

Groton Finance Committee Meeting
Meeting Virtually via Zoom ID # 923-2141-0887
Tuesday April 21, 2020 7:00 PM

Finance Committee Members

Present: Bud Robertson, Chair Arthur Prest
Gary Green, Vice Chair Colby Doody
David Manugian, Clerk Mary Linskey
Scott Whitefield, (7:10 PM)

Select Board Members

Joshua Degen, Vice Chair Becky Pine (7:13 PM)
John Giger John Reilly, Clerk

Community Preservation Committee Members

Tim Svarczkopf Carolyn Perkins
Bob DeGroot Dan Emerson
Anna Eliot Richard Hewitt
Bruce Easom

Others present:

Mark Haddad, Town Manager
Tricia Dufresne, Town Accountant
Elizabeth Faxon, Per Diem minute taker
Bruce Easom, Friend of Prescott Member

Chairman Robertson called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.
The first item of the meeting was a discussion on Article 9 of the Spring 2020 Annual Town Meeting (ATM) Warrant.

Article 9. COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Haddad talked about the Prescott school sprinkler system installation bid opening, reporting a total of 2 bids were received, one from XL Fire Protection for \$249,400 and one from Carlisle Engineering for \$463,000. He reported Carlisle Engineering has done good work for the Town on numerous projects in the past, and XL has not worked for the Town in the past however they are a certified vendor. Mr. Haddad noted their bid was missing a certificate of eligibility or DCAMM certification. This is a requirement under MGL for inclusion in the bid package submission. He noted that in the past bids have been rejected as incomplete for similar reason. He is consulting the Select Board to make the decision as to whether to accept the bid. Mr. Prest asked if reference checks have been done on XL, Mr. Haddad replied this will be done by the engineer. Mr. Prest asked what the Town's experience has been on the Fire station with the low bidder. Mr. Haddad replied the low bidder went bankrupt half way through the project, and the Town had to complete the project. Relations with the low bidder of the Senior Center were difficult and eventually the company was ordered to cease and desist for 3 months due to incorrect execution of the project. Alternatively, Mr. Haddad reports, the low bidder on the highway garage has done outstanding work for the Town.

Dan Emerson called the Community Preservation fund Committee (CPC) meeting to order at 7:10 PM.

The question was asked whether if the higher bid was chosen, would there be enough funds in the CPC account. Mr. Easom recused himself from discussion on this specific issue, but was able to provide the general information that there is not enough money in the CPC reserve to fund the higher bid. The \$125,000 project recommendation is what the CPC can afford.

Ms. Perkins stated that the CPC committee has already voted on funding the project for \$125,000, and held a public hearing on the proposal. She asked whether a project change, i.e. additional funding, would trigger the need for another public hearing. She also asked, for clarification on procedural next steps. Mr. Haddad explained that if XL is chosen, then the CPC has sufficient funds to proceed. If XL's bid is rejected, then both bids will be rejected or, town meeting will identify a different funding source via vote. Ms. Linskey asked about the certificate of eligibility and DCAMM certification. Mr. Haddad explained that the DCAMM certification is the certificate of eligibility. Mr. Haddad reiterated that this is by law a mandatory requirement for inclusion in the bid package submission. Ms. Linskey noted that with such a large discrepancy in the bid price, would it be possible to give this error less weight. Mr. Robertson asked for the Select Board's decision on accepting the present bids. Mr. Haddad replied that the Select Board would like to see the engineer's report and will take the matter up again at their meeting next week. Mr. Degen noted that they are interested in reviewing the engineer's report because of two issues: the discrepancy of almost 2 to 1 in the amount of the proposals, as well as the reference checks of the low bidder. Mr. Svarczkopf speculated that the high bidder may have thought this was an unpopular project and inflated the cost in the bid package. Ms. Jennings informed the meeting that she personally checked references on XL and stated they have been in business for 25 years and they specialize in historic buildings. She is in favor of overlooking the mistake of eliminating the certificate of eligibility if in fact this is a credible, capable vendor. She added that in the event this was not approved, given the guidelines of the current business plan for the Prescott school, there would be difficulty moving forward. The CPC and the Finance Committee will take no action until the engineer's report has been reviewed. Ms. Pine commented that there is a significant difference in the engineer's current estimate for the project of \$350,000 - \$400,000 versus two years ago when the project was approved and the estimate was \$279,000. Mr. Haddad said that the project put out to bid previously was a "design and build" and no bids were received. He noted that the project bid was re-requested with a definitive design which resulted in an increased engineering cost estimate.

The following votes were taken on Article 9:

Article 9 Part 2 Prescott project: A. Prest made a motion to take no action until the engineer's report is available including references. D. Manugian seconded. Roll Call vote;

AYE - M. Linskey, B. Robertson, G. Green, A. Prest, C. Doody, D. Manugian, S. Whitefield.

The motion passed unanimously.

Article 9 Part 1. C. Doody made a motion to appropriate a payment of \$51,385 for housing coordinator staff wages from CPC funds in FY21. D. Manugian seconded. Roll call vote;

AYE - M. Linskey, B. Robertson, G. Green, A. Prest, C. Doody, D. Manugian, S. Whitefield.
The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Haddad announced that next Monday, April 28th, 2020, the Selectboard will hold a continuation of this public hearing. He added that the positions on all Warrant articles are requested by this same date. The Community Preservation Committee meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM. The Finance Committee members then took the following position on the Spring ATM 2020 Warrant articles;

Article 1. Annual reports. Finance committee takes no position.

