



## **Monday, March 2, 2026 | 7:30 PM**

### **MAYOR & COUNCIL - 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 are 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**

Meeting was called to order at 7:31pm.

Present: Mayor Rusk, Deputy Mayor Sheffield, Councilor McElroy, Councilor Norris, Councilor Piazza, Councilor Ambroise and Councilor Johns (via Zoom).

#### **II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

#### **III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS, AND MEMORIALS**

#### **IV. RECEIPT OF CITIZEN'S PETITIONS/COMMENTS**

Receipt of Citizens' Petitions is the portion of the Council meeting where the Council welcomes comments from citizens. To address the Council, please sign the sheet on the table at the front of the meeting room. When you are recognized, please approach the podium. Clearly state your name and address. Each presentation should be limited to five (5) minutes or less, and citizens should, if possible, submit email or written comments. Presentations should be related to matters pertinent to the City of Groton. City Councilors will only ask questions in order to clarify the speaker's presentation and can respond during the Responses to Citizens' Petitions portion of the meeting.

Bryon Niemann, 76 Allen Street – Has been attending the Public Safety meetings with the Fire Department which were very informative. Spoke in favor of increasing firefighter staffing. Commended Mayor and Council for having the discussions. Stated having a properly supported fire department is as necessary as homeowner's or car insurance. Mr. Niemann generously donated \$1,000 to the fire department special revenue fund in support of the increase staffing effort.

Petricia Weaver, 75 Brandegee Avenue – Spoke in support of full fire department staffing immediately in the name of public safety. Stated it is a blessing to live in the City with all the services it provides. Response times are amazing and everyone is always so helpful. There is difficulty however, when there is more than one incident occurring at the same time. Thinks it's important to increase staffing on hand so City is prepared for any situation.



Robert Marquis, 136 Allen Street – Supported the proposal for at least 3 additional firefighters to keep up with public safety needs. Stated that investing in adequate staffing is about maintaining a reliable sustainable level of service for the future. The request is not excessive; it’s measured, reasonable and necessary, ensuring both stations can respond effectively.

Eli Morton, 20 Virginia Avenue – Spoke in favor of increasing firefighter staffing. The City of Groton Firefighters are extremely well-trained and confident in their abilities. Unfortunately, they are often put in emergency situations with less resources to accomplish the same task.

Tim Jeffery, Northfield Commons #74 - Spoke in favor of increasing firefighter staffing. Noted that when infrastructure requirements increase, so do the demands for public safety.

Kevin Price, 105 Chestnut Hill – Thanked community and fellow first responders for all their support in this endeavor. Explained the last fire department staff increase took place 26 years ago, fires burn hotter and more toxic than before, and that medical emergencies are more complex due to expanded regulations. Call volume has increased as well as training requirements yet all with same number of staff.

Debra Patrick, 8 Mellow Avenue – Spoke in support of the increase to the firefighter staffing. Stated firefighters are sworn to protect the city and want to give them the tools and people they need to continue doing so. Urged council to give the fire department full staffing they require and is willing to have that reflected in taxes.

Chester Knickey, 113 Blueberry Hill Road – Current firefighter for the City. Expressed to council that the department has operated understaffed throughout the entirety of his 26-year career. Informed that call volume has grown, incident complexity has grown and expectations upon firefighters has grown, yet staffing has not kept pace. This issue is long overdue and we cannot keep asking fewer firefighters to perform more tasks in more hazardous conditions with less margin for error. It affects operational effectiveness, firefighter safety and ultimately the residents they are sworn to protect.

**V. RESPOND TO CITIZEN’S PETITIONS/COMMENTS**

The council acknowledged the need for action and expressed commitment to addressing the issue.

Deputy Mayor Sheffield raised concerns about funding additional staffing through mill rate increases and questioned whether the community would support such tax increases, while also noting concerns about potential firefighter retirements.

Mayor Rusk announced an ongoing online staffing survey available until March 6th for city residents to provide input on the proposed increase.



**VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Committee of the Whole, 2-9-26

*Motion to approve: Deputy Mayor Sheffield. Second: Councilor Ambroise. Motion carried, 6-0-0.*

Mayor and Council, 2-17-26

*Motion to approve: Deputy Mayor Sheffield. Second: Councilor Piazza. Motion carried, 6-0-0.*

**VII. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS**

Councilor McElroy – Nothing to report.

Councilor Norris – Nothing to report.

Deputy Mayor Sheffield – Attended the Black History Month celebration and thanked Juliette Parker for hosting another successful event.

Councilor Johns – Attended Black History Month celebration at municipal building, commented on it being a nice well put together event.

Councilor Piazza – Nothing to report.

Councilor Ambroise – Nothing to report.

Mayor Rusk – Thanked public works, parks and recreation and Groton utilities for all their efforts during the storms. Thanked residents for diligently shoveling sidewalks. Informed residents of a new resident recognition initiative called the Good Neighbor Award. Consider nominating neighbors that have gone above and beyond, there is a sheet on our website and Facebook, all nominations need to be submitted by March 20<sup>th</sup>. Attended numerous events including Black History Month celebration, Community Speaks Out fundraiser, St. John's Black History Month celebration and Polar Plunge fundraiser. Met with state and federal representatives to discuss funding for the City. Announced city is now accepting RFP's for the beach concession stands.

