



City of Groton, Connecticut

Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 4, 2022

City Municipal Building
295 Meridian Street
Groton, CT 06340

Council Chambers

7:30 PM

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

Meeting was called to order at 7:30pm by Mayor Keith Hedrick.

I. ROLL CALL

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

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 emailed 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.

V. RESPOND TO CITIZEN'S PETITIONS/COMMENTS

None.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor and Council Minutes, March 21, 2022

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot, second by Councilor Lisa McCabe.

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

Committee of the Whole, March 28, 2022

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot, second by Councilor Lisa McCabe.

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

VII. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS

Councilor Paul Norris – Nothing to report.

Councilor Lisa McCabe – Nothing to report.

Councilor Stephen Sheffield – Attended the 3:3 Highway Budget Meeting on March 26, 2022.

Councilor Christine Piazza – Nothing to report.

Councilor Rashaad Carter – Nothing to report.

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MINUTES
APRIL 4, 2022**

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot – Attended the 3:3 Highway Budget Meeting on March 26, 2022. She would also like to notify residents that the Food Box Distribution is upcoming April 22, 2022.

City Clerk Megan Peters – Nothing to report.

Finance Director Ron Yuhas – Nothing to report.

Mayor Keith Hedrick –

Groton Utilities Purchase Power Adjustment

Mayor Keith Hedrick introduces Groton Utilities Associate General Manager, Aaron Brooks, to discuss the new Purchase Power Adjustment and the need for the recent increase in electric rates. He explains the increased pricing in the industry and what Groton Utilities has had to do because of it. He explains that Groton Utilities will continue to keep the rates as low as possible for the rate payers. Groton Utilities also works with all Community Partners including United Way, TVCCA and Groton Human Services for assistance to residents who may need it.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot questions the approval of new rates and the ordinance. She also questions why we didn't start it May 1st versus April 1st.

Aaron Brooks states that to the best of his knowledge this is approved per the ordinance and if we did wait a month, it would have been approximately an additional 8% increase.

Councilor Lisa McCabe inquires if the market does improve, at what point Groton Utilities will re-evaluate the pricing.

Aaron Brooks states that Groton Utilities will re-evaluate in the fall.

Councilor Rashaad Carter inquires if this was a forecasted issue, why had we not brought this to the Council to discuss earlier.

Aaron Brooks understands and empathizes with all residents as he realizes that cost of all goods are going up. If the wholesale pricing goes down, Groton Utilities will also lower prices, but unfortunately if wholesale pricing continue to go up, it will be passed on to the customer.

Councilor Stephen Sheffield mentions inflation and inquires about the service charge.

Aaron Brooks states that the only changes to the bill will be the variable components.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot clarifies that Groton Utilities is seeing a 40% increase but because of the rate stabilization fund residents will only see about a 17% increase.

Councilor Paul Norris inquires to the connection between purchase power and usage.

Councilor Christine Piazza discusses her experience with the Home Energy Audit and states that there was a cost associated to it.

Aaron Brooks states that it is absolutely free, there is no fee attached to this service.

Aaron Brooks talks about the Groton Utilities Conservation Programs and the many available rebates to homeowners.

Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot would like the opportunity to schedule Home Energy Audits at Groton City Day.

Mayor Keith Hedrick introduces Groton Utilities General Manager of Customer Service, Tina Daniels to the Council to discuss options for residents who may need energy assistance. If you do not qualify for energy assistance, please reach out to Groton Utilities for a payment plan.

Tina Daniels reviews the many options for assistance for Groton Utilities customers.

Budget

Mayor Keith Hedrick presents the Council with their Annual Budget Book with the proposed budget for FY2023.

Mayor Keith Hedrick continues with other communications and reports including- Community Workshop, April 14th

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MINUTES
APRIL 4, 2022**

Food Box Distribution, April 22nd
Easter Eggstravaganza, April 16th
Farmer's Market, April 16th
Little League Opening Day, April 23rd
Groton City Clean-Up Day, April 23rd

Mayor Keith Hedrick continues by talking about the upcoming budget proposal to the Town Council in regards to the Shore Avenue sea wall.

