

**RULES OF THE THIRTY-SECOND  
REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING  
GROTON, CONNECTICUT**

Adopted by the 32<sup>th</sup> RTM at the RTM Meeting held January 8, 2020, revised August 12, 2020.

**CONTENTS**

**Section 1 ROLL CALL**

- Rule 1.1 Call to order
- Rule 1.2 Late arrivals

**Section 2 QUORUM**

- Rule 2.1 Constitution of a quorum
- Rule 2.2 Absence of a quorum

**Section 3 MODERATOR**

- Rule 3.1 Election of Moderator
- Rule 3.2 Managing the meeting
- Rule 3.3 Disturbance at meetings
- Rule 3.4 Taking part in debate
- Rule 3.5 Absence of the Moderator  
Moderator Pro Tempore
- Rule 3.6 Election of new Moderator
- Rule 3.7 Right to speak

**Section 4 CLERK OF THE RTM**

- Rule 4.1 Agendas and Minutes
- Rule 4.2 Handling RTM correspondence

**Section 5 ORDER OF BUSINESS**

- Rule 5.1 Regular order of business

**Section 6 COMMITTEES**

- Rule 6.1 Standing Committees
- Rule 6.2 Committee membership and Chair  
appointment
- Rule 6.3 Special Committees and Liaisons
- Rule 6.4 Committee responsibilities
- Rule 6.5 Referral of matters to Committee

**Section 7 MOTIONS**

- Rule 7.1 Parliamentary authority
- Rule 7.2 Reducing motion to writing
- Rule 7.3 Moving the Question

**Section 8 DISCUSSION, DEBATE AND VOTING**

- Rule 8.1 Personal interest/Conflict of  
interest
- Rule 8.2 Roll Call vote
- Rule 8.3 Question of count
- Rule 8.4 Moderator's vote
- Rule 8.5 Decorum in debate
- Rule 8.6 Addressing the chair
- Rule 8.7 Recognition of non-members
- Rule 8.8 Violations of rules

**Section 9 GENERAL**

- Rule 9.1 Charter requirements
- Rule 9.2 Ex-officio members of the RTM  
under the Charter
- Rule 9.2.1 Student Liaisons to the RTM
- Rule 9.3 Meetings
- Rule 9.4 Power of Initiative
- Rule 9.5 Veto of Town Ordinance
- 2Rule 9.6 Citizens' Petition

**SECTION 1 ROLL CALL**

- Rule 1.1 The Moderator shall take the Chair at the hour for which the meeting has been called, or to which the meeting was adjourned. He/she shall immediately call the RTM to order, have the Clerk of the RTM take Roll Call and if a quorum is present, proceed to business.
- Rule 1.2 Any member appearing after the Roll Call shall make such fact known to the Clerk of the RTM. The Clerk of the RTM shall preserve a permanent record of attendance.

**SECTION 2 QUORUM**

- Rule 2.1 Fifty percent (50%) of the Town Meeting Representatives entitled to vote shall constitute a quorum for doing business.
- Rule 2.2 In the absence of a quorum, the Moderator may adjourn the RTM to a time definite and place certain.

**SECTION 3 MODERATOR**

- Rule 3.1 The Moderator shall be elected by a majority vote of the RTM members present at the first meeting of the newly elected RTM and shall serve for a term of two (2) years.
- Rule 3.2 The Moderator shall chair the RTM in accordance with Section 7.1.
- Rule 3.3 In case of any disturbance or disorderly conduct within the meeting hall, the Moderator shall have the power to order the persons causing such disturbance to remove themselves or be removed.
- Rule 3.4 If the Moderator wishes to take part in the debate on any issue, he/she will ask a member to perform the duties of the Moderator until the main question is resolved. Nothing herein means that the Moderator cannot ask questions, or offer information or clarification on an issue from the podium. A question or simple comment is not considered participating in debate.
- Rule 3.5 In case the Moderator is absent at the hour to which the RTM stands adjourned or has been called, the Clerk of the RTM shall call the RTM to order. The first business shall be the election of a Moderator Pro Tempore, which shall be done immediately, and the Moderator Pro Tempore thus elected shall preside in the RTM and discharge all the duties of the Moderator until his/her return.
- Rule 3.6 In case of the death or resignation of a Moderator, the Clerk of the RTM shall call the RTM to order as provided in the first clause of this Rule 3.5 and the first business shall be the election of a Moderator and the Moderator thus elected shall preside over the RTM and discharge all the duties of the Moderator during the remainder of that term.
- Rule 3.7 The Moderator shall guarantee the right of speech to every citizen of the Town of Groton at RTM meetings. This privilege shall be controlled under Section 5 (D) Citizens' Petitions and under Section 9.6.

