

RULES OF THE THIRTY-THIRD REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING GROTON, CONNECTICUT

Adopted by the 33rd RTM at the RTM Meeting held March 9, 2022.

Preamble

We, the members of the 33rd RTM subscribe to the laws and policies of the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the State of Connecticut, the Groton Town Charter, the Rules of the 33rd RTM and the most current edition of Robert's Rules of Order to govern the matters that come before this organization.

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SECTION 1 ROLL CALL

Rule 1.1 The Moderator shall take the Chair at the hour for which the meeting has been called, or to which the meeting was adjourned. The Moderator shall immediately call the RTM to order, have the Clerk of the RTM take Roll Call and if a quorum is present, proceed to business.

Rule 1.2 Any member appearing after the Roll Call shall make such fact known to the Clerk of the RTM. The Clerk of the RTM shall preserve a permanent record of attendance.

SECTION 2 QUORUM

Rule 2.1 Fifty percent (50%) of the Town Meeting Representatives entitled to vote shall constitute a quorum for doing business.

Rule 2.2 In the absence of a quorum, the Moderator may adjourn the RTM to a time definite and place certain.

SECTION 3 MODERATOR

Rule 3.1 The Moderator shall be elected by a majority vote of the RTM members present at the first meeting of the newly elected RTM and shall serve for a term of two (2) years.

Rule 3.2 The Moderator shall chair the RTM in accordance with Section 7.1.

Rule 3.3 In case of any disturbance or disorderly conduct within the meeting hall, the Moderator shall have the power to order the persons causing such disturbance to remove themselves or be removed.

Rule 3.4 If the Moderator wishes to take part in the debate on any issue, they will ask a member to perform the duties of the Moderator until the main question is resolved. Nothing herein means that the Moderator cannot ask questions, or offer information or clarification on an issue from the podium. A question or simple comment is not considered participating in debate.

Rule 3.5 In case the Moderator is absent at the hour to which the RTM stands adjourned or has been called, the Clerk of the RTM shall call the RTM to order. The first business shall be the election of a Moderator Pro Tempore, which shall be done immediately, and the Moderator Pro Tempore thus elected shall preside in the RTM and discharge all the duties of the Moderator until his/her return.

Rule 3.6 In case of the death or resignation of a Moderator, the Clerk of the RTM shall call the RTM to order as provided in Rule 3.5 and the first business shall be the election of a Moderator and the Moderator thus elected shall preside over the RTM and discharge all the duties of the Moderator during the remainder of that term.

Rule 3.7 The Moderator shall guarantee the right of speech to every member of the public at the Town of Groton RTM meetings. This privilege shall be controlled under Section 5 (D) Citizens' Petitions and under Section 9.6.

SECTION 4 CLERK OF THE RTM

By Charter, the Town Clerk is the Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting (RTM).

Rule 4.1 Agendas, draft minutes of meetings and other communications will be mailed or emailed to RTM members at least seven (7) days prior to scheduled meetings as per individual members' requests. Such agenda will contain a listing of such items of business as are known to be acted upon.

Rule 4.2 The Clerk of the RTM shall receive and open all mail addressed to the RTM and shall present same to the Moderator for presentation to the RTM at its next meeting. If action is indicated upon any mail received, it shall be referred to the Moderator by the Clerk of the RTM immediately.

SECTION 5 ORDER OF BUSINESS

The regular order of business shall be as follows:

- (A) Roll Call
- (B) Moment of Silence and Salute to the Flag
- (C) Approval of Minutes of previous meeting
- (D) Public Petitions
- (E) Reception of Communications
- (F) Report of Town Manager
- (G) Economic Development
- (H) Report of the Superintendent of Schools
- (I) Reports of Committees
- (J) Liaison Reports
- (K) Budget Discussions
- (L) Other Business
- (M) Adjournment

SECTION 6 COMMITTEES

Rule 6.1 Standing Committees

There shall be the following Standing Committees:

- Finance
- Community Development and Services
- Education
- Recreation
- Public Safety
- Public Works
- Rules and Procedures

