

# TOWN OF GROTON FINANCE COMMITTEE

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*Monday, March 23, 2015, Selectmen's Meeting Rm*

*Groton Town Hall, 173 Main St. Groton, MA, 7:00 p.m.*

**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:** M. Hartnett (Town Treasurer), T. Orcutt (Water Superintendent), M. Haddad (Town Manager), J. Petropoulos (Board of Selectmen), R. Swezey (Principal Assessor), P. Cunningham (Member Board of Selectmen), A. Eliot (Board of Selectmen), S. Schulman (Board of Selectmen), K. Lindemer (GELD Commissioner), and members of the press and public.

**Documents available at the meeting:** FY16 Town Operating & Capital Budget Proposals  
2015 Spring Town Meeting Warrant – Draft of 3/8/15  
Line Item/Reserve Fund Transfer Proposal Spreadsheet

*Mr. Green called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.*

**Town of Groton Budget Update** - Mr. Haddad explained that a snow & ice deficit of \$200,000 was built into the FY15 Operating Budget, however, due to the severity of the past winter, that deficit is approaching \$300,000. In an effort to avoid impacting the tax rate for FY16, he suggested offsetting a portion of that deficit (\$175,000) with Overlay Surplus funds recently released by the Assessors. The Board of Selectmen has already voted to add an article to that effect (Article 20) to the warrant.

Mr. Lindemer requested information as to what drives the year over year municipal budget increases. He expressed concern that these increases trend above the level of inflation. Mr. Haddad agreed that the municipal budget is projected to increase about 5.4% for FY16 and that the particular cost drivers were listed in his original budget message. He summarized that \$27,000 of the increase is due to the Pepperell SRF project transferred to General Government from the Sewer Enterprise, \$71,000 is due to the proposed SRO position in the Police Department, \$38,210 will be used to open Sargisson Beach, \$101,299 relates to Health Insurance rate increases, and \$180,066 is due to an 11% increase in the County Retirement assessment. Mr. Pease noted that while the major cost drivers account for much of the overall budget increase, there are a number of smaller cost increases spread over several categories which taken together account for the difference. Mr. Green said that the Town does not budget to inflation. Furthermore, the Finance Committee has deliberated on every line item of the proposed budget and is comfortable that costs proposed for services are legitimate and reasonable. Mr. Lindemer asked how the Finance Committee could consider voting to support a budget that was going to result in a tax rate increase for FY16. Mr. Green replied that while the Finance Committee was appreciative of Mr.

Lindemer's presentation on March 3<sup>rd</sup> regarding municipal budget trends, the FinCom plans to use this meeting for taking positions. He would prefer not to entertain questions regarding general trend analysis, but would be happy to address questions regarding specific line items should Mr. Lindemer have any such concerns. Mr. Haddad added that the Town had cut the municipal budget last year in an effort to resolve the school budget crisis; the proposed FY16 budget attempts to restore certain of those items where warranted. Mr. Robertson said that Town departments typically spend at levels that overreach inflation, and Town Meeting has supported this. However, going forward, the Finance Committee will attempt to play a larger role in labor negotiations to ensure that voted increases are sustainable.

Mr. Haddad informed the Finance Committee members that the major increases to the budget for Protection of Persons & Property was due to the proposed new SRO position as well as the recently ratified union contracts which "front-loads" the wage increases for the Police Patrolmen and Sergeants. Mr. Robertson said that he has not yet received a copy of the SRO job description. Ms. Dufresne apologized for overlooking this request and agreed to obtain that document from the Police Chief. Mr. Hargraves mentioned that filling this position will help to mitigate overtime costs during the summer when school is out of session and the SRO duties will presumably be lighter. The Finance Committee deferred taking a position on the Public Safety budget until the job description for the SRO is received.

Mr. Haddad said that due to flat Groton enrollment figures for Nashoba Valley Technical High School, the increase to this budget over FY15 is relatively small. Other towns are experiencing very high assessment increases due to planned expansion of program offerings coupled with higher enrollment. Mr. Prest said that this is an argument for providing adequate funding at the GDRSD. It costs more to educate a student at the Vocational Tech schools; when programs are cut or underfunded at GDRSD students tend to migrate to the NVTSD instead. Mr. Green and Mr. Robertson agreed that the NVTHS was requesting a reasonable budget for solid programming. Mr. Pease would like to explore the possibility of developing analytics that would predict which students at the middle school level would be seeking out voc-tech secondary schools. Mr. Petropoulos wondered what the options were for this budget line. Mr. Haddad replied that a majority of the towns that participate in the NVTHS district have to support the budget, or the district will have to cut the budget and have it re-voted. Mr. Lindemer felt that budget increases in the school categories were warranted.

The Library & Citizens' Services budget is decreasing for FY16 due to the proposed changes in the Country Club business model (primarily due to the lease of the Function Hall and sharing one Admin Asst. position with DPW). A portion of this decrease was reclassified to General Government (liability insurance and the Admin. Asst. position). Mr. Haddad said that the new Golf Pro has started, and that he is very confident that the Country Club can look forward to a successful season.

Mr. Haddad mentioned that the Town has taken on new excluded debt to pay for the Fire Station construction, but that the Lost Lake Sewer BAN has been paid off. A new BAN for FY16 has been proposed for initial funding of the Public Safety Radio Project, Lost Lake Fire Protection, and the Four Corners Economic Development Project. The Town is estimating interest costs of \$125,000 in FY16 for this short-term debt.

The Employee Benefits budget has increased due to health insurance rate increases, and an increase to the pension assessment due to recent retirees whose service years have not been allocated among the

contributing municipalities. This adjustment will result in a lower assessment for FY17. The County Retirement budget line has historically been fully funded even though the Town can generally take a 2% early pay discount. Mr. Haddad cautioned that it is the Treasurer's responsibility to determine whether sufficient cash flow exists to pay this assessment in full in July. Mr. Pease felt that the Finance Committee could help to ensure that cash is available to enable the Town to take advantage of the discount. Mr. Hartnett replied that the cash flow position is dependent on collections as well as a variety of other factors. Mr. Robertson suggested funding this line at the discounted amount and utilizing short term borrowing to make up the difference if cash flow is insufficient in any given year.

**Voted Positions on Budget** – The Finance Committee voted positions on General Government, Land Use, Schools, Public Works, Library & Citizen Services, Debt Service, Employee Benefits, Water/Sewer/Cable Enterprises, and the Overlay Surplus offset for Snow & Ice. Please see the Finance Committee Positions on Articles worksheet attached. Discussion highlights are as follows:

**Four Corners Economic Development Initiative**- Mr. Haddad explained that he is still working with the property owners to establish the parameters of the project in a way that will be fair to all involved. The attorney for Craven's Package Store and Ixtapa (neither of whom would receive a benefit from town sewer services) will advise in writing as to whether these businesses would prefer not to be in the new sewer district. Mr. Haddad clarified that the Four Corners Sewer District once created will remain separate from the Town Center Sewer District, and while it will be managed by the current sewer commissioners, it will be accounted for in a separate Enterprise Fund. The full cost is still estimated at \$3 million including engineering. He is recommending that the all project costs be reimbursed through betterment assessments. Meetings with the other property owners and the neighborhood association are ongoing as well. The Town is looking into the possibility of requesting partial funding through a MA Works Grant. Applications for this grant will only be considered for "shovel ready" projects, therefore Mr. Haddad would like to seek an appropriation for \$285,000 from Town Meeting this spring to do the design and bid work. If the grant is successful, it will be that much easier to get authorization to move ahead with the construction at the fall Town Meeting. If the grant is not successful, TIF agreements can be used to offset some of the costs, and the creation of an Economic Opportunity Area may allow for state tax credits. Mr. Prest asked for an estimated cost to be borne by the Town. Mr. Haddad replied that the short term interest cost will amount to approximately \$52,500 in FY16; this will be recovered through betterment assessments once the construction is complete. Mr. Pease suggested amending the language in Article 13 as follows: to correct the spelling of the word "benefited" in line #6, to replace the word "authorize" with the word "require" in line #5, and to replace the word "cost" with the phrase "total cost including all design and net construction sums" in line #6. Mr. Robertson felt that the real question is not whether the Town should pay for the engineering. He believes that the question is whether or not the Town needs sewer infrastructure at Four Corners. If so, then Town Meeting should be asked to appropriate the costs of the entire project, and the full costs should then be recovered through betterments (or grant revenue). Mr. Haddad reminded the group that if the project is designed, but not built, those engineering costs cannot be recovered through betterment assessment. Mr. Manugian requested an explanation of how the betterments would be allocated. Mr. Haddad said that it will most likely be based on estimated sewer flows, but that the engineers would help refine that calculation.

