

TOWN OF GROTON FINANCE COMMITTEE

Saturday, February 7th, 2015, Selectmen's Meeting Rm

Groton Town Hall, 173 Main St. Groton, MA, 9:00 a.m.

Review of Departmental Budgets for FY2016

Present for Finance Committee: R. Hargraves (Vice Chair), G. Green (Chair), B. Robertson, Barry Pease, Art Prest, M. Bacon, D. Manugian, P. DuFresne (Town Accountant, Recording)

Absent: None

Also Present: Members of the Board of Selectmen, Members of the Press, Mr. Mark Haddad (Town Manager), Members of the Finance Team, Department Heads, and Members of the Public

Documents available at the meeting: FY16 Town Operating & Capital Budget Proposals
Tax Rate & Average Tax Bill Spreadsheet
Parks Department Budget Update
Groton Public Library Budget Update
Lost Lake Fire Protection Study Committee Report

Mr. Green called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Ms. Eliot called the Board of Selectmen meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Town Manager's Budget Update - Mr. Haddad informed the group that he is recommending several adjustments be made to the budget that was originally presented to the Finance Committee on 12/31/14:

<u>Department</u>	<u>Adjustment</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
Planning Board	increase of \$160	MRPC Assessment Finalized
Board of Health	increase of \$934	NABH Assessment Finalized
Health Insurance	increase of \$42,000	MNHG FY16 Rates Finalized

Mr. Haddad expressed some concern that Nashoba Valley Technical High School had not yet provided any preliminary budget numbers. The Superintendent has notified the member towns that she will not release assessment figures until she has a better idea of what her revenue sources will be (from the Governor's Office and the DESE). This information may not be available until early in March. Mr. Haddad is confident that all the budget adjustments so far identified will be offset by expected increases to PILOT payments (GELD \$15,000, Buddhist Temple \$20,000, Solar City \$25,000, Shanklin Museum \$8,000). He mentioned that the Parks Commission is considering taking on the maintenance of the middle school playing fields, however, this will most likely not impact the Town budget until FY17. The legal budget is also of some concern as there are two pending lawsuits that may carry over into FY2016. Mr. Hargraves said he would like to see a separate Town Meeting article for any proposed adjustment to the legal budget. Mr. Haddad

replied saying that he was currently working with the Assessors to release approximately \$165,000 of Overlay Reserves. If this amount is appropriated to the legal budget at Town Meeting, this will most likely be accomplished with a separate article. He reminded the group that the largest portion of the increased legal expense is covered by insurance; only Town Counsel participation will impact the budget.

Police Department Budget Discussion— Chief Palma addressed the group regarding his request for a full-time School Resource Officer for FY16. When this position was filled in the past, it was budgeted cooperatively between the School District and the Town. After the School District pulled the funding, the Town was unable to retain the position. Currently, patrol officers are used to teach the DARE program and to interface with the schools for emergency needs, however, this all must be done on overtime. He reminded the group that the Town is growing rapidly, and National School Safety recommendations indicate that every secondary school have a School Resource Officer. Groton has three secondary schools. Although the private schools in Town retain their own security teams, the Groton Police Department is ultimately responsible for maintaining student safety and for preventing/investigating criminal activity at those schools. Chief Palma feels that currently, school safety concerns are addressed only when scheduling permits, and have become an exercise in “risk management.” He firmly believes that a full-time position dedicated to the schools is necessary at this time. He cautioned the group that while overtime expenses will eventually be reduced, that impact won’t be realized until FY17. The duties of this officer will include working on emergency plans with School District officials, drug & alcohol intervention issues, and non-custodial parent conflicts, among other day to day activities. During the summer months, this officer will be utilized to cover vacation absences. The Police Department has successfully used an undercover officer to reduce the amount of drugs coming in to Groton from surrounding communities as well as the incidence of drunk driving. Chief Palma would like to continue this positive trend and feels that a School Resource Officer would be invaluable to this effort. Mr. Robertson asked about Police Department shift schedules. Chief Palma explained that he tries to schedule 1 Sergeant and 2 Officers for each shift. Occasionally, it is necessary to run a shift short by one person, however this is very risky given the size of the Town. He noted that increased development in Littleton and Westford could impact traffic in Groton by as much as 10,000 vehicles per year. Ms. Eliot asked whether the position vacated by Irm Pierce would be filled immediately. Chief Palma replied that he hopes to fill that vacancy by March and has a pool of strong applicants (reserve officers) from which to choose. He plans to fill the School Resource Officer position from his current staff, and then backfill with a new patrolman. Mr. Degen requested clarification regarding the Police wage budget. Mr. Haddad explained that the increase of \$120,331 projected for FY16 included \$55,230 for the SRO wage plus \$65,101 which represents the impact to FY16 of the collective bargaining agreement. He reminded the group that while that impact is high for FY16, there would be no COLA adjustment for FY17 or FY18 under this agreement. Mr. Petropoulos requested clarification regarding the Lieutenant’s salary for FY16. Mr. Haddad replied that the Lieutenant’s contract was amended to remove the Quinn Bill benefit which was then added to his base salary. Mr. Petropoulos asked the Police Chief to describe the daily routine for the proposed SRO. Chief Palma said that (except during the summer and barring emergency situations) he expects the SRO to be in the schools 8 hours per day meeting with faculty, coordinating emergency plans, teaching, and managing ongoing juvenile cases. Mr. Hargraves asked the Police Chief to clarify his request to move the current Lieutenant into a Deputy Chief position. Chief Palma said that he suggested this course of action with an eye toward succession planning. Upon the Chief’s retirement, a search to fill that position could cost as much as \$25,000 or \$30,000. A good succession plan can not only eliminate that cost, but would provide for a more seamless transition for the Department and the Town. The title of Deputy Chief would allow the Lieutenant to

accomplish tasks for the Department that he currently cannot do and would have no financial impact on the budget. Mr. Robertson asked for clarification regarding the FY15 to FY16 wage increases noted in the budget spreadsheets. Mr. Haddad explained that due to the vagaries of the calendar, FY16 contains an extra payroll warrant. This will not impact the salaried employees, as their annual salary will simply be spread over 27 pay periods instead of the usual 26 (with an additional adjustment during those months that contain an extra pay day). However, in order to properly budget for those employees paid by the hour, it was necessary to budget 52.5 weeks in the year instead of the usual 52.2. Mr. Pease asked whether state or federal grant support was available to help fund the SRO position. Chief Palma replied that the Department routinely pursues all potential grant revenue. While grants for Regional Dispatch have been relatively easy to come by, he is not optimistic about funding the SRO position in this fashion. Mr. Pease mentioned the increased use of electronic notifications from the Police Department to Town residents. Chief Palma said that the Code Red system which was put in place for FY15 has been successfully used for storms, water main breaks, and frail elder contacts. He will continue to utilize this important service going forward. Mr. Pease asked about overtime management efforts in the Police Department. Chief Palma said that a new part-time position was added last year to help the Department to process payroll and manage shift and overtime budgets. This effort has been very successful to date. Mr. Cunningham wondered whether the proposed SRO could be utilized in a regional capacity. Chief Palma replied that the SRO will absolutely be used to support the Swallow Union School in Dunstable, however, there would be no attempt to bill Dunstable for this service. He has found that it is difficult for one officer to serve two masters, and Dunstable is often called upon to respond to the High School. He would consider this service to be a "wash" financially. Mr. Green asked about the FY16 projected cost for cruiser maintenance. Chief Palma said he is hopeful that purchasing 2 new cruisers annually will help to keep maintenance costs down. The additional \$6,000 approved for FY16 is expected to be needed for routine maintenance. He tries to hold back budgeted minor capital funding for unexpected repair costs that might occur before year end.

