

INFORMATION FOR VOTERS

TOWN OF GROTON



**2016 BALLOT QUESTION
TOWN ELECTION
MAY 17, 2016**

**Published by:
Michael F. Bouchard
Town Clerk of the Town of Groton**

**Town of Groton
2016 Annual Town Election
Voting Information**

- **Annual Town Election**
 - The **Annual Town Election** will be held Tuesday, May 17th, 2016.
 - Polls will be open from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM.
 - Polling locations:
 - Precinct 1: Groton Senior Center, 163 West Main St. (Route 225)
 - Precincts 2 and 3: Groton Country Club, 94 Lovers Lane (Opposite Post Office)

- **Absentee Ballots**
 - Absentee ballots are available.
 - The last day and hour to request an absentee ballot is Monday, May 16th, 2016 at 12:00 Noon. Please allow time for mailing or be prepared to vote in the Town Clerk's office.

- **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@townofgroton.org

- **Town Election information**
 - Please visit our web site at www.townofgroton.org
 - Select Elections and Voter Information from the list on the left.

BALLOT QUESTION INFORMATION
For MAY 17, 2016 ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION
Proposition 2 ½ Override

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 board of selectmen is required to print and mail to each household where a registered voter resides information relating to each question that will appear on the 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.

On April 5, 2016 Town Counsel’s request for arguments for the May 17 Proposition 2 ½ ballot question was issued by the office of the Town Clerk, with a submission deadline of April 15. No argument from an opponent was received, so the argument against the question, appearing below, was prepared by Town Counsel.

Ballot Question:

Shall the Town of Groton be allowed to assess an additional \$1,899,746 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purpose of funding the Town’s Annual Operating Budget, including the Town’s share of the cost of operating the Groton Dunstable Regional School District for the fiscal year beginning July first two thousand sixteen?

Summary of the Question:

This question relates to the amount of taxes the Town may assess for fiscal year, 2017, which starts on July 1, 2016. Under a Massachusetts law, known as Proposition 2 ½, the Town is limited in the amount it may assess for property taxes. (The maximum amount a city or town may levy in a given year is generally referred to as the **levy limit**.) However, under the law, the voters may vote to authorize an increase in the amount of money the Town may raise through taxation. This question is for a so-called “override” of the Proposition 2 ½ limits for fiscal year (FY) 2017, in order to pay for Town operating budget costs, including costs related to the Groton Dunstable Regional School District. This question is being presented to the voters in order to authorize the Town to raise by taxation, outside of the limits imposed by Proposition 2 ½, the sum of \$1,899,746 toward those budget costs. Approval of this question will authorize the Town to raise by taxation, in fiscal year 2017, that additional amount.

When an override is passed, the levy limit for the year is calculated by including the amount of the override. In this case, that amount is \$1,899,746. An override amount also becomes part of the levy limit base for future years. That levy limit may increase at the rate of 2.5 percent each year plus so-called new growth, which is, in general, the amount equal to the tax rate for the prior fiscal year multiplied by any increase in the property tax base, such as from new development.

Effect of a Yes or No Vote:

A YES VOTE will allow the Town to raise by taxation in FY17 the additional sum of \$1,899,746 for Town operating budget costs, including costs related to the Groton Dunstable Regional School District, and to do so outside the Proposition 2 ½ levy limit.

A NO VOTE will require that the Town fund FY17 operating budget costs, including costs related to the Groton Dunstable Regional School District, without the additional sum, and within the Proposition 2 ½ levy limit.

Arguments In Favor And Against

IN FAVOR: A Yes vote is a vote for a strong community and the high performance schools that it deserves. Groton faces many of the same issues impacting all Massachusetts communities. State aid has decreased, while operating costs and unfunded mandates have increased. While many Massachusetts towns have already passed overrides as a way to deal with their budget issues, Groton has not passed an override since 2003. Instead, our schools have operated with budgets that have resulted in a series of cuts that today are shown in our District's lowered performance rating. A Yes vote is not just for schools. It also funds important municipal services and is an investment that will help sustain property values and strengthen the desirability of our community. Every resident in Groton will benefit in some way from a Yes vote on Question 1.

AGAINST: Approval of the ballot question will allow the Town to impose additional taxes on residents. Proposition 2 ½ sets a limit on the amount of money a city or town may raise by taxation. Approval of the ballot question will allow the Town to exceed that limit. Conservative fiscal policy dictates that the Town impose taxes within the limit set by Proposition 2 ½. It is not easy to make hard decisions. Residents should consider what is really needed, even if it is not everything that is wanted. Residents should consider the impact their choices will have on everyone in the Town, including residents with limited ability to afford new taxes. A No vote will enforce fiscal discipline.

(Argument prepared by Town Counsel, as described above.)