Mr. Hargraves would like to see an analysis showing what the estimated tax revenue to the Town would be based on maximum build-out at Four Corners. Mr. Haddad replied that a conservative estimate (using

retail use valuations) would be around \$100,000. Mr. Petropoulos thought it would be a more valid calculation if Mr. Wong's property were excluded (as his potential build-out is not dependent on the sewer project) and also New England Power (as they are unlikely to develop significantly). Excluding those parcels would yield incremental tax revenue of only \$35,000 annually. TIF agreements would serve to delay this already modest return on investment. Mr. Green noted that (aside from the issue of tax revenue) the Economic Development Committee is concerned about blight in this area of town. Filling vacant buildings with prosperous businesses would also be considered a positive outcome. Mr. Petropoulos replied that the business owners to be impacted should have the final say on whether or not to proceed with this project. Mr. Prest mentioned that Mr. Wong's decision to downsize his original site plan may have been influenced by the lack of sewer infrastructure. Mr. Lindemer would like to know which of the property owners has specifically asked for this project. Ms. Eliot said that the neighborhood residents approached the Board of Selectmen because they were concerned about potential blight at Four Corners. The addition of sewer infrastructure there will increase the value of these properties. Mr. Petropoulos replied that if that is the case, the businesses will then request that the project move forward, and the Town should not make the decision until that happens. Mr. Green noted that there is no financial risk to the Town if the funding is recovered through betterments. Mr. Lindemer felt that the size of the betterments would be injurious to the businesses, which amounts to a risk to the Town. Mr. Green replied that the Town Manager has already said that this project would not be forced on the businesses if they do not want it; and if they want it, it can be assumed that they accept the risk. Mr. Prest said that the leasing companies for the undeveloped pads cannot lease the properties without sewer capacity. Furthermore, complete build-out of all properties at the Four Corners is necessary to ensure sufficient foot traffic to make all the business owners profitable. Mr. Robertson opined that Shaw's is probably the only business there that knows whether or not this project should be undertaken. If Shaw's agrees to it, then he would be ready to support it. Mr. Petropoulos said that he would like Article 13 broken down into three separate motions:

1. Construction of the Sewer Infrastructure
2. Funding Plan for Construction of Sewer Infrastructure
3. Request to Provide a Stub to the 4<sup>th</sup> Corner Residential Property

Mr. Haddad clarified that the fourth corner is currently zoned residential, but if it is re-zoned at some point, the state has already said it could be included as part of the district. That is why the project currently includes stubbing that property. Mr. Schulman wondered if stubbing that property could lead to 40B projects. Mr. Haddad said that Town Counsel is looking into that question.

**Proposed Line Item & Reserve Fund Transfers** - Mr. Haddad summarized the Line Item Transfer Requests as currently estimated for Town Meeting. He stressed that these may be adjusted as budget needs through year-end become clearer. (Please reference the Line Item/Reserve Fund Transfer spreadsheet attached). Of particular note, the Police Department is currently tracking a bit higher than would be hoped (\$20,000 - \$22,000), but this is mostly due to an unexpected retirement payout. It is possible that this budget may recover prior to year end, therefore it is not yet included as a request. Mr. Haddad listed the following as potential Reserve Fund requests: Fire Department expenses of \$17,000 for critical equipment needs and \$30,500 for wage support related to extreme weather and litigation issues, and \$3,500 for Accounting Department unanticipated audit expenses. The legal budget will require support of \$62,000 as mediation efforts have failed with regards to the Planning Board/ZBA litigation issue. Additionally, \$20,000 will be requested to replace the dilapidated pool chairs at the Country Club. Repairs

to the locker rooms and pro shop at the Club are already underway, and provided expenses do not exceed current estimates, will be funded through a transfer from the Country Club wage line. Mr. Haddad reminded the group that the current list of Line Item Transfer requests is subject to change as the year progresses. The Finance Committee deferred taking a position on this article.

**Lost Lake Fire Protection-** The Finance Committee briefly discussed the issue of providing potable water as well as fire protection to the Lost Lake area. Mr. Robertson wondered if there was a particular reason this service could not be offered to the residents; perhaps some kind of remuneration could be offered to the Town by the Water Enterprise. Mr. Haddad said that he would ask the Water Commissioners to respond to this question.

**CPC Project Funding Recommendations –** Mr. Green said that as the CPC is currently meeting to take their own positions regarding these projects, any discussion regarding Article 30 would be deferred by the Finance Committee to March 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Charter Review Committee Update –** The Finance Committee has received four letters of interest from individuals wishing to act as designee to the Charter Review Committee. The members briefly discussed the procedure they will adopt for making a final choice (a public vote will be taken either in writing or by roll call).

**Approval of Meeting Minutes –** Approval of minutes was deferred for a subsequent meeting.

*Mr. Green officially adjourned the meeting at 9:25 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Dufresne, Recording Secretary

Line Item Transfers  
Spring 4/27/15 for FY15

3/19/2015

*DRAFT*

Funding Source	\$	Budgetary Use	\$	Notes
<i>Reserve Fund</i>	<b>137,300</b>	Fire Dept Expenses	17,000	Nozzles & Ladder Truck Repair
		Accounting Expenses	3,500	Scheduled Departmental Audit
		Fire Wages	30,500	Storm Coverage/C.Jefferson pay
<i>RFT Subtotal</i>	<b>137,300</b>	<i>Subtotal</i>	<b>51,000</b>	
<i>Ending Reserve Fund Bal</i>	<b>86,300</b>			
<i>Line Item Transfers</i>				
Communications Wages	70,000	Mechanical Insp Salaries	6,000	Misc Budget Adjustment
		Sealer of Weights/Meas Sal	2,000	Misc Budget Adjustment
		Legal Expenses	62,000	Increased Litigation Expenses
County Retirement	30,000	Medicare Matching	5,000	Misc Budget Adjustment
		IT Wages	5,000	Stipend pd during IT Dir vacancy
		Country Club Expenses	20,000	Pool Chairs
Country Club Wages	32,000	Country Club Salary	16,000	New Golf Pro
		Country Club Expenses	11,000	Stock Pro Shop & Repair Locker Rms
		Country Club Expenses	5,000	FY15 Budget Support
Highway Wages	35,000	Highway Expenses	35,000	General Expenses
Library Wages	1,610	Library Salaries	1,610	Misc Budget Adjustment
HR Salary	2,500	HR Expense	2,500	Recruitment
<i>Line Item Trfs GF</i>	<b>171,110</b>		<b>171,110</b>	\$0.00
<i>Free Cash Beginning Bal</i>	400,358.00			
		Voting Machines	22,000.00	
		FY13 Grant Deficits	1,884.16	
		Town Hall HVAC	<u>60,000.00</u>	
<i>Free Cash End Balance:</i>	<b>316,473.84</b>		<b>83,884.16</b>	
<b>Enterprise Funds</b>				
Funding Source	\$	Budget Use	\$	
Water E&D	100,000	Water Operating Budget	100,000	
Sewer E&D	100,000	Sewer Operating Budget	100,000	
Overlay Surplus Released	175,000	Snow & Ice	175,000	

Spring Town Meeting (April 27, 2015)

Finance Committee Positions on Articles (votes taken 3/16, 3/23, 3/31, 4/06/15)

Article #	Description	Dollar Amount	Moved	Seconded	Gary G	Bob H	Dave M	Bud R	Barry P	Art P	Mark B	Total Vote	Presenter
1	Hear Reports											No Position	
2	Elected Officials Compensation	80,989	Bud	David	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Barry
3	Wage & Classification Schedule		Mark	Bud	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Bud
4	Citizens' Petition Town Manager Contract											No Position	
5	OPEB Trust Fund Authorization		Mark	Bud	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Bud
6	OPEB FY16 Contribution	200,000	Art	David	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Bud
7	Cable Enterprise Creation		Barry	David	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	David
8	FY16 Operating Budget	33,298,830											
8a	General Govt	1,926,434	Bud	Mark	y	y	y	y	A	y	y	6-0-1	Gary
8b	Land Use	422,912	Bob	Bud	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7-0-0	David
8c	Protection of Persons/Ppty	3,561,983	Bob	Art	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7-0-0	Bob
8d	Schools	18,862,805	Bud	Art	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7-0-0	Bud
8e	Public Works	2,094,007	Bob	David	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7-0-0	David
8f	Library & Citizens Services	1,539,710	Barry	Mark	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7-0-0	Barry
8g	Debt Service	1,383,590	Bob	David	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7-0-0	Gary
8h	Employee Benefits	3,507,389	David	Art	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7-0-0	Bud
8i	Water Enterprise	997,545	David	Bob	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7-0-0	David
8j	Sewer Enterprise	662,154	David	Barry	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7-0-0	David
8k	Cable Enterprise	265,458	Bob	Mark	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7-0-0	David
9	FY16 Capital Budget	716,045											
Item 1	Swap Loader	105,000	Bud	Mark	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	David
Item 2	Fire Chief's Vehicle	46,900	Barry	Mark	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	David

