

INFORMATION FOR VOTERS

TOWN OF GROTON (MA)



**2024 BALLOT QUESTION
SPECIAL TOWN ELECTION
APRIL 2, 2024**

**Published by:
Dawn E. Dunbar
Town Clerk of the Town of Groton**

Town of Groton (MA)
2024 Special Town Election
Voting Information

- **Special Town Election**

- Groton is holding a Special Town Election on **Tuesday, April 2, 2024**
- Polls will be open from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM
- Polling Locations:
 - Precinct 1: Groton Center, 163 West Main Street (Route 225)
 - Precinct 2: Groton Dunstable Middle School South, 344 Main Street
 - Precinct 3: Groton Dunstable Middle School South, 344 Main Street

- **Purpose of the Special Town Election**

- Question 1, explained in this brochure, requests a General Override of Proposition 2½ to pay for the operating budget of the Town of Groton and the Assessment of the Groton Dunstable Regional School District for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2024.

- **Vote by Mail Ballots & Absentee Ballots**

- Vote by Mail ballots are available for the Special Election.
- The last day and hour to request a **ballot by mail** is Tuesday, March 26, 2024 by 5:00 PM.
- Vote by Mail Ballots **must be received** by the Clerk's office by the close of polls (8:00 PM) on Tuesday, April 2, 2024. Ballots can be left in the drop box outside the back door of Town Hall or hand delivered to the Clerk's Office.
- The last day and hour to vote by **Absentee Ballot in person** is Monday, April 1, 2024 by 12:00 PM.
- Please allow time for mailing or be prepared to vote at the Polls on Election Day.

- **In-Person Early Voting**

- In-Person Early Voting is available for the Special Election at the Town Clerk's Office, 173 Main Street.
- The Hours as are follows:

▪ Saturday	March 23	9AM to 3PM
▪ Monday	March 25	8AM to 7PM
▪ Tuesday	March 26	8AM to 4PM
▪ Wednesday	March 27	8AM to 4PM
▪ Thursday	March 28	8AM to 4PM
▪ Friday	March 29	8AM to 1PM

- **Voter information**

- If you would like to check on your voter registration, polling location or have another voting related question, please contact the Town Clerk's office
 - Office: 978-448-1100
 - Email: Townclerk@grotonma.gov
 - Web: www.grotonma.gov

- **Special Town Election Information**

- Please visit our web site at www.grotonma.gov
- Look under Government for Election Information and then select Town Elections

BALLOT QUESTION INFORMATION
For April 2, 2024 SPECIAL TOWN ELECTION
Question 1: General Override of Proposition 2½

As authorized by Chapter 53, Section 18B of the General Laws

WHY ARE YOU RECEIVING THIS INFORMATION?

In towns that accept the provisions of section 18B, as Groton did by vote of the 2015 Spring Town Meeting, the Select Board is required to print and mail to each household where a registered voter resides information relating to each question that will appear on a town election ballot. The information must include (1) the full text of each question; (2) a fair and concise summary of each question, including a one sentence statement describing the effect of a yes or no vote, prepared by the town counsel; and (3) arguments for and against each question, which may not exceed 150 words. When a voter question will appear on the ballot, the statute provides for a request by the town counsel for “written arguments from the principal proponents and opponents of the question,” with a notice period of at least 7 days. The statute also provides that the principal proponents and principal opponents shall be the persons determined by the town counsel to be best able to present the arguments for and against the question. If no argument is received from a proponent or opponent, an argument must be prepared by the town counsel.

Ballot Question #1:

“Shall the Town of Groton be allowed to assess an additional \$5,500,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of funding the operating budget of the Town and the Assessment of the Groton Dunstable Regional School District for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024?”

YES _____ NO _____

Summary of Question #1:

In 1980, the voters of the Commonwealth adopted a law by referendum commonly known as “Proposition 2½”.

Proposition 2½ limits the annual tax levy of the Town, which is the total amount that can be raised by local real estate and personal property taxes, to an increase of two and one half (2½%) percent of the previous year’s levy limit plus new growth. Proposition 2 ½ allows the Town to ask the voters, through a ballot question, to override the levy limit and authorize an increase above the 2 ½ % cap.