Article 2. Elected official's compensation as provided in the budget. \$91,748 Town Clerk, and \$65 for the Town moderator. D. Manugian made a motion to approve Article 2 as written. A. Prest seconded. Roll call vote: AYE - M. Linskey, B. Robertson, G. Green, A. Prest, C. Doody, D. Manugian, S. Whitefield. The motion passed unanimously. (7-0-0)

Article 3 Wage and classification schedule as shown in Appendix B of the Warrant. D. Manugian made a motion to approve Article 3 as written. A. Prest seconded. Roll call vote: AYE - M. Linskey, B. Robertson, G. Green, A. Prest, C. Doody, D. Manugian, S. Whitefield. The motion passed unanimously. (7-0-0)

Discussion: Mr. Green asked if there had been any discussion with the unions about contract modifications to help reduce payroll expenditures for FY21. Mr. Haddad affirmed that discussions were underway. Mr. Green is hesitant to ask town meeting to approve a budget that includes an increase in wages with the current state of emergency and the potential unknown fiscal consequences. It was noted that this wage schedule reflects a range of possibilities that may be adjusted at a later time.

Article 4 *FISCAL YEAR 2021 ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET*

Chairman Robertson postponed discussion on Article 4 to later in the meeting.

Article 5 *APPROPRIATE FY 2021 CONTRIBUTION TO THE OPEB TRUST*

Mr. Haddad noted the Town's policy to annually contribute from free cash an amount necessary to keep the net present value of the OPEB liability from growing. For FY21 this amount has been calculated as \$177,094. Legally the treasurer may withdraw from the restricted OPEB Trust account only to pay retiree benefits. Mr. Degen suggested that the Town postpone the contribution to OPEB and fund it at the Fall town meeting. His rationale being that if revenues don't hit projections, the Town may be able to use this contribution money as a reserve fund in the interim. Ms. Dufresne commented that June 30, 2020 will be a GASB 74/75 full valuation year and the official actuarial report will be part of the bond rating review necessary for the new school construction. Mr. Green mentioned he would favor funding the obligation at Spring ATM. D. Manugian moved to approve Article 5 as written. C. Doody seconded. Roll call vote:

AYE - M. Linskey, B. Robertson, G. Green, A. Prest, C. Doody, D. Manugian, S. Whitefield.
The motion passed unanimously. (7-0-0)

Article 6 *FISCAL YEAR 2021 CAPITAL BUDGET*

M. Haddad reported the capital budget has been significantly reduced. The only items in the budget are debt obligations (dump truck and tractor trailer), the lease for a mower for the country club, and \$40,000 for IT infrastructure. Funding for the capital budget will also include replacement of an ambulance at a cost of \$325,000, funded by ambulance receipts, with the remaining total of \$125,100 to be funded from capital stabilization.

D. Manugian made a motion to approve Article 6 as written. G. Green seconded. Roll call vote:
AYE - M. Linskey, B. Robertson, G. Green, A. Prest, C. Doody, D. Manugian, S. Whitefield.
The motion passed unanimously. (7-0-0)

Article 7 *POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERATOR*

This article asks for \$25,000 to repair a transfer switch on the generator. This is very important to the police station and communications during storm events. Mr. Haddad asked the Finance Committee to either support the article or, approve a Reserve Fund transfer for this repair. Discussion ensued as to whether this request should be funded from free cash or capital stabilization. Mr. Robertson suggested using capital stabilization thus providing the flexibility of having free cash available for future expenditures. Mr. Manugian preferred an immediate Reserve Fund transfer. He notes this request is an urgent necessity but has not gone through a typical capital review process and may be vulnerable at town meeting. Secondly, this should be funded now to avoid any lapse in this important public service. Mr. Geiger agreed that this is an essential funding request. He added that testing protocol should be reviewed and perhaps conducted more frequently.

D. Manugian made a motion to approve a Reserve Fund Transfer for \$25,000 as requested for the repair of the transfer switch for the Police department generator. G. Green seconded. Roll call vote: AYE - M. Linskey, B. Robertson, G. Green, A. Prest, C. Doody, D. Manugian, S. Whitefield. The motion passed unanimously. (7-0-0)

Mr. Haddad then asked the Select Board's permission to remove Article 7 (Police Department Generator Repair) from the ATM 2020 Warrant.

J. Reilly moved to remove Article 7 from the Town meeting warrant. J. Giger seconded. Roll call vote: AYE - J. Reilly, J. Giger, B. Pine, J. Degen. The motion passed unanimously. (4-0-0)

Article 8 *ADOPT M.G.L., C.44, §53 F½ CREATING A STORMWATER ENTERPRISE FUND*

Mr. Haddad explained that Article 8 is a bylaw that will allow the Selectboard to charge a fee to pay for the maintenance of the Town's stormwater management system. The fee will cover the cost of the Town's requirement to be in compliance with its MS4 permit i.e., the Municipal

Separate Storm Sewer System requirements. The stormwater regulations have been increased to protect the water supply via cleaning catch basins more frequently, fulfilling more significant reporting requirements, and other associated action items. The fee will be set at a later date. This fee might range from \$15 to \$47 per quarter assessed to each taxpayer. The budgetary process will be the same as the Water and Sewer Enterprise funds. Mr. Manugian confirmed property could be liened in the event that the fee is not paid.

D. Manugian made a motion to approve Article 8 as written. C. Doody seconded. Roll call vote: AYE - M. Linskey, B. Robertson, G. Green, A. Prest, C. Doody, D. Manugian, S. Whitefield. The motion passed unanimously. (7-0-0)

Article 10 *AMEND ZONING BYLAW – BYLAW CODIFICATION*

The Finance Committee took no position

Article 11 *ACCEPTANCE OF AMELIA WAY AS A TOWN WAY*

The Finance Committee took no position.

