

TOWN OF GROTON FINANCE COMMITTEE

Monday, September 21st, 2015, 1st Floor Meeting Rm

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

Public Hearing Joint with Selectmen: Presentation of Fall Town Meeting Warrant

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

Absent: M. Bacon

Present for Board of Selectmen: P. Cunningham, J. Degen, A. Eliot, J. Petropoulos (Chair), S. Schulman

Also Present: M. Haddad (Town Manager), D. Dunbar (Exec. Assistant)

Documents available at the meeting: Draft of Town Meeting Warrant (9/16/15)

Mr. Green called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Mr. Petropoulos called the BOS meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Warrant Review – Mr. Haddad provided a brief summary of the FY16 Town Budget. He noted that the overall value of the Town has dropped by \$4 million; this causes an increase to the tax rate of approximately \$.04. Free Cash has been certified at \$1,009,992, and the current level of unexpended tax capacity is \$143,984.

Article 1: Prior Year Bills – Currently there is one bill from Turf Unlimited in the amount of \$5,000 for the Parks Department. There are a couple of invoices that are in dispute for National Grid and Sprague (due to a broken gas meter issue at the Public Safety Building). These could add an additional \$10,000 to this article, but may not be resolved in time for Town Meeting. Mr. Delaney is working with these vendors to obtain the most accurate usage estimate before these are submitted for payment.

Article 2: Budget amendment requests totaling \$76,500 have been received from the Department Heads. \$8,000 for BOS expenses, \$40,000 for the Police Department, \$20,000 for the Fire Department, and \$8,500 for Municipal Buildings. Chief Palma explained that an additional \$15,000 was needed for the Public Safety Building improvement project to cover unexpected electrical system costs. Also, \$10,000 will be necessary for Dispatch space renovations, and an additional \$15,000 to finish the PSB security upgrade. Mr. Cunningham asked whether the Town might be eligible for grant funding for any of these projects. Chief Palma said that grant funding will be actively pursued and these expenses will be offset should such funding be received. He

added that using volunteer labor performed by department personnel has helped control costs to a great degree. Mr. Schulman wondered whether any remaining fire station construction funding could be re-purposed for this need. Mr. Haddad agreed that about \$80,000 is potentially available in the construction fund, but is not yet ready to close that project out. Mr. Petropoulos expressed concern over what he termed a "cost overrun" for the PSB improvements. Mr. Delaney (DPW Director) explained that because this project was undertaken "in-house" an enormous amount of savings was realized over bidding it out and hiring a contractor. Unfortunately, that does lead to a piecemeal approach and a reliance on estimates that do not contain a contingency for surprises. Mr. Degen said that at this point the project that was started must be finished. He would however advocate for using the Fire Station Construction funding for this purpose. Mr. Hargraves agreed that this would be an appropriate use of the construction funding; a previous precedent had been set in 1993 when the Police Department moved out of Town Hall and some renovations were then required. Mr. Haddad suggested spending the full amount from the newly certified Free Cash. Mr. Pease requested a detailed cost estimation for the \$40,000 budget adjustment proposed.

Chief McCurdy is requesting \$20,000 for expenses related to mounting an on-call recruitment effort. Although he had not originally planned for this in FY16, a combination of higher than usual Town interest and some attrition among the on-call officers has prompted this effort. Currently there are approximately 39 on-call members; the preference is for 45 to 50 members. In response to a question from Mr. Cunningham, Chief McCurdy confirmed that the largest part of this expense covers the cost of turn-out gear which averages \$1,600 to \$1,800 per set. Mr. Petropoulos asked whether recruitment costs could be worked into future budgets to avoid mid-year adjustments of this nature. Chief McCurdy assured him that this has been done, and offered to provide a written summary of his recruitment strategy for future reference. Replacement of turn-out gear can absolutely be anticipated and written into the capital plan for the Fire Department.

Mr. Delaney informed the group that he was seeking an adjustment of \$8,500 to add a new shared position to his department. This will be a 40-hour per week Transfer Station Attendant/Custodial Worker position and will be shared between the Electric Light Department, the Country Club, and the Transfer Station. If approved, it is estimated that for the remainder of FY16, GELD will pay for approximately \$11,000 of this position, the Country Club will cover \$9,200 and the Transfer Station will provide \$8,500. Mr. Delaney explained that the burden of vacation coverage as well as the increased activity at the Transfer Station have caused him to request additional staff for the last several years. The opportunity to split this position among several departments makes it an extremely cost-effective solution. Mr. Degen would prefer to see these hours covered by the Senior Work-Off participants. Mr. Delaney replied that the seniors rotate out of the program too quickly to justify the time spent in training them; it is simply an inefficient approach. Mr. Degen said that he would support this if several part time positions were created instead of one full time position. This would allow the Town to avoid paying benefits for an employee. Mr. Cunningham reminded the group that the Transfer Station brings in a great deal of revenue for the Town; it would be unfortunate if potential revenue were lost due to operational inefficiencies. Mr. Petropoulos expressed concern that labor provided by the DPW to the Country Club has aggravated the problems at the Transfer Station. Mr. Cunningham noted that there is an obvious

need for these hours, it may not be in the Town's best interests to make decisions based on a policy of avoiding benefits costs. Ms. Eliot asked for the Finance Committee's input. Mr. Green replied that the Finance Committee has not yet met to discuss any of these issues. However, he would advise against hiring part-time employees when full-timers are actually needed. This only leads to hours "creeping up" in later budget cycles. His observation is that the DPW Director manages to accomplish a great deal on a very tight budget year after year. This seems to be an affordable solution to what has been an ongoing problem. Mr. Degen said that there are plenty of individuals who are searching for part-time work; why not give them an opportunity? Mr. Haddad reiterated his position that the budget adjustments should be paid for with Free Cash in order to preserve the tax rate.

