



**City of Groton, Connecticut**

**Committee of the Whole  
Minutes**

**Monday, October 25, 2021**

**City Municipal Building  
295 Meridian Street  
Groton, CT 06340**

**Council Chambers**

**6:00 PM**

**Mayor Keith Hedrick, Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot, Councilor Rashaad Carter, Councilor Lisa McCabe,  
Councilor Paul Norris, Councilor Christine Piazza and Councilor Stephen Sheffield  
City Clerk Megan Peters**

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Meeting was called to order at 6:02pm Mayor Keith Hedrick.

**I. ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Mayor Keith Hedrick, Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot via Zoom, Councilor Rashaad Carter, Councilor Lisa McCabe, Councilor Paul Norris on the phone and on the way, Councilor Christine Piazza (arrived late), Councilor Stephen Sheffield, Finance Director Ron Yuhas and City Clerk Megan Peters

**Excused:** N/A

**II. REFERRALS:**

**742 GROTON UTILITIES**

**2/21/19**

**-SEWER COST OF SERVICE STUDY**

**10/25/21**

Mark Beauchamps, CPA, CMA, MBA, the President of Utility Financial Solutions, LLC is introduced to the council to present the Wastewater Financial Projection Cost Presentation in relation to the proposed new rates as of February 1, 2022. Mark is via Zoom for this presentation.

Councilor Stephen Sheffield inquires as to the upward trend of inflation and if this will impact the rates moving forward.

Mark states that the increase projected should be a good prediction to go along with inflation and it does provide us with a good cushion of any necessary increased costs.

Councilor Paul Norris enters meeting at 6:10pm.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot inquires as to the last three years of rate adjustments.

Mark states that he believes it was 2%, 2% and 3% in the last three years.

Finance Director Ron Yuhas states that we have not had a rate increase since the sewer tax went into place.

Councilor Paul Norris inquires as how the inflation rate impacts the rate increases.

Mark states that inflation effects the increase because of cost of goods, equipment and services.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot inquires as to how this will affect the residents.

Mark Beauchamps continues with his presentation to address Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot question in regards to how this increase will affect our residents.

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Councilor Christine Piazza enters the meeting at 6:18pm.

Mark Beauchamps continues with his presentation.

Jillian Jurczyk from Utility Financial Services, LLC also is on Zoom for this presentation. She jumps in to assist Mark with some clarification of questions.

Mayor Keith Hedrick explains the schedule of events that must happen prior to the proposed rate change in February 2022.

Mayor Keith Hedrick requests a motion to move this to the Mayor and Council Meeting on 11/15/2021 to continue moving forward with the timeline to roll out the new rate on February 1, 2022.

Motion made by Councilor Lisa McCabe, second by Councilor Stephen Sheffield.

Councilor Rashaad Carter confirms the size and increase of an average home in the City of Groton.

Councilor Christine Piazza confirms that this study was done based upon the average use of a resident.

All in favor, 6-0-0. Motion carried.

**655 DEPARTMENT PRESENTATIONS 10/17/17**  
**-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS 10/25/21**

Maria Miranda from Miranda Creative presents the new Strategic Marketing and Communications Strategy for the City of Groton to the Council.

Maria starts by explaining the first time she met the group in 2019 and how she was tasked with differentiating us from Town of Groton by creating a distinct and separate brand.

Miranda Creative is located on the Norwich Town Green and they have been in business for 30+ years.

Maria Miranda continues with her presentation to explain to the Council what has been done so far and what we are doing now to create our brand. She finishes by telling the Council what is planned for the future and what she plans to achieve at the conclusion of this rebranding.

Councilor Lisa McCabe asks if there are any previews to the proposed city branding.

Maria Miranda states that there are many strong ideas on the table that she feels confident about but she does not have any previews for the group.

**-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – ACTIVE CT TRANSPORTATION**  
**SPAN GRANT AWARD 10/25/21**

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Economic Development Specialist Cierra Patrick and City Planner Leslie Creane present the Welcome to the City Gateway Initiative to the Council.

Councilor Rashaad Carter appreciates the presentation. Councilor Rashaad Carter inquires as to if this presentation has been brought to the Department of Transportation. He questions whether the current layout has a reason for being as it is. He describes his commute home and the value he sees for that right hand ramp that directly puts you on Thames Street versus not having that ramp and the backup of traffic.

City Planner Leslie Creane addresses the concern of Councilor Rashaad Carter and the right hand ramp. She states that this new design is to improve walkability in the City which is what she has been told that residents are looking for.

Economic Development Cierra Patrick also addresses Councilor Rashaad Carter's concern.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot confirms and clarifies the drawing to the group.

Mayor Keith Hedrick confirms that nothing has been decided. The final drawing will come back to council for approval.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot agrees with Councilor Rashaad Carter on a possible back-up of the right lane based upon this drawing. She would like to invite business owners of that area to a future meeting to discuss the possible changes to get their feedback on the project.

Councilor Christine Piazza inquires as to the past steps taken with this project.

Councilor Paul Norris thanks Cierra and Leslie for starting and taking on this project. He then states as a driver who does use that exit daily, he also can see the back-up that is concerning to both Councilor Rashaad Carter and Councilor Christine Piazza.

Cierra would like anyone to email her at [patrickc@cityofgroton-ct.gov](mailto:patrickc@cityofgroton-ct.gov) if they too have concerns with the traffic pattern or timing of daily back-ups in this area.

Councilor Paul Norris inquired as to if we have a timeline for this project.

Cierra states that they do not have a timeline currently, they are still looking to come to a design that everyone agrees upon.