Article 12 *CURRENT YEAR LINE ITEM TRANSFERS*

Mr. Haddad reviewed the current line item transfers with the meeting. Mr. Haddad asked the Finance Committee to support the transfers as proposed. G. Green proposed the FinCom make a recommendation on these line-item transfers closer to town meeting in case there are any changes. Ms. Dufresne confirmed she is still waiting to hear from department heads and there may be additional shortages to mitigate. She would prefer to take this vote at the end of the year. Mr. Haddad noted that in previous years, these Line Item Transfers are accomplished through a joint vote of the Select Board and FinCom at year-end (after June 30th but prior to July 15th).

Mr. Haddad requested that Article 12 be withdrawn from the Spring ATM Warrant.

J. Degen moved to remove Article 12 from the Town meeting warrant and meet jointly with the Finance Committee after year end to address the line item transfers. J. Giger seconded. Roll call vote: AYE - J. Reilly, J. Giger, B. Pine, J. Degen. The motion passed unanimously. (4-0-0)

Article 13 *APPROPRIATE MONEY TO OFFSET SNOW AND ICE DEFICIT*

Mr. Haddad recommends that FinCom defer taking action on this until the Assessors decision on use of overlay is available. If the Assessors decline to release the overlay, then this deficit will be treated as a line item transfer. If the Assessors agree to release \$50,000 of overlay, a town meeting vote will be required.

The Finance Committee deferred taking position on this article.

Article 14 *APPROPRIATION TO FUND TOWN FOREST EXPENSES*

Mr. Haddad informed the group that this is a \$5,000 budget request to fund Town Forest expenses. The money comes out of a Receipts Reserved for Appropriation Fund and is used at their discretion, typically tree removal.

D. Manugian made a motion to approve Article 14 as written. A. Prest seconded. Roll call vote: AYE - M. Linskey, B. Robertson, G. Green, A. Prest, C. Doody, D. Manugian, S. Whitefield. The motion passed unanimously. (7-0-0)

Article 15 *TRANSFER WITHIN CENTER SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND*

Mr. Haddad asked the Finance Committee to defer taking position on this article. He reports that water use is substantially lower than normal due to COVID-19 municipal building closures. The Sewer Commission requests more time to propose a number for this transfer.

Article 16 *TRANSFER WITHIN FOUR CORNERS SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND*

Mr. Haddad noted the connection fees owed to the Town of Ayer. The Sewer Commissioners have appropriate money in their budget to support this. He asked the Finance Committee to recommend a transfer of \$15,000 from E&D to the FY20 Four Corners Operating Budget.

D. Manugian made a motion to approve Article 16 as written. C. Doody seconded. Roll call vote: AYE - M. Linskey, B. Robertson, G. Green, A. Prest, C. Doody, D. Manugian, S. Whitefield. The motion passed unanimously. (7-0-0)

Article 17 *TRANSFER WITHIN CABLE ENTERPRISE FUND*

D. Manugian made a motion to approve Article 16 as written (\$10,000 transfer from E&D to the FY20 Cable Access Operating Budget). C. Doody seconded. Roll call vote:

AYE - M. Linskey, B. Robertson, G. Green, A. Prest, C. Doody, D. Manugian, S. Whitefield. The motion passed unanimously. (7-0-0)

Article 18 *PRIOR YEAR BILLS*

Mr. Haddad listed some unpaid bills from prior fiscal years including App Geo GIS services, and advertising in the Groton Herald totaling \$255.75.

G. Green made a motion to support Article 18 as written. D. Manugian seconded. Roll call vote: AYE - M. Linskey, B. Robertson, G. Green, A. Prest, C. Doody, D. Manugian, S. Whitefield. The motion passed unanimously. (7-0-0)

Article 19 *DEBT SERVICE FOR SURRENDEN FARMS*

Mr. Haddad states this article is for the second to last payment for debt service for Surrenden Farms (town owned property) in the amount of \$482,891. Funding for this article is from Community Preservation Funds (Open Space reserve and Unallocated reserve).

G. Green made a motion to recommend Article 19. S. Whitefield seconded. Roll call vote: AYE - M. Linskey, B. Robertson, G. Green, A. Prest, C. Doody, D. Manugian, S. Whitefield. The motion passed unanimously. (7-0-0)

Article 20 *ESTABLISHING LIMITS FOR THE VARIOUS REVOLVING FUNDS*

Mr. Haddad explained that the State allowed municipalities to set up revolving funds with a bylaw, but annual spending limits must be established for each in one town meeting article. There are ten revolving funds with all suggested spending limits included in Article 20.

G. Green made a motion to recommend Article 20 as written. D. Manugian seconded. Roll call vote: AYE - M. Linskey, B. Robertson, G. Green, A. Prest, C. Doody, D. Manugian, S. Whitefield. The motion passed unanimously. (7-0-0)

Article 21 *ACCEPT LAW INCREASING REAL ESTATE TAX EXEMPTIONS*

Mr. Haddad explained that this article increases real estate tax exemptions by 100 percent of what is allowed to all persons who qualify under M.G.L. Ch. 59. This article is geared toward 70+ seniors, surviving spouses (widows/widowers), legally blind persons and veterans with service-connected disabilities. This increase doubles the allowable exemption under State law.

G. Green moved to recommend Article 21. D. Manugian seconded. Roll call vote: AYE - M. Linskey, B. Robertson, G. Green, A. Prest, C. Doody, D. Manugian, S. Whitefield. The motion passed unanimously. (7-0-0)

Article 22 *ACCEPT PROVISIONS OF M.G.L., CHAPTER 59, §5, CLAUSE 22F*

Mr. Haddad informed the Members that passage of this Article allows the Town to reduce from five consecutive years to one year the residency requirement, making certain veterans and their surviving spouses or parents, eligible for the property tax exemptions.

D. Manugian made a motion to approve Article 22 as written. G. Green seconded. Roll call vote: AYE - M. Linskey, B. Robertson, G. Green, A. Prest, C. Doody, D. Manugian, S. Whitefield. The motion passed unanimously. (7-0-0)

Those present returned attention to Article 4 of the Warrant.