Article 3: Transfer of \$425,000 from Free Cash to Capital Stabilization – The Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to support this article which restores reserve balances to level recommended in Overall Financial Management Policy (1.5% of Budget).

Article 4: Transfer of \$50,000 from Free Cash to Stabilization – The Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to support this article which restores reserve balance to level recommended in Overall Financial Management Policy (5% of Budget). Mr. Pease asked at what point it would be appropriate to discontinue adding to the Stabilization Fund. Mr. Haddad replied that part of what makes Groton a AAA rated community is our dedication to maintaining healthy reserve account balances. Mr. Pease said that it might be a good idea to revisit the idea of capping that fund balance at some point.

Article 5: Free Cash to Offset the Tax Rate – Mr. Haddad explained that it is wise to retain between \$200,000 and \$250,000 of Free Cash against unforeseen events which may occur during the year. Several of the Selectmen suggested using \$200,000 to offset the Tax Rate, but will defer taking a position until the Finance Committee has had a chance to discuss this article.

Article 6: Extending the 4 Corners Sewer District – This is being proposed to further the Town's efforts to secure grant funding for the 4 Corners Economic Development Proposal. A residential facet of the project adds value to the grant proposal and Rocky Hill Subdivision is ready to begin construction and supportive of the effort.

Article 7: Pipeline Legal Fund – Mr. Petropoulos summarized this as a question of whether the Town should set aside Free Cash to support Groton interests as the pipeline project moves forward. There is no particular risk other than opportunity costs due to this money being unavailable for spending on other issues for a period of time. Mr. Haddad suggested that since there is nothing to defend against at this point in time, and for the foreseeable future, this article should be removed from the warrant. Should it become necessary to spend money on this effort, the Finance Committee could vote to spend from their Reserve Fund budget, or it could be appropriated at the Spring Town Meeting. On a motion by Mr. Degen, seconded by Mr. Cunningham, the Board of Selectmen voted in the majority to withdraw this article from the warrant. The Vote: 4-0-1 (Mr. Schulman abstained).

Article 8: Transfer to Water Enterprise Fund – Mr. Orcutt explained that the Water Commission has voted to transfer a sum of money to support FY16 efforts at well and pump maintenance.

Article 11: Mosquito Control – Mr. Haddad informed the group that the Board of Health has asked that this article be once again presented to Town Meeting; an affirmative vote will create an additional Cherry Sheet assessment (beginning in FY2017) of \$73,000 annually for the next three years. Dr. Horowitz explained that the Board of Health had previously deferred this initiative due to the school budget needs, but now feels that there are areas of Town that would benefit from mosquito control (i.e. Sargisson Beach). Triple E and West Nile virus have been found in nearby communities and represent a serious health risk to residents. She added that this will not involve town-wide spraying, the methods have become more sophisticated since the last time Groton participated in this program. Mr. Degen said that as Town Meeting has approved this in the past, and the prevention is needed, he thinks it is important to allow a new vote. Ms. Eliot would like to see some attention paid to the need to relieve the tick problem in Groton which also carries significant health risks to the residents. Dr. Horowitz replied that no tick prevention control is available at this time. Mr. Delaney said that state mosquito control provides a useful way of dealing with culvert maintenance issues (they do not require special permitting to clean culverts that is required of the local DPW). Mr. Degen requested that the Board of Health supply more detailed educational material and statistics related to mosquito-borne diseases. Mr. Pease sees this as a public safety issue comparable to the Lost Lake fire protection project or the radio system upgrades undertaken this year at a much greater expense. He reminded the group that the loss of even a single life that could result from a failure to control mosquitos is impossible to put a price on. Mr. Petropoulos replied that this mosquito control project will not guarantee the public's safety from mosquito-borne diseases. Mr. Haddad added that Town Meeting rejected this article last fall. The Board of Selectmen voted three in favor, while two deferred their opinion until additional information could be received.

Mr. Haddad informed the group that the Town Clerk will be unable to attend the Town Meeting on October 19th. He asked that the Selectmen nominate the Assistant Town Clerk (Marlene Kenney) to act as Town Clerk during the meeting. The Board of Selectmen voted to do so.

The Public Hearing was suspended at 8:30 pm while the Selectmen voted to extend the contract for the current Town Counsel through October 15th.

At this point in the meeting (8:32 p.m.), the Finance Committee relocated to the 1st Floor Conference Room to discuss and take positions on the warrant articles presented.

Article 1: Prior Year Bills – Ms. Dufresne reminded the group that while there is currently only one invoice for \$5,000, there is the potential for adding 2 additional bills (National Grid and Sprague).

On a motion by Mr. Hargraves, seconded by Mr. Manugian, the Finance Committee voted unanimously to support this Article at Town Meeting. The Vote: 6-0-0

Article 2: FY16 Budget Amendments – Mr. Hargraves requested clarification regarding the consultant expense request for the regional school district agreement review. Mr. Pease replied that an organization with specific legal expertise in this area will be aiding this effort, and both the school district and Dunstable

will be sharing the cost with Groton. Mr. Pease indicated that he has some concerns regarding the expense request (\$3,500) for the Prescott Building cost estimate update. Mr. Green suggested that Mr. Greg Sheldon (Prescott Re-Use Committee) be invited to attend the next FinCom meeting to help clarify this issue. Mr. Pease indicated that he would also like to see detail for each of the Police Department expense requests. The members deferred taking a position on BOS & Police expense budget adjustments until further information is received.