Fire Department Budget Discussion – Chief McCurdy clarified the need for an updated radio system for the Public Safety Departments. He was especially concerned that communications breakdowns occur during emergency situations, and that certain areas of Town (including the High School) are chronic "dead zones." The current infrastructure is intended for use in vehicles and should not be relied on for dispatch transmittal. Mr. Haddad said that originally, the project was to be phased in over a period of 3 years. However, given the urgency of the need, and the impact to the safety of both Groton residents and first responders it makes sense to complete this project sooner rather than later. Chief McCurdy said that this would be a good opportunity to consolidate the communications systems throughout the Town; the new system could theoretically be used by the Police, Fire, DPW, Electric Light, and Water/Sewer Departments. The new system would also tie in to the school channels and the bus service. Mr. Haddad said that the current funding plan calls for a \$650,000 bond authorization to ride along with the Lost Lake Fire Protection bond and the Four Corners Sewer Project. If those projects are not ultimately authorized, the Radio Upgrade could be funded with a 5-year State House Note instead. In response to a question by Mr. Degen, Mr. Haddad explained that a Bond Anticipation Note is typically issued first, and then long term bonding is done as the projects proceed. The impact of the debt service on the tax bill (over 5 years) would be about \$36.00 annually or \$.09 on the tax rate. Mr. Prest wondered whether grant funding could be available for this project. Chief McCurdy said that while some state grant funding is available it does require a significant Town match. There is no Federal funding available at this time that he knows of. Mr. Pease wondered if there were alternative technical solutions to a new radio system. Chief McCurdy

explained that the radio system currently proposed is the most efficient and cost-effective solution. He added that the project costs would include a transmitter, a base station and repeaters, but not necessarily new vehicle radios unless those are older models. Mr. Petropoulos asked for an estimate of maintenance costs for the radio system. Chief McCurdy said that maintenance costs associated with the upgraded infrastructure should be lower than what is currently being expended on the outdated system, and would likely be less than \$1,000 annually. Chief Palma noted that maintenance costs are part of the Dispatch budget. Mr. Hargraves asked whether there is any surplus funding available in the Fire Station construction budget that could be re-purposed for this project. Mr. Haddad replied that those funds have already been earmarked for other capital purchases in FY16. Chief McCurdy said that he built the FY16 Fire Department budget from the ground up this year using a Community Risk Reduction focus with an eye toward keeping pace with the needs in the Town. Looking back over operations for the last 3 years, he felt that the training budget had been underfunded. Training is a key component to remediating hazards during emergency situations. Call volume is increasing year over year, but 911 calls tend to increase at 5:30 p.m. which impacts overtime expenses. Mr. Pease wondered whether staggering shift schedules would help. Chief McCurdy said that this would solve one problem but would create another. Mr. Pease hopes that the extra training being offered has a focus on leadership and team-building. Chief McCurdy agreed that educating current leaders and developing future leaders is a main focus. He estimated that roughly 10-15% of the training budget is geared to leadership and team-building. Mr. Pease was concerned that this percentage might be on the low side. Mr. Hargraves asked for assurance that vacations are scheduled to avoid incurring overtime expenses whenever possible. Chief McCurdy said that, on average, 3 out of 4 overtime shifts are filled. He tries to take overtime shifts himself whenever possible, although this is not an efficient use of resources. Mr. Petropoulos asked for a description of what is driving the increased call volume. Chief McCurdy replied that medical emergencies account for most of that increase. *(Anna Eliot left the meeting at this time, 10:20 a.m.)* Mr. Petropoulos expressed concern whether the 911 service was being used inappropriately, and whether it would make sense to try to remediate this. Chief McCurdy said that his focus on community risk reduction would tend to slow (but not eliminate) the increase in call volume. Mr. Petropoulos pointed out that increasing call volume and the associated overtime impact should have already been incorporated into the budget for FY15, therefore he is surprised that such a large increase in overtime for shift coverage is proposed for FY16. Mr. Haddad believes that the previous Fire Chief miscalculated this portion of the budgetary need, which is already making itself felt in FY15. He would like to see this corrected for FY16. He added that an increase was made to the hourly rate for the call members; no such increase has been budgeted for a number of years. Mr. Pease would like the Fire Chief to attempt an analysis that might indicate when the rate of overtime expense finally justifies adding another full time firefighter to the staff. Mr. Degen was interested to know the percentage of overtime that could be attributed to calls that come in after 5:30 p.m. Chief McCurdy offered to research and obtain that number for him as soon as possible. He added that the Department is collecting a great deal of data relative to overtime expenses, but it will require some time before this information can be analyzed and put to use. Mr. Green asked for confirmation that the union contract requires that full time staff be offered overtime shifts before the call members. Mr. Haddad confirmed that this is correct, but there is no evidence that the full-timers are abusing this agreement. Mr. Hargraves asked whether the ambulance is used for routine patient transport. Chief McCurdy replied that the ambulance is used only in emergency situations. *(Anna Eliot rejoined the meeting at this time 10:35 p.m.)* Chief McCurdy outlined his minor capital requests: safety gear that is too old must be replaced per NSA regulations, a number of nozzles and hoses have been found to be old or incompatible with current equipment and must be replaced, and a patient loading device has been

proposed which will help to prevent back injuries to employees. A typical back injury could cost the Town between \$30,000 and \$40,000; therefore the patient loading device would pay for itself if it prevents even one such injury. Mr. Haddad noted that the Fire Department minor capital budget was reduced (by the Finance Team) from \$56,000 to \$19,000, therefore, the Fire Chief would have to prioritize his needs in this area. Chief McCurdy described the swap loader vehicle proposed for FY16. This would be a Fire Department vehicle with interchangeable components that could be used by the Police Department or DPW. While the entire vehicle would cost \$105,000, the initial investment would be \$85,000 (\$80,000 for the truck and \$5,000 for the brush module). \$50,000 of the required funding would be repurposed from the article voted for FY15 to convert the old ambulance to a forestry vehicle. The "swap out" process for interchanging modules takes approximately 3 to 4 minutes to complete. Mr. Degen cautioned that an F series truck may not be robust enough to handle the swap loader mounting. He suggested using a truck with a longer wheel base (which may increase the cost by approximately \$15,000). Chief McCurdy explained that the heaviest use it would be put to would be for carrying water; the load would have to be carefully managed or its utility as an off-road vehicle would be limited. Mr. Haddad briefly summarized the capital requests for FY16 and the proposed funding plan for each. Chief Palma expressed his opinion that the Public Safety Departments have had such success recently because the employees feel appreciated and supported. Should this ever change, then the culture will change as well and success rates are likely to fall during emergencies.

Lost Lake Fire Protection Project – Mr. Haddad explained that in the fall of 2013, Town Meeting appropriated \$103,000 to hire an engineer (Wright-Pierce) to conduct a study relative to providing fire protection services to areas of Lost Lake. Those studies have been completed, the need firmly established, and the estimated cost of providing the infrastructure is \$1,900,000. He stressed that the purpose of this project is to provide fire protection not potable drinking water. However, as part of the bid specifications, the contractors are being asked to provide add-alternate estimates for adding stubs to the individual properties. Should the end users decide to hook up to the Town's drinking water infrastructure, they would be responsible for paying all the associated costs. Mr. Orcutt said that this is a very congested and densely populated area with difficult topography and narrow roads. These factors make it very challenging to fight fires at Lost Lake. The Lost Lake Fire Protection Study Committee has recommended installing one dry hydrant, two 50,000 gallon underground cisterns, and two water main extensions. He stressed that due to topography and expense issues, this solution does not protect the entirety of Lost Lake. It will, however, provide protection for 80% of the homes that were previously unprotected. Mr. Haddad expects that bids will be available prior to Town Meeting so that a more exact estimate of the costs will be known. Mr. Green would like to see a more detailed breakdown of the costs associated with each of the proposed solutions. Mr. Orcutt will provide this information, but he estimates that \$100,000 will be spent to construct each of the cisterns, \$50,000 will be spent on the dry hydrant, and the balance represents the costs to extend the water mains. Mr. Petropoulos asked what proportion of homes would benefit from each solution. Mr. Orcutt replied that 112 would be served by the water main extensions, and 74 by the cisterns or the dry hydrant. Mr. Petropoulos asked whether an alternative to this project had been considered. Chief McCurdy replied that tanker trucks could be brought in from other communities. This represents a problem due to the narrow roads; the trucks get jammed up and cannot get out of the way or leave the site when necessary. The residents could install fire sprinklers in their homes, however this is a costly solution and difficult to enforce. A final option would be to provide the Fire Department with the resources to be able to arrive on the scene more quickly with more people. This is also a very costly alternative. Chief McCurdy felt that the plan presented by the Lost Lake Fire Protection

Committee was well-designed and likely to be successful once implemented. Mr. Petropoulos wondered if this design would provide coverage beyond the 1,000 foot limits. Mr. Orcutt said that protection beyond 1,000 feet is provided but the benefit would be less direct. Chief McCurdy added that the best and most cost effective protection occurs within the 1,000 foot limit; beyond that point more resources are required to impact fire remediation. Beyond 3,000 feet it is almost impossible to fight a fire successfully. The group briefly discussed the homeowner's insurance premium benefit of having fire protection services available. It was determined that this issue is not germane to the discussion as the primary goal for the project is to provide fire protection to residents rather than insurance credits. Mr. Pease would like to know why more underground cisterns were not planned, as that seems to be more cost-effective than extending water mains. Mr. Orcutt replied that there is not enough land available to make this feasible. Additionally, pressurized water from a hydrant aids in fighting fires. Mr. Pease asked about the effectiveness of using tanker trucks. Chief McCurdy replied that their effectiveness was limited; they can only carry about 2,800 gallons of water which does not provide water for a sufficient duration. Mr. Degen expressed concern that some of the lots at Lost Lake have offsets that disallow development. He would recommend including a "grandfathering" clause limiting development to existing lots of record at this time. Mr. Petropoulos said that the Planning Board is working to address this issue.