Article 4 *FISCAL YEAR 2021 ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET*

Mr. Haddad informed the meeting that \$423,000 in operating budget reductions were made and illustrated in a presentation to the school committee at a recent meeting. Projected revenues were also presented and areas of funding for the deficit. After budget adjustments, the remaining deficit to cover is \$283,000 (which could be transferred from Stabilization). He expects the school committee to provide the financial team with a budget update by April 27, 2020. Ms. Linskey asked about the process of negotiating with non-profits for donation in lieu of tax payments. She added that in her experience working with non-profits, the idea that they provide a benefit to the

public is often used as payment in lieu. She noted that not all non-profits actually do benefit the public and instead the public absorbs some of the cost. She expressed interest in learning how the negotiations with non-profits are conducted with regards to these payments. Mr. Haddad referred to Indian Hill music center which plans on opening in FY23, saying that the Town will be approaching them for a PILOT. Mr. Haddad pointed out that the Town works very closely with non-profits negotiating financial cost offsets for town services. He reviewed the various PILOT agreements in place, illustrating the generosity of these organizations which continues throughout the current state of emergency. Mr. Degen added that some of these tax-exempt organizations have agreed to pay taxes on any new property acquisitions. He commented that Groton has a nonprofit council which may be of interest to Ms. Linskey. Mr. Degen urged the Town Manager to set up a meeting to review PILOT agreements.

Mr. Haddad then returned discussion to the operating budget and explained that given the current state of emergency, a further reduction was made to the operating budget of \$43,000 (Weed Harvesting of \$15,000 and Beach Life Guards of \$28,000), an offset to the snow and ice deficit of \$100,000 and an expected school budget reduction. Other mitigation actions may include working with labor unions to provide some relief for FY21. Mr. Haddad stated the Select Board would like to see the \$15,000 for the Baddacook Weed Harvesting project funded given the investment the Town has already made in weed eradication. Mr. Robertson cautioned that any reduction in the District assessment to the town must not be absorbed into the budget. This would only make balancing the budget in FY22 that much harder. He further states his satisfaction with the budget as presented. He suggested various approaches to payroll reductions to achieve the least amount of impact to employees and the Town. Mr. Haddad mentioned negotiations are underway with unions to find a way to come up with some savings in payroll, if this is unsuccessful, then different actions could include instituting furloughs or reduction of hours. It is not something that has to be addressed immediately. He also is comfortable moving forward with the budget as is. Mr. Giger added that the Town should build documented contingency models for situations where the Town needs to employ significant and time sensitive cost cutting actions.

Mr. Haddad is recommending the Finance Committee support the proposed operating budget totaling \$41,412,041. If the Finance Committee decides to restore the \$15,000 for Baddacook Weed Harvesting, the deficit would be equal to \$298,000. Mr. Robertson called for discussion. Mr. Green wished to defer taking action on the budget until confirmation has been received from various sources such as the School Committee, and town meeting date has been firmly decided on given the current state of emergency. Mr. Haddad agreed and asked for direction on the \$15,000 for Baddacook.

Mr. Degen commented that the town has made significant investments over the years in pond weed eradication and to pause this ongoing maintenance would be detrimental. He is recommending that the Finance Committee support this effort. He noted that the Water Department has made a commitment of \$10,000 towards the project, and combined with the very good results of the work thus far, continuing with the project is important. Mr. Giger and Ms. Pine expressed support in keeping this expense in the operating budget. Ms. Pine added that this

project was started 3 years ago with funding from the CPC with the understanding that it would become part of the town budget eventually.

On a motion by Mr. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Green, the Finance Committee voted unanimously to restore \$15,000 to the FY 21 operating budget for the Baddacook pond weed maintenance program. The Vote: AYE - M. Linskey, B. Robertson, G. Green, A. Prest, C. Doody, D. Manugian, S. Whitefield. (7-0-0)

Mr. Haddad laid out the schedule and action plan to finalize the budget in the Warrant with the final recommendations of the Select Board and Finance Committee prior to town meeting.

Mr. Green asked when information will be available pertaining to local receipts from meals and room occupancy tax. Mr. Haddad stated that the 3rd quarter financials will be included on the Select Board's agenda for the next meeting. Ms. Dufresne noted that 4th quarter receipts from March, April and May will be posted in June. December, January and February receipts were posted in March. All FY20 recorded tax receipts, car excise, etc. are typical thus far. Mr. Haddad remarked that the 3rd quarter 2020 meals and room occupancy tax that was reported was very strong. 4th quarter will be a different story. Mr. Green requested that anytime the budget is discussed, the Finance Committee be provided with updated revenue information.

Mr. Haddad spoke about the joint budget statement he has drafted for inclusion in the Spring ATM warrant. The joint statement is from the Town Manager and the Finance Committee and summarizes the budget process and reports on the condition of the Town financially. Mr. Manugian offered some clerical corrections; he will send Mr. Haddad a redline email containing such. Mr. Haddad will incorporate these edits in the Warrant; the only additional change being what the School Committee provides for a final assessment.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

February 26, 2020 draft Finance Committee meeting minutes. Discussion M. Linskey was present at the meeting, so the draft minutes shall be amended to include this.

D. Manugian made a motion to approve the 2.26.2020 minutes as amended. A. Prest seconded.

Roll call vote:

AYE - M. Linskey, B. Robertson, G. Green, A. Prest, C. Doody, D. Manugian.

ABS - S. Whitefield.

The motion passed by majority vote (6-0-1).

February 25, 2020 draft Finance Committee meeting minutes.

D. Manugian made a motion to approve the 2.26.2020 minutes as written. A. Prest seconded.

Roll call vote:

AYE - M. Linskey, B. Robertson, G. Green, A. Prest, C. Doody, D. Manugian, S. Whitefield.

