

**CITY OF GROTON
SPECIAL
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MINUTES
MONDAY, MAY 13, 2019**

**MUNICIPAL BUILDING
AUDITORIUM
8:00 PM**

I. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Mayor Hedrick welcomed everyone and introduced the West Side Middle School Chorus under the direction of Renee Celey.

The chorus performed the Star Spangled Banner.

Mayor Hedrick asked all the children in the room to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. WELCOME FROM MAYOR HEDRICK

Thank you West Side Middle School Chorus for singing the National Anthem and thank you to choir Director Renee Celey for leading them.

I want to thank you for coming out to tonight's ceremonies. Many of you are instrumental in making the City successful and in moving the City of Groton forward. Thank you to the friends and families who are here tonight as well as the elected officials. I want to offer my thanks and congratulations to the candidates who are about to be sworn in to office. In addition, I would like to thank City Clerk Deb Patrick, Park and Rec Director Mary Hill, and City employees James, Jim, Casey, Ryan and April for all of their work to make tonight successful

Pastor Coleman will now lead the invocation.

III. INVOCATION PASTOR JOSEPH COLEMAN

Pastor Coleman offered a prayer to guide our elected official in their duties.

IV. RECOGNITION OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mayor Hedrick thanked LT Governor Susan Bysiecicz for attending and participating in the swearing in ceremony tonight. He recognized the following local elected officials, Town of Groton Mayor Patrice Granatosky, New London Mayor Mike Passero, Former City of Groton Mayor Marian Galbraith, Town Councilors Juliette Parker, David Atwater, RTM members Reggie Stanford and Sheila Perry and thanked them for attending tonight.

Mayor Hedrick asked Former Deputy Mayor Larry Gerrish to come forward and presented him with a plaque thanking him for his service as a City Councilor and Deputy Mayor.

Mr. Gerrish thanked Mayor Hedrick and said it was a pleasure to serve the City of Groton noting he would continue to be involved in other ways.

Mayor Hedrick asked former Councilor Stephen Sheffield to come forward and presented him with a plaque thanking him for his years of service on the City Council.

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MINUTES
MAY 13, 2019**

Mr. Sheffield thanked the Mayor and said his time serving on the City Council was rewarding. He thanked Liz Duarte who first approached him to run for City Council saying it was a great experience.

Mayor Hedrick presented flowers to City Clerk Deb Patrick thanking her for all she does for the City, the Council and him. He noted her current term runs for another 2 years. Clerk Patrick thanked Mayor Hedrick for the flowers and said it was an honor to serve the City of Groton and will continue for another 2 years.

Mayor Hedrick presented flowers to his wife, Joyce, thanking her for her tremendous support so he is able to serve as Mayor. Without her support he could not do the job he does.

V. OATH OF OFFICE FOR MAYOR

LT. Governor Susan Bysiewicz called Mrs. Hedrick and their family up onto the stage and administered the oath of office to Mayor Keith Hedrick.

VI. OATH OF OFFICE FOR COUNCILORS

LT. Governor Susan Bysiewicz called his family up onto the stage and administered the oath of office to Councilor Jamal Beckford.

LT. Governor Susan Bysiewicz called his family up onto the stage and administered the oath of office to Councilor Rashaad Carter.

LT. Governor Susan Bysiewicz administered the oath of office to Councilor Gweneviere Depot.

LT. Governor Susan Bysiewicz called her family up onto the stage and administered the oath of office to Councilor Lisa McCabe.

LT. Governor Susan Bysiewicz called her family up onto the stage and administered the oath of office to Councilor Minerva Ortiz.

LT. Governor Susan Bysiewicz called her family up onto the stage and administered the oath of office to Councilor Jill Rusk.

VII. CONGRATULATORY REMARKS FROM LT. GOVERNOR SUSAN BYSIEWICZ

LT. Governor Bysiewicz congratulated the Mayor and Councilors and thanked them for stepping up to serve their community. She thanked their families noting that the support of our family is what allows us to serve. She thanked those who have served in the military for defending our right to democracy. She asked those who have a family member up here on the stage to stand. She then asked all those who have served in the military to stand. She noted the diversity of this Council, men and women as well as people of color are a model of diversity for the State of Connecticut and here in the City of Groton.

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MINUTES
MAY 13, 2019**

She talked about the number of women now serving in politics in general throughout our country and the diversity as well.

VIII. REMARKS FROM MAYOR HEDRICK

Thank you Lt Governor Bysiewicz for your kind remarks.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I present to you the City of Groton Council.

I was cautioned to keep my remarks brief and child friendly. Those of you who know me can attest sometimes that can be a challenge for me. That is why I have a script.

Two years ago I started my journey as Mayor of the City of Groton. My first week ended with a phone call telling me we had received a grant from the Department of Public Health for \$15M for the new construction of the Water Treatment Plant. My second week ended with a two hour phone call from my attorney regarding the ethics hearing resulting from Kentucky Derby trips. And so it began.

In the subsequent 2 years, the City departments have been very busy.

WATER We are currently 60% completed with a \$54M Water Treatment Plant construction project. Completion of this state of the art plant will allow us to exceed state water standards. We recently received the 2019 Certified Operator Public Health Drinking Water Merit Award from the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health. This award recognizes superior operation performance of a water treatment plant by its certified operators which are critical to DPH's mission of providing safe drinking water.

We recently replaced a 70 + year old water tank at Walker Hill with a new 2.1 M gallon tank. This will provide water to the surrounding area and is a backup to the submarine base. We installed emergency cross connects in our water system which will allow resiliency in water distribution as far north as Norwich, Preston, Montville and other regions.