**VIII. COMMITTEE REFERRALS**

Finance/ Economic Development Committee - may request a meeting and will let clerk know at least two days in advance.

Public Safety/Public Works Committee – Referral – Parking Ordinance 250a.

Community Development/ Parks and Recreation Committee – coordinating with other members to schedule a meeting regarding a Beautification Committee.

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

**R-26-03-21 RESOLUTION THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL FINALLY AUTHORIZE THE APPROVAL OF A PERMANENT ACCESS ROAD EASEMENT FOR EVERSOURCE AT 101 SANDY HOLLOW ROAD, LEDYARD, CONNECTICUT,**



**PROPERTY OWNED BY THE CITY OF GROTON, AND THAT THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF GROTON BE AUTHORIZED TO SIGN THE AGREEMENT**

**WHEREAS**, Eversource upgraded their transmission line that runs through the Ledyard Reservoir; and

**WHEREAS**, during construction, Groton Utilities granted Eversource permission to use the existing entrance from Gate #46 on Long Cove Road to maintain watershed security and access their structures; and

**WHEREAS**, Groton Utilities has requested that Eversource use the Gate #46 entrance for maintenance that may be needed on their transmission line; and

**WHEREAS**, granting this access would eliminate the construction of another access road and will minimize environmental impacts, protect the Ledyard and Morgan Reservoirs, and prevent unauthorized access points for vehicles; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Groton Planning and Zoning Commission approved the 8-24 on December 16, 2025; and

**WHEREAS**, at its regular meeting held on October 15, 2025, the Groton Utilities Commission/Water Pollution Control Authority authorized Groton Utilities Management to move forward and take necessary steps to authorize a permanent access road easement at 101 Sandy Hollow Road, Ledyard, Connecticut, property owned by the City of Groton, and furthermore, that the City Council be apprised of this action with the recommendation that it concur and take the necessary steps to proceed with this agreement;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Mayor and Council finally authorize the approval of a permanent access road easement for Eversource at 101 Sandy Hollow Road, Ledyard, Connecticut, property owned by the City of Groton and that the Mayor of the City of Groton be authorized to sign the agreement.

*Motion to approve: Councilor McElroy. Second: Councilor Ambrose. Motion carried, 6-0-0.*

---

**R-26-03-22 RESOLUTION THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL APPOINT MARY HOWE, 169 MONUMENT STREET, GROTON, CONNECTICUT, AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION, TERM TO EXPIRE ON MARCH 2, 2029**



**WHEREAS**, State Statutes Planning and Zoning, Section 8-1 and Ordinance #41 states, “Appointments shall be made by the Mayor with the approval of the City Council”; and

**WHEREAS**, a vacancy exists for a regular member to the Planning and Zoning Commission; and

**WHEREAS**, Mary Lhowe, 169 Monument Street, Groton, Connecticut, desires to serve on the Planning and Zoning Commission and has been recommended for appointment as a regular member;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Mayor and Council appoint Mary Lhowe, 169 Monument Street, Groton, Connecticut, as a regular member of Planning and Zoning Commission, term to expire on March 2, 2029.

*Motion to approve: Councilor Norris. Second: Deputy Mayor Sheffield. Motion carried, 6-0-0.*

---

**R-26-03-23 RESOLUTION THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL APPROVE THE RE-APPOINTMENT OF KEONA STRICKLAND, 134 DRIFTWOOD CIRCLE, GROTON, CONNECTICUT, AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE, TERM TO EXPIRE ON MARCH 2, 2027**

**WHEREAS**, a vacancy exists for a regular member to the Youth Advisory Committee; and

**WHEREAS**, Keona Strickland, 134 Driftwood Circle, Groton, Connecticut, desires to serve on the Youth Advisory Committee and has been recommended for re-appointment as a regular member;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Mayor and Council approve the re-appointment of Keona Strickland, 134 Driftwood Circle, Groton, Connecticut, as a regular member, Youth Advisory Committee, term to expire on March 2, 2027.

*Motion to approve: Deputy Mayor Sheffield. Second: Councilor Piazza. Motion carried, 6-0-0.*

---

**R-26-03-24 RESOLUTION THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL APPROVE THE RE-APPOINTMENT OF MEGAN BISHOP, 128 MERIDIAN ST, GROTON, CONNECTICUT, AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE, TERM TO EXPIRE ON MARCH 7, 2028**

**WHEREAS**, a vacancy exists for a regular member to the Youth Advisory Committee; and

**WHEREAS**, Megan Bishop, 128 Meridian Street, Groton, Connecticut, desires to serve on the Youth Advisory Committee and has been recommended for re-appointment as a regular member;



**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Mayor and Council approve the re-appointment of Megan Bishop, 128 Meridian Street, Groton, Connecticut, as a regular member, Youth Advisory Committee, term to expire on March 7, 2028.