The motion passed unanimously (7-0-0).

February 8, 2020 draft Finance Committee meeting minutes.

D. Manugian made a motion to approve the 2.08.2020 minutes as written. G. Green seconded.

Roll call vote:

AYE - B. Robertson, G. Green, A. Prest, D. Manugian.

ABS - C. Doody, M. Linskey, S. Whitefield.
The motion passed by majority vote (4-0-3).

April 15, 2020 draft Finance Committee meeting minutes.

D. Manugian made a motion to approve the 2.26.2020 minutes as written. M. Linskey seconded.

Roll call vote:

AYE - M. Linskey, B. Robertson, G. Green, A. Prest, C. Doody, D. Manugian, S. Whitefield.

The motion passed unanimously (7-0-0).

April 13, 2020 draft Finance Committee meeting minutes

D. Manugian made a motion to approve the 2.26.2020 minutes as written. G. Green seconded.

Roll call vote:

AYE - M. Linskey, B. Robertson, G. Green, A. Prest, C. Doody, D. Manugian, S. Whitefield.

The motion passed unanimously (7-0-0).

Chairman Robertson officially adjourned the meeting at 9:10p.m. with a reminder of the meeting on April 28th to hold further discussion on the budget and vote on deferred Articles. M. Haddad confirmed he would forward any applicable materials received in the interim.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Faxon
Per Diem Minute taker

Approved on: _____8/12/20_____

Documents Available:

1. Warrant, Summary, and Recommendations, Town of Groton 2020 Spring Town meeting.
2. Reserve Fund Transfer Documentation: Police Dept. Generator

REQUEST FOR TRANSFER FROM THE RESERVE FUND

Date: 4/21/2020

Advisory Board
Town of Groton

Ladies & Gentlemen:

A request is hereby made for the following transfer from the Reserve Fund in accordance with Chapter 40, Section 6, of the Massachusetts General Laws:

1. Amount requested: \$25,000.00
2. To be transferred to: Police Dept. General Expenses FY20
3. Present balance in said appropriation: \$53,266.65
4. The amount requested will be used for (give specific purpose):
Repair of obsolete parts in emergency generator
5. This expenditure is extraordinary and /or unforeseen for the following reasons:

Condition of generator was unknown at time budget was prepared

Michael F. Luth
Officer or Department Head

Action of Advisory Board

Date of Meeting 4/21/20 Number Present and Voting 7

Transfer voted in the sum of \$ 25,000⁰⁰

Transfer disapproved _____

NK
Chair Advisory Board

Request must be made and transfer voted before any expenditure in excess of appropriation is incurred.

Reserve Fund Transfers Granted Fiscal Year 2020

Document #	Date of Vote	Department Budget	Amount	Description of Need
RFT #1	2/25/2020	Library General Expense	15,000.00	Foundation Repair
RFT #2	2/25/2020	Municipal Bldgs Expense	9,400.00	Repair Recycling Bldg
RFT #3	4/21/2020	Police General Expenses	25,000.00	Repair of Emergency Generator
RFT #4				
RFT #5				
RFT #6				
RFT #7				
RFT #8				
RFT #9				
RFT #10				
RFT #11				
RFT #12				
RFT #13				
RFT #14				
Total Voted Transfers			49,400.00	
Original Budget FY18			150,000.00	
Remaining Balance			100,600.00	
PENDING		Library Salaries	3,575.00	Retirement Vac Pay

Warrant, Summary, and Recommendations

TOWN OF GROTON



2020 SPRING TOWN MEETING

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

Beginning Monday, May 18, 2020 @ 7:00 PM

Attention – Voters and Taxpayers

Please bring this Report to Town Meeting

**THE BUDGET HANDOUT FOR ARTICLE 4 IS AVAILABLE
IN THE BACK OF THE WARRANT**

**SPRING TOWN MEETING WARRANT
MAY 18, 2020**

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 eighteenth day of May, 2020 at Seven O'clock in the evening, to consider all business other than the election of Town Officers and on the ninth day of June, 2020 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 Two	Select Board	3 Years
Vote for One	Commissioner of Trust Funds	3 Years
Vote for One	Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee	3 Years
Vote for One	Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee	2 Years
Vote for One	Groton Electric Light Commission	3 Years
Vote for Two	Park Commission	3 Years
Vote for One	Park Commission	2 Years
Vote for Two	Planning Board	3 Years
Vote for One	Planning Board	2 Years
Vote for One	Planning Board	1 Year
Vote for One	Sewer Commission	3 Years
Vote for One	Trustees of the Groton Public Library	3 Years
Vote for Two	Water Commission	3 Years
Vote for One	Groton Housing Authority	5 Years
Vote for One	Groton Housing Authority	4 Years

ARTICLE LISTINGS

Article 1:	Hear Reports	
Article 2:	Elected Officials Compensation	
Article 3:	Wage and Classification Schedule	
Article 4:	Fiscal Year 2021 Annual Operating Budget	
Article 5:	Appropriate FY 2021 Contribution to the OPEB Trust Fund	
Article 6:	Fiscal Year 2021 Capital Budget	
Article 7:	Police Department Generator	
Article 8:	Create a Stormwater Enterprise Fund	
Article 9:	Community Preservation Funding Recommendations	
Article 10:	Amend Zoning Bylaw – Bylaw Codification	
Article 11:	Acceptance of Amelia Way as a Town Way	
Article 12*:	Current Year Line Item Transfers	
Article 13*:	Appropriate Money to Offset the Snow and Ice Deficit	
Article 14*:	Appropriation to Fund Town Forest Expenses	
Article 15*:	Transfer Within Center Sewer Enterprise Fund	
Article 16*:	Transfer Within Four Corners Sewer Enterprise Fund	
Article 17*:	Transfer Within Cable Enterprise Fund	
Article 18*:	Prior Year Bills	
Article 19*:	Debt Service for Surrenden Farms	
Article 20*:	Establishing Limits for the Various Revolving Funds	
Article 21*:	Accept Law Increasing Real Estate Tax Exemptions	
Article 22*:	Accept Provisions of M.G.L., c. 59, §5	
	Budget Report of the Town Manager and Finance Committee to Town Meeting	
	Appendix A – Fiscal Year 2021 Proposed Operating Budget	
	Appendix B – Fiscal Year 2021 Wage and Classification Schedule	