INFORMATIONAL BALLOT
ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION
GROTON, MASSACHUSETTS
MAY 17, 2016

Michael Bushnell
 TOWN CLERK

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS

- A. TO VOTE, completely fill in the OVAL to the RIGHT of your choice(s) like this: ●
- B. Follow directions as to the number of candidates to be marked for each office.
- C. To vote for a person whose name is not printed on the ballot, write the candidate's name on the line provided and completely fill in the OVAL.

<p>BOARD OF ASSESSORS For Three Years Vote for NOT More than ONE</p> <p>DONALD R. BLACK ○ 373 Longley Road</p> <p>(Write-in) ○</p>	<p>GROTON HOUSING AUTHORITY For One Year Vote for NOT More than ONE</p> <p>LESLIE B. COLT ○ 28R Lowell Road</p> <p>(Write-in) ○</p>	<p>TRUSTEES OF THE GROTON PUBLIC LIBRARY For Three Years Vote for NOT More than TWO</p> <p>NANCY FOLEY WILDER ○ 33 Worthen Drive Candidate for Re-election</p> <p>MARK W. GERATH ○ 45 West Street Candidate for Re-election</p> <p>(Write-in) ○</p> <p>(Write-in) ○</p>
<p>BOARD OF HEALTH For Three Years Vote for NOT More than ONE</p> <p>ROBERT J. FLEISCHER ○ 119 Nashua Road Candidate for Re-election</p> <p>(Write-in) ○</p>	<p>PARK COMMISSION For Three Years Vote for NOT More than TWO</p> <p>KENNETH J. BUSHNELL ○ 481 Longley Road Candidate for Re-election</p> <p>(Write-in) ○</p>	<p>TRUSTEES OF THE GROTON PUBLIC LIBRARY For One Year Vote for NOT More than ONE</p> <p>MARILYN B. DABRITZ ○ 403 Main Street</p> <p>D. LEIGH HORTE ○ 110 Spruell Road</p> <p>(Write-in) ○</p>
<p>BOARD OF SELECTMEN For Three Years Vote for NOT More than TWO</p> <p>JOSHUA DEGEN ○ 409 Martins Pond Road Candidate for Re-election</p> <p>RUSSELL J. BURKE ○ 324 Old Ayer Road</p> <p>BARRY A. PEASE ○ 23 Island Pond Road</p> <p>(Write-in) ○</p> <p>(Write-in) ○</p>	<p>PARK COMMISSION For Two Years Vote for NOT More than ONE</p> <p>(Write-in) ○</p>	<p>WATER COMMISSION For Three Years Vote for NOT More than ONE</p> <p>DAVID P. CROCKER ○ 1042 Lowell Road Candidate for Re-election</p> <p>GREG R. FISHBONE ○ 85 Main Street</p> <p>(Write-in) ○</p>
<p>COMMISSION OF TRUST FUNDS For Three Years Vote for NOT More than ONE</p> <p>LESLIE W. WICKFIELD ○ 21 Jenkins Road Candidate for Re-election</p> <p>JUNE ADAMS JOHNSON ○ 8 Elm Street</p> <p>(Write-in) ○</p>	<p>PLANNING BOARD For Three Years Vote for NOT More than TWO</p> <p>GEORGE E. BARRINGER, JR. ○ 50 Fox Run Candidate for Re-election</p> <p>JOHN R. GIGER ○ 152 Witley Road Candidate for Re-election</p> <p>(Write-in) ○</p> <p>(Write-in) ○</p>	<p>GROTON -DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE For Three Years Vote for NOT More than TWO</p> <p>LESLIE G. LATHROP ○ 55 Sunset Road Candidate for Re-election</p> <p>ANGELA M. DONAHUE ○ 10 Bishop Way</p> <p>MARLENA A. GILBERT ○ 45 Arbor Way</p> <p>(Write-in) ○</p> <p>(Write-in) ○</p>
<p>GROTON ELECTRIC LIGHT COMMISSION For Three Years Vote for NOT More than ONE</p> <p>RODNEY R. HERSH ○ 8 Bridge Street Candidate for Re-election</p> <p>OLIN G. LATHROP ○ 55 Sunset Road</p> <p>(Write-in) ○</p>	<p>SEWER COMMISSION For Three Years Vote for NOT More than ONE</p> <p>JAMES L. GMEINER ○ 366 Longley Road Candidate for Re-election</p> <p>(Write-in) ○</p>	

QUESTION 1:

Shall the Town of Groton be allowed to assess an additional \$1,899,746 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purpose of funding the Town's Annual Operating Budget, including the Town's share of the cost of operating the Groton Dunstable Regional School District for the fiscal year beginning July first two thousand sixteen?

YES ○

NO ○

INFORMATIONAL BALLOT

NOT FOR VOTING PURPOSES

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

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