**SECTION 4 CLERK OF THE RTM**

By Charter, the Town Clerk is the Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting (RTM).

- Rule 4.1 Agendas, draft minutes of meetings and other communications will be mailed or emailed to RTM members at least seven (7) days prior to scheduled meetings as per individual members' requests. Such agenda will contain a listing of such items of business as are known to be acted upon.
- Rule 4.2 The Clerk of the RTM shall receive and open all mail addressed to the RTM and shall present same to the Moderator for presentation to the RTM at its next meeting. If action is indicated upon any mail received, it shall be referred to the Moderator by the Clerk of the RTM immediately.

## SECTION 5 ORDER OF BUSINESS

The regular order of business shall be as follows:

- (A) Roll Call
- (B) Moment of Silence and Salute to the Flag
- (C) Approval of Minutes of previous meeting
- (D) Citizens' Petitions
- (E) Reception of Communications
- (F) Report of Town Manager
- (G) Economic Development
- (H) Report of the Superintendent of Schools
- (I) Liaison Reports
- (J) Reports of Committees
- (K) Budget Discussions
- (L) Other Business
- (M) Adjournment

## SECTION 6 COMMITTEES

### Rule 6.1 Standing Committees

There shall be the following Standing Committees:

- Finance
- Community Development and Services
- Education
- Recreation
- Public Safety
- Public Works
- Rules and Procedures

### Rule 6.2 Committee Membership and Chair Appointment

- 6.2.1 The Moderator shall appoint the Chair and members of each standing committee unless otherwise specifically instructed by a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of the RTM members present.
- 6.2.2 The Moderator shall consult with the Floor Leaders in considering standing committee membership and leadership, but the final authority rests with the Moderator.
- 6.2.3 No committee shall have less than five (5) members.
- 6.2.4 There shall be no more than a two-thirds (2/3rds) majority appointed from any one political party.
- 6.2.5 Each RTM member shall be on at least one, but no more than two standing committees, with exception of the Moderator. The Moderator shall be an ex-officio member of all standing committees. The Floor Leaders of the two major political parties shall be ex-officio to all committees where they are not a regular member. Ex-officio members may participate in discussion but shall not make a motion or vote.
- 6.2.6 Membership of the Finance Committee shall be made up of seven (7) members, one from each of the RTM districts.
- 6.2.7 Replacement appointments to any committee made by the Moderator between RTM meetings shall become effective when said appointments are announced at the subsequent RTM meetings.

### Rule 6.3 Special Committees and Liaison Appointments

The Moderator may appoint such special committees or representatives as in her/his opinion may be necessary, and may designate the Chair thereof.

6.3.1 Special Committees – Duplication of Standing Committees functions

Special Committees appointed by the Moderator under Rule 6.3 shall in general not overlap or duplicate standing committees. If it is necessary to constitute a special committee which does so overlap or duplicate standing committee functions, the Chair and one member of the other political party of the affected standing committee shall be appointed voting members of the special committee. The Rules and Procedures Committee shall determine when such duplication or overlap occurs and shall so notify the Moderator.

6.3.2 Liaison

Any person appointed by the Moderator as a liaison for the RTM shall be a current member of the RTM. The liaison appointment shall expire upon the resignation of the RTM member, the expiration of her/his term on the RTM, or upon appointment of a new liaison by the Moderator.

Rule 6.4 Committee Responsibilities

It is the function and responsibility of each committee to:

1. Ask questions, gather information, and be fully informed about the operation of town functions within its purview, particularly as related to the RTM's budgetary authority.
2. Provide information to the RTM necessary for the RTM to make informed decisions on items recommended for action.
3. Maintain contact with the appropriate appointed and elected officials of the Town.
4. Consider and recommend action to the RTM regarding proposed or pending legislation affecting its assigned area.
5. Initiate or propose RTM action on issues in the committee's purview.
6. Perform such other functions as may be assigned to them by the Moderator or the RTM from time-to-time.

6.4.1 Committee Reports

Each chair of a committee shall submit a report to the RTM on each item referred to the committee for consideration and on other items the committee initiates for consideration, for the purpose of advising the RTM as to the recommended action on such matters. This report shall include any information presented to the committee that may assist the full RTM in considering the question, and shall be in accordance with Rules 6.4.1.1 and 6.4.1.2 below.

6.4.1.1 Content of Reports/Minutes/Minority Report

A committee report/minutes shall contain the following information: date, time, and place of meeting; names of members present and absent; names of members voting affirmatively and negatively and those abstaining; recommendations for action by the RTM and any further information deemed pertinent or necessary for the RTM to make an informed decision on the subject. If the vote of the committee was divided, the dissenting minority may submit a report of its own.