Pepperell SRF Sewer Expense – Mr. Haddad explained that 6 years ago, the sewage treatment plant in Pepperell was upgraded and Groton purchased additional capacity to allow for projected growth and development in the Town as a whole. At the time, The Sewer Department agreed to pay half the cost of Groton's share of the plant upgrade and the Town of Groton agreed to pay the remaining half. In the intervening years, the Sewer Department has always paid both halves of that obligation. Beginning in FY16, as part of its effort to reduce rates and control expenses, the Sewer Department has asked that the Town begin paying for its share as was originally agreed (\$27,000 annually). This debt will be retired in 10 years. Mr. Pease asked whether it could be paid off early. Mr. Gmeiner explained that this is Pepperell's debt; they assess Groton annually for part of the debt service expense. Mr. Manugian asked what the "Club Sewer Collection System" referred to in the Inflow & Infiltration Capital Plan. Upon review, Mr. Gmeiner said that this was a typo; the word "Club" should be removed. This capital expenditure refers to system-wide leak remediation. Mr. Haddad remarked that hydrant maintenance costs had been cut from the Town budget as a partial offset to the Pepperell SRF expense. The new budgeted expense for the Pepperell SRF Debt (\$27,000) will be carried under the Selectmen's General Expense budget.

Deficit Spending of Snow & Ice – Mr. Haddad suggested that given the number and severity of the winter storms that have impacted the Snow & Ice budget, it would be prudent to authorize deficit spending at this time. Mr. Pease asked where the funding to support deficit spending ultimately comes from. Mr. Haddad informed him that all budgetary deficits are raised on the following year's Tax Recap Sheet. Mr. Delaney added that we began this year with an empty salt and sand shed. Purchasing those supplies put the Town \$90,000 behind before the winter even started. Mr. Haddad reminded the group that deficit spending is only allowed if a municipality has budgeted at least as much as it did the prior year. Therefore, it is not useful to inflate the budget line in a particular year, because the budget could then never be reduced.

On a motion by Mr. Pease, seconded by Mr. Hargraves, the Finance Committee voted unanimously to authorize deficit spending of the Snow & Ice budget for FY2015. The Vote: 7-0-0

DPW Budget Discussion – Mr. Delaney (DPW Director) stated that he has attempted to level-fund all of his budgets for FY16. He is comfortable with the way operations are progressing currently and his expenses are projected to finish within budget at the end of FY15. Mr. Haddad complimented Mr. Delaney's ability to accomplish a great deal with very few resources. He added that while the Town typically spends most of its money on public safety issues, the time is rapidly approaching when DPW will require additional funding. Mr. Delaney briefly discussed Snow & Ice operations, saying that he spends about \$4,000 for a round of salt and typically completes two rounds per storm. Mr. Degen asked for an estimate on maintenance of the middle school playing fields. Ms. Haberlin (Parks Department Chair) said that these discussions were still in the very early stages, and it was really too early to discuss budget estimates. Mr. Degen asked that Dunstable's share of the cost be factored into the equation as those discussions move forward. Mr. Delaney added that the DPW would need capital for equipment and additional staff in order to take on a project of that magnitude. Mr. Manugian asked for information regarding the proposed new Dump Truck. Mr. Delaney said it would be a 6-wheel truck with a wing. This truck is typically replaced every three years. He will likely purchase a Mack, as the International models have not been as reliable as he would like. A small utility loader is also planned for purchase in FY16 and will replace the Bobcat which is now seven years old. Mr. Delaney mentioned that the Chapter 90 money which the state has promised has not yet been released; the funding which the Town is now receiving was promised last year. The Road Maintenance budget is important as it prevents deficit spending of Chapter 90 at year end. Mr. Delaney explained that he likes to keep a year's worth of road maintenance money in reserve for emergency projects. Also, Chapter 90 is specifically for project-based reimbursements, not for routine road maintenance. Mr. Degen asked about the status of recycling fees. Mr. Delaney replied that while the revenue is tracking well as compared to budget, the operation is not running as efficiently as it could. The Transfer Station would benefit from an additional employee in the near future. No new towns have joined the regional recycling effort, as it can be difficult to persuade residents to package their recyclables in a different way. However, the operation as it is currently running pays for itself. Mr. Petropoulos said that he has been very impressed with how the DPW budgets are managed and the way in which the DPW Director consistently manages to accomplish so much with so little.

Parks Department Budget Discussion – Ms. Haberlin informed the group that the Parks Department has set a goal that all parks properties be clean, safe, and accessible. They have adopted a "single vendor" approach to field maintenance which has proven very cost effective. The DPW Department is still responsible for mowing. Liming and aerating of all fields will also be undertaken as needed. Rain sensors are being installed on irrigation equipment in an effort to conserve water and relieve the budget. Portable toilets are being upgraded to make them accessible and more numerous. Fencing and directional signage are being added where possible for the convenience and safety of all the users. Long overdue playground safety inspections are also being done. Electrical costs are up due to the temporary lighting solution at the Cow Pond Brook fields. This lighting is being upgraded to be more cost-effective, but in the meantime, it is necessary for safety reasons and to extend the soccer season. The Parks Capital Plan includes expenditures necessary for relocating the Prescott playground equipment to Cow Pond Brook and to Cutler Field. Mr. Green requested a more detailed breakdown of the costs associated with the various capital requests. Ms. Haberlin agreed to provide that information as soon as it is available. She would rather not go out to bid before the budget request is approved. She added that the Parks Department enjoys a very good relationship with all the sports users who are willing to reinvest in the Town properties that their teams utilize. She also mentioned that they are working on a plan to build a walking track around the Cow Pond fields; the early estimate for this project is \$140,000. Mr. Hargraves asked for an

update on the gazebo repairs. She replied that repairs to the Library gazebo are coming along, and it is expected to be completely finished before the 4th of July. CPC funding will be pursued for all eligible projects.

Library Budget Discussion – Mr. Mark Gerath and Ms. Vanessa Abraham explained that there were three budget increases proposed for the Library: electricity expenses, a cell phone for the custodian, and the Xerox maintenance contract. They were pleased to report that the Trust Fund Commissioners continue to permit spending of \$60,000 annually from the Robbins Fund to offset the materials budget. This allows the Library to maintain its current strong position relative to other communities with regards to circulation expenditures. The planned remodel of interior building space is proceeding; an architect has been hired (to be paid for from state grant funds), and related construction expenditures will be funded from the Library Trust accounts. The Library is seeking to make 3 staffing changes for FY16. Two additional custodial hours have been requested due to the additional hours that the building is open to the public. The Reference Librarian is increasingly called upon to perform technical and IT duties. In order to accommodate this need, the Library Director would like to schedule an additional 6 hours for a Library Assistant to fill in at the Reference desk. Finally, the Summer Reading Program is enormously successful and continues to grow each year. Studies have definitively shown that children lose reading skills over the 9 week summer season when they do not read. Fully 600 children participate in 20 separate programs that take place over the full 9-week summer season. In order to continue to support this activity, the Library is seeking an additional 37 staff hours for Summer Reading. Extra staff hours are especially useful during the summer season to cover vacation absences. Mr. Hargraves asked whether the Summer Reading Program interfaces with the GDRSD summer reading requirements. Ms. Abraham replied that the Library does work with the school district to make sure that extra copies of the district's recommended summer reading books are ordered and on hand to meet demand. Mr. Gerath noted that they will continue to request funding for Sunday hours in the fall. Although these hours have not been approved for FY16, as Sunday continues to be the busiest time at the Library, the request will continue to be put forward.

