



Monday, March 9, 2026 | 6:00 PM

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - AGENDA

Mayor Jill Rusk, Deputy Mayor Stephen Sheffield, Councilor Jean-Claude Ambroise, Councilor Nicholas Johns, Councilor Christy McElroy, Councilor Christine Piazza, Councilor Paul Norris and City Clerk Dani Baycura

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89455110454?pwd=Rb5biaQ9lMPAuupHNOljuZXULk2TeL.1>

Meeting ID: 894 5511 0454

Passcode: 689841

I. ROLL CALL

II. NEW BUSINESS OR REFERRAL

- A. Thames River Heritage Park Donation Request
- B. Boards & Commissions Appointments
 - 1. Harbor Management Commission Alternate – C. Ryan
- C. Police Department
 - 1. Taser Transfer Agreement

III. ADJOURNMENT



Date 2/24/2026	Department Mayor's Office
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Initiative:

Mayor & Council to approve a donation of \$14,500.00 to the Thames River Heritage Park

Information:

The Thames River Heritage Park Foundation (TRHPF) has submitted a letter of request for a donation from the City of Groton to help support the water taxi operation and services for the summer 2026 season. TRHPF is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote, support, and sustain the Thames River Heritage Park, a collection of heritage sites linked by water which capture the history of the Thames River Estuary. The City of Groton has been an active participant in the efforts to move forward the designation of the Thames River Heritage Park, and played an integral part in the successful Water Taxi Pilot program conducted during the summer of 2014. The Water Taxi operated its first season during the summer of 2016. This year, they are celebrating their ten year anniversary, with a marketing campaign called: Discover the Park: 2016 - 2026! Their 2025/2026 goals include expanding demographics and programming and increasing visibility by bringing people all over the state to visit, play and dine in Groton and New London.

Funding for TRHPF's operations and programs comes from members, donors, corporate sponsors, foundation grants, and state and local governments. This year, they are requesting \$14,500 from the City of Groton, Town of Groton, and City of New London, a 15% increase from the 2025 ask.

Options:

1. Approve the donation
2. Deny the donation
3. Request additional information about Thames River Heritage Park
4. Do nothing

Recommended Action:

The Mayor's Office recommends option #1, approve the donation

Thames River Heritage Park

ONE RIVER. A THOUSAND STORIES.

January 31, 2026

Honorable Jill Rusk
Mayor, City of Groton
295 Meridian Street
Groton, CT 06340

Dear Mayor Rusk:

Thames River Heritage Park Foundation (TRHPF) extends its gratitude and thanks to you and the City of Groton for your continued support of the water taxi operation and services during the City's FY 2026.

TRHPF is a nonprofit organization whose mission and purpose is to promote, support, and sustain the Thames River Heritage Park (the Park), a collection of heritage sites linked by water which capture the history and culture of life along the Thames River.

The Park makes the heritage and culture of the Thames River region vivid and relevant to all, connecting people, communities, institutions, sites and stories to the historic waterfront and natural landscape of the Thames River Estuary.

TRHPF is dedicated to advancing inclusive community engagement, heritage education, and stewardship along the Thames River. Approaching its 10th anniversary in 2026, TRHPF has developed boat-based programs, public lectures, youth education initiatives, and partnerships that connect residents and visitors to the region's natural and cultural heritage.

Consider that TRHPF is a new kind of state park. One without boundaries. The park is a collection of 25 national and historic sites along the shores of the Thames River and beyond, linked by a water taxi, that tells the stories that shaped our nation. It is a virtual park. We had about 17,000 people visit our Park in 2025. We are definitely growing! Our volunteers grew from 2024 to 2025 by 57%. Tours and charters grew by 55%, and ridership grew by 89%.