#### 6.4.1.2 Presentation

A written copy of the committee report/minutes and any minority report shall be given to the Clerk RTM within seven (7) days of the committee meeting. Votes on any matter must be available within 48 hours of the meeting. If the committee report is presented at an RTM meeting sooner than seven (7) days after the committee meeting, the written report must be given to the Clerk of the RTM at that RTM meeting. At the request of the committee chair, a copy of the committee report will be sent by the Clerk of the RTM to each RTM member, with the agenda or as soon as possible, for the meeting at which the report is to be presented.

#### 6.4.1.3 Notice of Committee Meetings

All chairs shall notify the Clerk of the RTM of the date, time and place when any committee meeting is scheduled. The Clerk of the RTM shall notify each member and ex-officio member of that committee, the chair of the corresponding Council committee, and all other RTM members. such other members as shall have expressed in writing a desire to be notified of a specific committee meeting. The Clerk of the RTM may notify the press of such a meeting so that interested members of the RTM or the public may attend.

#### 6.4.2 Quorum

A quorum of any committee of the RTM is defined as fifty (50) percent of the total number of committee members eligible to vote.

#### 6.4.3 Joint Committee Meetings

For a joint meeting of two (2) or more committees, a joint committee chair shall be appointed by the Moderator. Fifty (50) percent of each committee is required to constitute a quorum at any joint committee meeting.

#### 6.4.4 Responsibilities of the Rules and Procedures Committee

A temporary Rules and Procedures Committee, appointed by the newly-elected Moderator, is responsible for drafting and recommending rules to the RTM after each municipal election. The rules as recommended by the committee shall be adopted by a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of those present and voting with prior notice to the full RTM of this item on the agenda, or, by a majority vote of the full RTM.

When an alteration or amendment of the rules is requested during the session of the RTM, such proposed amendment to the rules will be referred to the standing Rules and Procedures Committee for consideration and a recommendation to the RTM. Any change to the Rules requires the same vote as above.

#### Rule 6.5 Referral of Matter to Committee

Matters may be referred to standing committees at any time by the Moderator or in his/her absence by the Town Manager, or in the absence of both, by the Chairman of the Council.

6.5.1 No matter shall be acted upon by the RTM without a recommendation first having been made on said matter by the appropriate committee, unless a motion to suspend the rules passes by a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of those present and voting.

6.5.2 Upon referral of a matter to committee, the committee shall report on said matter at the next regular RTM

Meeting or at a special RTM meeting called for that specific matter. Failure of the committee to do so shall place the matter before the RTM for action.

6.5.3 Matters referred to committee between RTM meetings must be announced at the subsequent meeting of the RTM. Such matters may be reported upon by said committee at this meeting. However, for such matters to be acted upon by the RTM at the same meeting, the following requirements must be satisfied:

1. The matter must have been referred at least seven (7) days prior to said meeting.
2. The committee (s) must have prepared a report which includes recommendations for action by the RTM.
3. A written summary of the matter must appear on the agenda and have been sent to each RTM member prior to the meeting.
4. While the matter must have been referred to the RTM at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting, the Town Council may or may not have taken action prior to the seven (7) days. The Town Council must have taken action prior to the RTM meeting.

6.5.4 Any matter of proper interest to the RTM may be returned to the appropriate standing committee by a majority vote of those present, except that after a matter has been once returned to committee, it shall require a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of those present to return it again to the standing committee.

## **SECTION 7 MOTIONS**

### **Rule 7.1 Parliamentary Authority**

The most current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall govern the RTM in all cases to which they are now applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with these rules as they now stand or are amended, or with the Charter of the Town of Groton.

### **Rule 7.2 Reducing Motion to Writing**

Any motion shall be reduced to writing if the Moderator so directs or the Clerk of the RTM requests it, before the question is put to a vote.

### **Rule 7.3 Moving the Question**

The Moderator may refuse to accept a motion to move the question for ten (10) minutes after the motion on the floor is made if debate is desired by any member of the RTM. If the RTM votes to move the question the Moderator may, at their discretion, allow for a maximum of ten (10) additional minutes of debate with each RTM member allowed a maximum of one (1) minute.

## **SECTION 8 DISCUSSIONS, DEBATE AND VOTING**

### **Rule 8.1 Personal Interest/Conflict of Interest**

Any member shall disqualify himself/herself from voting if he/she has a conflict of interest in the subject under consideration, as defined by Sec. 3.5.3 in the Town Charter. Any member who, voluntarily, does not vote on an issue, shall retain all other rights of his/her office. The Town Charter requires any member who has a financial interest, direct or indirect, in any contract, transaction, or decision of the RTM, to disclose that interest so that it may be recorded into the record.