Article #	Description	Dollar Amount	Moved	Seconded	Gary G	Bob H	Dave M	Bud R	Barry P	Art P	Mark B	Total Vote	Presenter
Item 3	Dump Truck	180,000	Barry	David	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	David
Item 4	IT Infrastructure	50,000	Barry	Bud	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Barry
Item 5	HVAC Upgrade Town Hall	30,000	Bud	Mark	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Bud
Item 6	Building Security Upgrade	30,000	Barry	David	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Bud
Item 7	Bobcat/Utility Loader	35,000	David	Bud	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	David
Item 8	Carpet Replacement Library	22,645	David	Bud	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Mark
Item 9	Field Improvements Parks	45,000	Barry	Mark	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Barry
Item 10	Playground Improvements	50,000	David	Art	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Barry
Item 11	Police Cruisers	85,000	David	Bud	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Art
Item 12	Rough Mower - Country Club	10,000	Bud	Barry	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Bud
Item 13	Golf Carts	20,000	Bud	Mark	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Bud
Item 14	Boom Sprayer - Country Club	6,500	Bud	Mark	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Bud
10	Joint Radio Project	650,000	Bud	David	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Art
11	Lost Lake Fire Protection	1,972,200	Barry	David	N		y	y	y	y	y	5-1	Art
12	Establish 4 Corners Sewer Dist											Deferred	
13	Design/Construct 4 Corners Sewer	3,000,000										Deferred	
14	Auth IGA with Ayer											Deferred	
15	Est 4 Corners as an E.O.A.		Art	David	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7-0-0	Gary
16	GDRSD Stabilization Fund Auth.		Bud	Mark	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Bud
17	Add'l Parking on Main St.		Barry	Bud	y	y		y	y	y	y	7-0-0	Bob
18	Purch Sta Ave Parking Lot		Barry	Bud	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7-0-0	Barry
19	Current Year Line Item Trfs		David	Bob								Deferred	
20	Offset to Snow/Ice Deficit	175,000	Bob	Barry	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7-0-0	Bud
21	Water Enterprise Transfer E&D		Barry	Mark	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	David
22	Sewer Enterprise Transfer E&D		Barry	Mark	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	David



Article #	Description	Dollar Amount	Moved	Seconded	Gary G	Bob H	Dave M	Bud R	Barry P	Art P	Mark B	Total Vote	Presenter
23	Prior Year Bills	715	Barry	Bob	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7-0-0	Gary
24	Replace Voting Machines	22,000	Barry	Mark	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Gary
25	Deficit Grant Balances FY13	1,884	Barry	David	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Gary
CAPItem 5	HVAC Upgrade Town Hall	60,000	Bud	Mark	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Bud
26	Fund Trf to LL Watershed Cmte	17,639	Art	Bud	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Art
27	Rezone 73 Pepperell Rd		Art	Mark	y		abstain	defer	defer	y	y	3-0-1 (2 defer)	Art
28	Sale or Lease of Tarbell School		Art	Mark	y		abstain	defer	defer	y	y	3-0-1 (2 defer)	Art
29	CPA Funding Accounts	677,500	David	Bob	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7-0-0	Gary
30	CPA Funding Recommendations:												
A	Accessible Trail Project	24,932	Art	David	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7-0-0	Art
B	Conservation Fund Cash	200,000	Barry	Mark	N		N	N	N	N	N	0-6	David
C	Old Meetinghouse Rehab	203,333	Barry	Bob	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7-0-0	Bob
D	Basketball Court Repairs	109,000	Art	Dave	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7-0-0	Bud
E	ADA Park/Open Space Study	6,000	Bob	Barry	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7-0-0	Barry
F	Housing Coordinator Salary	49,509	Mark	Barry	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7-0-0	Gary
G	Milestone Engraving	17,000	Bob	Barry	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7-0-0	Barry
31	Zoning Amendment 218-25											No Position	
32	Zoning Amendment 218-33C											No Position	
33	Citizens' Petition 152-158 Boston Rd Rezone											No Position	
34	Acceptance of MGL 53 sec 18B Ballot Question Summary											No Position	
35	Home Recycling Revolving Fund	10,000	Barry	David	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Gary
36	Apply for Grants		David	Barry	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Gary
37	Surrenden Farms Debt Svc	480,000	Barry	Mark	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Gary
38	Stormwater Revolving Fund	10,000	Barry	David	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Gary
39	Cons Comm Revolving Fund	50,000	Barry	David	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Gary

Article #	Description	Dollar Amount	Moved	Seconded	Gary G	Bob H	Dave M	Bud R	Barry P	Art P	Mark B	Total Vote	Presenter
40	Affdbi Hsg Revolving Fund	50,000	Barry	David	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Gary
41	Real Estate Tax Exemption Inc.		Mark	Barry	y		y	y	y	y	y	6-0	Gary
	Total Taxation	33,298,830											
	FY15 Free Cash Carryforward	400,358											
	Total Free Cash committed	84,599											
	FY15 Free Cash Bal. Remaining	315,759											

N=Voted Against Recommendation

A= Abstained

y= Voted to Recommend

Voted 3-16-15

Voted 3-31-15

Voted 3-23-15

Voted 4-6-15

Revised: 03-17-2015

## Warrant, Summary, and Recommendations

# TOWN OF GROTON



## 2015 SPRING TOWN MEETING

Groton-Dunstable Middle School Auditorium  
344 Main Street, Groton, Massachusetts 01450

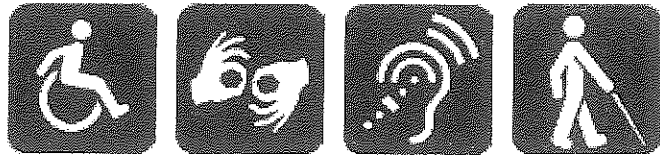
Beginning Monday, April 27, 2015 @ 7:00 PM

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Attention – Voters and Taxpayers

Please bring this Report to Town Meeting

*THE BUDGET HANDOUT FOR ARTICLE 8 IS AVAILABLE  
IN THE BACK OF THE WARRANT*



## Town Meeting Access for Voters with Disabilities

**Parking** – Universally accessible parking spaces are available in the parking lot in front of the Groton Dunstable Middle School South. There is a ramp providing access from the parking lot to the front door of the Middle School.

**Wheelchair Accessible & Companion Seating** – Wheelchair spaces, seating for people with mobility issues and companion seats are available in the center aisle on both sides of the auditorium.

**Sign Language** – A Sign Language Interpreter will be provided for the hearing impaired, upon request, at least one week prior to the meeting.

**Speaking at Town Meeting** – There will be volunteers available to bring hand-held microphones to voters who have mobility issues or cannot stand in line and wait at the microphones.

**Restrooms** – Accessible restrooms are available near the entrance to the auditorium.

**Transportation to Town Meeting** - The Council on Aging van will be available to Groton residents attending Town Meetings at no charge. All riders will be at the meeting prior to the start. However, the van will depart the school at 10 PM regardless of the status of the meeting. The van is wheelchair accessible. Your reservation can be made by calling the Senior Center at 978-448-1170. Seats will be filled on a first come, first serve basis.

**Questions or concerns** - If you or a member of your household has questions or would like to request a sign language interpreter, please contact ADA Coordinator Michelle Collette at Town Hall at 978 448-1105 at least one week before the Town Meeting.

**SPRING TOWN MEETING WARRANT  
APRIL 27, 2015**

Middlesex, ss.  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
To any Constable in the Town of Groton

Greetings:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby required to notify and warn said inhabitants of the Town of Groton qualified to vote on Town affairs to assemble in the Groton-Dunstable Middle School Auditorium in said Town on Monday, the twenty-seventh day of April, 2015 at Seven O'clock in the evening, to consider all business other than the election of Town Officers and on the nineteenth day of May, 2015 at an adjourned session thereof to give their ballots for:

Vote for One	Board of Assessors	3 Years
Vote for One	Board of Health	3 Years
Vote for One	Board of Selectmen	3 Years
Vote for One	Commissioner of Trust Funds	3 Years
Vote for Two	Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee	3 Years
Vote for One	Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee	1 Year
Vote for One	Groton Electric Light Commission	3 Years
Vote for One	Park Commission	3 Years
Vote for One	Moderator	3 Years
Vote for Three	Planning Board	3 Years
Vote for One	Sewer Commission	3 Years
Vote for Two	Trustees of the Groton Public Library	3 Years
Vote for One	Water Commission	3 Years
Vote for One	Groton Housing Authority	5 Years
Vote for One	Town Clerk	3 Years

**ARTICLE 1: HEAR REPORTS**

To see if the Town will vote to hear and act on the report of the Board of Selectmen and other Town Officers and Committees, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Board of Selectmen: *Recommended Unanimously***  
**Finance Committee: *No Position***

**Summary:** *To hear reports of Town Boards, Committees and Commissions.*

**ARTICLE 2: ELECTED OFFICIALS' COMPENSATION**

To see if the Town will vote to allow the following compensation for the following elected officials:

Selectman (four)	\$ 760	Town Clerk	\$ 74,544
Board of Selectmen, Chairman	\$ 910	Town Moderator	\$ 65
Board of Assessors, Chairman	\$ 910	Assessor (two)	\$ 760

for the ensuing year, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended (4 In Favor, 1 Deferred - Petropoulos)*

**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*

**Summary:** *To provide compensation for elected officials as proposed by the Town Manager.*

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**ARTICLE 3: WAGE AND CLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE**

To see if the Town will vote to amend and adopt for Fiscal Year 2016 the Town of Groton Wage and Classification schedule as shown in Appendix B of this Warrant, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
TOWN MANAGER**

**Board of Selectmen:**

**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*

**Summary:** *This article proposes a wage adjustment of two (2%) percent for FY 2016 for the three employees covered by the Personnel Bylaw. This follows the Supervisors' Union Contract which calls for a two (2%) percent wage adjustment in FY 2016 as well.*

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**ARTICLE 4: CITIZENS' PETITION – TOWN MANAGER'S CONTRACT RENEWAL**

On June 30, 2016, the Groton Town Manager's contract will expire. We, citizens of the Town of Groton, Massachusetts, ask that our Selectmen not renew the contract of the existing Town Manager.