Mayor Keith Hedrick confirms that additional information will be brought to the council in the future.

This item will be moved to the Mayor and Council Meeting on November 1<sup>st</sup>.

Motion to move this made by Councilor Lisa McCabe, second by Councilor Christine Piazza.

All in favor, 6-0-0. Motion carried.

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**799 YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD**

**10/25/21**

Parks and Recreation Director Mary Hill presents bringing back the Youth Advisory Board to the Council.

Mayor Keith Hedrick asks for a Motion made by Councilor Lisa McCabe, second by Councilor Christine Piazza.

Councilor Rashaad Carter would like to tighten the number of the group and also have the middle schools be involved with the group.

Mary Hill further describes the goal of this group and how it can improve the programming in the City of Groton.

Mayor Keith Hedrick explains that this program is just a piece of a bigger puzzle to assist with engagement in the City from this age group.

Councilor Stephen Sheffield inquired about involvement from the Town of Groton.

Mary Hill states that she can look further into the Town programs.

Councilor Lisa McCabe asked if this Youth Advisory Board would include members of the youth for representation.

Councilor Paul Norris asks if a Youth Advisory Board could eventually lead into a Youth Advisory Commission to give it more “teeth”. He also feels that no one knows what kids want more than kids, so you need kids around that table.

Mayor Keith Hedrick states that at this time he will not be making a Commission, but this Advisory Board will be under the advisement of the Council.

Councilor Paul Norris would like to reach out to the Town to see if they have City kids involved to better start our group.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot would like to involve people who have the involvement in the youth community including teachers from the middle school, parents, and students.

Councilor Rashaad Carter states that this group should be involved in the bigger picture and not just grouped in with Parks and Recreation programming.

Councilor Stephen Sheffield would like to know the timeline of meetings and how often this group would meet.

Mary Hill states that this group would meet monthly.

Councilor Christine Piazza is excited for this and appreciates involving the youth into the city. She

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gives examples of what her daughter was involved in and how it made her feel.

All in favor, 6-0-0. Motion carried.

**758 POLICE** **7/22/19**  
**-HOMELAND SECURITY** **10/25/21**

Chief of Police, Eric Jenkins, describes that the priority of the city is to keep our residents safe. With this, costs can concur and therefore the need for grants. Chief Jenkins is requesting to get the Mayor involved in getting these grants.

This item will be moved to the Mayor and Council Meeting on November 1<sup>st</sup>.  
Motion to move this made by Councilor Lisa McCabe, second by Councilor Stephen Sheffield.  
All in favor, 6-0-0.  
Motion carried.

**-BULLETPROOF VESTS** **10/25/21**

Chief Eric Jenkins is looking for a grant to obtain new vests. Every year, every officer needs a new vest to ensure that our officers are safe while on the job. This is a 50/50 grant. Chief Eric Jenkins is requesting approval to accept the grant for the necessary vests.

Councilor Lisa McCabe inquires as to what happens to used/old vests?

They are sent back to the company and are used for other items. They are also used at the range as examples.

This item will be moved to the Mayor and Council Meeting on November 1<sup>st</sup>.  
Motion to move this made by Councilor Lisa McCabe, second by Councilor Christine Piazza.  
All in favor, 6-0-0. Motion carried.

**742 GROTON UTILITIES** **2/21/19**  
**-SIEMENS CIRCUIT BREAKERS** **10/25/21**

Mark Biron, General Manager, Groton Utilities, presents the need for the Siemens circuit breakers as part of an ongoing project.

This item will be moved to the Mayor and Council Meeting on November 1<sup>st</sup>.  
Motion to move this made by Councilor Stephen Sheffield, second by Councilor Christine Piazza.  
All in favor, 6-0-0. Motion carried.

**-GRAYBAR** **10/25/21**

This is for the Buddington Substation and the parts needed for the project.

Councilor Stephen Sheffield questions the contingency built in to the request.

Mark Biron states that with the supply chain issues and the cost of goods the prices are changing daily. The higher than normal contingency is to accommodate those changing prices when the order

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is placed.

This item will be moved to the Mayor and Council Meeting on November 1<sup>st</sup>.  
Motion to move this made by Councilor Stephen Sheffield, second by Councilor Lisa McCabe.  
All in favor, 6-0-0. Motion carried.

**- H.O. PENN MACHINERY CO, INC GENERATOR REPAIRS** **10/25/21**

Mark Biron notifies the Council that last week we had a generator issue in which needed immediate repair. This purchase is after the fact for that repair.

This item will be moved to the Mayor and Council Meeting on November 1<sup>st</sup>.  
Motion to move this made by Councilor Stephen Sheffield, second by Councilor Christine Piazza.  
All in favor, 6-0-0. Motion carried.

**550 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS/BONDS** **6/10/15**

Finance Director Ron Yuhas states that he received a request for the current state of the Capital Improvement Projects and Bonds, what we have completed thus far and where we are with the present projects.

Finance Director presents his presentation to the group.

This presentation was informational only.

**561 GROTON UTILITIES FINANCIALS** **9/24/15**

Groton Utility Financials are moved to a future meeting.

**690 CITY BUDGET PRESENTATIONS** **4/6/18**

City Budget Presentation is moved to a future meeting.

**III. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion made to adjourn by Councilor Lisa McCabe, second by Councilor Stephen Sheffield.  
All in favor, 6-0-0. Motion carried.

Mayor Keith Hedrick adjourned meeting at 8:15pm.

**ATTEST:**

**APPROVED:**

**Megan Peters**  
**City Clerk**