As you know, water taxi service is based on the recommendations of the Yale Urban Design Workshop (YUDW) to connect, promote, support, and sustain the sites that comprise the Park. TRHPF continues its work to raise funds, develop effective marketing campaigns to promote the Park and produce a coordinated heritage experience for visitors and residents alike. This year, we celebrate ten years as we market **Discover the Park: 2016 - 2026!**

In 2025 and continuing into 2026, our goals are to (1) expand demographics and programming to be better representative of Youth & Families, Seniors, Veterans and BIPOC and (2) increase our visibility by bringing people from all over the State and beyond to visit, play, dine and enjoy Groton and New London. We have plans in place where we will have a host of brand-new activities, kicking off the year with a TRHP open house fair in May 2026, which will be open to the communities we serve, introducing them to what the park has to offer and why we do what we do.

In addition to boat tours, cruises and water taxi service; TRHPF is starting its 5th (acclaimed) Docent Academy in 2 weeks, where we will offer Interpreter Training in partnership with CT Storytelling Center. We will also host a Jr. Docent Academy in the Fall 2026. We just kicked off our 5th 6-part lecture series entitled, *Freedom: The Victories, Promises and Potentials of 1776*, in partnership with Lyman Allyn Art Museum, and the first two lectures sold out, SRO. We intend to offer our printed marketing materials in Spanish as well as English and are hoping to also offer at least one or two Spanish-speaking boat tours.

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We do have data where people reported what town they were from. While we don't have the actual # of people, we do have the # of times people said where they were from. Out of the top 10 towns who visited the park, based on this data, Groton garnered the lion's share with 32% of the total. We expect that number to grow substantially in 2026.

TRHPF is already working with an annual deficit as we continue to grow the organization. The funding we are requesting provides critical operational support, expenses which include the management fee for our boat operator as well as the costs of captains and crew. Insurance is a significant expense in our budget, especially with the addition of our 3rd boat, the Nameaug. The boats are getting older and there were several significant and unexpected repairs needed. We spent almost 25% more than what was budgeted for repairs on the boats in both 2024 and 2025, some of which were totally unexpected. At our last Transportation Operations Committee meeting, we are focusing on the long term for transitioning to a more cost-effective boat system, while maintaining the current boats in the interim.

As we enter the FYE 2027, funding from the City is more critical than ever. The cost, just to provide basic maintenance and operate the boats, is approximately \$60,000-\$65,000 per year per boat and is dependent upon fuel, personnel and ongoing repairs costs. At the present time, our boating operations, truly the heart and soul of our organization, experienced major growth by (1) adding the Nautilus Dock as a new boat tour stop; (2) the Nameaug came online mid-summer, bringing us to three boats for the upcoming 2026 season and (3) all three vessels were refurbished and repaired this past year. We recently worked out a boat maintenance schedule with the marina. Additionally, the cost to promote, administer, market, develop programs/tours and coordinate volunteers for water taxi service, tours, and charters is approximately \$50,000 per year.

As you are aware, water taxi and tour ticket sales cover a small portion of the operational expense of providing these services. Funding for TRHPF's operations and programs comes from individual members, donors, corporate sponsors, foundation grants, and state and local governments like the City of Groton. To assure that we have the funds necessary to support the boat operation and associated services, **we request that the City of Groton match the support request of the City of New London and the Town of Groton at the level of \$14,500 for the upcoming fiscal year.** This funding represents an approximate 15% increase from 2025.

I am sure you can agree that an investment in the Park is an investment in the City of Groton. According to a study conducted by the Travel Industry Association **tourists visiting heritage sites spend more money and time at destinations than other types of travelers.** Additionally, 81% of tourists (who traveled at least 50 miles from home) engaged in at least one heritage tourism activity. Of these, 21% are frequent heritage tourists, making more than three such history/culture-related trips per year. **Most heritage tourists also undertook their trip specifically because of historical or cultural events or attractions.** THRP's collaborative marketing program supports heritage tourism. TRHP's Docent Academy graduates volunteer as tour interpreters and Park ambassadors; ticket scanners and ushers at the Garde; gardeners and archivists at Avery-Copp House Museum; docents and tour guides at Fort Griswold, and Ebenezer Avery House, Fort Trumbull, Hempsted Houses – the list is endless, all the while enhancing the visitor experience in the City of Groton.