Country Club Budget Discussion – Mr. Haddad informed the group that a well-qualified consultant had been hired to review operations at the Country Club. His final report contained several recommendations that should be considered as part of the business model for the Club going into FY16. To this end, a new position has been created for a Golf Pro/General Manager to run the golf program and also oversee the other diverse business functions at the facility. Additionally, revenue collection will be streamlined; all monies collected will be payable to the Town and will be processed through a single cash register and turned over to the Town Treasurer. This will facilitate accounting for receipts and simplify the audit trail. The consultant also recommended leasing out the Function Hall to a party knowledgeable in the areas of events management, catering, etc. This will allow the Town to focus its energies and resources on growing the golf, pool and camp businesses. An RFP was issued to lease the Function Hall and is due to the Town Manager on the 19th of February. So far, the leasing of the Tavern has been successful. Mr. Haddad would like to encourage the planning of more cooperative activities and events (between The Tavern and the other divisions of the Country Club) to drive revenue for both entities while also providing a service to the community. Three finalists for the position of Golf Pro/General Manager have been selected, and Mr. Haddad is confident that any one of those three could successfully manage that operation. Should the Town receive no qualified responses to the RFP for the Function Hall, it would be necessary to re-balance the budget to cover the expenses of that division. Mr. Green suggested shutting down the hall completely.

Mr. Haddad replied that while a partial shut-down could be accomplished, it would still be necessary to retain offices there and pay all the utilities (approximately \$20,000 annually). The Function Hall will continue to be used for elections and COA programs, and must honor all previously booked engagements. Mr. Hargraves suggested moving the Senior Center to the Function Hall facility. Mr. Haddad said that the COA is currently working on a strategic plan and collecting data relative to this issue. The Town has taken steps to cut administrative expenses at the Club. With the imminent hiring of the General Manager, the need for administrative support will decrease. Therefore, the hours worked by the current Administrative Assistant will be sharply reduced; she will be based at Town Hall where she will fill the recently vacated Administrative Assistant for DPW, while also supporting the Country Club as needed (seasonally). While this will unfortunately reduce support at the Transfer Station, the Treasurer's Office will work with the Senior Work-Off volunteers to bridge that gap. Mr. Robertson wondered whether any thought had been given to how the budget will be re-balanced in the event that the Function Hall is not leased out. Mr. Haddad replied that the Finance Team is still considering options, but no plan is in place at this time. Approximately \$100,000 would have to be found in the FY16 budget. Mr. Prest asked whether the Town Manager had a sense of how the RFP had been received on the street. Mr. Haddad said that the Town has reached out to the local chamber of commerce, nearby businesses, the Central Register, and local newspapers. The advertising plan was structured to be similar to that of Barnstable, MA; Barnstable enjoyed a favorable outcome to a similar search. Mr. Prest asked whether weddings were being aggressively marketed. Mr. Haddad replied that since the Town has spent some money improving the bride's room, more weddings have been successfully booked. The Events business is making its best showing in the last 5 years, but it is still not realizing enough revenue to cover its expenses. Mr. Green asked for an update on the liquor license issue. Mr. Haddad said that the licenses were being corrected now, and will be issued to The Tavern (& Function Hall lessee) in FY16. Mr. Pease approved of this effort to remove the marketing and event planning to a third party who will presumably be more expert at managing these types of activities. Mr. Petropoulos asked why the marketing revenue had been decreased for FY16. Mr. Haddad replied that the Town is assuming that the Function Hall lessee and The Tavern will be doing their own marketing, therefore the Town's share of the expense will be reduced. Mr. Petropoulos suggested requesting an expansion of the scope of services for the Country Club consultant to include a more detailed study regarding current trends in 9-hole golf courses. Mr. Bacon expressed concern that pool customers are not being properly served. Mr. Haddad agreed and said that improvements to the pool area have been made recently (new pump and filter) and additional amenities are planned (replacement furniture). Mr. Degen wondered whether the revenue realized from the driving range justified its being kept open. Mr. Haddad reminded him that \$47,000 of CPC funds have been committed to improving the driving range. The new range will offer a much better experience and should help draw business in to the Club. Mr. Pease asked whether the entire Club could be outsourced rather than just certain individual segments. Mr. Haddad said that this would be an alternative that the new General Manager could consider while developing his strategic plan for the future of the Club. Mr. Robertson mentioned that it is crucial that the Town undertake some basic cosmetic work on the Function Hall building (the bathrooms and exterior paint for starters). Mr. Haddad agreed and said that improvements are ongoing, and will continue to be accomplished using in-house labor as much as possible. He is hopeful that the Groton Golf Association will continue to actively support improvement efforts as they have done in the past. Mr. Prest suggested renting space at the facility for construction of a cell tower. Mr. Petropoulos said that the topography may limit service there.

OPEB (GASB 45) Funding Plan - Mr. Haddad informed the group that he would like to see the Town commit to begin funding its OPEB liability. Continuing to ignore this issue could lead to an eventual downgrade of the Town's bond rating (currently AAA). Mr. Haddad explained that the initial funding plan could be structured in such a way as to have no impact on the operating budget. He continues to recommend that an unbreakable trust be established as per GASB recommendations, then the appropriation that is currently voted for health Insurance and paid out annually for the benefit of our retirees (\$200,000) could be carved off and paid from the Trust instead. This would show a good faith effort on the part of the Town to address the growing unfunded liability without adding to the tax burden. There is no requirement to fund this at a minimum level every year; the funding level can be adjusted annually so as not to overburden financial resources in any given year. Mr. Haddad urged the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee to support this effort so as to maintain the advantage of the AAA bond rating which was so hard won. Mr. Degen made it known that he will never support the effort to fund OPEB until it becomes a required mandate. Mr. Robertson asked for the argument against setting up the OPEB Trust. Mr. Haddad replied that as long as the Town is depositing only what it will be paying out in retiree health insurance costs, there is no downside at all. He added that it was very likely that funding would be mandated within the next few years; when that happens, the Town will already be set up to take the next steps. Mr. Robertson noted that as long as health insurance rates continue to increase, it may be worthwhile to fund a bit extra. Should the rates ever spike during a particular year, the balance in the Trust could be used to stabilize the budget. He wondered how many other Towns are currently spending the entirety of their annual OPEB Trust deposit on current year retiree health insurance premiums. Mr. Harnett replied that this is not data that is readily available from the surveys taken so far. Mr. Cunningham asked what the potential interest cost would be on a bond issue rated AA+ versus AAA. Mr. Harnett noted that this is difficult to estimate as it depends on the size of the bond issue and the market conditions at the time, but he guessed it could be in the area of \$75,000. Mr. Hargraves asked who would be administering these funds. Mr. Harnett said that Morgan Stanley would hold the funds which would be administered by the Town's Trust Commissioners.

Four Corners Economic Development – Mr. Haddad presented the highlights of the proposed project to sewer the Four Corners area of Groton. This is being brought forward at this time to promote commercial development in an area that has been stagnant for the last 10 years and is at risk for becoming blighted. While Mr. Haddad cautioned that he cannot promise that a particular level of growth will result, it is a fact that the businesses in the area are very limited in their activities by the lack of septic capacity. He is proposing that the Town of Groton front the engineering costs (estimated at \$300,000), but that all construction costs be recovered through the assessment of betterments. Ms. Eliot agreed saying that most of the properties there already have approved plans, but have not yet built out due to the lack of sewer capacity. Mr. Prest agreed that those businesses that are planning to install private septic systems would save money if the Town could move forward quickly with the sewer project. Mr. Green asked whether the \$300,000 identified as engineering costs is part of the \$3,000,000 estimated for construction. Mr. Haddad said that it was included, and that piece would be funded with a temporary note. The Town would have to cover the costs of construction until the betterments could be assessed. The FY16 budget includes \$132,000 for short-term debt service for the Four Corners Sewer, Lost Lake Fire Protection and the Public Safety Radio Upgrade projects. The Treasurer will structure Bond Anticipation Notes to provide the financing necessary to pay the bills until the permanent borrowing is done and betterments assessed where appropriate. Mr. Green asked whether the abutters had been polled as to their feelings about this project. Mr. Haddad said the abutters are interested as they don't want that area to become blighted.

Mr. Cunningham said that they are very concerned about the kinds of businesses to be brought in there. Mr. Haddad said that as of right now, about half the business owners are in favor of going forward with the sewer project and half are still skeptical. He added that negotiating a TIF agreement to help offset the betterment costs may reduce the financial impact to those who are not ready to commit. Mr. Pease wondered why a TIF agreement would be considered when the Town was offering to front \$300,000 for engineering costs. Mr. Haddad said that the final solution may not include a 100% TIF; perhaps a 50% TIF or a shorter term could be negotiated if that seems more balanced. Mr. Hargraves disapproves of this funding plan as it represents an additional tax for property owners. Mr. Degen agreed that this is indeed an additional tax, but surrounding Towns are all enjoying the benefit of increased development. This lack of septic capacity is holding Groton back. With the addition of Market Basket in Littleton, Shaw's could fail which would seriously devalue that property. The Town should be actively encouraging current businesses to stay and helping them to thrive, while also bringing in new businesses. \$300,000 of taxpayer participation seems a good gamble for the possible return. Mr. Prest agreed saying that our ratio of residential to commercial/industrial tax revenue is poor compared to other communities. If Groton is to survive and fund schools and public safety at reasonable levels it is necessary to change that ratio soon. Mr. Hargraves was concerned about the financial impact to Shaw's. Ms. Swezey reminded him that increased sewer capacity would enable Shaw's to offset the betterment charge with new lease revenue. Mr. Haddad said that the Finance Committee will be given an updated betterment cost breakdown as soon as possible. Mr. Petropoulos would rather see the four corners businesses pay for the associated engineering costs and work out a balanced offset through TIF agreements.

