



BUSINESS

Connections

Robert “Bob” Zuliani begins Term as City Utilities Commissioner

Robert “Bob” Zuliani, a retired accountant, former City Councilor, and a former member of the Board of Education, has begun a new career as a policy maker for the City of Groton’s electric, water, and sewer businesses.

Waltham, Massachusetts, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting.



Robert “Bob” Zuliani

Photo by Steve Schaub

He is now a member of the City of Groton Utilities Commission, which sets policy for Groton Utilities’ three major businesses—electric, water and sewer services. Together their revenues are budgeted for fiscal year 2019 at 70 million dollars.

Zuliani is truly a local. “I never left,” he quips. “I’m home grown. I was educated here, married here, retired here. I lived all my life here in Groton.”

Local also translates to commitment. Zuliani has been active in the Greater Groton Community since his graduation from Bentley College in

Early on after his return home from college, he became involved in the community, serving two terms as a City of Groton Councilor from 1975-79.

He noted the Zuliani name was quite recognizable locally, because his father operated an Italian restaurant called Vic’s at the edge of what is now the Groton Shopping Plaza for a decade in the 1940s and 1950s. Zuliani laughed when telling the tale, because he says that he was not sure whether the people were voting for him or his dad, since his father had a respectable reputation in the restaurant business.

“This first local political experience started me out learning about local government,” he explained. “I learned

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Zuliani continued

about the relationship between the City Council and the utilities, and then about the City-Town relationship.” He explained that it helped that he was an accountant, as he educated himself about the workings of local government. This was especially relevant in trying to understand the city’s annual request to the Town of Groton for highway and police funding.

Zuliani’s career as an accountant lasted 30 years. He worked 15 years in the public accounting field, and then 15 years in corporate accounting. Then he left his working days behind, retiring at 55 in 2000.

His appointment to the City of Groton Utilities Commission is interesting in that he is a Republican, and City Mayor Keith Hedrick, who chairs the commission, is a Democrat. “I think the mayor was interested in that I had a long career in finance,” Zuliani explained. “I believe the mayor is looking to bring a variety of critical skills, backgrounds and experiences to the Utilities Commission.”

He was a member of the Groton Board of Education from

1995-2003, serving as chairperson of the Board’s Finance Committee.

He also served as Business Education Program Chairman for the Mystic Oral School Advisory Committee. He is also a past member of the Groton Jaycees and the Town of Groton Enterprise Zone Advisory Committee.

Zuliani and service extended beyond the local borders. He was in the U.S. Army from 1966-68, serving in Saigon, Vietnam.

His service to the community also includes serving on the Board of Trustees of the Bill Memorial Library and the Colonel Ledyard Cemetery Association, both in the City of Groton. You guessed it. He serves as treasurer for both groups.

Zuliani also is on the City of Groton Ethics Board and is its sitting chairperson.

Local is again relevant, as he is a parishioner of Sacred Heart Church of Groton.

We thought you’d never ask!

I own a small business. It seems harder and harder to survive with so many expenses rising seemingly every day. I remember when I started my business and signed up for my electric service that you folks required a security deposit of several hundred dollars.

Why can’t I get my money back now when I could really use it? After all, I’m not going anywhere. I’ve been a customer for many years. Besides, you’re just using my money to make money for your utility anyway.

Groton Utilities response:

It is our policy to collect a security deposit from every Non- Residential Customer, not to exceed three (3) months’ service.

We evaluate the business and the past

experience of the business in making a determination on the final deposit amount. We do have other deposit options for Non- Residential Customers (with approval of management):

- provide four (4) letters of credit;
- previously established good credit with Groton Utilities;
- provide a surety bond for the total amount of the security deposit;
- provide an irrevocable letter of credit for the amount of the deposit from a bank; and
- provide a two-year prepaid security bond for the amount of the deposit without renewal as long as the credit status of the account remains in

good-credit standing.

We will review your deposit after two years of good credit standing at the customer request.

Why do we do this? We must protect all of our business customers, not just one. If you go out of business, and we cannot collect your past due bills, then all our business customers lose.

Groton Utilities does not use your deposit money to earn interest and therefore income for our utility. You, the customer, are earning interest on the funds, which are posted to your monthly statement.



Electric motor loads

If you are adding large electric motor loads in your home or business, we need to know. When starting, large electric motors use a large amount of power that causes electrical disturbances to your residence or business.

Examples of electrical disturbances are low voltage, dimming lights and light flicker. In order to prevent electrical disturbances, modifications

to your electrical facilities and possibly Groton Utilities distribution system may be necessary.

Examples of large electrical motor loads for residential customers are electric heat pumps, central air conditioning and single-phase motors greater than three (3) horsepower.

Commercial and industrial customers

should contact Groton Utilities if they are planning to install a motor 10 horsepower or greater.

Please call Groton Utilities Project Management at 446-4000 with any questions you might have or if you are planning additional motor loads at your home or business.