SEWER We moved the funding of the sewer from the tax base to an enterprise account under Groton Utilities to help stabilize tax rates and allow for the proper funding of Capital Improvement Projects. Improved operation of the pollution abatement facility allowed us to receive \$13K in Nitrogen Credits from the State of Connecticut.

ELECTRIC You may have heard about the loss of power when a crane ran into the power lines across I-95 recently. This was a major even, ripping down all lines completely. The electric Crew restored power in approximately four hours and completely restored the system to full operability in approximately 14 hours. The Electric Division has an aggressive tree cutting campaign to minimize outages due to tree damage during storms. The crews are also maintaining the substations and the miles of electric lines in our service territory.

PUBLIC WORKS Public Works continues to keep the roads and streets clean and clear of debris and snow. They also continue to stay on top of the garbage and recycling in this ever changing climate of regulations. The City and Town recently completed a Roads and Highways study to evaluate efficiencies in these areas. The conclusion of the study is we are doing what is right for the City and the Town is doing what is right for the Town. This year we will complete the paving of West Elderkin and portions of Benham Road using the remaining Town Road Bond money.

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MINUTES
MAY 13, 2019**

This year we will start the engineering for a \$2.3M LOTCIP (Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program) full depth paving project on Poquonnock Road from Rainville Road up to and including five corners. Construction should start in spring 2020.

PARK AND RECREATION Parks and Recreation replaced the porch at the Tyler House as well as most of the windows in the house. We will continue with Tyler House renovations including bathrooms and the rest of the windows.

We are continuing to expand the use of the Zbierski House.

We have a new park at the Lower Costa Property which will be named by a contest later this year.

We are building a new Park House garage for the storage of equipment used by Parks and Recreation employees.

We will continue to provide excellent programs for all to enjoy.

BUILDING, PLANNING AND ZONING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In the past two years we have had a lot of development in the City of Groton such as Branford Manor reconstruction, Groton Estates, Groton Town Houses, Pump and Munch Gas tanks, Avery Market Gas Tanks and the renovation of Cumberland Farms.

We've welcomed new businesses including Pink Brow and Beauty Bar, Wish-A-Cut, Two Sisters Shipping & Business Center, JC Image, Studio 11:11, WASU convenience store, and Thayer Mahan.

We have seen investment in the past two years at Pfizer and Electric Boat with commitment for future development. Electric Boat Shipyard will start construction of the new Columbia Class Submarine building this year.

We approved a Tax Increment Financing policy and our TIF Master Plan is scheduled for Town approval later this year. We hope this tool will help attract new developers to Five Corners and Thames Street. We continue to embrace economic development and small businesses in the City of Groton.

FIRE AND POLICE We continue to provide excellent public safety services. The police have an Autism and Law Enforcement Education Coalition (ALEC) Certified officer to train officers and engage the public. We are working with the Town of Stonington to use a software program which will help police officers who answer calls to residences with people on the spectrum.

The Police continue to host many community events such as Touch a Truck and food, toy and coat drives to engage the community. They are active in the community on a daily basis not just when an incident occurs.

The Fire Department has responded to numerous EMT and fire calls including a major structural fire at Branford Manor. Due to their quick response, the fire was contained to one section of the building.

FINANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES While these departments are typically in the background, they play a vital role in day-to-day operations. HR ensures required training is conducted, departments are properly staffed and policies are reviewed and updated. Finance ensure employees are paid and benefits are properly administered. They ensure the proper procedures are followed for the purchase of equipment and services in the City.

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MINUTES
MAY 13, 2019**

Since 2017 our taxes are reduced almost 1 mill.
Our Unassigned Fund Balance is **five million, sixty thousand, five hundred eighty three dollars** (\$ 5,060,583.00), which as a percentage of expenditures is 30.4%, leaving a healthy reserve.

And our pension is funded at 95.4%.

The City is fiscally stable.

FUTURE

So what does the future hold for this new council?

We will continue with Economic Development on Thames Street and Five Corners.

We will improve infrastructure in water, sewer, electric, roads and highways and our municipality owned properties.

We will address space issues within the municipal building.

We will develop strategies for future traffic and parking issues associated with the continued expansion of businesses in the City.

We will evaluate the impacts of new legislation on the City and implement policies as required.

We will manage the transition of the Mother Bailey House.

We will continue to work through MS-4 Storm Water Regulations.

All in all it will be a busy two years for this Council but I know they are up to the challenge.

Thank you.

We will now proceed with the meeting. Council please take your seats at the table.

IX. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Keith Hedrick, Councilors Jill Rusk, Jamal Beckford, Lisa McCabe, Gweneviere Depot, Minerva Ortiz, Rashaad Carter and City Clerk Debra Patrick.

X. NEW BUSINESS

**R-19-5-65 RESOLUTION SELECTING JAMAL BECKFORD AS DEPUTY
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF GROTON**

WHEREAS, under the provisions of Article III, Section 1 of the City of Groton Charter, the Council will choose, by a majority vote, at the first meeting following the regular election, a Deputy Mayor of the City of Groton;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that by a majority vote of the City Council, Jamal Beckford is selected as Deputy Mayor of the City of Groton to serve until the next regular election.

Councilor Rusk moved Councilor Depot seconded a motion to approve R-19-5-65.
Motion carried.

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MINUTES
MAY 13, 2019**

XI. CLOSING SONG

True Colors – West Side Middle School Chorus

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Rusk moved Deputy Mayor Beckford seconded a motion to adjourn. Motion carried.

Mayor Hedrick adjourned the meeting at 8:52 p.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

**Debra Patrick
City Clerk**