**A Yes Vote:** Would inform the Selectmen that Town Meeting objects to the renewal of the current Town Manager contract upon its expiration on June 30, 2016.

**A No Vote:** Would inform the Selectmen that Town Meeting has no objection to a renewal of the current Town Manager contract upon its expiration on June 30, 2016.

**CITIZENS' PETITION**

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>
Robert T. Flynn	425 Nashua Road	Scott T. Eggimann	547 Martins Pond Road
Kathleen M. Harrington	310 Chicopee Row	Jeffrey D. Casale	64 Hollis Street
Shane W. Grant	247 Main Street	Bruce E. Dubey	80 Ames Road
Shawn Hunter	173 Wintergreen Lane	Michael E. Bushnell	105 Northwoods Road
Kimberley J. Burrill	478 Main Street	Fred Anthony Correia	11 Cow Pond Brook Road

**Board of Selectmen:** *(2 Against, 1 In Favor - Degen, 2 Deferred – Eliot, Petropoulos)*  
**Finance Committee:** *No Position*

**Summary:** *This Article has been submitted as a Citizens' Petition by the above ten (10) registered voters of the Town of Groton for Town Meeting consideration.*

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**ARTICLE 5: OTHER POST-EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS LIABILITY TRUST FUND**

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Chapter 32B, Section 20 of the General Laws to establish a separate trust fund, to be known as the Other Post-Employment Benefits Liability Trust Fund, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
TOWN MANAGER**

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended (4 In Favor, 1 Against - Degen)*  
**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*

**Summary:** *In 2008, the federal Governmental Accounting Standards Board, which promulgates ongoing accounting standards for governmental entities, required that all governmental entities disclose on their financial statements the costs and liabilities associated with Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB). OPEB are non-pension benefits provided to retirees, primarily consisting of health insurance. The Town of Groton has a current OPEB liability of \$7.2 million. In an effort to continue receiving a AAA Bond Rating from the rating agencies, the Town of Groton needs to start addressing this Liability. The first step in the process is to establish a dedicated Trust Fund for this purpose. MGL, c. 32B, §20 authorizes the creation of the OPEB Trust Fund. Not only does this Fund allow the Town to address the Liability, it allows the Town to pay for retirees' health insurance out of the Trust funds. It is the*

Town's intention to begin to pay one portion of this Liability, the current cost of retiree health insurance, out of the Fund. The purpose of this Article is to accept MGL, c32B, §20 so that the Town can create the OPEB Trust Fund.

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**ARTICLE 6: APPROPRIATE FY 2016 CONTRIBUTION TO THE OPEB TRUST**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager; to be added to the Other Post-Employment Benefits Liability Trust Fund as authorized by Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 32B, Section 20, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
TOWN MANAGER**

**Board of Selectmen: Recommended (3 In Favor, 1 Against - Degen, 1 Deferred - Eliot)**  
**Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**Summary:** *The purpose of this article is to begin to fund the Town's OPEB Liability. To start out, the Town will be appropriating the amount necessary to cover retirees' health insurance in Fiscal Year 2016. That expense will be paid directly out of the Trust. It is estimated that the FY 2016 cost is approximately \$200,000. This is money that would otherwise be funded in the Health Insurance Line Item of the FY 2016 Operating Budget. There will be no additional tax increase in FY 2016 for this purpose.*

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**ARTICLE 7: CREATE ENTERPRISE FUND FOR LOCAL ACCESS CABLE**

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44, §53F½, to create an Enterprise Fund for the operation of the Local Access Cable Department, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**TOWN MANAGER**

**Board of Selectmen: Recommended Unanimously**  
**Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**Summary:** *Recently, the Massachusetts State Legislature amended Chapter 44, §53F½, allowing communities that accept this Section of the Law to create an Enterprise Fund for the operation of Local Access Cable Departments. The Cable Advisory Committee recommended to the Town Manager that such a fund be created to manage the finances of the Department. All costs associated with the management of this Department will be paid from revenues received from the two cable providers in the Town of Groton.*

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**ARTICLE 8: FISCAL YEAR 2016 ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds a sum or sums of money as may be necessary to defray the expenses of the Town for the next fiscal year (2016), and act upon the budget of the Finance Committee, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
TOWN MANAGER**

**Board of Selectmen:  
Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *Budget – In accordance with Section 6 of the Town Charter, the Finance Committee conducts its annual budget process by receiving the Town Manager’s proposed balanced budget on or before December 31<sup>st</sup>; meeting with department heads and boards; holding public budget hearings in preparation for issuing its recommendations to Town Meeting; and presenting its budget recommendations at Spring Town Meeting. The budget handout for this Article is contained in Appendix A of this Warrant. Please also see the Town Manager’s Report which includes the Finance Committee’s and Board of Selectmen’s recommendations.*

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**ARTICLE 9: FISCAL YEAR 2016 CAPITAL BUDGET**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager, for the purpose of funding the Fiscal Year 2016 Capital Budget as follows:

<b>Item #1 – Swap Loader</b>	<b>\$105,000</b>	<b>Fire/EMS</b>
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**Summary:** *Utilizing the \$50,000 that was allocated in the FY 2015 budget for the building of a brush truck, the Fire Department is requesting additional funds for a swap loader unit. This swap loader would allow for quick changes to the body in the rear of the truck to make a change from the role of a brush truck to a lighting plant or a flatbed truck. The switch out process takes approximately 3-4 minutes and gives a tremendous multi-role capability. One module will be the brush unit. This will allow the truck to act as a brush truck in the dry season, thus taking out of service a 1985 brush truck currently in use. In cooperation with the Police Department, a lighting unit will be constructed to allow the vehicle to go to incidents or events and provide a significant power and light source. A flat bed will also be purchased so that the vehicle can be used to move equipment such as the UTV, boats or other loose equipment to incident scenes or for maintenance.*

**Board of Selectmen: Recommended (3 In Favor, 2 Deferred – Petropoulos, Eliot)**  
**Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**Item #2 – Fire Chief's Vehicle**                      **\$46,900**                      **Fire/EMS**

**Summary:**    *The current Chief's vehicle (a 2008 Ford Expedition) is in line for replacement in FY 2016. The new vehicle will most likely be a Chevy Tahoe, which is similar to what was purchased by the Police Chief and Lieutenant and will allow for the reuse of the current vehicle in the apparatus replacement program. The Expedition will be traded in with any money received used to offset the cost of the new vehicle.*

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended Unanimously*  
**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*

**Item #3 – Dump Truck**                      **\$180,000**                      **Highway Department**

**Summary:**    *This is a scheduled replacement. The vehicle to be replaced is a front line truck responsible for plowing and sanding as well as normal construction duties.*

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended Unanimously*  
**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*

**Item #4 – IT Infrastructure**                      **\$50,000**                      **Town Facilities**

**Summary:**    *This item in the Capital Budget was established six years ago and has been very successful. In Fiscal Year 2016, the following items are proposed to be purchased/upgraded with this allocation: Sixteen Replacement Desk Top Computers; Four Replacement Lap Top Computers; 3 Replacement Servers; Disk Storage Array; 2 Cisco Switches; 16 Hours of Technical Support*

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended Unanimously*  
**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*

**Item #5 – HVAC Upgrade – Town Hall**                      **\$90,000**                      **Town Facilities**

**Summary:**    *The original system was installed in 1991 and will be almost 25 years old in FY 2016. The system will be in need of updating in FY 2016. This will be put out to a formal bid.*

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended Unanimously*  
**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*

**Item #6 – Building Security**                      **\$30,000**                      **Town Facilities**

**Summary:**    *This is the second year appropriation of a three year plan to upgrade and update the alarms in all Town buildings. It will include video, and swipe cards as well as other entry protective measures to enhance the safety of our employees and the public. This measure is a recommendation of the Police Chief.*