IT Department Budget Discussion – Mr. Haddad noted that the Town is in the process of hiring a new IT Director. The previous IT Director, Jason Bulger, is working for the Town on a temporary basis as a consultant to help smooth the transition. Mr. Pease expressed concern that the IT Salary budget is underfunded; he would recommend boosting this line item in order to attract a more forward-thinking candidate. He would like to be sure that the Town will hire an individual with the breadth of knowledge to optimize automation in a service-oriented organization like the Town. Mr. Haddad agreed that better candidates can be attracted with a higher salary.

Mr. Degen left the meeting at this time (1:20 p.m.)

Veterans Expense Budget Discussion – Mr. Bacon asked about the kinds of expenses that flow through the Veterans expenses account. Ms. Dufresne replied that many different types of benefits are offered to veterans, including payment for food, clothing, shelter, housing supplies and medical care. Mr. Haddad added that these benefits are reimbursed to the Town by the state.

Legal Expense Budget Discussion – Mr. Manugian requested an update on the Planning Board vs. ZBA legal issue. Mr. Haddad said that recent mediation efforts have failed, and the attorney for the Planning Board wants to go to trial. The estimated cost to the Town is \$35,000. Mr. Pease suggested appropriating these costs at the next Town Meeting in a separate article. Mr. Green disagreed saying that these are regular legal costs that the Town is obligated to pay. The proper resolution of this matter is to not re-elect the current Planning Board members when their terms expire. Mr. Haddad said that Town Meeting will either vote it as a Line Item Transfer or as a special article if overlay surplus is used to fund the expense. He added that if either of these cases carries forward into FY16, then the \$90,000 currently budgeted will fall short of the actual need.

Municipal Budget Growth Discussion - Mr. Haddad pointed out that the Town budget originally presented last year was \$500,000 under the levy limit. After the adjustments were made to reduce the municipal budget to meet the needs of the school district, the Town budget increased only 1.36% while the school district budget increased 8.58%. This year the school budget is increasing by 3.7%, while the Town budget is increasing 5.3%. However, a significant part of that budget increase is related to Health Insurance and Retirement costs (which the Town has very little control over), the School Resource Officer (which is a school safety initiative), and debt service (public safety initiatives: Radio Upgrade/Lost Lake Fire Protection). When the trends are carefully analyzed it is apparent that year over year, the municipal budget is increasing less than the school budget. The average tax bill in Groton has gone up approximately \$160 per year (with the exception of FY15 which was an anomaly caused by the school budget crisis). The Town very deliberately built up debt capacity over several years in order to fund the Fire Station within the levy limit, thereby keeping the tax rate as low as possible. The Town has no control over the budget certified by the School District. The Town's operating budget has been stable over the last ten to fifteen years, which is one of the reasons behind its recent bond rating upgrade to AAA. The ability to respond to the school's fiscal crisis last year and fund the \$1,400,000 additional assessment speaks to the Town's sound and conservative budgeting practices. The Finance Team worked many hours on this budget and has submitted to you the very lowest budget that we felt would also meet the Town's needs, and improve services only where necessary and justifiable. Mr. Green replied that he has not identified any frivolous funding in the budget presented. However, the fact remains that there is no unexpended tax capacity built in. He would like the Finance Committee to work on building that back in. He suggested that both the Finance Team and the Finance Committee meet independently and propose budget cuts that can be evaluated and incorporated into the final budget draft if warranted. Mr. Robertson would like to see an analysis done of wages, salaries and benefits as a percentage of the overall budget (less the school district). He added that the Country Club operation is a risk for FY16. He would like to see a cushion of at least \$250,000 built back into the budget for this reason. Mr. Petropoulos added that if the municipal budget grows by 2.5% every year, the growth in tax bills paid by the residents will overtake the increase in their household incomes and present a hardship. Serious consideration must be given to cutting the FY16 budget. Mr. Haddad wondered why it was appropriate for the school budget to increase by 2.5% but not appropriate for the municipal budget to increase by the same amount. Mr. Petropoulos replied that the schools have to recoup funding for services lost over the previous year. They need to build up their assessments to avoid future budget crises. Mr. Green asked whether the school district has provided a 5-year budget projection. Mr. Robertson replied that they are still developing their strategic plan at this time. Once that process has been completed, they will be in a position to project their needs 5 years out. They previously indicated that they would give us some projections this spring. Mr. Green indicated that he would like to invite the School Superintendent to a future Finance Committee meeting.

Ms. Eliot adjourned the meeting of the Board of Selectmen at 1:45 p.m.

The Finance Committee agreed to meet again on Tuesday, 2/17/15 to further deliberate the FY16 budget.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

On a motion by Mr. Pease, seconded by Mr. Prest, the Finance Committee voted in the majority to approve and release the meeting minutes of 01/05/15 as drafted. The Vote: 5-0-2

Mr. Green officially adjourned the meeting at 1:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Dufresne, Recording Secretary



**TOWN
OF
GROTON**

Joseph Bosselait, Co-Chair
Thomas D. Orcutt, Co-Chair
Robert T. Delaney, Jr.
Donald L. Palma
Lynwood V. Prest
Rena E. Swezey
Carol M. Quinn

Lost Lake

Fire Protection

Study Committee

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Preface

This report has been prepared by the Lost Lake Fire Protection Study Committee appointed by the Town Manager, Mark Haddad. In Mr. Haddad's directive, made on June 10, 2013, he wanted the committee to explore all of the firefighting options available to the Lost Lake Area of town based on the population density of the Lost Lake Area, proximity of abutting homes to one another, narrow streets and lack of municipal water in the immediate area. The committee comprised of the following: Fire Chief, Water Superintendent, Police Chief, Public Works Director, Conservation Commission, and two "At Large" Representatives from Lost Lake, was charged with reporting its findings back to the Town Manager with recommendations by the end of the summer. The Fire Protection Committee met

Introduction

On May 10th, 2013, at approximately 12:01 P.M., a fire occurred at #99 Boathouse Road. As indicated in the Fire Department's Report, the fire had been smoldering for nearly two hours prior to the initial call at 12:01 P.M. In addition, there were discussions regarding adequate fire protection in the densely populated area of Lost Lake. Therefore, on June 13th, 2013, the Town Manager, Mark Haddad, issued a directive to the Fire Chief and to the Water Superintendent to review the existing fire protection resources in and around the Lost Lake area and make recommendations to his office on those findings.

In the directive, the Town Manager appointed the following members:

Fire Chief	Joe Bosselait - Co-Chair
Water Superintendent	Thomas Orcutt - Co-Chair
Police Chief	Don Palma
Public Works Director	Robert Delaney
Conservation Commission	Rena Swezey
At Large Representative	Carol Quinn
At Large Representative	Val Prest

Mr. Haddad's directive to the committee was to explore all of the firefighting options available to the Lost Lake Area of town. This directive was based on the population density of the Lost Lake Area, proximity of abutting homes to one another, narrow streets and lack of municipal water in the immediate area. The committee was charged with reporting its findings back to the Town Manager with recommendations by the end of the summer. The Fire Protection Committee met twelve times over the summer months as a committee. Individual members also teamed up on numerous occasions to inventory potential draft sites, obtain water level depths in Knopps Pond and Lost Lake, review potential water main extensions, explore potential cistern sites and review access limitations on Town Public Ways.

Assessment of Using the Lakes to Fight Fires

The Lost Lake Fire Protection Study Committee reviewed many options for improved fire protection around Lost Lake and Knopps Pond under the directive received by the Town Manager. An issue that became very apparent early on in the process was trying to dispel a notion that even though you could see an immense source of water readily available for fighting fires, accessing it via conventional pumping through fire apparatus at high flow rates was a very difficult task. Other issues the committee struggled with were the high cost of extending municipal water (\$125.00 to \$135.00 per linear foot) to sections of Lost Lake and Knopps Pond. Access to private property for municipal structures also became problematic for some of the recommendations. The Committee remained focused on three permanent, long term fire protection measures for consideration and one short term, intermediate recommendation. Each recommendation and corresponding map had specific "reach" limits placed upon them. The Committee used a 1,000 foot limit on the coverage maps for fire protection. This corresponds to individual homeowner insurance policies, Insurance Services Offices (I.S.O.) credits and the length of hoses carried on the fire apparatus. Additional trucks with hoses can extend these distances and coverage's, but the Committee needed to establish limits first responders

These recommendations for Fire Protection at Lost Lake and Knopps Pond include "Dry" fire hydrants, underground cisterns and/or tanks and municipal water main extensions. The short term, intermediate recommendation includes floating suction pumps to be carried on the Fire Apparatus.