### **Rule 8.2 Roll Call Vote**

A roll call vote shall be taken by the Clerk of the RTM on any question and entered in the minutes at the desire of any member, expressed at any time before the question is put to a vote.

Rule 8.3 Question of Count

When a vote has been counted, if at least two members raise a question concerning the vote count, a roll call count of the RTM shall be made.

Rule 8.4 Moderator's Vote

On roll call votes, the Moderator shall vote last.

Rule 8.5 Decorum in Debate

8.5.1 Members shall confine their remarks in debate to the pending question.

8.5.2 Members shall address all remarks to the Moderator or the Committee Chair and maintain a courteous tone. Members shall avoid personal affronts and/or accusations of improper motives.

Rule 8.6 When any member is about to speak in debate or deliver any matter to the RTM, he/she shall rise and address the Chair as "Mr./Madam Moderator". If two or more rise at the same time, the Moderator shall name the member entitled to the floor.

Rule 8.7 If any member, in speaking or otherwise, transgresses the rules and orders of the RTM, the Moderator shall call him/her to order. The member will be allowed to justify his/her act or discussion, then if accepted by the Moderator, he/she will continue; if not, he/she will be seated.

Rule 8.8 Any RTM member entitled to the floor during discussion of an item of business on the agenda, shall have the privilege of recognizing any non-member present for the purpose of speaking in his/her place on that item of business. The non-member shall have a time allocation as determined by the Moderator, not to exceed ten (10) minutes, and he/she will otherwise be subject to the same restrictions as an RTM member.

**SECTION 9 GENERAL**

Rule 9.1 Charter Requirements

All requirements of the Charter with respect to the proceedings of the RTM are to be strictly followed and no rules shall ever be adopted by the RTM which shall be in conflict with any Charter requirement respecting such proceedings.

Rule 9.2 Ex-Officio Members of the RTM under the Charter

Under the Charter, the Town Manager, the Town Clerk, the Chairman of the Board of Education, the Town Attorney and the members of the Council shall be ex-officio members of the RTM and shall have all the rights and privileges of RTM members except the right to make motions or to vote.

Rule 9.2.1 Student Liaisons to the RTM

There may be as many as four (4) student liaisons to the RTM whose purpose shall be to share the perspectives of younger town residents. These liaisons shall reside in the Town of Groton and shall serve a term from September 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year. Preferably, each individual liaison will serve for two terms.

The RTM Community Development and Services Committee will be responsible for communications and the selection of students liaisons. The community Development and Services Committee will notify local high schools and publicize in Groton Town communications about this opportunity at least four months in advance of the next term. Interested high school students will submit requested materials to the RTM Committee Chair

for review. This method may also be used to fill vacancies; Students who are liaisons to the Board of Education are not eligible.

Student Liaisons shall have the privilege of being recognized to speak during meetings in the same manner as RTM members, although they may not vote or make a motion.

Rule 9.3 Meetings

9.3.1 Regular meetings of the RTM shall be determined by Resolution adopting a calendar-year schedule for the following year prior to December 31 of the current year. This schedule may be amended by Resolution thirty (30) days in advance of the change in schedule.

9.3.2 The Moderator shall ensure that the meeting facility has proper visual and auditory capability.

Rule 9.4 Power of Initiative

Introducing a motion with the Power of Initiative is a right of every voting member on the RTM as outlined in Section 4.5 of the Town Charter.

All proposals, motions, or resolutions using such right shall be clearly identified as such, by including in its title the term "power of initiative" and shall be subject to these rules of the RTM.

In the event of suspension of Rule 6.5.1, (requiring committee action for the RTM to consider a matter) in order to allow consideration of an Initiative, a motion under this "power" shall be submitted in writing prior to the vote and a recess shall be called to allow sufficient time for the member to reduce said motion to writing if necessary.

Rule 9.5 Veto of Town Ordinances

Section 4.6 of the Town Charter empowers the RTM to veto an ordinance that has been newly adopted by the Town Council. Such a veto requires a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of the total membership of the RTM. The Moderator will ask the RTM membership if any member wishes to make a motion to veto after the appropriate committee makes their recommendation. Such a veto must be filed with the Town Clerk within forty-five (45) days of the Council's enactment of the ordinance.

Rule 9.6 Citizens' Petitions

Any citizen who is not a voting member of the RTM wishing to speak may notify the RTM via the Town Clerk of the RTM at any time prior to the hour the meeting is called at which he/she desires to speak. His/her time allocation shall be determined by the Moderator, not to exceed ten (10) minutes, and he/she will be subject to the same restrictions as any RTM member.