On a motion by Mr. Pease, seconded by Mr. Manugian, the Finance Committee voted unanimously to support the Fire Department FY16 Budget Amendment of \$20,000 for an additional recruit class. The Vote: 6-0-0

Municipal Building Wages FY16 Budget Adjustment Request – Mr. Prest said he was satisfied that this is a legitimate need for the department. Mr. Hargraves replied that he would rather keep employee counts down. Mr. Pease noted that custodial work is not something that can be replaced or augmented by automation.

On a motion by Mr. Hargraves, seconded by Mr. Prest, the Finance Committee voted unanimously to support the FY16 Municipal Building Wage adjustment request of \$8,500. The Vote: 6-0-0

Articles 3 & 4: Free Cash Transferred to Stabilization Funds – The Finance Committee discussed the fact that the transfers to reserve requested by the Town Manager were slightly higher than the guidance supplied in the Overall Financial Management Policy. Several of the members would prefer to limit the transfers to exactly the 1.5% and 5% minimums established in that document. Mr. Green suggested that no position be taken on these articles until the Town Manager is consulted. Mr. Pease said that additional revenue received by the Town (above original estimates) should be directly returned to the taxpayers.

On a motion by Mr. Pease, seconded by Mr. Manugian, the Finance Committee voted unanimously to support retaining a maximum balance of \$250,000 of certified Free Cash, transferring an amount equal to 1.5% of budget from Free Cash to Stabilization, and 5% of budget to Capital Stabilization, with the remaining balance of Free Cash to be used to offset the FY16 Tax Rate. The Vote: 6-0-0

Article 8: Transfer within the Water Enterprise Fund: No Discussion

On a motion by Mr. Hargraves, seconded by Mr. Pease, the Finance Committee voted unanimously to support the Water Department request to transfer E&D to the FY16 Water Enterprise Operating Budget. The Vote: 6-0-0

Article 11: Mosquito Control – Mr. Hargraves moved to recommend support of Article 11 to Town Meeting. Mr. Pease agreed that there is value in this initiative for all residents. Mr. Green expressed concern about the cost of this program and its effect on the FY17 budget. Mr. Robertson would like to wait for the additional information to be provided by the Board of Health. Mr. Hargraves withdrew his previous motion to recommend support of Article 11.

Approval of Meeting Minutes –

On a motion by Mr. Pease, seconded by Mr. Robertson, the Finance Committee voted unanimously to approve the meeting minutes of September 1st, 2015 as drafted. The Vote: 6-0-0

Mr. Green officially adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Dufresne, Recording Secretary

Fall Town Meeting (10/19/15)

Finance Committee Positions on Articles (votes taken 9/21/15,)

Article #	Description	Dollar Amount	Moved	Seconded	Gary G	Bob H	Dave M	Bud R	Barry P	Art P	Mark B	Total Vote	Presenter
1	Prior Year Bills	5,000	BH	DM								6-0-0	
2	Amend FY16 Budget	76,500											
2.1	BOS Expenses	8,000										Deferred	
2.2	Police Dept	40,000										Deferred	
2.3	Fire Dept Recruit Class	20,000	BP	DM								6-0-0	
2.4	Municipal Bldg Wages	8,500	BH	AP								6-0-0	
3	Trf Free Cash to Cap Stab	425,000											
4	Trf Free Cash to Stabilization	32,000											
5	Offset the Tax Rate	200,000	BP	DM	voted to offset tax rate at highest level that preserves 250k in Free Cash								6-0-0
6	Extend 4 Corners Sewer District											no position	
	<i>Kinder Morgan Pipeline Fund</i>	<i>withdrawn</i>											
7	Trf \$ to Water Enterprise		BH	BP								6-0-0	
8	Amend Groton Sewer Sys Map											no position	
9	Extend Sewer to 122 Old Ayer Rd											no position	
10	Central MA Mosquito Control											Deferred	
11	Amend 218-9 Zoning Bylaw											no position	
12	Amend 218-23 Zoning Bylaw											no position	
13	Amend Zoning Bylaw											no position	
14	Amend Zoning Bylaw											no position	
15	Amend Chap 196 Sign Code											no position	
	Total Taxation												
	Free Cash Certified 9/2015	1,009,092											
	Total Free Cash committed	738,500											
	FY15 Free Cash Bal. Remaining	270,592											

N=Voted Against Support

A= Abstain

REVISED: 09-16-2015

Warrant, Summary, and Recommendations

TOWN OF GROTON



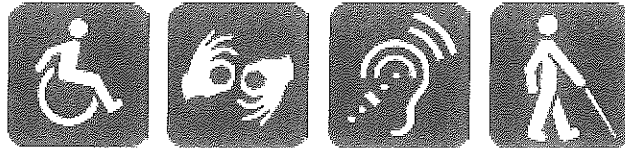
2015 FALL TOWN MEETING

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

Beginning Monday, October 19, 2015 @ 7:00 PM

Attention – Voters and Taxpayers

Please bring this Report to Town Meeting



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.