"Dry" Fire Hydrants

"Dry" fire hydrants are sections of water pipe that extend out into a body of water with a screen on one end and on the other end on dry ground is a fire pumper connection. The committee focused on this issue for the greatest amount of time in its discussions as it appeared to be the easiest and most cost effective recommendation it could move forward. Committee members even explored "hybrid" dry fire hydrants that on the surface also appeared to be effective but were also rendered unacceptable. The single biggest negative impact with "dry" fire hydrants is lake depth. It was determined that seven (7) feet of water was required to even consider a "dry" fire hydrant installation on Lost Lake and Knopps Pond. The other issue with "dry" fire hydrants was access related for fire apparatus.

The functionality of a "dry" fire hydrant is very simple you need lots of water at a sustained rate of pumping (i.e. 1,000 gallons per minute). However, in Lost Lake and Knopps, you need a minimum depth of seven feet of water for twelve months out of the year or your "dry" hydrant is ineffective. Seven feet is very difficult to obtain without exceeding twenty five feet of distance into the lake.

How is seven feet derived?

Seven feet takes into consideration a 30" (2' -6") seasonal drawdown of both water bodies. Thus, leaving you with 4' - 6" of depth in the lake for fighting fires. In order for a "dry" hydrant to function properly in Lost Lake and Knopps Pond without sucking mud and/or clogging the screens at the end of the suction pipe, you need to be at a minimum of two feet off the bottom of the water body. If the intake structure is not a two feet, you run the risk of clogging the screen under high suction rates and/or damaging the fire apparatus. This will leave you with 30" (2'-6") of lake water to draw from without freezing. If there is 12" of ice on the lake, the available water is reduced to less than 20".

The Committee Members reviewed assessor's maps for possible public access points for fire apparatus. Wind shield surveys codified map locations and access points. Finally, potential "dry" fire hydrant locations were measured from a boat for acceptable water depths of seven feet. What was very quickly identified by the Committee is that seven feet of water was nearly impossible to achieve. Obtaining that a seven foot depth required distances from shore that exceed twenty five feet. Distances

that exceed twenty five feet become not only financially expensive (specialized equipment on barges) but also become impediments for recreational boaters. There is special excavation equipment that can excavate to distances of fifty feet, but the seven foot depth was difficult and/or impossible to obtain in either water body.

For these reasons, "dry" fire hydrants are not highly recommended by this Committee.

Cisterns and/or underground tanks

Cisterns and/or underground water storage tanks were the second option the committee considered. In order for a cistern to be considered, the committee needed to consider its size or water storage capabilities. At a minimum, and for fire insurance recognition and credit from ISO, thirty thousand (30,000) gallon minimum storage capacity is required. At 30,000 gallons of stored water, this only gives the fire fighters 3 thirty (30) minutes of firefighting capability at a 1,000 gallons per minute. The Committee quickly adjusted the minimum cistern capacity to 50,000 gallons and nearly doubling the firefighting capabilities at a structure fire. This would also provide ample time for mutual aid to arrive with tanker trucks if the event was very large or sustained for a longer period of time.

The type of cistern was also discussed and it is recommended that a "Rotondo" type precast concrete structures be pieced together and sealed in the field installations. This type of structure would measure approximately 8' x 10' x 100' or approximately 2,500 square feet (includes temporary construction easements for installation and shoring). Fiber glass units were also discussed, but were also quickly eliminated as options due to the narrow streets in and around Lost Lake and Knopps Pond.

Water Main Extensions

Without argument, the extension of municipal water to the Lost Lake/Knopps Pond Area of Groton is the most beneficial method to fight structure fires. It is the most reliable and essentially an unlimited supply of pressurized water at a single connection point. The only area of Lost Lake and Knopps Pond currently covered by municipal water is Lost Lake Drive beginning at Lowell Road and ending at the intersection of Lone Lane and Whitney pond Road. All other sections and/or areas of this area have no coverage or immediate access to municipal water. It is important to note that this is the most expensive alternative the committee considered but reliability and unlimited supplies of water come with a cost. It is also important to note that these extensions are limited to water pies and hydrants and individual water service stubs are not part of this proposal.

The municipal water extensions proposed by the committee include two specific areas around Lost Lake and Knopps Pond. The Lost Lake Drive and Pine Trail water main extensions will cover nearly 40 homes in the immediate area including homes on Redskin Trail and Wenuchus Trail. This extension includes 4 fire hydrants strategically placed in order to maximize coverage. The other proposed water main extension is on Boston Road extending into Groton Ridge Heights. This water main extension will cover nearly 77 homes with 5 fire new fire hydrants.

Drafting from a Static Source

The Committee also reviewed potential static water drafting sites that will be used as an interim measure over the next twelve to eighteen months and in conjunction with the above listed recommendations. It is important to note that these Static Drafting Sites have limited capabilities in that they may not be used if there is ice on the ponds and access to the water source is impeded.

Recommendations

The Lost Lake Fire Protection Study Committee has narrowed its recommendations to three options for the Town Manager to consider for improved fire protection to the Lost Lake Area. It is important to note that not every street and/or dwelling is fully covered with a viable source of water for the extinguishment of a fire at Lost Lake. The Committee identified heavily populated clusters around the Lost Lake and Knopps Pond and targeted their efforts on those specific locations. The Committee also tried to be fiscally responsible in its recommendations as well as limitations on access to and over private property.

The final Committee recommendations are as follows: install a "Dry" Fire Hydrant at the bridge on Island Pond Road (see attached coverage map), two 50,000 gallon underground cisterns. One cistern to be located on Weymissit Road at Radio Road and the other at "Off" Prescott at Prescott Street (see attached coverage map), two water main extensions - Boston Road and Summit Road and the second extension on Lost Lake Drive and Pine Trail (see attached coverage map). The Committee also reviewed draft sites that could be utilized for eight months out of the year when the water levels are high or a summer levels and the when there is no ice on either water pond. These draft sites will be utilized in a limited capacity by the Fire Department.

"Dry" Fire Hydrants

"Dry" Fire Hydrants are pipes that are installed into a body of water with a fire connection and/or pumping port

Boston Road & Groton Ridge Heights Water Main Extension

Boston Road 3 hydrants from Prime Gas and 3 in Groton Ridge Heights

Total of 77 houses are covered by new hydrants

From Entrance to Old Lantern Road: 3

Note: 1 Old Lantern) - 15 Old Lantern - 3 houses are covered by existing hydrant at Prime)

New coverage: 19 Old Lantern - 35 Old Lantern = 3 houses

From Entrance to Augustine: 10

All houses on Augustine will be covered - 10 houses (note: these houses are currently protected by a cistern)

From Entrance to Groton Ridge Heights: 51 (misses 5)

Lakeside = 16 houses (all covered)

Ridgewood = 11 houses (misses 2 – Fletchers at end)

Birchwood = 11 houses (misses 3)

Summit = 4 houses

Englewood = 3 houses

Maplewood = 4 houses

Hazelwood = 2 house

To Nate Nutting (this assumes using hydrant at Groton Ridge Heights): 8 (misses 2)

Nate Nutting - = 8 houses (Misses: 2 houses at end of street)

Boston Road: note: additional, didn't include those covered by Prime hydrant =5

573 Boston – 499 A-B Boston = 5 houses

Lost Lake Drive, Redskin Trail & Pine Trail Water Main Extension

Total number of 40 houses to be protected by new fire hydrants

Redskin Trail: 11 new houses (7 are already protected) 18 houses total

Pine Trail: 10 new houses (2 are already protected) 12 houses total

Lost Lake Drive: 11 new houses (365-475 Lost Lake Drive)

Whiley Road: 4 new houses

Wenuchus Trail: 4 new houses

Dry Fire Hydrants and Underground Cisterns

Dry Hydrant on site at bridge on to the Island on Knopps Pond

Total # of houses covered by the new Dry Hydrant – 34

10 houses on the Island at Island Rd.

8 additional houses on Island Rd. opposite side of bridge.

7 houses or structures on Shenandoah Rd.

