



Monday, January 12, 2026 | 6:00 PM

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - Minutes

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

The following minutes meet all requirements under CT FOIA for public meetings and is not a transcript of the meeting. Please visit [Groton Municipal Television on YouTube](#) to view the meeting in further detail.

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Mayor Rusk called the meeting to order at 6:04pm. **Present:** Mayor Rusk, Deputy Mayor Sheffield, Councilor Norris, Councilor Johns and Councilor Ambroise. Councilor Piazza arrived at 6:30pm

II. NEW BUSINESS OR REFERRAL

A. FOIA Training

Russell Blair of the Connecticut FOIA Commission presented a training on the Freedom of Information Act. He emphasized that public meetings and records must be accessible, and outlined key aspects of FOI, including the definition of a public meeting, the importance of maintaining records, and the distinction between records requests and general inquiries. City also discussed the role of the FOI Commission in investigating alleged violations and the consequences for non-compliance, such as fines or mandates for training. He encouraged officials to seek clarification when needed and to ensure that discussions and decision-making occur during public meetings rather than through electronic communications.

Recess at 6:41pm. Meeting resumed at 6:45pm.

B. Legislative Update with Senator Somers, Representative Bumgardner and Representative Gaiewski

Senator Summers and Representative Bumgardner discussed the need to prioritize funding for the seawall project, which has already received \$2.8 million but faced increased costs. They emphasized the importance of writing letters to push for additional state funding. The legislators also highlighted other key issues including prison reform, special education funding, farmland preservation, and the growing fentanyl crisis. The city officials were encouraged to share their priorities and needs to help guide legislative efforts.

The meeting also focused on several key topics, including funding requests for critical projects, discussions with stakeholders, and ongoing efforts to secure additional



funding opportunities. Participants addressed the need for a homeless shelter in Groton to address rising drug addiction and homelessness, as well as the importance of energy infrastructure improvements and the seawall project. Concerns were raised about the impact of development on local wildlife, highlighting the need for a balanced approach to conservation and development. Participants also discussed the availability of opioid settlement funds for potential projects and emphasized the importance of collaboration and communication to address local issues effectively. Further discussion ensued, please visit Groton Municipal Television on YouTube for presentation in its entirety.

Recess at 8:04pm. Meeting resumed at 8:13pm.

C. Parks and Recreation

1. Washington Park Facility Upgrades

Council was asked to move Washington Park facility upgrades, which were awarded to a single bidder with a planned completion by May. Director Mary Hill explained the project includes repairing pavilions, replacing roofs on 3 of the 4 buildings, redoing the siding, and renovating bathrooms.

*Motion to move to Mayor and Council meeting of January 20, 2026: Councilor Piazza. Second: Deputy Mayor Sheffield. Motion carried, 5-0-0. *Councilor Ambrose not present for voting.*

D. Groton Utilities

1. Electric Facility Study

General Manager Robarge requested \$203,000 for a comprehensive study of all Groton Utilities electrical systems and components. The study would assess Groton and Bozrah distribution systems, help coordinate protection relays and identify projects needed over the next 5-10 years.

Motion to move to Mayor and Council meeting of January 20, 2026: Councilor Piazza. Second: Councilor Ambrose. Motion carried, 6-0-0.

2. Sewer Cleaning and Inspection Bid Award

General Manager Weber explained this project, part of the asset management of the wastewater collection system, would entail cleaning and video inspection of approximately 32 miles of piping. The pipes will be rated on a scale to determine future repair priorities. Capital improvements based on the findings will likely appear on the FY27-28 budget.



*Motion to move to Mayor and Council meeting of January 20, 2026: Councilor Ambroise.
Second: Deputy Mayor Sheffield. Motion carried, 6-0-0.*

3. Eversource Easement

It was explained that Eversource owns a high line that goes through the reservoir from Long Hill Road to Shennecossett Road. Eversource is requesting a permanent easement for easy access through City gates rather than calling for access each time. He stated attorneys reviewed the agreement to protect City interests.

*Motion to move to Mayor and Council meeting of January 20, 2026: Deputy Mayor Sheffield.
Second: Councilor Ambroise. Motion carried, 6-0-0.*

E. Donation Request

1. Groton Community Meals

Council agreed to split the remaining budgeted council donation balance between the two requestors allotting \$750 to each.

Motion to move to Mayor and Council meeting of January 20, 2026: Councilor Piazza. Second: Councilor Ambroise. Motion carried, 6-0-0.

2. Children First Groton

Motion to move to Mayor and Council meeting of January 20, 2026: Councilor Piazza. Second: Councilor Ambroise. Motion carried, 6-0-0.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn: Councilor Piazza. Second: Councilor Ambroise. Motion carried, 6-0-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:54pm.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Dani Baycura
City Clerk