**FALL TOWN MEETING WARRANT
OCTOBER 19, 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 nineteenth day of October, 2015 at Seven O'clock in the evening, to consider the following:

ARTICLE LISTINGS

Article 1:	Prior Year Bills	3
Article 2:	Amend the Fiscal Year 2016 Town Operating Budget	3
Article 3:	Transfer Money into the Capital Stabilization Fund	3
Article 4:	Transfer Money into the Stabilization Fund	4
Article 5:	Offset the Tax Rate.....	4
Article 6:	Extend Four Corners Sewer District	5
Article 7:	Create Kinder Morgan Pipeline Legal Fund	5
Article 8:	Transfer Money to Water Enterprise	6
Article 9:	Amend Groton Center Sewer System Map	6
Article 10:	Extend Sewer System to Include 122 Old Ayer Road	6
Article 11:	Central Massachusetts Mosquito Control Project	7
Article 12:	Amend Section 218-9 of the Zoning Bylaw	7
Article 13:	Amend Section 218-23 of the Zoning Bylaw	8
Article 14:	Amend Zoning Bylaw of the Town of Groton	9
Article 15:	Amend Zoning Bylaw of the Town of Groton	9
Article 16:	Amend Chapter 196 "Signs" of the Code of the Town of Groton	11
	Report of the Town Manager to the 2015 Fall Town Meeting	13
	Appendix A – Proposed Amendments to Chapter 196 "Signs"	19

ARTICLE 1: 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.*

ARTICLE 2: AMEND THE FISCAL YEAR 2016 TOWN OPERATING BUDGET

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Fiscal Year 2016 Operating Budget as adopted under Article 8 of the April 27, 2015 Spring Town Meeting, and 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 Fiscal Year 2016, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TOWN MANAGER**

Board of Selectmen: *See Town Manager's Report in Back of Warrant for Recommendations*
Finance Committee: *See Town Manager's Report in Back of Warrant for Recommendations*

Summary: *The Fiscal Year 2016 Town Operating Budget was approved at the 2015 Spring Town Meeting in April, 2015. Any changes to this Budget would have to be made prior to setting the tax rate. The purpose of this article is to make any necessary changes to balance the FY 2016 Operating Budget. Please see the Town Manager's Report contained in the back of this Warrant for an explanation outlining the proposed changes.*

ARTICLE 3: TRANSFER MONEY INTO THE CAPITAL STABILIZATION FUND

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds a sum or sums of money to be added to the sum already on deposit in the Capital Stabilization Fund, or to take any other action relative thereto.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen:
Finance Committee:

Summary: *The Fund has a balance of \$129,646. The financial management goal is to achieve and maintain a balance in the Capital Stabilization Fund equal to 1.5% of the total annual budget. Any balance beyond the 1.5% level should be added to the Capital Stabilization Fund in conjunction with the Capital Plan to reduce overall borrowing and associated costs. The target amount for the Capital Stabilization Fund will be provided at Town Meeting.*

ARTICLE 4: TRANSFER MONEY INTO THE STABILIZATION FUND

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds a sum or sums of money to be added to the sum already on deposit in the Stabilization Fund, or to take any other action relative thereto.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen:
Finance Committee:

Summary: *The balance in this fund is \$1.64 million. The financial management goal is to achieve and maintain a balance in the Stabilization Fund equal to 5% of the total annual budget. The target amount for the Stabilization Fund will be provided at Town Meeting.*

ARTICLE 5: OFFSET THE TAX RATE

To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from the General Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash) or from other available funds for the purpose of affecting the tax rate for the period beginning July 1, 2015, or to take any other action relative thereto.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen:
Finance Committee:

Summary: *The intent of this article is to use a portion of Free Cash or General Stabilization Fund monies as a funding source for the FY 2016 Budget in order to lower the amount of money required to be raised from taxes or to balance a deficit budget. The amount of Free Cash and General Stabilization Fund monies available for appropriation will be provided at Town Meeting.*

ARTICLE 6: EXTEND FOUR CORNERS SEWER DISTRICT

To see if the Town will vote to extend the "Four Corners Sewer District", as established by the vote under Article 12 of the 2015 Spring Town Meeting, to include the property shown on Groton Assessors' Maps as Lot 120-2-40 and more particularly shown as Lot 1C-5 on the plan entitled "Rocky Hill Subdivision Lay Out Plan" by R. Wilson and Associates, dated April 20, 2005, a copy of which is on file in the Town Clerk's Office, provided that all costs of designing, laying, and construction of the connection and any General Benefits Facility Charge are paid by the owner of the property benefited thereby, or to take any other action relative thereto.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen:
Finance Committee:

Summary: *When the Spring Town Meeting voted to create the Four Corners Sewer District, it also approved funding for the submission of a MassWorks Development Grant to pay for the construction. During the compilation of the Town's Grant Application, it was determined that adding a housing component would make the application more viable. To that end, the Town had previously approved a 55 and Older Development on the parcel referenced in this Warrant Article. Adding this parcel to the Four Corners Sewer District enhances the Town's Grant application. The Developer of this Housing Development has agreed to pay all cost associated with adding this parcel to the District in a Public/Private Partnership that will also enhance the Town's Grant Application. This article seeks to amend the original district by adding this parcel.*

ARTICLE 7: CREATE KINDER MORGAN PIPELINE LEGAL FUND

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 Board of Selectmen, upon a four-fifths vote of the Board, for the purpose of securing legal resources to affect the impact of the proposed Kinder Morgan pipeline to the Town of Groton, including its land, open space and the property and lives of its residents, or to take any other action relative thereto.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen:
Finance Committee:
Electric Light Commission: *Not Recommended Unanimously*