VIII. COMMITTEE REFERRALS

None.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

R-22-04-37 RESOLUTION TO THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL APPROVE THE REAPPOINTMENT OF JEFFREY GODLEY, 132 TYLER AVENUE, GROTON, CONNECTICUT AS A REGULAR MEMBER, GROTON UTILITIES COMMISSION, TERM TO EXPIRE ON MAY 31, 2026

WHEREAS, the term of Jeffrey Godley, 132 Tyler Avenue, Groton, Connecticut as a regular member, Groton Utilities Commission expires on May 31, 2022; and

WHEREAS, Jeffrey Godley, 132 Tyler Avenue, Groton, Connecticut desires to continue to serve and as a regular member of the Groton Utilities Commission and has been recommended for reappointment;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council approve the reappointment of Jeffrey Godley, 132 Tyler Avenue, Groton, Connecticut, as a regular member of the Groton Utilities Commission, term to expire on May 31, 2026.

Motion made by Councilor Paul Norris, second by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot.
All in favor, 6-0-0. Motion carried.

R-22-04-38 RESOLUTION THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL APPOINT JOAN M FEENEY TO THE YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADVISING THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL ON ISSUES RELATED TO THE COMMUNITY'S YOUTH TERM TO EXPIRE ON MARCH 7, 2024

WHEREAS, at its regular meeting held on November 1, 2021 the Mayor and Council approved the reestablishment of a Youth Advisory Committee; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Youth Advisory Committee is to

- assess the needs of the community's youth,
- identify existing resources available to meet those needs,

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MINUTES
APRIL 4, 2022**

- make recommendations to the Mayor and Council on actions the City can take either on its own or in conjunction with other organizations to meet the unmet needs of the community's youth; and

WHEREAS, it was identified that the committee will consist of members with specific skills, expertise and interests toward reaching the goals as defined by the committee, including but not limited to City residents, and representatives may change from time to time based on the focus of the committee; and

WHEREAS, Joan M Feeney wishes to serve and has been recommended for appointment by the Mayor;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council appoint Joan M Feeney to the Youth Advisory Committee for the purpose of advising the Mayor and Council on issues related to the Community's Youth term to expire on March 7, 2024.

Motion made by Councilor Lisa McCabe, second by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot.
All in favor, 6-0-0. Motion carried.

R-22-04-39 RESOLUTION THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL APPOINT LISA LAMBERT TO THE YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADVISING THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL ON ISSUES RELATED TO THE COMMUNITY'S YOUTH TERM TO EXPIRE ON MARCH 7, 2024

WHEREAS, at its regular meeting held on November 1, 2021 the Mayor and Council approved the reestablishment of a Youth Advisory Committee; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Youth Advisory Committee is to

- assess the needs of the community's youth,
- identify existing resources available to meet those needs,
- make recommendations to the Mayor and Council on actions the City can take either on its own or in conjunction with other organizations to meet the unmet needs of the community's youth; and

WHEREAS, it was identified that the committee will consist of members with specific skills, expertise and interests toward reaching the goals as defined by the committee, including but not limited to City residents, and representatives may change from time to time based on the focus of the committee; and

WHEREAS, Lisa Lambert wishes to serve and has been recommended for appointment by the Mayor;

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MINUTES
APRIL 4, 2022**

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council appoint Lisa Lambert to the Youth Advisory Committee for the purpose of advising the Mayor and Council on issues related to the Community's Youth term to expire on March 7, 2024.

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot, second by Councilor Stephen Sheffield.
All in favor, 6-0-0. Motion carried.

R-22-04-40 RESOLUTION THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF JENNIFER SMITH, 67 TYLER AVENUE, GROTON, CONNECTICUT, AS A REGULAR MEMBER, BEACH AND PARKS COMMITTEE, TERM TO EXPIRE ON DECEMBER 31, 2023

WHEREAS, a vacancy exists on the Beach and Parks Committee; and

WHEREAS, Jennifer Smith, 67 Tyler Avenue, Groton, Connecticut has been recommended for appointment and desires to serve as a regular member of the Beach and Parks Committee;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council approve the appointment of Jennifer Smith, 67 Tyler Avenue, Groton, Connecticut, as a regular member, Beach and Parks Committee, term to expire on December 31, 2023.