Rule 6.2 Committee Membership and Chair Appointment

- 6.2.1 The Moderator shall appoint the Chair and members of each standing committee unless otherwise specifically instructed by a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of the RTM members present.
- 6.2.2 The Moderator shall consult with the Floor Leaders in considering standing committee membership and leadership, but the final authority rests with the Moderator.
- 6.2.3 No committee shall have less than five (5) members.
- 6.2.4 There shall be no more than a two-thirds (2/3rds) majority appointed from any one political party.
- 6.2.5 Each RTM member shall be on at least one, but no more than two standing committees, with exception of the Moderator. The Moderator shall be an ex-officio member of all standing committees. The Floor Leaders of the two major political parties shall be ex-officio to all committees where they are not a regular member. Ex-officio members may participate in discussion but shall not make a motion or vote.
- 6.2.6 Membership of the Finance Committee shall be made up of seven (7) members, one from each of the RTM districts.
- 6.2.7 Replacement appointments to any committee made by the Moderator between RTM meetings shall become effective when said appointments are announced at the subsequent RTM meetings.

Rule 6.3 Special Committees and Liaison Appointments

The Moderator may appoint such special committees or representatives as in their opinion may be necessary, and may designate the Chair thereof.

6.3.1 Special Committees – Duplication of Standing Committees functions

Special Committees appointed by the Moderator under Rule 6.3 shall in general not overlap or duplicate standing committees. If it is necessary to constitute a special committee which does so overlap or duplicate standing committee functions, the Chair and one member of the other political party of the affected standing committee shall be appointed voting members of the special committee. The Rules and Procedures Committee shall determine when such duplication or overlap occurs and shall so notify the Moderator.

If no member of the affected standing committee from any other political party, besides the majority, is willing or able to serve on the special committee, then any RTM member from any other political party, besides the majority, who is willing and able to serve on the special committee shall be considered an appropriate substitute.

6.3.2 Liaison

Any person appointed by the Moderator as a liaison for the RTM shall be a current member of the RTM. The liaison appointment shall expire upon the resignation of the RTM member, the expiration of their term on the RTM, or upon appointment of a new liaison by the Moderator.

Rule 6.4 Committee Responsibilities

It is the function and responsibility of each committee to:

1. Ask questions, gather information, and be fully informed about the operation of town functions within its purview, particularly as related to the RTM's budgetary authority.
2. Provide information to the RTM necessary for the RTM to make informed decisions on items recommended for action.
3. Maintain contact with the appropriate appointed and elected officials of the Town.
4. Consider and recommend action to the RTM regarding proposed or pending legislation affecting its assigned area.
5. Initiate or propose RTM action on issues in the committee's purview.
6. Perform such other functions as may be assigned to them by the Moderator or the RTM from time-to-time.

6.4.1 Committee Reports

Each chair of a committee shall submit a report to the RTM on each item referred to the committee for consideration and on other items the committee initiates for consideration, for the purpose of advising the RTM as to the recommended action on such matters. This report shall include any information presented to the committee that may assist the full RTM in considering the question, and shall be in accordance with Rules 6.4.1.1 and 6.4.1.2 below.

6.4.1.1 Content of Reports/Minutes/Minority Report

A committee report/minutes shall contain the following information: date, time, and place of meeting; names of members present and absent; names of members voting affirmatively and negatively and those abstaining; recommendations for action by the RTM and any further information deemed pertinent or necessary for the RTM to make an informed decision on the subject. If the vote of the committee was divided, the dissenting minority may submit a report of its own.

6.4.1.2 Presentation

A written copy of the committee report/minutes and any minority report shall be given to the Clerk of the RTM within seven (7) days of the committee meeting. Votes on any matter must be available within 48 hours of the meeting. If the committee report is presented at an RTM meeting sooner than seven (7) days after the committee meeting, the written report must be given to the Clerk of the RTM at that RTM meeting. A copy of the committee report will be sent by the Clerk of the RTM to each RTM member, with the agenda or as soon as possible, for the meeting at which the report is to be presented.

6.4.2 Notice of Committee Meetings

All chairs shall notify the Clerk of the RTM of the date, time and place when any committee meeting is scheduled. The Clerk of the RTM shall notify each member and ex-officio member of that committee, the chair of the corresponding Council committee, and such other members as shall have expressed in writing a desire to be notified of a specific committee meeting, The Clerk of the RTM may notify the press of such a meeting so that interested members of the RTM or the public may attend.