9 Weymisset Rd.

Cistern on Conservation Parcel on Weymissett Road at the Intersection of Radio Road

Total #of houses covered by the new 50,000 gallon Cistern – 26

4 Radio Rd

5 Highland

3 Rustic Trail

4 Moose Trail

10 Weymissit

Cistern on Prescott Street/"Off" Prescott Street

Total # of houses and Structures covered by the new 50,000 gallon Cistern – 14

8 "Off" Prescott Street

6 Prescott Street

Total of 77 houses or structures to be covered

Draft Sites on Lost Lake and Knopps Pond

Locations:

Boathouse Road @ House #37

Valley Road @ House #49

Pine Trail @ Boat launch

Shelters Road @ House #116

Ridgewood Avenue @ House #90

Hazelwood Avenue @ House #7

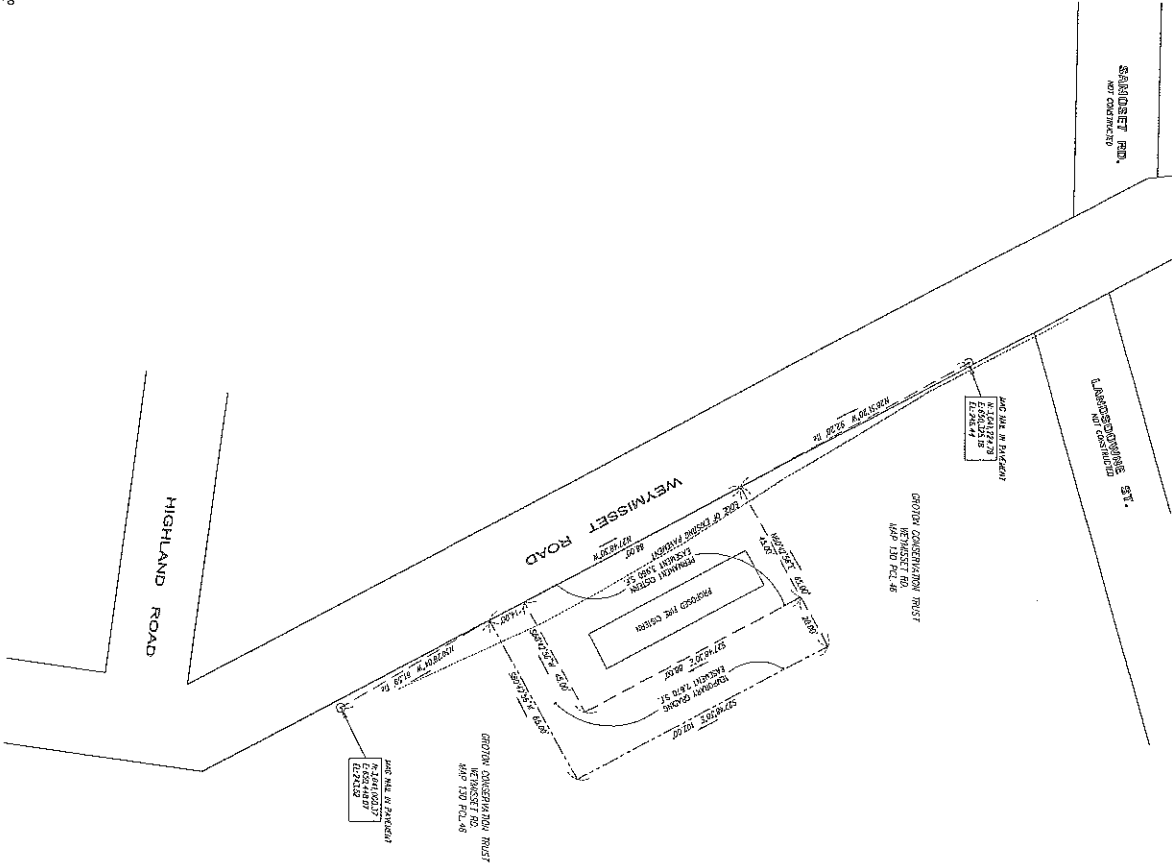
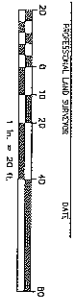
Maplewood Avenue @ House #72

Prescott Street @ House #164

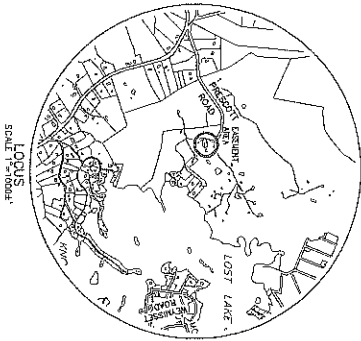


RESERVED FOR REENTRY USE

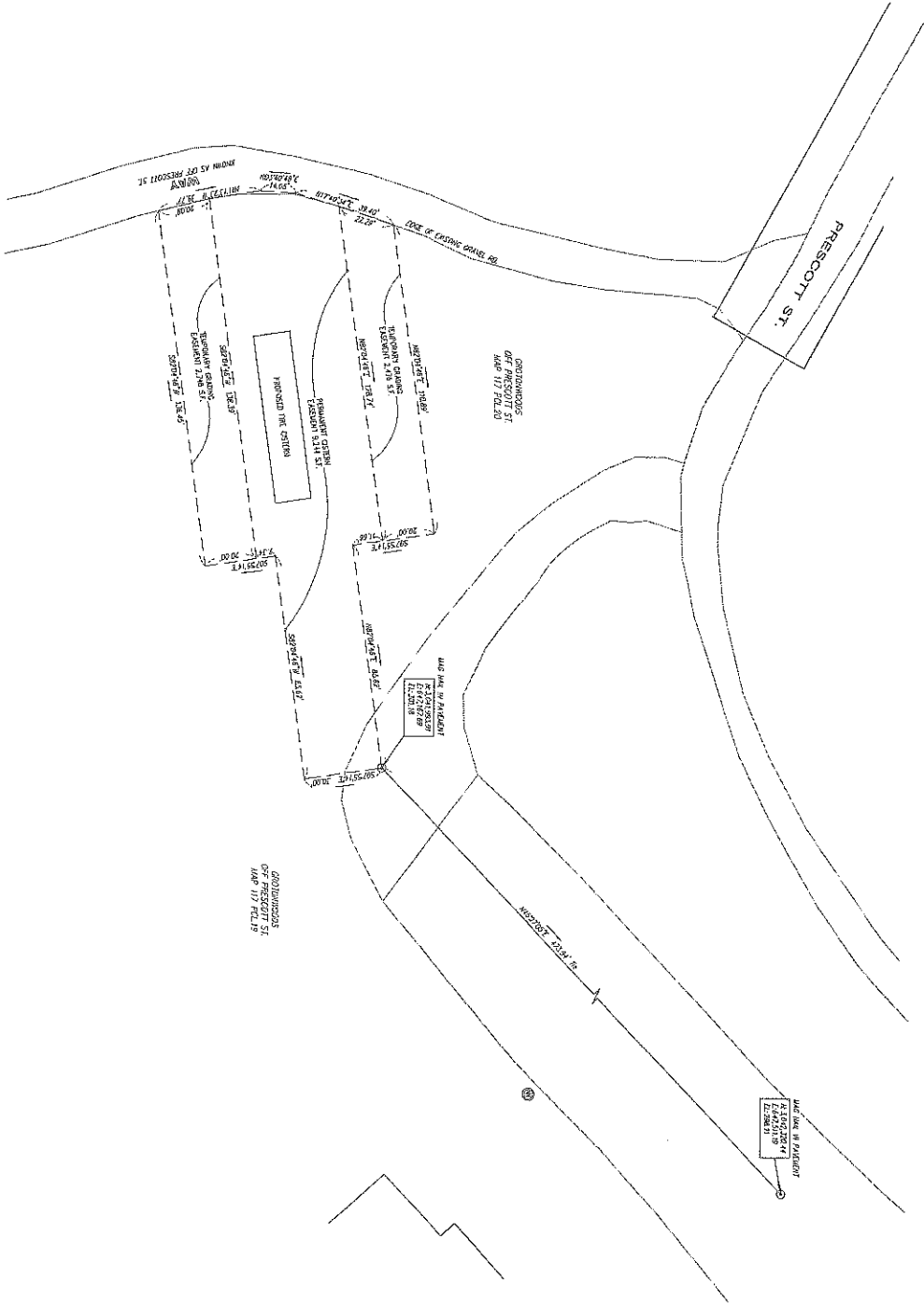
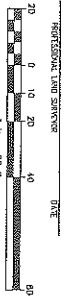
I CERTIFY THAT THIS PLAN CONFORMS TO THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE BOARDING OF SURVEYORS OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS



PLAN OF EASEMENTS IN GROTON, MASSACHUSETTS	
DATE: JULY 21, 2018 PREPARED FOR: 155 MAIN STREET GROTON, CT	JOB NO.: 4684 DATE: 08-1-2017
DUCHARME & DILLIS Civil Design Group, Inc. CIVIL ENGINEERING, LAND SURVEYING, & ERECTION CONTRACTORS 1082 MAIN STREET, P.O. BOX 428 GROTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01460 PHONE: 860-776-6001 FAX: 860-776-6001 WWW.DCDGS.COM	



I CERTIFY THAT THIS PLAN CONFORMS TO THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE BOARD OF REGISTRY OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA.