Motion made by Councilor Stephen Sheffield, second by Councilor Christine Piazza.
All in favor, 6-0-0. Motion carried.

R-22-04-41 RESOLUTION THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL AUTHORIZE AND APPROVE A DONATION OF \$400.00 (FOUR HUNDRED DOLLARS AND NO CENTS) TO FLEET RESERVE ASSOCIATION, 242 THAMES STREET, GROTON, CONNECTICUT

WHEREAS, the City of Groton received a request for donation from Fleet Reserve Association to support the placement of flags on the graves of Veterans in Colonel Ledyard Cemetery and Starr Hill Burial Area; and

WHEREAS, resolution R-14-4-48 authorized the City Council to make donations to support the social, cultural and educational interests of the City of Groton;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council authorize and approve a donation of \$400.00 (Four Hundred Dollars and No Cents) to Fleet Reserve Association, 242 Thames Street, Groton, Connecticut.

Motion made by Councilor Christine Piazza, second by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot.
All in favor, 6-0-0. Motion carried.

R-22-04-42 RESOLUTION THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL AUTHORIZE AND APPROVE THE EXPENDITURE OF \$10,000.00 TO THE THAMES RIVER HERITAGE PARK FOUNDATION FOR THE PURPOSES OF

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MINUTES
APRIL 4, 2022**

**SUPPORTING THE PROGRAM YEAR 2022 OPERATING EXPENSES
FOR THE THAMES RIVER HERITAGE PARK WATER TAXI**

WHEREAS, the City of Groton has been an active participant in the efforts to move forward the designation of the Thames River Heritage Park; and

WHEREAS, the City played an integral part in the successful Water Taxi Pilot program conducted during the summer of 2014; and

WHEREAS, the Water Taxi operated its first season during the summer of 2016 and while successful, the efforts will continue to focus on the taxi service as well as developing fundraising strategies; and

WHEREAS, the addition of the Water Taxi will connect historic institutions into one park experience, provide links between the New London transportation hub and surrounding historic sites and offer a viable daily transportation alternative for local residents; and

WHEREAS, the water taxi will aid in regional economic development by increasing the customer base for existing business, historic institutions and state parks as well as encouraging new business;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council authorize and approve the expenditure of \$10,000.00 to the Thames River Heritage Park Foundation for the purposes of supporting the program year 2022 operating expenses of the Thames River Heritage Park Water Taxi.

Motion made by Councilor Rashaad Carter, second by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot. All in favor, 6-0-0. Motion carried.

R-22-04-43 RESOLUTION THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL APPROVE THE TEMPORARY USE AND CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL AT EASTERN POINT BEACH ON SEPTEMBER 10, 2022 AS PART OF THE GROTON CITY BREW RUN HOSTED BY THE GREATER MYSTIC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND SPONSORED BY GROTON UTILITIES, PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF EASTERN POINT BEACH RULES AND REGULATIONS

WHEREAS, the City of Groton has approved the use of Eastern Point Beach on September 10, 2022 in an effort to support the Groton City Brew Run; and

WHEREAS, the Groton City Brew Run will be a Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce event highlighting the City of Groton; and

WHEREAS, Groton Utilities will be financially sponsoring the event; and

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MINUTES
APRIL 4, 2022**

WHEREAS, the event host would like to allow for the consumption of alcohol on Eastern Point Beach property, and per Resolutions R-22-02-12 and R-14-6-71, the use and consumption of alcohol on Eastern Point Beach property is limited to the porch and inside the Zbierski House only with a special permit approved by the Director of Parks and Recreation;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council approve the temporary use and consumption of alcohol at Eastern Point Beach on September 10, 2022 as part of the Groton City Brew Run hosted by the Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce and sponsored by Groton Utilities, pursuant to the provisions of Eastern Point Beach Rules and Regulations.

Motion made by Councilor Paul Norris, second by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot. All in favor, 6-0-0. Motion carried.