Summary: *The Board of Selectmen believes that the Town needs additional expert legal resources to address the impact of the proposed Tennessee Gas Pipeline Project in the Town of Groton. These funds would be administered by the Board of Selectmen, who would create a policy for the expenditure of these funds. Use of these funds would be solely for supporting legal challenges that would have a significant probability of affecting the impact of the proposed pipeline on the Town of Groton and its interests, including its assets, open space and the property and lives of its residents. It would require a 4/5's vote of the Board of Selectmen before these funds could be expended. It is the intention of the Board of Selectmen to encourage other towns affected by the proposed Pipeline to consider allocating similar funds. Any unused funds would be returned to the Town's general fund.*

ARTICLE 8: TRANSFER MONEY TO 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 2016 Water Department Operating Budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS

Board of Selectmen:
Finance Committee:
Water Commission:

Summary: *This Article requests funding from the Water Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2016 Water Department's General Expense for Engineering Services related to the Electrical Upgrades and Pump and Motor improvements at the Whitney Pond Well. The final amount needed will be presented to the Fall Town Meeting.*

ARTICLE 9: AMEND GROTON CENTER SEWER SYSTEM MAP

To see if the Town will vote to approve amendments to the plan entitled "Town of Groton Sewer System" showing the Groton Center Sewer System, which was established by a vote of the Special Town Meeting of February 6, 1989 under Article 7, which plan is referred to in section 190-3 of the Groton Code, or to take any other action relative thereto.

BOARD OF SEWER COMMISSIONERS

Board of Selectmen:
Finance Committee:
Sewer Commission:

Summary: *This article is to approve minor changes/corrections to the Groton Center Sewer District Map that from time to time requires clarification. This article does not seek to add any new parcels to the District.*

ARTICLE 10: EXTEND SEWER SYSTEM TO INCLUDE 122 OLD AYER ROAD

To see if the Town will vote to extend the "Groton Center Sewer System," as established by the vote of the Special Town Meeting of February 6, 1989, under Article 7, to include the property shown on Assessors' Lot 222-55 (122 Old Ayer Rd), such extension to be only for the exclusive use of the property currently shown on Groton Assessors' Maps as Lot 222-55, which is proposed to be used and occupied by Indian Hill Music, Inc., and on the condition that, and only for as long as said property is used as a music education and performance center by Indian Hill Music, Inc. or its successors or assigns; otherwise, the system extension shall terminate and be null and void; and provided that all costs of designing, laying, and construction of the extension and any associated connection and the cost of additional capacity and the proportionate share of any General Benefit Facilities, and all other costs associated therewith,

are paid by the owner of the property benefited thereby, whether by the assessment of betterments or otherwise, or to take any other action relative thereto.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen:
Finance Committee:

Summary: *This article requests authorization from the Town Meeting to extend the Center Sewer System to include 122 Old Ayer Road in order to provide for Indian Hill Music's use. This extension, if approved, will provide sewer capacity for the exclusive use of Indian Hill Music. Should Indian Hill Music not relocate to this location, the extension of the Center Sewer System will be rescinded.*

ARTICLE 11: CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS MOSQUITO CONTROL PROJECT

To see if the Town will vote to become a member of the Central Massachusetts Mosquito Control Project for a minimum of three (3) years, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 252, Section 5A, Chapter 583 of the Acts of 1973 and any other enabling authority, or take any other action relative thereto.

BOARD OF HEALTH

Board of Selectmen:
Finance Committee:

Summary: *The Central Massachusetts Mosquito Control Project (CMMCP) is a mosquito control project established by legislative act, Chapter 583 of the Acts of 1973. It operates under an assessment procedure and provides a year-round program of mosquito control in 39 cities and towns in both Middlesex and Worcester counties. Services offered include larval and adult mosquito surveillance, larval and adult mosquito control, public education, ditch cleaning and maintenance and research/control efficacy. The program is tailored to meet the specific needs of the member cities and towns, and residents can opt out of any part of the program. Spraying is done at residents' request. It is anticipated that the Town will be assessed an annual fee of \$73,000 on our Cherry Sheet for a minimum of three (3) years for a total of \$219,000.*

ARTICLE 12: AMEND SECTION 218-9 OF THE ZONING BYLAW

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

by striking out Section 218-9, Location of Districts, which reads as follows:

§218-9 Location of districts. Said districts are located and bounded as shown on a map entitled "Town of Groton, Massachusetts — Zoning Map," dated August 22, 2014, on file in the office of the Town Clerk. Said map, with the boundaries of the districts and all explanatory matter thereon, is hereby made a part of this chapter.

And inserting in its place:

§218-9 Location of districts. Said districts are located and bounded as shown on a map entitled "Town of Groton, Massachusetts — Zoning Map," as most recently amended by Town Meeting, on file in the office of the Town Clerk. Said map, with the boundaries of the districts and all explanatory matter thereon, is hereby made a part of this chapter.

or to take any other action relative thereto.