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended Unanimously*  
**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*

**Item #7 – Bobcat/Utility Loader                      \$35,000                      Transfer Station**

**Summary:**    *The Utility Loader at the Transfer Station is used to move recyclables at the Transfer Station as well as snow removal and other maintenance issues. Due to the increase in recyclables, a larger Loader is needed to accommodate the work required. It is a real workhorse at the Transfer Station. An alternative piece of equipment that was considered was a forklift, however, it is more expensive and cannot be used for snow removal and other uses that a Utility Loader can perform.*

**Board of Selectmen: *Recommended Unanimously***  
**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Item #8 – Carpet Replacement                      \$22,645                      Library**

**Summary:**    *The 1999 carpeting on the second and third floors of the library needs replacing. There is much wear in the heavy traffic areas. The Children’s Room, Stairs, Lobby, Sibley Hall, and Community Meeting Room were redone 5-7 years ago. This replacement will be phased over two years. In FY 2017, a request of \$20,000 will be made to complete the replacement program.*

**Board of Selectmen: *Recommended Unanimously***  
**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Item #9 – Field Improvements                      \$45,000                      Parks**

**Summary:**    *This request is to install lights & fencing at Cow Pond Brook Fields to allow for safety and greater utilization of existing field space. Currently portable lights are used for certain events. The new Baseball Field had lights installed when it was constructed 4 years ago. The fields require additional seeding, fertilization and irrigation.*

**Board of Selectmen: *Recommended Unanimously***  
**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Item #10 – Playground Improvements              \$50,000                      Parks**

**Summary:**    *Cutler Field will be utilizing the existing playground equipment from the Prescott School. The playgrounds are in need of resurfacing with CSPC standard safety products (poured rubber and engineered wood fiber chips). Additionally a shade canopy will be provided for sun protection at the Christine Hansen Memorial Playground.*

**Board of Selectmen: *Recommended Unanimously***  
**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***



**ARTICLE 10: JOINT RADIO PROJECT**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager, to purchase, equip, replace and upgrade all radio systems utilized by the Public Safety Departments of the Town of Groton, including the Police, Fire, Highway and Water Departments, and for all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**TOWN MANAGER**

**Board of Selectmen: Recommended (3 In Favor, 2 Deferred – Eliot, Petropoulos)**  
**Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**Summary:** *The Police Chief and Fire Chief have proposed a joint radio project to upgrade the departments' radio systems. This is a major upgrade. Currently the Police and Fire department radio systems are inadequate for a community the size of Groton. This issue creates major "dead" areas that are unacceptable and place personnel needlessly at risk. One of the most common contributing factors in firefighter and police officer injuries and deaths is communications issues. Approximately \$650,000 will be required to complete the project. While the Town at this point appears to be the bearer of the entire project cost, some relief through competitive grants is currently being pursued.*

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**ARTICLE 11: LOST LAKE FIRE PROTECTION**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager, to construct water main extensions on Lost Lake Drive, Pine Trail, Boston Road, Lakeside Drive and Summit Drive, two (2) 50,000 gallon underground fire cisterns and one (1) "dry" fire hydrant for Fire Protection Purposes in the Lost Lake Area of Groton, and all costs associated and related thereto, or take any other action relative thereto.

**TOWN MANAGER**

**Board of Selectmen:**  
**Finance Committee: Recommended (5 In Favor, 1 Against - Green)**

**Summary:** *This article seeks to extend a 12" ductile iron water main approximately 2,700 linear feet on Lost Lake Drive and Pine Trail, a 12" ductile iron water main approximately 1,600 linear feet on Boston Road, 800 linear feet of 8" ductile iron water main on Summit Drive and 1,000 linear feet of 8" ductile iron water mains on Lakeside Drive. In addition, two (2) 50,000 gallon underground cisterns will be installed, with one installed on Weymissit Road and one installed on Off Prescott Street. Finally, one (1) "dry" fire hydrant for fire protection purposes will be installed. The Fire Protection deficiencies have been identified in the report from the Lost Lake Fire Protection Study Committee in August of 2013. The total cost of said improvements is estimated to be \$1,972,200. A detailed breakdown will be provided at Town Meeting.*

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**ARTICLE 12: ESTABLISH THE FOUR CORNERS SEWER DISTRICT**

To see if the Town will vote to establish a new sewer service area in the Town of Groton to be known as the "Four Corners Sewer District" under the provisions of Chapter 83 of the Massachusetts General Laws, for the purpose of providing a system of sewerage to serve the so-called Four Corners portion of the Town, said service area to subject to expansion by a vote of Town Meeting.

Four Corners Sewer District

A. There is hereby established a Sewer System within the Town entitled "Four Corners Sewer District" comprised of land situated in a geographical area bounded and described on a plan of land entitled the "Four Corners Sewer District" drawn by the Town of Groton and dated January 2015, on file with the Office of the Town Clerk, the said geographical area shall be served by a system of sewerage to be provided by the Town within the territorial limits and capacity of said system.

B. The system may be extended and expanded to serve increased land area if there remains sufficient capacity and the land is zoned Business or Commercial by a vote of Town Meeting or a Special Town Meeting following the enactment of this article.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
TOWN MANAGER**

**Board of Selectmen:  
Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *This article proposes creation of a new sewer district to serve the Four Corners area with a Wastewater Collection System.*

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**ARTICLE 13: DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION OF FOUR CORNERS SEWER SYSTEM**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager, for the design and construction of the Four Corners Sewer System; to determine whether this appropriation shall be raised by borrowing from the Massachusetts Water Pollution Abatement Trust or otherwise; and, further, to authorize the Board of Selectmen and/or the Board of Sewer Commissioners to assess betterments upon the properties benefitted thereby for the cost of the System, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
TOWN MANAGER**

**Board of Selectmen:  
Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *This article seeks an appropriation for the Board of Selectmen to construct a sewer collection system in the Four Corners Area of Town in order to promote economic development. The Sewer Collection System is for properties zoned Business or Commercial. This system is not for residential users. The cost of the sewer system will be borne by the end users through betterments.*

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**ARTICLE 14: AUTHORIZE INTER-MUNICIPAL AGREEMENT WITH AYER**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into an inter-municipal agreement with the Town of Ayer for the discharge of Groton wastewater to the Ayer Sewer Collection System for treatment, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
TOWN MANAGER**

**Board of Selectmen:  
Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *An affirmative vote under this article will permit the Board of Selectmen to enter into an inter-municipal agreement with the Town of Ayer for the purpose of discharging wastewater to the Town of Ayer's Wastewater Collection System for treatment.*

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**ARTICLE 15: ESTABLISH FOUR CORNERS BUSINESS DISTRICT AS AN E.O.A.**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to submit to the Massachusetts Economic Assistance Coordinating Council an Application for Designation of Economic Opportunity Area(s) to designate the Four Corners Business District area as an Economic Opportunity Area, said Area to be comprised of the following parcels: 102-1, 120-3, 133-1, 133-10, 133-11, 133-54 and 133-55, or take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Board of Selectmen:  
Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *In an effort to help revitalize the Four Corners Business District, the Board of Selectmen would like to apply to the State to designate Four Corners as an Economic Opportunity Area. If approved, any renovation to a building that has been vacant for more than two years (defined as at least 75% vacant for at least 2 years) in the EOA will then be eligible for a 10% Massachusetts Abandoned Building Renovation Tax Deduction (ABRTD) based on the cost of the renovations in the first year. The Board believes this will help revitalize some of the vacant buildings in the Four Corners Business District.*

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**ARTICLE 16: GDRSD – CREATE STABILIZATION FUND**

To see if the Town will vote to approve the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District Committee vote on February 11, 2015 to a) establish a Stabilization Fund, pursuant to Section 16G½ of Chapter 71 of the Massachusetts General Laws, said Stabilization Fund to be invested and to retain its own interest earnings as provided by law, and b) to set up an operational line item for the transfer of available monies into said Stabilization Fund, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**GDRSD COMMITTEE**

**Board of Selectmen: *Recommended Unanimously***  
**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Summary:** *This account, if approved by Town Meeting in both Member Towns, allows the Regional School District to set aside funds for future capital expenses in a Stabilization Account. Projects eligible for Stabilization Account funds use include any for which the district could borrow money or which are approved by the Director of Accounts in the Department of Revenue. This account is a tool that will aid the district in saving for future capital expenses in advance of work. Funds would be added to this account directly from the Towns, via approval at future Town Meetings, or from the GDRSD Operating Budget. At this time we are not requesting Town funds for the account and the 2017 Fiscal Year would be the first time funds would be added via a line item in the Operating Budget. Establishment of the Account allows GDRSD a tool to maintain its current fiscal stability into the future.*