6.4.3 Quorum

A quorum of any committee of the RTM is defined as fifty (50) percent of the total number of committee members eligible to vote.

6.4.4 Joint Committee Meetings

For a joint meeting of two (2) or more committees, a joint committee chair shall be appointed by the Moderator. Fifty (50) percent of each committee is required to constitute a quorum at any joint committee meeting.

6.4.5 Responsibilities of the Rules and Procedures Committee

A temporary Rules and Procedures Committee, appointed by the newly-elected Moderator, is responsible for drafting and recommending rules to the RTM after each municipal election. The rules as recommended by the committee shall be adopted by a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of those present and voting with prior notice to the full RTM of this item on the agenda, or, by a majority vote of the full RTM.

When an alteration or amendment of the rules is requested during the session of the RTM, such proposed amendment to the rules will be referred to the standing Rules and Procedures Committee for consideration and a recommendation to the RTM. Any change to the Rules requires the same vote as above.

Rule 6.5 Referral of Matter to Committee

Matters may be referred to standing committees at any time by the Moderator or in their absence by the Town Manager, or in the absence of both, by the Chairman of the Council.

- 6.5.1 No matter shall be acted upon by the RTM without a recommendation first having been made on said matter by the appropriate committee, unless a motion to suspend the rules passes by a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of those present and voting.

- 6.5.2 Upon referral of a matter to committee, the committee shall report on said matter at the next regular RTM Meeting or at a special RTM meeting called for that specific matter. Failure of the committee to do so shall place the matter before the RTM for action.
- 6.5.3 Matters referred to committee between RTM meetings must be announced at the subsequent meeting of the RTM. Such matters may be reported upon by said committee at this meeting. However, for such matters to be acted upon by the RTM at the same meeting, the following requirements must be satisfied:
1. The matter must have been referred at least seven (7) days prior to said meeting.
 2. The committee (s) must have prepared a report which includes recommendations for action by the RTM.
 3. A written summary of the matter must appear on the agenda and have been sent to each RTM member prior to the meeting.
 4. While the matter must have been referred to the RTM at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting, the Town Council may or may not have taken action prior to the seven (7) days. The Town Council must have taken action prior to the RTM meeting.
- 6.5.4 Any matter of proper interest to the RTM may be returned to the appropriate standing committee by a majority vote of those present, except that after a matter has been once returned to committee, it shall require a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of those present to return it again to the standing committee.

SECTION 7 MOTIONS

Rule 7.1 Parliamentary Authority

The most current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall govern the RTM in all cases to which they are now applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with these rules as they now stand or are amended, or with the Charter of the Town of Groton.

Rule 7.2 Reducing Motion to Writing

Any motion shall be reduced to writing if the Moderator so directs or the Clerk of the RTM requests it, before the question is put to a vote.

Rule 7.3 Moving the Question

The Moderator may refuse to accept a motion to move the question for ten (10) minutes after the motion on the floor is made if debate is desired by any member of the RTM. If the RTM votes to move the question the Moderator may, at their discretion, allow for a maximum of ten (10) additional minutes of debate with each RTM member allowed a maximum of one (1) minute.

SECTION 8 DISCUSSIONS, DEBATE AND VOTING

Rule 8.1 Personal Interest/Conflict of Interest

Any member shall disqualify themselves from voting if they has a conflict of interest in the subject under consideration, as defined by Sec. 3.5.3 in the Town Charter. Any member who, voluntarily, does not vote on an issue, shall retain all other rights of their office. The Town Charter requires any member who has a financial interest, direct or indirect, in any contract, transaction, or decision of the RTM, to disclose that interest so that it may be recorded into the record.

Rule 8.2 Roll Call Vote

A roll call vote shall be taken by the Clerk of the RTM on any question and entered in the minutes at the desire of any member, expressed at any time before the question is put to a vote.

Rule 8.3 Question of Count

When a vote has been counted, if at least two members raise a question concerning the vote count, a roll call count of the RTM shall be made.

Rule 8.4 Moderator's Vote

On roll call votes, the Moderator shall vote last.

Rule 8.5 Decorum in Debate

8.5.1 Members shall confine their remarks in debate to the pending question.

8.5.2 Members shall address all remarks to the Moderator or the Committee Chair and maintain a courteous tone. Members shall avoid personal affronts and/or accusations of improper motives.

