees and after receiving names of citizens interested in serving on said committee.

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

The motion carried unanimously

2006-0296

Preliminary Design Development Work for Animal Shelter

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PRELIMINARY DESIGN DEVELOPMENT WORK FOR THE TOWN ANIMAL SHELTER

the Town of Groton, and

WHEREAS, the Council has, on several occasions, discussed cost and funding concerns as well as alternative means of protecting animals that are under the Town's custody and care, including the possibility of regional sharing of costs and facilities, and

WHEREAS, it appears that the Town must construct a new animal shelter at the Town's public works complex, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager, Mark R. Oefinger, should proceed with an appropriate level of preliminary design development work to serve as the basis for a decision by the Town Council on the general specifications, total cost, and means of funding for a new animal shelter, and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby authorizes a transfer of \$25,000 from Contingency (10741) to Public Works (Public Buildings) (10352) for the purpose of undertaking this additional design work.

Refer to RTM.

A motion was made by Councilor Wright, seconded by Councilor Streeter, that this matter be Adopted and Referred to the Representative Town Meeting.

Councilor Sheets is opposed to the transfer of \$25,000 because she feels that this dollar amount is too much to pay for preliminary design work.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 8 - Mayor Watson, Councilor Bartinik, Jr., Councilor Bond, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Scott, Councilor Streeter and Councilor Wright
Opposed: 1 - Councilor Sheets

Suspension of the Rules

A motion to suspend the rules to consider the Town Manager's evaluation was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor O'Beirne and so voted unanimously.

2006-0198 Town Manager Annual Evaluation

RESOLUTION ADOPTING TOWN MANAGER'S COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, the Town Council has reviewed the performance of the Town Manager and rates his performance as exceeds expectations, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager shall receive a 3.08% increase in salary effective July 1, 2006, which effectively increases his salary from \$119,325.79 to \$123,000.00.

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

The motion carried unanimously

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 8:30 p.m. was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Bond and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

Barbara Tarbox, Town Clerk

*Elga Concepcion
Office Assistant*