Jill, thank you for your consideration. We know you share our belief that this is a sensible investment - a small amount that will pay big dividends for the City. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions.

Sincerely,



Executive Director
860-333-6706

jhenley@thamesriverheritagepark.org



Date 3/9/26	Department Boards and Commissions
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Initiative:

Appointment of Charles T. Ryan as an alternate member on the Harbor Management Commission.

Information:

A vacancy exists for an alternate member of the Harbor Management Commission and per Ordinance 56, Section 5, "the City Council shall appoint a successor for a term of five (5) years to fill the vacant position".

Charles Ryan has been recommended and desires to serve as an alternate member of the Harbor Management Commission.

Options:

1. Appoint as stated
2. Wait for further applications
3. Consider at a later time

Recommended Action:

Option 1: Motion to recommend a resolution to appoint Charles Ryan as an alternate member to the Harbor Management Commission, term to expire March 16, 2031.

APPLICATION FOR BOARDS, COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES

Please return the completed application to: City Clerk, 295 Meridian Street, Groton, CT 06340

BOARD OR COMMISSION: Habor Management

NAME: Charles T Ryan

ADDRESS: 26 Indian Ave, Groton, CT 06340

EMAIL: cryan2374@tvconnect.net

Political affiliation (if any) D Daytime telephone: 860-908-6412

1. What do you know about this Board or Commission?

The commission oversees City of Groton waters for management and use under recreational and commercial activities to meet state and local regulations and requirements.

2. Why would you like to serve on this Board or Commission?

I understand there is a vacancy on the commision. I've a 50-year interest in boating and maritime activities.

3. List qualifications you have (education, work, hobbies, community activities) that would help you in fulfilling your responsibilities as a member.

I have had a 16-year mooring in Pine Island Bay. Maritime interests in past 50 years spanning Wisconsin, USN and local small boat activities. I have a B.S. Nuclear Engineering Technology degree (regulatory). I held an NRC Senior Reactor Operator license from 1985 to 2016 (regulatory).

Date: 02-11-2026 Signature: Charles T. Ryan

Please include a resume with application

For office use only	Date
Copy to Mayor	
City Council Appointment	

(Rev September 22, 2023)

2026 FEB 25 P 4 10

Charles T Ryan Resume

26 Indian Ave

Groton, CT 06340

(cell) – 860-908-6412

cryan2374@tvconnect.net

I have a long-time experience / interest in boating, and seek to provide support in Groton City Harbor Management Commission activities.

2019 – Present - Retired from Dominion Energy, Millstone

2000 – 2019 - Sr Instructor – Nuclear Operations, Dominion Energy

1998 – 2000 – Safety Conscious Work Environment – Millstone Site Training Lead

1996 – 1998 – Plant Outage Coordinator / Operations scheduler

1986 – 1996 – Operations Sr Instructor

1982 – 1986 – Supervising Control / Reactor Operator

1976 – 1982 – USN Electrician's Mate 1st Class, nuclear powered Submarine (USS Shark, SSN-591)

Licenses / Degrees

1985- 2016 - NRC Senior Reactor Operator (Millstone Unit 3)

1999 – B.S. Nuclear Engineering Technology

Boating Experience

50 yrs small boat sailing (Wisconsin, US Navy, local)

2009 – 2025 – 22' Hunter sailing off of mooring in Pine Island Bay



Date 3/9/26	Department City of Groton Police Department
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Initiative:

City of Groton Council approve and authorize Jill Rusk, Mayor of the City of Groton to enter into and execute the Inter-Municipal Transfer Hold Harmless and Indemnification Agreement for Forty (40) Taser 7 Conducted Electrical Weapons

Information:

Whereas, the City of Groton Police Department is in need of Tasers as the current Tasers X26P are being phased out; and

Whereas, the City of Groton has an opportunity to modernize the equipment with an agreement with the City of New London; and