PLANNING BOARD

Board of Selectmen:
Finance Committee:
Planning Board:

Summary: *The proposed amendment changes the reference to the Zoning Map by removing the revision date and by replacing it with, "as most recently amended by Town Meeting." The Zoning Map is revised whenever a property is rezoned by a 2/3 vote of Town Meeting, so the reference to Town Meeting vote will be more accurate.*

ARTICLE 13: AMEND SECTION 218-23 OF THE ZONING BYLAW

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

by deleting Section 218-23, "Off-street Parking and Loading," in its entirety and inserting in its place a new Section 218-23, "Off-street Parking and Loading," 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:
Planning Board:

Summary: *The proposed amendment is a result of the Comprehensive Master Plan, Phase II Implementation, non-residential zoning provisions. The amendment to the parking requirements establishes minimum and maximum number of parking spaces per use and gross floor area (GFA). The Planning Board will continue to have the ability to waive parking requirements based upon special circumstances.*

ARTICLE 14: AMEND THE ZONING BYLAW OF THE TOWN OF GROTON

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

by deleting item (2) of paragraph F in Section 218-25.1, "Personal Wireless Services Facilities," which reads as follows:

(2) Any extension, addition of cells or construction of a new or a replacement personal wireless services facility or accessory structures, buildings or equipment shall require the issuance of a new special permit under this chapter or an amendment to a special permit previously issued under this Chapter.

And inserting in its place Items (2) and (3) to read as follows:

(2) Any extension in height of an existing tower, expansion of a base station, or construction of a new or a replacement personal wireless services tower shall require the issuance of a new special permit under this chapter or an amendment to a special permit previously issued under this chapter.

(3) Any eligible facilities request, defined in 47 U.S.C. Section 1455(a) as a request for modification of an existing wireless tower or base station that involves: (A) collocation of new transmission equipment; (B) removal of transmission equipment; or (C) replacement of transmission equipment; shall be subject to Minor Site Plan Review by the Land Use Director and Building Commissioner. (Refer to § 218-25C(1) Minor Site Plan Review.)

And by adding the word "Modifications" to the title of paragraph F, so that it reads as follows:

"Approval of special permit applications; Modifications."

or to take any other action relative thereto.

PLANNING BOARD

Board of Selectmen:

Finance Committee:

Planning Board:

Summary: *The proposed amendment will bring the Zoning By-law into compliance with the most recent amendment to the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 and applicable FCC regulations. Collocation and replacing equipment on an existing tower or within existing base stations will no longer require a special permit from the Planning Board. The changes will be subject to Minor Site Plan Review by the Land Use Director and Building Commissioner.*

ARTICLE 15: AMEND THE ZONING BYLAW OF THE TOWN OF GROTON

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

1. in Section 218-26, Flexible Development, by deleting item (1) of Paragraph D, Procedures, which reads as follows:

D. Procedures. Flexible development may be authorized upon the issuance of a special permit by the Planning Board. An application for flexible development shall be filed in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Planning Board.

(1) Where the flexible development is a subdivision of land, a development plan conforming to the requirements for a preliminary plan as set forth in the Subdivision Rules and Regulations of the Planning Board. Final engineering details regarding flexible development may be provided during the course of definitive plan review. In the event that the flexible development does not involve the subdivision of land, the development plan shall conform to the requirements for the applicable plan as set forth in such rules and regulations.

And by inserting in its place the following:

D. Procedures. Flexible development may be authorized upon the issuance of a special permit by the Planning Board. An application for flexible development shall be filed in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Planning Board.

(1) Where the flexible development is a subdivision of land, a development plan conforming to the requirements for a definitive plan as set forth in the Subdivision Rules and Regulations of the Planning Board shall be submitted to the Planning Board. The special permit application shall be submitted concurrently with the application for approval of a definitive plan. In the event that the flexible development does not involve the subdivision of land, the development plan shall conform to the requirements for a definitive plan as set forth in the Subdivision Rules and Regulations.

2. Adding the following items to Paragraph F of Section 218-26, Modification of lot requirements:

4) Lot frontage. The minimum frontage of any lot shall not be less than 40 ft.

5) Individual lot area. The minimum area of any individual lot shall not be less than 10,000 square feet.

or to take any other action relative thereto.

PLANNING BOARD

Board of Selectmen:

Finance Committee:

Planning Board:

Summary: *The proposed amendment will change the submission requirements for special permits for Flexible Development plans. At the present time, special permit plans are submitted with preliminary subdivision plans. The amendment will requirement submission of special permit plans with definitive subdivision plans when more engineering data is available. The amendment also reestablishes minimum lot frontage and lot area requirements in Flexible Developments.*

ARTICLE 16: AMEND CHAPTER 196 "SIGNS" OF THE GROTON CODE

To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 196, "Signs," of the Town of Groton Code by deleting Chapter 196 in its entirety and inserting in its place a new Chapter 196, "Signs," 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:

Finance Committee:

Sign Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*

Summary: *In 2010, Town Meeting amended Chapter 196 by completely overhauling the Sign Bylaw and providing a new bylaw that allowed greater flexibility for businesses and residents, while still maintaining the important qualities of the former Sign Bylaw. The new bylaw has been in existence for five years and has been very successful. That said, after a complete review of Chapter 196, the Sign Committee is recommending minor amendments to the Sign Bylaw to address issues that have arisen over the past five years with the implementation of the new bylaw. Appendix A of this Warrant is a redlined version of Chapter 196 outlining the proposed changes. The Sign Committee will provide a complete report to the 2015 Fall Town Meeting.*

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 28th Day of September in the year of our Lord Two Thousand Fifteen.