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**ARTICLES 17 THROUGH 28 PERTAIN TO FISCAL YEAR 2015 BUSINESS**

**ARTICLE 17: ADDITIONAL PARKING ON MAIN STREET/STATION AVENUE**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager in Fiscal Year 2015, to construct a municipal parking lot on land located at 167 Main Street and shown on Assessors' Map 113 as Parcel 48, which premises are described in a deed recorded at the South Middlesex Registry of Deeds at Book 12634, Page 361 and owned by Bank of America, and on land located at 163 Main Street and shown on Assessors' Map 113 as Parcel 47, which premises are described in a deed recorded at the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds at Book 13572, Page 703 and owned by Shames Realty Trust, and all costs associated and related thereto; and, further, to authorize the Board of Selectmen to obtain easements by gift, purchase, or eminent domain, for the permanent use of the parking lot for municipal purposes, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
TOWN MANAGER**

**Board of Selectmen: *Recommended (3 In Favor, 1 Against – Petropoulos, 1 Deferred - Degen)***  
**Finance Committee:**



**Summary:** *In an effort to create more parking, the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board have been working with the owners of Bank of America and Citizens Bank on Main Street to create a municipal parking lot in the rear of both properties. The Town will seek easements for the construction and maintenance of this lot for municipal use. A detailed cost breakdown will be provided to the Spring Town Meeting.*

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**ARTICLE 18: PURCHASE LOT ON STATION AVENUE FOR MUNICIPAL PARKING**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire from 14 Station Avenue, LLC by gift, purchase, or eminent domain, for general municipal purposes, including, without limitation, for use as a municipal parking lot, a parcel of land located on Station Avenue, shown on Assessors' Map 113 as Parcel 60, described in a deed recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds in Book 62225, Page 73, said parcel containing 0.32 acres, more or less, in the aggregate, and to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, or borrow, or any combination of the foregoing, a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager in Fiscal Year 2015, for such acquisition and costs related thereto, and further to authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into all agreements and execute on behalf of the Town any and all instruments as may be necessary or convenient to effectuate the purpose of this article, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
TOWN MANAGER**

**Board of Selectmen:  
Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *For the past two years, the Town has been leasing land, owned by 14 Station Avenue, LLC, between the Town Hall and former Center Fire Station for municipal parking. This lot is fully utilized and has added needed parking on Station Avenue for Town Hall and other uses. The Town Manager has recommended to the Board of Selectmen that this parcel be obtained by the Town for a permanent parking lot. The Town will be working with the new owner of the former Center Fire Station to make improvements to the lot once it is owned by the Town.*

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**ARTICLE 19: CURRENT YEAR LINE ITEM TRANSFERS**

To see if the Town will vote to transfer certain sums of money within the Fiscal Year 2015 budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Board of Selectmen:  
Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *To transfer money within the Fiscal Year 2015 Budget should the need arise. A handout explaining any necessary transfers will be available at Town Meeting.*

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**ARTICLE 20: APPROPRIATE MONEY TO OFFSET SNOW AND ICE DEFICIT**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager, to reduce the deficit in the Fiscal Year 2015 Snow and Ice Budget, as approved under Article 5 of the 2014 Spring Town Meeting, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**TOWN MANAGER**

**Board of Selectmen:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *Due to the severity of this winter, the Town anticipates a deficit in the Fiscal Year 2015 Snow and Ice Budget of over \$300,000. Ordinarily, this deficit is made up the following Fiscal Year. However, in an effort to minimize the impact on the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget, the Town Manager has recommended that some of the deficit be dealt with this year by utilizing funds from the Town's Overlay Surplus Reserve. This Article will reduce the deficit.*

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**ARTICLE 21: TRANSFER WITHIN WATER ENTERPRISE FUND**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Groton Water Department to transfer a sum or sums of money from the Water Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2015 Water Department Budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS**

**Board of Selectmen:**  
**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*  
**Water Commission:**

**Summary:** *This article allows the Water Department to transfer money from its surplus account to cover any deficit in the Fiscal Year 2015 budget. More information will be provided at Town Meeting to explain any transfer requested under this article.*

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**ARTICLE 22: TRANSFER WITHIN SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND**

To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum or sums of money from the Sewer Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2015 Sewer Enterprise Department budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SEWER COMMISSIONERS**

**Board of Selectmen:**  
**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*  
**Sewer Commission:**

**Summary:** *This article allows the Sewer Department to transfer money from its surplus account to cover any deficit in the Fiscal Year 2015 budget. More information will be provided at Town Meeting to explain any transfer requested under this article.*

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**ARTICLE 23: PRIOR YEAR BILLS**

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds, a sum or sums of money for the payment of unpaid bills from prior fiscal years, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Board of Selectmen:**

**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *Town Meeting approval is required to pay bills from a prior fiscal year. A list of unpaid bills will be provided at Town Meeting.*

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**ARTICLE 24: REPLACE VOTING MACHINES**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow a sum or sums of money for the purpose of replacing the voting tabulators used by the Town to tabulate votes during all elections, and all costs associated and related thereto, in Fiscal Year 2015, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**TOWN CLERK**

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended Unanimously*

**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*

**Summary:** *This request for a minor capital item is to replace the Town's voting tabulators. The Town uses three OpTech III-P Eagle precinct ballot tabulators for all elections. These machines are of 1985 design, and have been in use in Groton since the late 1990s. In 2011, the vendor (Elections Systems and Software) announced an "end-of-life" for these machines, citing particular concern for replacement part availability. While these machines have been solid performers, we have noticed a higher than normal service incident rate over the past two years. The vendor has committed to support of the OpTech Eagle through the 2016 election cycle. In 2014, the State certified two replacement machines as meeting federal and state standards. Both replacement machine types have similar functionality to the OpTech Eagle. If this item is approved by Town Meeting, a Request for Quotes will be issued.*

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**ARTICLE 25: APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR DEFICIT BALANCES IN GRANTS**

To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum or sums of money from available funds to offset a deficit balance for the Fiscal Year 2013 Training and EMD Grant, and, further, to transfer a sum or sums of money from available funds to offset a deficit balance for the Fiscal Year 2013 911 Support and Incentive Grant, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Board of Selectmen: Recommended Unanimously**  
**Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**Summary:** *Over the last several years, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has awarded the Town of Groton grant money for upgrades and maintenance to our 911 Dispatch equipment. These are reimbursable grants and the award is not forwarded to the Town until after the expense has been made. In regards to the two grants noted above, the Commonwealth disallowed a small portion of the Town's reimbursement request after the vendors had been paid. These deficits must be cleared in order to close out the grants for the FY 15 year end.*

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**ARTICLE 26: TRANSFER FUNDS TO LOST LAKE WATERSHED COMMITTEE**

To see if the Town will vote to transfer the remaining funds appropriated under Article 16 of the 2011 Fall Town Meeting, to be expended by the Town Manager in Fiscal Year 2015, for use by the Lost Lake Watershed Advisory Committee for engineering or other related purposes to carry out the Charge of the Committee approved by the Board of Selectmen, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**LOST LAKE WATERSHED COMMITTEE**

**Board of Selectmen: Recommended (4 In Favor, 1 Deferred – Eliot)**  
**Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**Summary:** *There is approximately \$17,600 remaining in the appropriation voted under Article 16 of the 2011 Fall Town Meeting that was for study of the potential of a sewer in the Lost Lake Area of Town. The Lost Lake Watershed Advisory Committee has replaced the original Lost Lake Sewer Advisory Committee and a new charge to study the entire watershed has been approved by the Board of Selectmen. In order for the new Committee to utilize the remaining funds, Town Meeting needs to transfer these funds for this purpose.*

**ARTICLE 27: REZONE PARCEL 102-44 FROM PUBLIC USE TO RESIDENTIAL – AGRICULTURAL “R-A”**

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Map established under Chapter 218 of the Code of the Town of Groton to rezone from Public Use (P) to Residential-Agricultural (R-A) a parcel of land located at 73 Pepperell Road consisting of approximately 1.44 acres, and shown on Assessors' Map 102 as Parcel 44, or take to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Board of Selectmen:**

**Finance Committee:** *Recommended (3 In Favor, 2 Deferred, 1 Abstain)*

**Planning Board:**

**Summary:** *Currently, the Tarbell School is zoned for public use because it is owned by the Town and was used for municipal purposes. The Board of Selectmen has solicited proposals for the sale of the Tarbell School and expects to have a proposal for Town Meeting consideration. Since the building will no longer be used for municipal purposes, it should be rezoned accordingly.*

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**ARTICLE 28: SALE OR LEASE OF TARBELL SCHOOL**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to sell and/or lease, for a period not to exceed 99 years, the building known as the Tarbell School, which comprises approximately 8,300 square feet, and all or a portion of the 1.44 acre site on which it is located at 73 Pepperell Road, West Groton, Massachusetts, to take all necessary action to comply with the General Laws of the Commonwealth for the disposal of said building, and to petition the General Court for any necessary special legislation, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Board of Selectmen:**

**Finance Committee:** *Recommended (3 In Favor, 2 Deferred, 1 Abstain)*

**Summary:** *The Tarbell School has been vacant for the past six years. Prior to vacating the property, the Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee conducted several public hearings on the re-use of the building. A report was drafted and the School Committee recommended that the Board of Selectmen develop an RFP requesting developers to submit proposals that are compatible with the neighborhood in West Groton. The Selectmen have issued an RFP and will present a proposal to Town Meeting based on the best proposal received.*

**ARTICLE 29: COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE FUNDING ACCOUNTS**

To see if the Town will vote to make the following appropriations from the Community Preservation Fund:

Allocation of Community Preservation Funds to the following sub accounts:

CPC Operating Expenses:	\$ 7,500
Open Space Reserve:	\$ 67,750
Historic Resource Reserve:	\$ 67,750
Community Housing Reserve:	\$ 67,750
Unallocated Reserve:	\$466,750

or to take any other action relative thereto.