**Articles 12 through 22 is the Consent Agenda and will be considered as a single vote.*

ARTICLE 1: HEAR REPORTS

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

SELECT BOARD

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Summary: *To hear reports of Town Boards, Committees and Commissions and to accept the annual report and other reports that may be presented to Town Meeting.*

ARTICLE 2: ELECTED OFFICIALS' COMPENSATION

To see if the Town will vote to set the compensation for the elected officials of the Town for the ensuing year, or to take any other action relative thereto.

SELECT BOARD

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Summary: *To provide compensation for elected officials as proposed by the Town Manager. The Town Clerk shall receive a salary of \$91,748 in FY 2021 and the Moderator shall receive a salary of \$65 in FY 2021.*

ARTICLE 3: WAGE AND CLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE

To see if the Town will vote to amend and adopt for Fiscal Year 2021 the Town of Groton Wage and Classification schedule as shown in Appendix B of this Warrant, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**SELECT BOARD
TOWN MANAGER**

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Summary: *The purpose of this Article is to set the wage and classification schedule for the three (3) employees covered by the Personnel Bylaw. Under the policy of the Select Board, these employees receive the same benefits as contained in the Town Supervisors' Union Contract. These employees will receive a two (2) percent cost of living adjustment in Fiscal Year 2021.*

ARTICLE 4: FISCAL YEAR 2021 ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow pursuant to any applicable statute, a sum or sums of money as may be necessary to defray the expenses of the Town for the next fiscal year (2021), and act upon the budget of the Finance Committee, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE
SELECT BOARD
TOWN MANAGER**

**Select Board:
Finance Committee:**

Summary: *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 31st; 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 the Spring Town Meeting. The budget handout for this Article is contained in Appendix A of this Warrant. Please also see the Finance Committee's and Town Manager's Report which includes the Finance Committee's and Select Board's recommendations.*

ARTICLE 5: APPROPRIATE FY 2021 CONTRIBUTION TO THE OPEB TRUST

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow pursuant to any applicable statute, 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.

**SELECT BOARD
TOWN MANAGER**

**Select Board:
Finance Committee:**

Summary: *The purpose of this article is to fund the Town's OPEB Liability. The Select Board and Finance Committee have adopted a funding policy for this purpose. One of the funding goals is to commit to an annual appropriation to the Trust that would keep the Net Present Value Liability from growing until such time as the Town can begin to pay down the liability. In Fiscal Year 2021, the anticipated amount necessary for this purpose is estimated to be \$177,094. This Article will seek an appropriation of \$177,094 from Free Cash to add to the OPEB Liability Trust Fund.*

ARTICLE 6: FISCAL YEAR 2021 CAPITAL BUDGET

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow pursuant to any applicable statute, a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager, for the purpose of funding the Fiscal Year 2021 Capital Budget, or to take another other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER

Summary: *The following is the proposed Town Manager's Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2021:*

Item #1 – Ambulance 2 Replacement **\$325,000** **Fire/EMS**

Summary: *The Fire Chief has instituted an equipment replacement program to improve the equipment of the Department. Ambulance 2 is a 2012 ambulance that is due for regular replacement in FY 2021.*

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Item #2 – Dump Truck **\$40,000** **Highway**

Summary: *At the 2018 Spring Town Meeting, the Meeting authorized the acquisition of a new Dump Truck for the Highway Department by borrowing the necessary funds (\$185,000) through the Commonwealth's State House Notes method and pay off the debt over five years. This will be the third of five payments for the Dump Truck.*

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Item #3 – IT Infrastructure **\$40,000** **Town Facilities**

Summary: *This item in the Capital Budget was established nine years ago and has been very successful. In Fiscal Year 2021, the following items will be purchased/upgraded with this allocation: Ten (10) new computers for Town Hall, Five (5) new computers for the Library; Replace aging servers and storage arrays; expand network; upgrade network switches to increase wireless coverage.*

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Item #4 – Tractor Trailer Unit**\$40,000****Transfer Station**

Summary: *At the 2018 Spring Town Meeting, the Meeting authorized the acquisition of a new Tractor Trailer Unit for the Transfer Station by borrowing the necessary funds (\$160,000) through the Commonwealth's State House Notes method and pay off the debt over four years. This will be the third of four payments for the Unit.*

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Item #5 – Triplex – Greens Mower**\$5,100****Country Club**

Summary: *The Country Club owns two triplex mowers. Four years ago, the Town proposed to replace one of the mowers so that the Club would have a backup mower. One cuts the greens and the other is used to cut the tees and collars around the greens. The Town Meeting agreed to finance the mower over five years. This is the final payment for a total cost of \$25,500.*

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

TOWN MANAGER

ARTICLE 7: POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERATOR

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow pursuant to any applicable statute, a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager in Fiscal Year 2020 and thereafter, for the purpose of repairing and upgrading the Generator located at the Groton Police Station, and all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *The Generator and automatic transfer switch (AWS) panel are original to the construction of the building in 1992. The panel components are obsolete and unavailable. If the components were to fail and it became necessary to use the generator to power the building, the Police Station and Communications center would not be operational for an extended period of time. A manual transfer switch (MTS) will be added in order to connect an external generator to provide power to the building in the event of primary generator failure or is needed for maintenance and repairs. The cost of this repair is \$25,000.*