John G. Petropoulos

John G. Petropoulos, Chairman

Anna Eliot

Anna Eliot, Vice Chairman

Stuart M. Schulman

Stuart M. Schulman, Clerk

Peter S. Cunningham

Peter S. Cunningham, Member

Joshua A. Degen

Joshua A. Degen, 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

REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER TO THE 2015 FALL TOWN MEETING

The 2015 Fall Town Meeting Warrant contains several warrant articles that seek appropriations, some of which will affect the Tax Rate and some which will have no further impact on taxes. The purpose of this report is to provide the residents and taxpayers with a summary of these articles and what impact they will have on the Fiscal Year 2016 Tax Rate.

As you will recall, the 2015 Spring Town Meeting voted a budget of \$33,298,830 which was \$100,000 under the levy limit based on our best estimate of revenues at that time. Since that time, we have begun to get a better picture of our estimates. Most importantly, in July, the Commonwealth finalized its budget and provided the Town with its final State Aid Estimates. Further, the Assessors continue to work toward the finalization of the Town's new growth. They should have it certified by the end of October. At this time, I am pleased to say that both of these amounts have come in essentially on budget, with slight increases in both accounts. The following chart provides the difference between what was originally estimated and what we are estimating at this time:

	<u>Original</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Difference</u>
State Aid	\$ 856,252	\$ 856,513	\$ 261
State Charges	\$ 106,992	\$ 81,969	\$25,023
Snow & Ice Deficit	\$ 155,224	\$ 144,388	\$10,836
Off-Set Receipts	\$ 20,000	\$ 17,617	\$ 2,383
New Growth	\$ 274,050 (\$15m)	\$ 279,531 (\$15.3m)	\$ 5,481
Local Receipts	\$3,633,192	\$3,633,192	\$ 0
	Additional Revenues		\$43,984

With this additional revenue, the approved budget is now \$143,984 under the levy limit. Since the original budget was voted, we have been attempting to address several issues that require attention. With this additional revenue, we would like to address these issues at the Fall Town Meeting before we set the Fiscal Year 2016 Tax Rate. Article 2 of the Warrant proposes to amend the original budget in some line items. In addition, the Department of Revenue has certified the Town's Free Cash at \$1,009,092. Some of this Free Cash will be used to fund several of the Articles contained in the Warrant. The use of "Free Cash" will not impact the tax rate.

The following is a summary of Warrant Articles requesting funding and how it will impact the anticipated FY 2016 Tax Rate:

Article 1: Unpaid Bills

Amount Requested: \$5,000

Turf Unlimited -	<u>\$5,000</u>
Total	\$5,000

Article 2: Budget Amendments

Amount Requested: \$84,000

The proposed funding for this Article will come from taxation and will impact the Tax Rate (at the conclusion of the summary and explanation will be a chart showing the impact on the FY 2016 Tax Rate). The following is a breakdown of the requests, followed by an explanation:

<u>Line Item</u>	<u>Original Appropriation</u>	<u>New Appropriation</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Board of Selectmen Expenses	\$ 2,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 8,000
Police Expenses	\$190,600	\$230,600	\$40,000
Fire Expenses	\$148,000	\$168,000	\$20,000
Municipal Building Wages	<u>\$ 84,728</u>	<u>\$ 93,228</u>	<u>\$ 8,500</u>
Total	\$425,328	\$501,828	\$76,500

Explanation of Requests

Board of Selectmen Expenses - \$8,000

There are two specific requests that comprise this appropriation of \$8,000. The first request is for a consultant to assist in the review of the Regional School Agreement. The Board of Selectmen has been working with representatives from Dunstable and the Groton Dunstable Regional School District reviewing the Regional School Agreement. It was determined to hire a consultant to assist in the review of the Agreement. The School Department advertised an RFP for this service and one company responded to the RFP. The Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools (MARS) submitted the only proposal, at a cost of \$13,500, which was accepted. Groton's share will be \$4,500. The second request has to do with the study of the Prescott School. The Municipal Building Committee for the Prescott School has been working very hard to develop a thorough and well thought out proposal for the future of the Prescott School. One of the areas of importance is the actual cost of renovating the building if it were to be designated for community use. In order to obtain the best possible cost estimates, they would like to be able to update the estimates that were contained in the Bargmann Report done for the original Prescott Re-Use Committee. They have reached out to the company that did the original estimates three years ago and they would charge \$3,500 for this update. The update would be based on the proposed use by the Committee.

Board of Selectmen:
Finance Committee:

=====

Police Expenses - \$40,000

Last fall, the Town Meeting appropriated \$60,000 to renovate the Public Safety Building after the Fire Department moved into the new Center Fire Station. An additional \$25,000 will be needed to complete the renovations. There have been unforeseen electrical costs. When the rehab began, an electrician was needed to come in for necessary renovations. A number of rooms had just one receptacle in them. Additionally, an electrical panel had to be added to accommodate current technology and leave some room for growth. The electrical renovations are now going to cost between \$12-14K. This expense covers upgrades to bring the building up to code and wiring the building to accommodate future needs. There have also been technology upgrades, wiring and backroom equipment as well as modifications to the dispatch center that would complete the renovations. Please note that all of the painting, cleaning and moving of materials is being completed by Department employees on a voluntary basis. In addition, in FY 2015 we began a multi-year security implementation that would offer many enhanced security features through-out the town. Through this process we contracted with a vendor to implement keycard access doors and high resolution security cameras within the town's larger buildings. We broke this into project phases and started 'Phase I' at the Public Safety Building at 99 Pleasant St (Groton Police Department) in April 2015. Phase I was a larger scope of the project because all of our central hardware would be located there. It required additional cameras and equipment to fully secure the premises for the desired levels of access/surveillance that should be expected of a public safety building. Phase II is planned for FY 2016 and will implement door access and surveillance at 173 Main St (Town Hall). After finalizing project quotes we have found that we require an additional \$15,000 in FY 2016 to complete Phase II. Therefore, the total amount requested for Police Expenses is \$40,000