PLAN OF EASEMENTS IN	
GRONON, MASSACHUSETTS	
DATE: JULY 21, 2014	1" = 20' (1" = 20' L.S.)
PREPARED FOR: TOWN OF GRONON	DRAWN BY: J. J. JONES
151 MAIN STREET, GRONON, MA	4884
DUCHARME & DILLIS	
Civil Design Group, Inc.	
CIVIL ENGINEER - LAND SURVEYOR - METEOROLOGICAL	
2023 MAIN STREET, P.O. BOX 428, GRONON, MA 01033-0428	
PHONE: 508-779-9301 FAX: 508-779-0242	
E-MAIL: J. JONES@DUCHARMEANDDILLIS.COM	



TOWN OF GROTON

Lost Lake Fire Protection Study Committee

Steele McCurdy, Co-Chair
Thomas D. Orcutt, Co-Chair
Robert T. Delaney, Jr.
Donald Palma
Lynwood V. Prest
Carol M. Quinn
Rene Swezey

Progress Report Lost Lake Fire Protection Committee

The intent of this update is to inform the residents of Groton on the progress of the Lost Lake Fire Protection Committee and the overall status of the project. Based on a favorable recommendation from Town Meeting for engineering services in the Fall of 2013, the Committee has been working with the Town Manager and our Engineering Consultant on the permitting and design plans and specifications for bidding.

The following is a brief overview of where the project presently stands:

Permitting: there are a number of permits required for this project and they have either been filed or will be filed in the next week or so.

- MASS DOT – a Road Opening/Access Permit has been issued for our construction work on Rte. 119. A one (1) year extension of the permit may be required.
- Chapter 91 Water Ways License – this permit was required due to the dry hydrant location in Knopps Pond (minimal disturbance but none the less the work is in the pond).
- ENF Permit- Environmental Notification Form was filed in the Environmental Monitor due to the work in the ACEC (Area of Critical Environmental Concern) and length of piping to be installed (thresholds exceeded). No EIR (Environmental Impact Report) is anticipated.
- NHESP - Natural Heritage Endangered Species Program application is going to be filed shortly with the Commonwealth. Permit or application is required due to the ACEC designation (the whole town is in it), but should not pose any issues with us moving forward.
- Wetlands Permit – I have met the Conservation Commission and they made some valuable recommendations for the project that our engineers have followed. This saved us money and will save us permitting time, but more importantly the conditions placed on construction project remain straight forward. Two separate applications will be filed.

Easements: I have been working with both Dan Wolfe from the Groton Conservation Trust as well as Richard Wolf and Mark Reilly from the Baptist Camp regarding the easement plans for the two cisterns. We have finalized the layouts and construction easements. The recordings for the parcels will not take place until there is a favorable vote to approve the construction funding

for the project at the spring of 2015 Town Meeting. Each easement plan will have two stone bounds set and the remainder of the corners will have iron pins set.

Construction: The Town Manager and I had a number of discussions regarding the bidding and construction for this important project and we have decided on a Spring Town Meeting appropriation request. Therefore, advertising and bidding for the project will occur sometime after the 1st of the year. The timing is very important because we need to wait until April Town Meeting for the appropriation and the contractors can only hold their bid prices.

Engineering Plans and Specifications: The Plans and Specifications are at the 95% complete stage and can be advertised for bid once we have closed out all of the permitting for the project so those comments and recommendations can be included in the documents

In summary, the project is moving along very well and we remain within our budget for the design, permitting and bidding for this endeavor for the Town of Groton. The Lost Lake Fire Protection Study Committee looks forward to a favorable vote at the Spring Town Meeting for implementing this project on your behalf.



TOWN OF GROTON

Lost Lake Fire Protection Study Committee

Steele McCurdy, Co-Chair
Thomas D. Orcutt, Co-Chair
Robert T. Delaney, Jr.
Donald Palma
Lynwood V. Prest
Carol M. Quinn
Rene Swezey

Memorandum

To: Lost Lake Fire Protection Committee
Town Manager, Mark Haddad

From: Thomas Orcutt, Committee Co-Chair

Subject: Lost Lake Fire Protection – Status Update

Date: September 16, 2014

The intent of this memorandum is to bring the Lost Lake Fire Protection Committee up to date as to where this project currently stands. Based on the favorable recommendation from Town Meeting for engineering services, I have been working behind the scenes with the Town Manager and our Engineering Consultant on the permitting and plans and specifications for bidding purposes.

Permitting – there have been a number of permits required for this project and they have either been filed or will be filed in the next week or so. Work is on-going and nearly completed.

- MASS DOT – a Road Opening/Access Permit has been issued for our construction work on Rte. 119. I may need to obtain an extension in late spring early summer depending on the construction schedules, but we have this permit in hand.
- Chapter 91 Water Ways License – this permit was required due to the dry hydrant location in Knopps Pond (minimal disturbance but none the less, work is in the pond).
- ENF Permit- Environmental Notification Form was filed in the Environmental Monitor due to the work in the ACEC and length of piping to be installed (thresholds exceeded). No EIR (Environmental Impact Report) is anticipated.
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Construction: The Town Manager and I had a number of discussions regarding the bidding and construction for this important project and we have decided on a Spring Town Meeting appropriation request. Therefore, advertising and bidding for the project will occur sometime after the 1st of the year. The timing is very important because we need to wait until April Town Meeting for the appropriation and the contractors can only hold their pricing for so long and more importantly, we do not want to include price escalators in the bid documents.

So, in summary, the project is moving along very well and we remain within our budget for the design, permitting and bidding for this endeavor. Phase II is looming and preliminary discussions are underway with the Town Manager, Fire Chief and I as to what that might look like going forward. We will keep the committee apprised of this progress.

Town of Groton

Tax Rate and Average Tax Bill 2010 through 2016

<u>Year</u>	<u>Tax Rate</u>	<u>% change</u>	<u>Avg Home Value*</u>	<u># of Parcels *</u>	<u>Avg Tax Bill</u>	
2010	15.78		403,710	3,065	\$6,371	
2011	16.38	3.80%	396,318	3,083	\$6,492	
2012	16.08	-1.83%	399,146	3,110	\$6,418	
2013	16.85	4.79%	396,483	3,129	\$6,681	
2014	17.38	3.15%	394,514	3,143	\$6,857	
2015	18.27	5.12%	398,416	3,163	\$7,279	
2016	18.90	3.45%	398,794	3,164	\$7,537	<i>Projected Tax Rate based on Preliminary Budget & New Growth Data</i>

* Average Home Value & Parcel Count are per LA4 (based on single family homes only)

\$24.17 @ 110 hours

Payroll

General Expenses

\$ 2,658.70

Property Maintenance

\$ 33,870.55

Sports Field maintenance was streamlined this past year to include a proactive maintenance schedule. Increase is expected in FY16 due to soil testing and treatment expense increase. This also includes winterizing of irrigation & repair of irrigation. Materials and labor for common areas are also included.

Waste Management

\$ 7,656.42

Enrollment was up this year across teams, especially this fall. Extra waste management (portapotties) were needed

Commemorations/Celebrations

\$	5,193.52
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Memorial Day, 4th of July, All Town Flags, Veterans Day

Safety (signage, inspections, fencing)

\$ 6,441.01

Includes repair work to Old Burial Ground, new skating rink

Electricity

\$ 11,180.48

All Park Properties

FY2016

Est FY16 Operating Cost Total

\$ 67,000.68

	Operating Cost	\$	67,000.68
	For FY16 Projects	\$	95,000.00
	Est FY16 Overall Budget	\$	162,000.68
			FY16

potential project:

Cp Walking track	\$
Cutler Fencing	\$
Woitowicz Parking Lot	\$
baseball bleachers - town field	\$
Gazebo Repair	\$
	\$

Anticipated in 2016 from Capital Plan (capital asset fund)

Item	Amount
Playground relocation	\$
CP Lighting	\$