**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE**

- Board of Selectmen:**
- Finance Committee:**
- Community Preservation Committee:**

**Summary:** *This is an accounting procedure that is necessary to ensure the Community Preservation Committee will have access to the funds raised during Fiscal Year 2016. Except for the CPC Operating Expenses, none of these funds will be spent without additional approval at Town Meeting.*

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**ARTICLE 30: COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS**

To see if the Town will vote to adopt and approve the recommendations of the Community Preservation Committee for Fiscal Year 2015, and vote to implement such recommendations by appropriating a sum or sums of money from the Community Preservation Fund established pursuant to Chapter 44B of the General Laws, and by authorizing the Board of Selectmen, with the approval of the Community Preservation Committee, to acquire, by purchase, gift or eminent domain, such real property interests in the name of the Town, or enforceable by the Town, including real property interests in the form of permanent affordable housing restrictions and historical preservation restrictions that will meet the requirements of Chapter 184 of the General Laws, as may be necessary or proper to carry out the foregoing, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**CPC Proposal A: Accessible Trail Project \$25,845**

**Summary:** *The Trails Committee has applied for a State Grant that will fund the creation of the Nashua River Accessible Trail. It will be the first trail of any kind in Groton to provide access for people of all abilities to a peaceful forest experience as well as beautiful views of the Nashua River and one of its oxbow ponds. The proposed trail will provide a unique recreational experience along the Nashua River for all, including parents with children in strollers, wheelchair-bound individuals, and anyone who needs a flat stable surface upon which to travel.*

The Nashua River Accessible Trail will be entirely within the J. Harry Rich State Forest, which is managed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The proposed trail will intersect Nod Rd. about 0.5 miles east of where Rte. 119 crosses the Nashua River. The grant application is for \$25,845. The grant has a requirement for 20% matching funds, which means the Town must provide \$5,845 towards the project. This article is seeking the full amount in the event the grant is not awarded. Any unexpended funds will be returned to the CPC.

**Board of Selectmen:**  
**Finance Committee:**  
**Community Preservation Committee:**

**CPC Proposal B: Conservation Fund \$200,000**

**Summary:** The Conservation Fund has been used by the Conservation Commission to purchase Conservation Restrictions and Agricultural Preservation Restrictions, and to purchase conservation land outright within the Town of Groton. Placing CPA funds into the Conservation Fund makes them instantly available to the Conservation Commission for acquiring open space that may be available for purchase for only a short period of time.

**Board of Selectmen:**  
**Finance Committee: Not Recommended Unanimously**  
**Community Preservation Committee:**

**CPC Proposal C: Rehab a Portion of Old Meetinghouse \$203,333**

**Summary:** The First Parish Church is responsible for the stewardship and maintenance of the Old Groton Meetinghouse. It has provided repairs over the years and have continued to maintain the structure. Recently, it privately raised \$17,000 to hire an architect to complete a comprehensive assessment of the structure. Based on this assessment, the architect has recommended a phased approach to rehabilitate and stabilize the Old Groton Meeting House. Phase I calls for addressing pressing structural repairs to rehabilitate the steeple, bell tower and attic. It will also correct exterior paint failures of the façade, the bell tower and the steeple, while also repairing the brick masonry at the front entrance. Phase I is estimated to cost \$305,000 to complete. The First Parish Church is requesting \$203,333, or 2/3's of the anticipated cost, while raising the remaining amount privately.

**Board of Selectmen:**  
**Finance Committee:**  
**Community Preservation Committee:**

**CPC Proposal D: Repair to Town Basketball Courts**

**\$98,055**

*Summary:* The Park Commission is proposing to repair the basketball courts located at Town Field and Cutler Field. Both of these courts serve large communities within the Town of Groton and are in serious need of repair. The repairs at Town Field will include removal and replacement of existing surface, fencing, posts, backboards and timed lighting, as well as correction of drainage issues. It will also include a new ADA compliant sloped path to support additional town functions such as the Fourth of July Celebration and other activities that take place at Town Field. The Cutler Field repairs will include patching of cracks in the existing court, installation of timed lighting, replacement of posts and backboards and court painting.

**Board of Selectmen:**

**Finance Committee:**

**Community Preservation Committee:**

**CPC Proposal E: ADA Compliant Park and Open Space Study**

**\$5,850**

*Summary:* The Commission on Accessibility has requested funding to work with the Northeast Independent Living Program to prepare a self-evaluation/transition plan for 28 park and open space properties in the Town of Groton. The plan will identify reasonable improvements along with a timeline for implementation in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The project will involve active participation from the Park Commission and other community organizations.

**Board of Selectmen:**

**Finance Committee:**

**Community Preservation Committee**

**CPC Proposal F: Housing Coordinator Salary**

**\$49,509**

*Summary:* The Town established the position of Housing Coordinator in 2009. Since that time, the Community Preservation Administrative Account has paid the salary of this position. Last year, the Community Preservation Committee approved the increase of the position to 25 hours and requested that it become an annual funding item to be approved by Town Meeting, with the funding to come from the Community Housing Reserve. Town Meeting approved this last year. This will be the second year that this position will be funded in this manner.

**Board of Selectmen:**

**Finance Committee:**

**Community Preservation Committee:**



**CPC Proposal G: Milestone Engraving**

**\$25,000**

**Summary:** Last year, the Town Meeting appropriated funding from the Community Preservation Fund to repair 20 of the mile markers originally installed in 1902 and 1903. The project was a success. The Groton Historical Commission is requesting additional funding to continue this restoration project by completing the remaining work on the local milestones. This will include resetting, etching and restorative cleaning of the milestones.

**Board of Selectmen:**

**Finance Committee:**

**Community Preservation Committee:**

**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE**

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**ARTICLE 31: AMEND CHAPTER 218-25 - ZONING CODE**

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Code of the Town of Groton, Chapter 218 Zoning as follows:

Amend Section 218-25 Site Plan Review by deleting Section 218-25 in its entirety and inserting in its place a new Section 218-25, Site Plan Review, a copy of which is on file in the office of the Town Clerk;

or to take any other action relative thereto.

**PLANNING BOARD**

**Board of Selectmen:**

**Finance Committee: No Position**

**Planning Board:**

**Summary:** The proposed amendment to Site Plan Review simplifies the process for "Minor Site Plan Review" by enabling review by the Land Use Director and Building Commissioner after consulting with other Town Departments. The existing Level II and Level III review will be combined into "Major Site Plan Review" which will continue to require a Planning Board Special Permit.

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**ARTICLE 32: AMEND CHAPTER 218, ZONING CODE**

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Code of the Town of Groton, Chapter 218 Zoning as follows:

Amend Section 218-33C Temporary Permits by deleting Section 218-33C in its entirety, and by inserting a new Section 218-16 Accessory Use, subsection E Temporary Permits, a copy of which is on file in the office of the Town Clerk;

or to take any other action relative thereto.