ARTICLE 8: ADOPT M.G.L., C.44, §53 F½ CREATING A STORMWATER ENTERPRISE FUND

To see if the Town will vote to establish a Stormwater Facilities Utility Enterprise Fund and to accept the provisions of Chapter 44, Section 53F½ of the Massachusetts General Laws, in order to authorize establishment of an Enterprise Fund known as the "Stormwater Facilities Utility Enterprise Fund" for the Groton Stormwater Facilities Utility, effective in Fiscal Year 2021, as follows:

1. Amend Groton Bylaws to add to §154-2 Definitions the following:

STORMWATER FACILITIES UTILITY – A Utility operation of the Town's Stormwater drainage facilities within the Town's Department of Public Works together with a related special user fee assessment, Town wide, as described in Groton Bylaw §154-5.

2. Amend Groton Bylaw to add §154-5 as follows:

§154-5 There is hereby established a Stormwater Facilities Utility as follows.

- (a) The Stormwater Facilities Utility shall provide for the operation, maintenance, and upgrade or expansion of existing storm drain systems throughout the town; development of drainage studies, plans, flood control measures, and water-quality programs; administrative costs; and construction of capital improvement projects, and purchase of all equipment necessary for the installation, operation and maintenance of the system; and the town's compliance with requirements now or hereafter contained in permits issued by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and The United States of America.
- (b) The Stormwater Facilities Utility shall be managed and operated by the Town Manager in consultation with the Groton Department of Public Works and shall be within the Town's Department of Public Works.
- (c) To generate funding specifically for stormwater management, a stormwater facility user utility fee is hereby imposed upon all Users of the Town's stormwater facilities throughout the town and the Select Board is hereby authorized to establish such user fee sufficient to meet the costs incurred by the Stormwater Facilities Utility and to amend such fee from time to time as warranted by the circumstances of costs and legal requirements.
- (d) The revenue received by the Town from the payment of Stormwater facilities user fees shall be deposited in the Stormwater Facilities Utility Enterprise Fund and the revenue generated shall be used by the Town Manager, in consultation with the Director of Public Works, to directly support the operation, maintenance, and upgrade or expansion of existing storm drain systems; development of drainage studies, plans, flood control measures, and water-quality programs; administrative costs; and construction of capital improvement projects, and purchase of all equipment necessary for the installation, operation and maintenance of the system; and the town's compliance with requirements contained in permits issued by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and The United States of America .

3. To accept M.G.L., Chapter 44, Section 53F1/2 "Enterprise Funds") for the Stormwater Facilities Utility Enterprise Fund, which statute provides as follows:

"Notwithstanding the provisions of section fifty-three or any other provision of law to the contrary, a city or town which accepts the provisions of this section may establish a separate account classified as an "Enterprise Fund", for a utility, cable television public access, health care, recreational or transportation facility, and its operation, as the city or town may designate, hereinafter referred to as the enterprise. Such

account shall be maintained by the treasurer, and all receipts, revenues and funds from any source derived from all activities of the enterprise shall be deposited in such separate account. The treasurer may invest the funds in such separate account in the manner authorized by sections fifty-five and fifty-five A of chapter forty-four. Any interest earned thereon shall be credited to and become part of such separate account. The books and records of the enterprise shall be maintained in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and in accordance with the requirements of section thirty-eight. No later than one hundred and twenty days prior to the beginning of each fiscal year, an estimate of the income for the ensuing fiscal year and a proposed line item budget of the enterprise shall be submitted to the mayor, board of selectmen or other executive authority of the city or town by the appropriate local entity responsible for operations of the enterprise."

"Said board, mayor or other executive authority shall submit its recommendation to the town meeting, town council or city council, as the case may be, which shall act upon the budget in the same manner as all other budgets. The city or town shall include in its tax levy for the fiscal year the amount appropriated for the total expenses of the enterprise and an estimate of the income to be derived by the operations of the enterprise. If the estimated income is less than the total appropriation, the difference shall be added to the tax levy and raised by taxation. If the estimated income is more than the total appropriation, the excess shall be appropriated to a separate reserve fund and used for capital expenditures of the enterprise, subject to appropriation, or to reduce user charges if authorized by the appropriate entity responsible for operations of the enterprise. If during a fiscal year the enterprise incurs a loss, such loss shall be included in the succeeding fiscal year's budget. If during a fiscal year the enterprise produces a surplus, such surplus shall be kept in such separate reserve fund and used for the purposes provided therefor in this section."

"For the purposes of this section, acceptance in a city shall be by vote of the city council and approval of the mayor, in a town, by vote of a special or annual town meeting and in any other municipality by vote of the legislative body. A city or town which has accepted the provisions of this section with respect to a designated enterprise may, in like manner, revoke its acceptance."

or to take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER
EARTH REMOVAL STORMWATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Summary: The Town of Groton is under the jurisdiction of the NPDES MS4 stormwater permit program operated by US Environmental Protection Agency. The permit program requires the Town to proactively manage its storm drainage system and ensure the protection of its waterways from stormwater pollution. Compliance with the requirements of this program is mandatory. The establishment of an enterprise fund would create the most consistent and transparent funding mechanism to achieve compliance with this program to reduce the likelihood of flooding and protect its waterways from stormwater pollution. Should this Article not be approved, the Town will need to amend the Operating Budget in the Fall, 2020 to address these needs. This would require a reduction in other parts of the Budget to fund this compliance.