Whereas, the City of New London has forty (40) Taser 7 Conducted Electrical Weapons that can be transferred to the City of Groton; and

Whereas, the signing of this agreement will allow the City of Groton Police Department to update the equipment to a more current taser; and

Therefore, be it resolved the City of Groton Council approve and authorize Jill Rusk, Mayor of the City of Groton to enter into and execute the Inter-Municipal Transfer Hold Harmless and Indemnification Agreement for Forty (40) Taser 7 Conducted Electrical Weapons

Options:

1. Approve and Authorize the Mayor to sign the agreement
2. Deny the agreement
4. Do Nothing

Recommended Action:

The department recommends option 1.

HOLD HARMLESS AND INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT
Inter-Municipal Transfer of Forty (40) TASER 7 Conducted Electrical Weapons

This Hold Harmless and Indemnification Agreement (“Agreement”) is entered into pursuant to the authority granted to municipalities under the laws of the State of Connecticut, by and between:

The City of New London, Connecticut, a municipal corporation organized under the laws of the State of Connecticut, with a principal address at 13 Masonic St, New London, CT 06320 (“Transferring Municipality”).

and

City of Groton, Connecticut, a municipal corporation organized under the laws of the State of Connecticut, with a principal address at 295 Meridian Street, Groton, CT 06340 (“Receiving Municipality”).

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Agreement is to establish the terms and conditions under which the Transferring Municipality agrees to transfer ownership and possession of forty (40) TASER 7 Conducted Electrical Weapons (CEWs), including associated cartridges, batteries, docking stations, and accessories (collectively, the “Equipment”), to the Receiving Municipality for lawful law enforcement use.

The Receiving Municipality acknowledges that it has been expressly advised that, according to the manufacturer (AXON Enterprises), the TASER 7 Conducted Electrical Weapons being transferred are beyond their normal useful life, and accepts the Equipment with full knowledge of that condition.

2. Transfer of Equipment; Assumption of Risk

The Transferring Municipality agrees to transfer the Equipment to the Receiving Municipality on an “as-is, where-is, with all faults” basis, without any express or implied warranties of any kind. The Transferring Municipality is transferring the equipment in order to save the costs involved in destruction of the equipment and to assist the Receiving Municipality.

The Receiving Municipality expressly:

- 1) Assumes all risk of loss, damage, defect, failure, or malfunction associated with the Equipment, including risks arising from age, wear, or end-of-life status.
- 2) Acknowledges that the Transferring Municipality has made no representations regarding the safety, reliability, serviceability, or remaining useful life of the Equipment.

Upon delivery and acceptance, all right, title, interest, custody, control, responsibility, and risk of loss associated with the forty (40) TASER 7 Conducted Electrical Weapons shall vest solely in the Receiving Municipality.

3. Compliance with Law and Standards

The Receiving Municipality shall be solely responsible for ensuring that the Equipment is used, stored, maintained, deployed, and disposed of in compliance with:

- 1) All applicable federal and Connecticut statutes, regulations, and case law;
- 2) Connecticut use-of-force standards and POST Council requirements where applicable;
- 3) Manufacturer guidance, advisories, limitations, and training requirements, including those relating to equipment age or service life.

Use of the Equipment shall be limited to properly trained and authorized personnel.

4. Indemnification and Hold Harmless

To the fullest extent permitted by Connecticut law, the Receiving Municipality agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the Transferring Municipality, its elected and appointed officials, officers, employees, agents, and volunteers from and against any and all claims, demands, actions, damages, losses, liabilities, judgments, costs, and expenses, including attorneys' fees, arising out of or in any way connected with:

- 1) The transfer, possession, custody, control, condition, maintenance, use, misuse, or deployment of the Equipment after transfer;
- 2) Any claim of bodily injury, death, or property damage allegedly caused by or related to the Equipment, including claims arising from the Equipment being beyond its normal useful life;
- 3) Any act or omission of the Receiving Municipality or its officers, employees, or agents related to the Equipment.