Question 1 seeks a permanent increase in the levy limit of Five Million Five Hundred Thousand (\$5,500,000) Dollars for the purposes of funding the operating budget of the Town and the Assessment of the Groton Dunstable Regional School District for Fiscal Year 2025 beginning on July 1, 2024. The override amount is intended to be used over the next three municipal fiscal years. It is estimated that the average property tax bill in Groton will go up from \$10,487 to

\$11,286 in Fiscal Year 2025, an increase of \$799, with the override (if approved) accounting for \$431 of the increase.

The Groton Town Meeting ultimately determines the total amount of appropriations (within the levy limit authorized by the voters) that will be spent on the operating budget of the Town and the Assessment of the Groton Dunstable Regional School District.

Effect of a Yes or No Vote:

A YES VOTE will allow the Town to permanently increase its levy limit by \$5,500,000 to pay the operating expenses of the Town of Groton and the Assessment of the Groton Dunstable Regional School District beginning in Fiscal Year 2025.

A NO VOTE will not allow the Town to permanently increase its levy limit.

Arguments In Favor And Against Question #1:

IN FAVOR: A YES vote will allow the Groton Dunstable School District and Town of Groton to maintain current programs and services for the next three years with a gradual tax increase over time. Costs for labor, health insurance, facilities maintenance, utilities, and mandated programs for both entities have risen faster than the authorized tax revenue permitted under Proposition 2 ½. Without the additional funding that this override will provide, the only choice will be to eliminate positions in the Town's public safety and highway departments, reduce services provided by the Groton library, and eliminate more than 50 full-time positions in the Groton Dunstable Schools. Our current municipal services and quality schools attract new residents and maintain home values. If we pass this override, the tax increase will be spread over three years. Please vote YES to maintain our quality Town services and excellent School District and preserve our property values.

AGAINST: Vote NO because many can't afford this large and permanent \$5,500,000 tax increase. This comes after a string of other temporary overrides passed in 2013, 2018, two in 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023. It's time to say no. The average home value in Groton of \$695,000 would pay \$1,341 more in annual property taxes in FY2027. This permanent override can compound over time at 2.5% per year which has the potential to increase the average home's annual tax bill to \$2,309 after 25 years. That average \$695,000 home could pay an additional \$42,602 in property taxes through 2049 if the override passes. With the other temporary override tax increases included, homes will see a 23.7% increase in annual taxes in FY2027 over FY2024. Let's not tax people out of their homes by increasing their taxes to an unaffordable level. A NO vote keeps taxes from going up even more.



EARLY / ABSENTEE
OFFICIAL BALLOT
SPECIAL TOWN ELECTION
GROTON, MASSACHUSETTS
APRIL 2, 2024

Dawn Dunbar
TOWN CLERK

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS

TO VOTE, completely fill in the OVAL to the RIGHT of your choice(s) like this: ●

BALLOT QUESTION

QUESTION #1

Shall the Town of Groton be allowed to assess an additional \$5,500,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of funding the operating budget of the Town and the Assessment of the Groton Dunstable Regional School District for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024?

YES ☐

NO ☐

Sample

**TOWN OF GROTON
COMMITTEE INTEREST FORM**

Town Government needs citizens who are willing to give time in the service of their community. If you are interested in serving, on a voluntary basis, on boards and committees within the Town, please complete this form and return to:

**TOWN OF GROTON
SELECT BOARD
173 MAIN STREET
GROTON, MA 01450-1237**

Date: _____

Name _____
First M.I. Last

Address _____

Mailing Address (if different) _____

Circle One GROTON, 01450 WEST GROTON, 01472

Telephone No. (home) _____ (cell) _____

Preferred e-mail Address _____

Occupation _____

Background _____

Town activities/issues, which interest you:

Specific committees or positions in which you are interested:

Town of Groton
Select Board
173 Main Street
Groton, MA 01450

PRSRT STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Groton, MA 01450
PERMIT #3

RESIDENTIAL POSTAL PATRON GROTON, MA