*Motion to approve: Councilor Piazza. Second: Deputy Mayor Sheffield. Motion carried, 6-0-0.*

---

**R-26-03-25 RESOLUTION THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL AUTHORIZE AND APPROVE A CONTRACT WITH LOUREIRO ENGINEERING ASSOCIATES INC., LOCATED AT 15 THAMES STREET, GROTON, CONNECTICUT, FOR DESIGN SERVICES, BID PREPARATION, & CONSTRUCTION ADMINISTRATION / INSPECTION FOR ADA ACCESSIBILITY TO LOWER THAMES VIEW PARK LOCATED AT 343 AND 353 THAMES STREET FOR THE QUOTED AMOUNT OF FORTY-NINE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED FORTY-SEVEN DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS (\$49,947.50)**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Groton received a SHIPP Grant in the amount of \$75,000.00 for the purpose of designing and constructing ADA Accessibility to Lower Thames View Park; and

**WHEREAS**, Loureiro Engineering Associates Inc. was identified as a preferred consultant from a competitive bid process; and

**WHEREAS**, ADA compliance is required for use of the planned dock facility at 343 and 353 Thames Street; and

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Mayor and Council authorize and approve a contract with Loureiro engineering associates inc., located at 15 Thames street, Groton, connecticut, for design services, bid preparation, & construction administration / inspection for ADA accessibility to lower Thames View Park located at 343 and 353 Thames street for the quoted amount of forty-nine thousand nine hundred forty-seven dollars and fifty cents (\$49,947.50)

*Motion to approve: Councilor Ambroise. Second: Deputy Mayor Sheffield. Motion carried, 6-0-0.*

---

**R-26-03-26 RESOLUTION THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL ACCEPT A DONATION OF TWENTY FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS AND NO CENTS (\$25,000.00) FROM MOHEGAN BASKETBALL CLUB, LLC, 1 MOHEGAN SUN BLVD, UNCASVILLE, CONNECTICUT, TO BE USED FOR FUTURE MAINTENANCE OF THE BASKETBALL COURTS AT WASHINGTON PARK**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Groton received a donation of \$25,000.00 (Twenty Five Thousand Dollars and No Cents) from Mohegan Basketball Club, LLC; and



**WHEREAS**, this is the final installment of donations as agreed upon in the MOU dated 4/10/2024; and

**WHEREAS**, this donation is to be used for future maintenance of the basketball courts at Washington Park; and

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Mayor and Council accept a donation of Twenty Five Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$25,000.00) Mohegan Basketball Club, LLC, 1 Mohegan Sun Blvd, Uncasville, Connecticut, to be used for future maintenance of the basketball courts at Washington Park.

*Motion to approve: Councilor Johns. Second: Deputy Mayor Sheffield. Motion carried, 6-0-0.*

---

**R-26-03-27 RESOLUTION THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL AUTHORIZE AND APPROVE THE REPLACEMENT OF GUARDRAIL FENCE AT THE NATIONAL SUBMARINE MEMORIAL, LOCATED AT 37 BRIDGE STREET, GROTON, CT 06340 BY WBE FENCE COMPANY, INC, 11 DEER COURT, BREWSTER, NY 10509 FOR THE TOTAL PRICE OF \$31,868.00 (THIRTY ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND SIXTY EIGHT DOLLARS AND NO CENTS) AND A 5% CONTINGENCY OF \$1,594.00 (ONE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED AND NINETY FOUR DOLLARS AND NO CENTS) FOR A TOTAL EXPENDITURE NOT TO EXCEED \$33,462.00 (THIRTY THREE THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED AND SIXTY TWO DOLLARS AND NO CENTS) TO BE PAID FROM BUDGETED CAPITAL FUNDS**

**WHEREAS**, the guardrail fencing at the National Submarine Memorial is over 15 years old and in need of repair; and

**WHEREAS**, this guardrail fencing helps protect the national memorial from vehicular traffic; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Groton solicited bids for the project; and

**WHEREAS**, the Director of Parks and Recreation & Finance Department purchasing agent recommend this project;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Mayor and Council authorize and approve the replacement of guardrail fence at the National Submarine Memorial, located at 37 Bridge Street, Groton, CT 06340 by WBE Fence Company, Inc, 11 Deer Court, Brewster, NY 10509 for the total price of \$31,868.00 (Thirty one thousand eight hundred and sixty eight dollars and no cents) and a 5%



contingency of \$1,594.00 (One thousand five hundred and ninety four dollars and no cents) for a total expenditure not to exceed \$33, 462.00 (Thirty three thousand four hundred and sixty two dollars and no cents) to be paid from budgeted capital funds.

*Motion to approve: Councilor Ambrose. Deputy Mayor Sheffield. Motion carried, 6-0-0.*

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

*Motion to adjourn: Councilor Piazza. Second: Deputy Mayor Sheffield. Motion carried, 6-0-0.*

Meeting adjourned at

**ATTEST:**  
**APPROVED:**

**Dani Baycura**  
**City Clerk**