8.5.3 Individual debate will occur per latest edition of Robert's Rules and Moderator, the Moderator's discretion may extend time allotted.

Rule 8.6 When any member is about to speak in debate or deliver any matter to the RTM, he/she shall rise and address the Chair as "Mr./Madam Moderator". If two or more rise at the same time, the Moderator shall name the member entitled to the floor.

Rule 8.7 If any member, in speaking or otherwise, transgresses the rules and orders of the RTM, the Moderator shall call them to order. The member will be allowed to justify their act or discussion, then if accepted by the Moderator, they will continue; if not, they will be seated.

Rule 8.8 Any RTM member entitled to the floor during discussion of an item of business on the agenda, shall have the privilege of recognizing any non-member present for the purpose of speaking in his/her place on that item of business. The non-member shall have a time allocation as determined by the Moderator, not to exceed ten (10) minutes, and he/she will otherwise be subject to the same restrictions as an RTM member.

SECTION 9 GENERAL

Rule 9.1 Charter Requirements

All requirements of the Charter with respect to the proceedings of the RTM are to be strictly followed and no rules shall ever be adopted by the RTM which shall be in conflict with any Charter requirement respecting such proceedings.

Rule 9.2 Ex-Officio Members of the RTM under the Charter

Under the Charter, the Town Manager, the Town Clerk, the Chairman of the Board of Education, the Town Attorney and the members of the Council shall be ex-officio members of the RTM and shall have all the rights and privileges of RTM members except the right to make motions or to vote.

9.2.1 Student Involvement

The RTM considers the Town's high school students a valuable asset and a connection to the Town's younger residents, and wishes to encourage high school students to learn about the Town's governmental structure and, in return, to share their perspectives on current matters. In support of these goals, up to four (4) high school students who are Town residents may, through a selection process developed by the RTM's Community Development and Services Committee, be recognized as student liaisons to the RTM. Students who currently are liaisons to the Board of Education are not eligible.

Student liaisons to the RTM may attend RTM meetings, submit written requests or reports to the Chair of the Community Development and Services Committee, read requests or reports under the Community Development and Services Committee agenda item. Develop strategies for outreach to the student population and respond to requests from the Moderator.

Rule 9.3 Meetings

9.3.1 Regular meetings of the RTM shall be determined by Resolution adopting a calendar-year schedule for the following year prior to December 31 of the current year. This schedule may be amended by Resolution thirty (30) days in advance of the change in schedule.

9.3.2 The Moderator shall ensure that the meeting facility has proper visual and auditory capability.

Rule 9.4 Power of Initiative

Introducing a motion with the Power of Initiative is a right of every voting member on the RTM as outlined in Section 4.5 of the Town Charter.

All proposals, motions, or resolutions using such right shall be clearly identified as such, by including in its title the term "power of initiative" and shall be subject to these rules of the RTM.

In the event of suspension of Rule 6.5.1, (requiring committee action for the RTM to consider a matter) in order to allow consideration of an Initiative, a motion under this "power" shall be submitted in writing prior to the vote and a recess shall be called to allow sufficient time for the member to reduce said motion to writing if necessary.

Rule 9.5 Veto of Town Ordinances

Section 4.6 of the Town Charter empowers the RTM to veto an ordinance that has been newly adopted by the Town Council. Such a veto requires a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of the total membership of the RTM. The Moderator will ask the RTM membership if any member wishes to make a motion to veto after the appropriate committee makes their recommendation. Such a veto must be filed with the Town Clerk within forty-five (45) days of the Council's enactment of the ordinance.

Rule 9.6 Public Petitions

Any member of the public who is not a voting member of the RTM wishing to speak may notify the RTM via the Clerk of the RTM at any time prior to the hour the meeting is called at which they desire to speak. Their time allocation shall usually be determined not less than five minutes unless a different time is determined by the Moderator. The public will be subject to the same restrictions as any RTM member.

Rule 9.7 Sale of Town Property

In Addition to Town Charter Sec. 9.6, the RTM shall not decide on the sale of Town owned property without the knowledge of the appraised value, preferred and allowed use, and probable sale price. The RTM may discuss sensitive issues in an executive session in compliance with FOIA requirements, and by a 2/3 vote of the members present and voting at a public meeting. No vote may be taken at an executive session.