Help those in real need

Groton Utilities is reaching out to its business customers in the Greater Groton Community for their help with those



with a real need. You can do this by donating to the Energy Assistance Fund at Groton Human Services.

For many years, Groton Utilities' residential customers have donated thousands of

dollars to the Energy Assistance Fund since it began. These donations have helped many families who are less fortunate and need assistance in paying their utility bills.

We are entering that time of year when some of your neighbors will be finding themselves in a money squeeze as their energy usage increases in the cold months ahead and their cash decreases.

If your business is in a position to give, we at Groton Utilities urge you to donate to the fund. While any time of year is a good time for giving, this is the time of year when people seem more likely to help others.

The year is ending. A new year is in sight. Hopefully your business can help some of your neighbors and customers get off to a better new year. Send your donation to:

GAP
C/O GROTON HUMAN SERVICES
2 FORT HILL RD
GROTON, CT 06340-4723

Make checks payable to GU/EAF. Please do not send cash through the mail.

On behalf of those who will benefit from your generosity, Groton Utilities says, "Thank you for caring!"

Our Key Accounts Team—ready to serve you

Questions about rates? Looking to save dollars by taking new conservation measures? Wondering what Groton Utilities can do to help your business? If you are a business in the Groton Utilities service area, our Key Accounts Team is ready to serve you.

Heading our team is Len Mediavilla, General Manager, Key Accounts. Other team members are Hollis McKee, Energy Engineer, and Aaron Brooks, Utility Analytics Manager.



Mediavilla can be reached at 860-446-4054 or mediavillal@grotonutilities.com.

McKee can be reached at 860-440-9932 or mckeeh@grotonutilities.com.

Brooks can be reached at 860-440-9933 or brooksa@grotonutilities.com

Groton Utilities

has been a municipally owned and operated electric and water utility since 1904.

*We live up to our motto:
At your service.*



Holiday Closings

Our offices at the City Municipal Building, including Customer Service and Project Management, and our Operational Sections located at The Julio H. Leandri Operations Complex on Poquonnock Road, will be closed for these upcoming holidays:

Monday, November 12
Veterans Day

Thursday, November 22
Thanksgiving Day

Friday, November 23
Post - Thanksgiving Day

Tuesday, December 25
Christmas Day

Groton Utilities' operations crews for both water and electric are available on an emergency basis during holidays. If you experience an electrical outage or a water main break, call us at 860-446-4000, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Customer Service lobby hours are Monday to Wednesday and Friday from 8 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and until 7 p.m. on Thursdays and 8 a.m. to noon on Saturdays.

Groton Utilities hopes you and your family have enjoyable holidays. Please drive safely. **And, yes, don't forget to buckle up!**



Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) statement
The City of Groton is an Equal Opportunity Employer in accordance with Federal, State and local laws. Discrimination because of an individual's race, color, religious creed, age, gender, sex (including pregnancy) marital status, national origin, ancestry, disability, sexual orientation, veteran status or any other protected class is prohibited.

Outdoor lighting improves building safety and security

As the days grow shorter and darkness falls early, now is a good time to think about improving the outdoor lighting around your business.



Outdoor lighting is one of the best ways to increase security, discouraging prowlers who might otherwise hide under the cover of darkness. Outdoor lights help you see objects that might be dangerous in the dark, such as dark steps or curbs.

A new security light can be inexpensive, and today's efficient choices can cost just a few cents per day to operate. Many, like low-energy light bulbs and photocells, simply plug or screw into existing fixtures, so installation is easy. Photocells, or light sensors, are designed to turn the lights on at dusk and off at dawn, so you don't pay for lighting during the day.

Like those easy options, installed lighting choices are designed to put light where it is most needed. For example, motion sensors turn on outdoor lights if movement is detected, so lights can scare off would-be intruders, while also alerting you or others to the prowler's presence. Today's motion sensor lights have adjustable sensitivity levels, so that small animals won't turn them on.

You might also put one or more lamps inside your business on a timer, too. Timers that will turn lights on at preset or random times can make your building look occupied. That discourages prowlers, too.

And no matter what lighting you choose, you'll always have the advantage of the low rates that we offer, so you can buy a lot of peace of mind for just a little bit of money.

Program keeps water pure

Groton Utilities continually works to make sure that all our customers receive the safest, highest quality drinking water possible. In fact, the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Connecticut Department of Health Services, and the American Water Works Association all recognize that we have a responsibility to provide our customers at the service connection with water that is safe.

We conduct an ongoing Water Quality Protection Program that includes annual

plumbing inspections of all business customers. During these inspections, trained and certified Groton Utilities personnel test and inspect equipment.

Cross-connection control and backflow prevention is necessary to ensure that no contaminants enter our water system from a customer's system. If a hazard is detected, the GU inspector will recommend installation of appropriate equipment.