This obligation shall apply regardless of whether such claims are alleged to have been caused in part by the Transferring Municipality, except to the extent prohibited by law.

5. Insurance Not Limiting Indemnification

The Receiving Municipality's obligation to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless shall not be limited in any way by the availability, scope, or limits of insurance coverage, self-insurance, or participation in any municipal risk pool, including CIRMA.

6. No Waiver of Governmental Immunity

Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed as a waiver or limitation of any governmental, sovereign, or statutory immunity, defense, or limitation of liability available to either

municipality under Connecticut General Statutes, including but not limited to §§ 52-557n and 7-465, or under common law.

7. No Partnership or Agency

Nothing in this Agreement shall be deemed to create a partnership, joint venture, or agency relationship between the parties. Each municipality shall remain solely responsible for its own acts and omissions.

8. Governing Law, Venue and Waiver of Jury Trial

This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Connecticut both as to interpretation and performance. In the event of a dispute, the parties shall negotiate in good faith. Should the dispute remain unresolved after such good faith effort, either party may pursue their legal remedies in the Superior Court of the State of Connecticut, New London County, for all purposes in connection with any action or proceeding which arises from or relates to this Agreement.

CITY OF GROTON HEREBY EXPRESSLY WAIVES ANY RIGHTS IT MAY HAVE TO TRIAL BY JURY OF CLAIM, DEMAND, ACTION OR CAUSE OF ACTION (1) ARISING UNDER THIS AGREEMENT OR ANY OTHER INSTRUMENT, DOCUMENT OR AGREEMENT EXECUTED OR DELIVERED IN CONNECTION HEREWITH, OR (2) IN ANY WAY CONNECTED WITH OR RELATED OR INCIDENTAL TO THE DEALINGS OF THE PARTIES HERETO OR ANY OF THEM WITH RESPECT TO THIS AGREEMENT OR ANY OTHER INSTRUMENT, DOCUMENT OR AGREEMENT EXECUTED OR DELIVERED IN CONNECTION HEREWITH, OR THE TRANSACTIONS RELATED HERETO OR THERETO, IN EACH CASE WHETHER NOW EXISTING OR HEREAFTER ARISING, AND WHETHER SOUNDING IN CONTRACT OR TORT OR OTHERWISE; AND CITY OF GROTON HEREBY AGREES AND CONSENTS THAT ANY SUCH CLAIM, DEMAND, ACTION OR CAUSE OF ACTION SHALL BE DECIDED BY COURT TRIAL WITHOUT A JURY, AND THE CITY OF NEW LONDON MAY FILE AN ORIGINAL COUNTERPART OR A COPY OF THIS SECTION WITH ANY COURT AS WRITTEN EVIDENCE OF CITY OF GROTON'S CONSENT TO THE WAIVER OF ITS RIGHT TO TRIAL BY JURY. Except as prohibited by law, CITY OF GROTON waives any right which it may have to claim or recover in any litigation referred to in the preceding sentence any special, exemplary, punitive or consequential damages or any damages other than, or in addition to, actual damages. CITY OF GROTON (a) certifies that neither the CITY OF NEW LONDON nor any representative, agent or attorney of the CITY OF NEW LONDON has represented, expressly or otherwise, that the CITY OF NEW LONDON would not, in the event of litigation, seek to enforce the foregoing waivers, and (b) acknowledges that, in entering into the Agreement, the CITY OF NEW LONDON is relying upon, among other things, the waivers and certifications contained in this section.

9. Entire Agreement

This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the parties and supersedes all prior negotiations or agreements, whether written or oral, relating to the subject matter herein.

10. Authority to Execute

Each signatory represents that they are duly authorized to execute this Agreement on behalf of their respective municipality and to bind that municipality to its terms.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Agreement as of the dates set forth below.

TRANSFERRING MUNICIPALITY

By: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

RECEIVING MUNICIPALITY

By: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____