**PLANNING BOARD**

**Board of Selectmen:**  
**Finance Committee: No Position**  
**Planning Board:**

**Summary:** *The proposed zoning amendment will remove the requirement of a special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) for temporary facilities and replace it with a by-right building permit, with temporary construction and office trailers subject to Minor Site Plan Review.*

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**ARTICLE 33: CITIZENS' PETITION – REZONE 152-158 BOSTON ROAD**

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town of Groton's Zoning Map to rezone from G-B (General Business) to R-B (Residential Business) certain premises located at 152-158 Boston Road owned by Peter W. Norton, consisting of approximately 30,654 square feet, which premises is described in a deed recorded with the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds in Book 21298, Page 3, being shown as Parcel 5 on Assessors' Map 222, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**CITIZENS' PETITION**

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>
Peter W. Norton	152 Boston Road	Carolyn J. Bissell	48 West Main Street
Rebecca M. Babcock	41 West Main Street	Hugo H. Maahs	973 Lowell Road
Michelle Collette	43 Windmill Hill Road	Wanda P. Maahs	973 Lowell Road
Regina Beausojeil	103 Blossom Lane	Peter C. Myette	69 Schoolhouse Road
Edward W. Homer	56 Sunset Road	Michael F. Bouchard	69 Hill Road

**Board of Selectmen:**  
**Finance Committee: No Position**  
**Planning Board:**

**Summary:** *This Article has been submitted as a Citizens' Petition by the above ten (10) registered voters of the Town of Groton for Town Meeting consideration.*

**ARTICLE 34: ACCEPT M.G.L. CHAPTER 53, SECTION 18B**

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 53, §18B, regarding information for local Ballot Questions,, a copy of which is on file in the Office of the Town Clerk, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Board of Selectmen: Recommended Unanimously**  
**Finance Committee: No Position**

**Summary:** *Acceptance of MGL Chapter 53 Section 18B will authorize the Board of Selectmen to create "fair and concise" summaries of local ballot questions when such questions appear on Town ballots. These summaries would also include one sentence describing the effect of a yes or no vote, and brief arguments for and against the question. This would be very similar to what voters see for state ballot questions. The process to create the question summaries would involve town counsel and designated question opponents and proponents. A copy of the question, summaries and arguments would be mailed to each household prior to an election. If Chapter 53 Section 18B is not accepted, the Town has no authority to create question summaries for local ballot questions.*

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**ARTICLE 35: HOME RECYCLING REVOLVING FUND**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Home Recycling Revolving Fund, in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44, §53E½, to be expended under the direction of the DPW Director, in order to place anticipated revenues collected from the sale of recycling equipment as well as monies received through related State grants, which shall be used to purchase additional recycling equipment, advertise the availability of such items, or undertake recycling related activities and to establish the limit on expenditures from said account for Fiscal Year 2016 at \$10,000, or take any other action relative thereto.

**TOWN MANAGER**

**Board of Selectmen: Recommended Unanimously**  
**Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**Summary:** *This account is proposed in order to accept receipts from both the sale of recycling equipment (including, but not limited to, recycling and compost bins) and funding obtained through related state grants, which may upon deposit be used without further appropriation to purchase additional recycling equipment or other items that will serve to enhance town-wide recycling efforts.*

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**ARTICLES 36 THROUGH 41 WILL BE PART OF THE CONSENT AGENDA. PLEASE SEE EXPLANATION PROVIDED BY THE TOWN MODERATOR AT THE END OF ARTICLE 31.**

**ARTICLE 36: APPLY FOR GRANTS**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to apply for Federal and State Grants for which the Town is or may be eligible and to expend the funds received thereunder, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Board of Selectmen: *Recommended Unanimously***  
**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Summary:** *To allow the Board of Selectmen to apply for grants that may become available during the year.*

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**ARTICLE 37: DEBT SERVICE FOR SURRENDEN FARMS**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds, a sum or sums of money, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44B, Section 5 for debt service for Fiscal Year 2016 for the Surrenden Farm Land Acquisition, as authorized under Article 1 of the April 24, 2006 Special Town Meeting, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE**

**Board of Selectmen: *Recommended Unanimously***  
**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***  
**Community Preservation Committee:**

**Summary:** *This article appropriates the debt payments for the Surrenden Farm Land Purchase. Funding for this article will come from Community Preservation Funds. The anticipated debt service for Fiscal Year 2016 is \$480,000.*

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**ARTICLE 38: STORMWATER MANAGEMENT REVOLVING FUND**

To see if the Town will vote to renew the revolving account under Chapter 44, §53E½ of the General Laws for the purpose of utilizing receipts and fees received under Chapter 198 of the Code of the Town of Groton, Stormwater Management - Low Impact Development, said receipts and fees to be credited to said account and expended by the Earth Removal Stormwater Advisory Committee for administration, oversight and review activities under Chapter 198, with the maximum amount to be expended in said account not to exceed \$10,000 for Fiscal Year 2016, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**STORMWATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Board of Selectmen: *Recommended Unanimously***  
**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Summary:** *This article reauthorizes the use of the revolving fund for technical review and processing of applications submitted under Chapter 198, Stormwater Management - Low Impact Development.*

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**ARTICLE 39: CONSERVATION COMMISSION REVOLVING FUND**

To see if the Town will vote to renew the revolving account under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44, §53E½ for the purpose of utilizing receipts and fees received for agricultural or silvicultural activities conducted on Town-owned conservation land under the care and custody of the Conservation Commission, said receipts and fees are to be credited to said account and expended by the Conservation Commission for oversight and management of conservation lands owned by the Town, with the maximum amount in said account not to exceed \$50,000 for Fiscal Year 2016, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended Unanimously*  
**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*

**Summary:** *This article reauthorizes the use of the revolving fund (established in 2007) for the management of conservation land in Groton. Reauthorization allows for reduced fees for management of conservation lands in Groton.*

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**ARTICLE 40: AFFORDABLE HOUSING REVOLVING FUND**

To see if the Town will vote to renew, under the authority of the Town Manager, a revolving account under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44, §53E½ for the receipt of revenue and funding of expenses related to marketing and monitoring Affordable Housing units within developments in the Town, said revenue, in the form of receipts and fees, to be credited to said account and expended by the Town Manager for this purpose, with the maximum amount in said account not to exceed \$50,000 for Fiscal Year 2016, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**TOWN MANAGER**

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended Unanimously*  
**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*

**Summary:** *A revolving fund is a tool used by cities and towns to allow a particular department or board to account for its revenues and expenses for particular programs separately from the General Fund. Program expenses can be directly offset by related revenue taken in, and expenditure of those monies requires no additional appropriation. Revolving funds must be authorized annually by Town Meeting at which time spending limits are established. This particular fund will utilize revenue collected in connection with land development for the purpose of promoting occupancy of affordable housing units as they become available. The funds will be spent largely on marketing and monitoring functions.*

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**ARTICLE 41: ACCEPT LAW INCREASING REAL ESTATE TAX EXEMPTION**

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Section 4, Chapter 73 of the Acts of 1986, as amended by Chapter 126 of the Acts of 1988, to allow an additional property tax exemption for Fiscal Year 2016 for those persons who qualify for property tax exemptions under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 59, Section 5, not to exceed \$1,000, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF ASSESSORS**

**Board of Selectmen: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Summary:** *This article is geared toward elderly persons, blind persons and veterans with service connected disabilities. It would increase the exemption under state statute up to 100% of the exemption.*

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## **Moderator's Consent Agenda to Save Time at Town Meeting**

In order to save time at Town Meeting, the moderator will use a procedure known as a consent agenda. It is the bundling of non-controversial articles into a single motion to be voted on by Town Meeting. Routinely used in other towns, the consent agenda can save time by not requiring a main motion, a second, an explanation and a vote on every routine article to which there is no objection or question.

### **What Articles Are Included**

The consent agenda will generally consist of regular housekeeping articles unanimously supported by the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee. Articles that change by-laws, introduce new spending or require more than a majority vote are ineligible.

In this warrant, Articles 36 to 41 have been identified by the moderator as being appropriate for the consent agenda. At Town Meeting, voters will receive a handout with the final consent agenda, as changes are possible between the time of this writing and April 28.

### **How Consent Agendas Work**

When the meeting reaches the first article to be included in the consent agenda, the moderator will explain the process. The moderator will read the title of every article included in the consent agenda. He will pause after each article to allow any voter who has a question on the article to loudly state, "hold."

The held article will be set aside for individual consideration apart from the consent agenda. The voter who holds an article will be asked to identify him- or herself to the moderator so that he or she may be called upon later to address the article.

After the meeting agrees on which articles to include in the consent agenda, there will be no debate and the moderator will immediately call for a vote. Every article included in the consent agenda will either pass or fail depending on the majority vote.

The articles held from the consent agenda will then be taken up individually in the order in which they appear in the warrant.

### **What Voters Need To Do**

Town Meeting voters should review in advance the articles in the consent agenda and note whether there are any they wish to "hold." A voter can then state "hold" when the moderator calls the article number and title to remove it from the consent agenda.

*Any voter with questions about Town Meeting procedure may call Town Moderator Jason Kauppi at (978) 448-6421 or email him at [jasonkauppi@gmail.com](mailto:jasonkauppi@gmail.com).*

Hereof fail not and make return of your doings to the Town Clerk on or before time of said meeting.

Given under our hands this 6<sup>th</sup> Day of April in the year of our Lord Two Thousand Fifteen.

Joshua A. Degen

Joshua A. Degen, Chairman

Anna Eliot

Anna Eliot, Vice-Chairman

Stuart M. Schulman

Stuart M. Schulman, Clerk

Peter S. Cunningham

Peter S. Cunningham, Member

John G. Petropoulos

John G. Petropoulos, Member

OFFICERS RETURN

Groton, Middlesex

Pursuant to the within Warrant, I have this day notified the Inhabitants to assemble at the time, place, and for the purpose mentioned as within directed. Personally posted by Constable.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Constable

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Duly Posted