

# TOWN OF GROTON FINANCE COMMITTEE

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## Minutes of Meeting Held October 15, 2012 (Fall Town Meeting)

Middle School Cafeteria, 344 Main St., Groton, MA 6:00 p.m.

**Present:** P. DiFranco, G. Green, J. Crowley, R. Hargraves, M. Flynn, J. Prager (Chair), P. DuFresne (Town Accountant, Recording), V. Jenkins (Finance Director)

**Absent:** S. Webber

**Guests:** None

**Documents available at the meeting:** Minutes of Meetings held September 18, 2012  
Town Meeting Packet/Motions  
Fall Town Meeting Warrant (Final)

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Prager at 6:00 p.m.

**CPA Funding for Conservation Commission Land Purchase-** The Finance Committee discussed whether the Conservation Commission truly needed \$25,000 of CPA funds in order to be able to move ahead with their proposed purchase of the Susan Walker land. They currently have a balance of \$723,000 on the books, and only need \$716,000 for the purchase. The costs of conveying the land are not known at this time, but are assumed to be within reach of the available fund balance. It was noted that the ConsCom has agreed to seek partial reimbursement from a Massachusetts LAND program grant. Should the purchase take place without support from this grant, the ConsCom land fund will be almost entirely depleted. However, the ConsCom is expected to make the P&S agreement contingent on receiving this grant award. The Finance Committee members suggested the postponement of Article 9 (CPA funding of \$25,000 to the Conservation Commission) until after the land is purchased and the status of the grant award is known. Mr. Prager felt it would be more appropriate for this article to be presented at the Special Town Meeting in January instead. The members questioned the validity of the land appraisal and expressed concern that the value may in fact be far less than \$716,000. Mr. Prager reminded the group that ConsCom has control over the funds held in their account; the purpose of Article 17 is to permit them to apply for the grant.

**On a motion made by Mr. Hargraves, and seconded by Mr. DiFranco, the Finance Committee voted *against* supporting Article 17 of the Fall Town Meeting Warrant. The Vote: 1-5-0**

Mr. Prager noted that if Article 17 fails, then Article 9 is rendered unnecessary. The Finance Committee discussed whether it would be useful to advance Article 17 on the warrant so that it would be addressed immediately before Article 9. Mr. Prager agreed to approach the Moderator with this request. The Finance Committee decided to take a position on Article 9 in the event that it is not postponed.

**On a motion made by Mr. Hargraves, seconded by Mr. Crowley, the Finance Committee voted *against* supporting Article 9 of the Fall Town Meeting Warrant. The Vote: 0-6-0**

**Discussion of Fitch's Bridge** - The Finance Committee discussed Article 18 (funding for design and replacement of Fitch's Bridge). Mr. Green noted that alternative financing options for this project should be considered, including fund-raising efforts. Mr. Prager added that there are many existing resources in Town that support pedestrian and equestrian activities. The Committee briefly discussed the public safety argument, and concluded that given the myriad ways in which individuals can fall into rivers in Groton, it was not completely compelling.

**Offsetting the Tax Rate** - Mr. Prager recommended that the Finance Committee not take a position on Article 25 (Offsetting the Tax Rate) until after Town Meeting has voted on those articles having a significant financial impact.

**Presentation of Finance Committee Recommendations** - Should Finance Committee input be sought during Town Meeting, it was decided that Mr. Prager would speak to the Lost Lake Sewer Article (#6), Mr. DiFranco to the Fitch's Bridge Article (#18), and Mr. Hargraves to the Conservation Commission Articles (#9 & #17).

**Approval of Meeting Minutes** –No votes were taken.

At this time (6:45 pm) the Finance Committee relocated their meeting to the Performing Arts Center in order to participate in the Fall Town Meeting.

*Town Meeting adjourned at 9:55 pm, to be continued on Monday, October 29, 2012 at 7:00 pm.*

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Dufresne, Recording Secretary