Board of Selectmen:
Finance Committee:

=====

Fire Department Expenses - \$20,000

The Groton Fire Department is requesting \$20,000 for the purpose of running an on-call firefighter recruit class in the fall/winter timeframe. This recruit class will help bolster the available call staff in all three fire stations. With the continued development in Town, the call volume has similarly grown at a consistent pace. This growth, coupled with the need to balance family and work commitments requires the Groton Fire Department to have a large call department to continue to answer emergency calls. In addition to the need to create balance for members, the nature of on-call services results in turnover often due to these same outside factors. On-call recruit programs and drive of course will cost money in terms of instruction, materials such as books and protective equipment for new personnel.

Board of Selectmen:
Finance Committee:

=====

Municipal Building Wages - \$8,500

The Department of Public Works has been trying to fill some voids in a couple of areas and has been trying to address them. The DPW Director initiated a solution during the summer months and needs to make it a permanent solution for the Department. The major areas of deficiency are the Transfer Station and in custodial work. At the transfer station, a checker is needed so that the other two employees can continue to do the larger work without interruption. The Department loses minor amounts of revenue when a checker is not available when people dump items without proper bags or in the wrong place. The use of a checker will cut down on these losses. While this issue does not generate enough revenue to fund an employee, it will, however, improve the efficiencies of the operations. There are a couple of areas where additional custodial support is needed. It includes more coverage in the Highway Garage, vacation coverage, learning the complexities of the new fire station, locker rooms at the Country Club on a more frequent basis, the bathroom at Transfer Station, Legion Hall and the new Electric Light Building. This past summer, the Department utilized a contractor who has been working at the Club for almost two years to fill these voids. This position will provide coverage during vacations as well as provide the coverage listed above. To fund this position, funding will come from the Electric Light Department, Country Club and Building Maintenance Wages. The amount requested is the Building Maintenance share of the new position.

Board of Selectmen:
Finance Committee:

=====

This Article requests that the funding for these requests (\$76,500) come out of our excess levy capacity. The impact on the FY 2016 Tax Rate is as follows:

Original Budget -	\$33,298,830
Original Town Valuation -	\$1,546,004,928
Original Levy Capacity Used -	\$26,826,670
Amount Under the Levy Limit -	\$100,000
Original Proposed Tax Rate -	\$18.83
Average Tax Bill -	\$7,532 or \$224 increase over FY 2015
New Proposed Budget -	\$33,375,330
New Town Valuation -	\$1,542,429,378
New Levy Capacity Used (w/Growth)	\$26,886,667
Amount Under the Levy Limit -	\$64,484
New Proposed Tax Rate -	\$18.90
Average Tax Bill -	\$7,560 or \$252 increase over FY 2015

=====

Article 3 – Capital Stabilization Fund

Amount Requested: \$425,000

The Fund has a balance of \$129,616. The financial management goal is to achieve and maintain a balance in the Capital Stabilization Fund equal to 1.5% of the total annual budget. To meet this level, the Town will need to add \$425,000 to the fund. This funding will come from Free Cash and not affect the Tax Rate.

Article 4 – Stabilization Fund

Amount Requested: \$50,000

The balance in this fund is \$1.64 million. The financial management goal is to achieve and maintain a balance in the Stabilization Fund equal to 5% of the total annual budget. To meet this level, the Town will need to add \$50,000 to the fund. This funding will come from Free Cash and not affect the Tax Rate.

Article 5 – Offset the Tax Rate

Amount Requested: \$

The Board of Selectmen is recommending that Town Meeting transfer \$____ from Free Cash to offset the tax rate in FY 2016. This will reduce the average tax bill (home valued at \$400,000) by \$____.

Article 7 – Create Kinder Morgan Pipeline Legal Fund Amount Requested: \$

From the Summary in the Warrant: "The Board of Selectmen believes that the Town needs additional expert legal resources to address the impact of the proposed Tennessee Gas Pipeline Project in the Town of Groton. These funds would be administered by the Board of Selectmen, who would create a policy for the expenditure of these funds. Use of these funds would be solely for supporting legal challenges that would have a significant probability of affecting the impact of the proposed pipeline on the Town of Groton and its interests, including its assets, open space and the property and lives of its residents. It would require a 4/5's vote of the Board of Selectmen before these funds could be expended. It is the intention of the Board of Selectmen to encourage other towns affected by the proposed Pipeline to consider allocating similar funds. Any unused funds would be returned to the Town's general fund." This funding will come from Free Cash and not affect the Tax Rate.

Article 8 – Transfer Money to Water Enterprise

Amount Requested: \$

From the Summary in the Warrant: "This Article requests funding from the Water Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2016 Water Department's General Expense for Engineering Services related to the Electrical Upgrades and Pump and Motor improvements at the Whitney Pond Well. The final amount needed will be presented to the Fall Town Meeting." This funding will come from Water Revenues and not affect the Tax Rate.

With the exception of Article 2 (\$84,000), all of the funding for the remaining money articles (\$____) will be appropriated from either Surplus Revenue ("Free Cash") or Water Revenues and not impact the Fiscal Year 2016 Tax Rate. Should each of these articles pass, the Town will have a balance of \$____ in Free Cash.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark W. Haddad

Mark W. Haddad
Town Manager