R-22-04-44 RESOLUTION THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL PROVISIONALLY AUTHORIZE AND APPROVE THE CITY OF GROTON TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH JJS UNIVERSAL CONSTRUCTION, 63 AIRPORT ROAD, DUDLEY MASSACHUSETTS FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF THE PUBLIC WORKS SALT SHED ROOF FOR A TOTAL PRICE NOT TO EXCEED \$38,498.90 (THIRTY-EIGHT THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED NINETY-EIGHT DOLLARS AND NINETY CENTS), INCLUSIVE OF A 10% CONTINGENCY, TO BE PAID FROM MUNICIPAL GRANTS AND AID FUNDS

WHEREAS, the roof on the salt shed is in poor condition requiring replacement; and

WHEREAS, a bid package for the project was developed and competitively bid by the City Finance Department; and

WHEREAS, JJS Universal Construction was the lowest responsible bidder; and

WHEREAS, JJS Universal Construction prior work performance references have been validated; and

WHEREAS, JJS Universal Construction has been judged by the Finance Director to be the most advantageous pricing for the City;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council authorize and approve the City of Groton to enter into an agreement with JJS Universal Construction, 63 Airport Road, Dudley Massachusetts for the replacement of the Public Works Salt Shed roof for a total price not to exceed \$38,498.90 (Thirty-Eight Thousand Four Hundred Ninety-Eight Dollars and Ninety Cents), inclusive of a 10% contingency, to be paid from Municipal Grants and Aid funds.

Motion made by Councilor Lisa McCabe, second by Councilor Christine Piazza. All in favor, 6-0-0. Motion carried.

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MINUTES
APRIL 4, 2022**

R-22-04-45 RESOLUTION THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL PROVISIONALLY AUTHORIZE AND APPROVE THE CITY OF GROTON TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH GATEWAY FENCE AND GUARDRAIL LLC, OF 36 RED HILL ROAD, BRANFORD, CONNECTICUT FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF BASEBALL FIELD FENCE ON FIELD 3 AT WASHINGTON PARK FOR A TOTAL PRICE OF \$16,465.00 (SIXTEEN THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED SIXTY FIVE DOLLARS AND ZERO CENTS). THE TOTAL COST OF THE PROJECT WILL BE PAID FROM BUDGETED CAPITAL FUNDS.

WHEREAS, the fence on field 3 at Washington Park is in very poor condition and

WHEREAS, bid package for the replacement was developed and competitively bid: and

WHEREAS, Gateway Fence and Guardrail LLC was the lowest bidder: and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council authorize and approve the City of Groton entering into an agreement with Gateway Fence and Guardrail LLC, of 36 Red Hill Road, Branford, Connecticut for the replacement of baseball field fencing on field 3 at Washington Park for a total price of \$16,465.00 (Sixteen thousand four hundred sixty five dollars and zero cents), to be paid from budgeted capital funds.

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Gweneviere Depot, second by Councilor Stephen Sheffield. All in favor, 6-0-0. Motion carried.

R-22-04-46 RESOLUTION TO INITIALLY APPROVE “AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL TO APPROVE INCREASES TO RETIREES PENSIONS UP TO AND INCLUDING THOSE WHO RETIRED IN 2018 AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CITY OF GROTON RETIREMENT BOARD”

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GROTON:

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council, upon recommendation of the Retirement Board, may increase the benefits of retired employees; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council have received a qualified cost estimate from an actuary; and

WHEREAS, the City of Groton Retirement Board recommended increasing the benefits of retired employees who retired in 2018 at their meeting held on March 10, 2022; and

That is: The COLA increase shall be calculated by multiplying the annualized increase in the Consumer Price Index issued by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor for the

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MINUTES
APRIL 4, 2022**

last available twelve (12) months by a factor of twenty-five percent (25%); however, in no event shall the adjustments exceed one and one-half (1.5%) per year. This adjustment is intended to provide persons retired before 1990 and those who retired up until December 2018 with the same COLA.

Effective Date This Ordinance shall become effective on or about July 1, 2022.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council initially approve “An Ordinance Authorizing the Mayor and Council to Approve Increases to Retirees Pensions up to and including those who retired in 2018 as Recommended by the City of Groton Retirement Board”.

Motion made by Councilor Stephen Sheffield, second by Councilor Christine Piazza.
All in favor, 6-0-0. Motion carried.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Lisa McCabe makes a motion to adjourn, second by Councilor Christine Piazza.
All in favor, 6-0-0. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:48pm.