ARTICLE 9: 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 2021, 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 Select Board, 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: Housing Coordinator \$51,385

Summary: *The Town established the position of Housing Coordinator in 2009, with the salary being paid out of the Community Preservation Administrative Account. Six years ago, 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 has approved this for the last six years. This will be the seventh year that this position will be funded in this manner. The full amount to be paid from the Community Housing Reserve.*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:
Community Preservation Committee:

CPC Proposal B: Prescott School – Phase III \$125,000

Summary: *This project is to fully fund the Prescott Fire Protection CPA grant that was voted by Town Meeting in 2018. Since that vote, information has come forward that the addition of a new fire alarm system installed at the same time as the sprinkler installation would not only be cost effective but would meet updated Fire Codes and allow access of individuals to the second floor of Prescott and also allow children under the age of 18 to be in the building without their parents. Some funds of the 2019 grant have been used for architectural designs for this project and for new fire doors. The additional funds requested in this article would supplement these funds, allow for the addition of the alarm system in the bids, plus address the possible increase in construction costs since the original grant was proposed. The full cost will not be known until the bids are received, prior to Town Meeting, but after publication of this description. The amount of \$6,000 to be paid from the Unallocated Reserve and the amount of \$119,000 to be paid from the Historic Reserve.*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:
Community Preservation Committee:

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

ARTICLE 10: AMEND ZONING BYLAW – BYLAW CODIFICATION

To see if the Town will vote to recodify the Code of the Town of Groton, Chapter 218 Zoning according to the following Table of Contents:

- § 218-1 General Provisions
 - § 218-1.1 Authority and Title
 - § 218-1.2 Purposes
 - § 218-1.3 Basic Requirements
- §218-2 Administration
 - § 218-2.1 Enforcement
 - § 218-2.2 Building Permits
 - § 218-2.3 Special Permits
 - § 218-2.4 Board of Appeals
 - § 218-2.5 Site Plan Review
 - § 218-2.6 Repetitive Petitions
 - § 218-2.7 Violations and Penalties
 - § 218-2.8 Amendment
 - § 218-2.9 Effective Date
 - § 218-2.10 Conflict of Laws and Validity
 - § 218-2.11 Fees
- § 218-3 Definitions
- § 218-4 Zoning Districts.
 - § 218-4.1 Classes of Districts
 - § 218-4.2 Intention of Districts
 - § 218-4.3 Location of Districts
 - § 218-4.4 Boundaries of Districts
- § 218-5 Use Regulations
 - § 218-5.1 Basic Requirements
 - § 218-5.2 Schedule of Use Regulations
 - § 218-5.3 Accessory Uses
 - § 218-5.4 Special Use Considerations in Official Open-Space Districts
 - § 218-5.5 Special Use Considerations in R-B, VCB, NB, GB and I Districts
 - § 218-5.6 Conversion of Seasonal Residences
 - § 218-5.7 Nonconformance
 - § 218-5.8 Prohibited Uses
- § 218-6 Intensity Regulations
 - § 218-6.1 Basic Requirements
 - § 218-6.2 Schedule of Intensity Regulations
 - § 218-6.3 General Provisions
 - § 218-6.4 Hammerhead Lots
- § 218-7 Overlay Districts
 - § 218-7.1 Floodplain District Regulations
 - § 218-7.2 Water Resource Protection Overlay District
 - § 218-7.3 Town Center Overlay District
 - § 218-7.4 Recreational Overlay District
- § 218-8 General Regulations
 - § 218-8.1 Off-Street Parking and Loading

- § 218-8.2 Off-Site Off-Street Parking
- § 218-8.3 Appearance
- § 218-9 Special Residential Regulations
 - § 218-9.1 Flexible Development
 - § 218-9.2 Major Residential Development
 - § 218-9.3 Multifamily Use
 - § 218-9.4 Accessory Apartments
- § 218-10 Special Regulations
 - § 218-10.1 Personal Wireless Services Facilities
 - § 218-10.2 Wind Energy Conversion Facility
 - § 218-10.3 Large-Scale Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Facilities
 - § 218-10.4 Marijuana Establishments

or to take any other action relative thereto.

PLANNING BOARD

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *The Planning Board is proposing to recodify the existing Zoning Bylaw to make it more user-friendly. The bylaw has been amended over the years, in an additive fashion. The grouping of certain provisions, and the overall organization of the bylaw, is disjointed and difficult to follow. The Planning Board is attempting to reorganize the existing bylaw in a more logical manner that will make it easier to find specific information. The recodification involves regrouping the sections, and then renumbering the sections accordingly. There will be no changes to any of the existing provisions or requirements that are currently in effect. A copy of the proposed Zoning Bylaw recodification is available on the Town of Groton's website at: <https://www.grotonma.gov/>*

ARTICLE 11: ACCEPTANCE OF AMELIA WAY AS A TOWN WAY

To see if the Town will vote to accept Amelia Way as a public way, as recommended by the Planning Board and laid out by the Select Board and as shown on a plan entitled "Amelia Way Street Acceptance Plan in Groton, Massachusetts," prepared by Hannigan Engineering, Inc., Leominster, MA for Grand Coast Capital Group, Hingham, Massachusetts, dated January 16, 2018, and on file with the Town Clerk; to authorize the Select Board to acquire, by gift, purchase or eminent domain such land and easements for the creation, maintenance and operation of a public way, including but not limited to easements for access, grading, drainage, sloping, construction and utilities, in all or any portions of such way and the parcels on such way, or to take any other action relative thereto.

SELECT BOARD

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *To accept Amelia Way as a public way.*

ARTICLES 12 THROUGH 22 WILL BE PART OF THE CONSENT AGENDA. PLEASE SEE EXPLANATION PROVIDED BY THE TOWN MODERATOR AFTER ARTICLE 32.

ARTICLE 12: CURRENT YEAR LINE ITEM TRANSFERS

To see if the Town will vote to transfer certain sums of money within the Fiscal Year 2020 budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

SELECT BOARD

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Summary: *To transfer money within the Fiscal Year 2020 Budget should the need arise. A handout explaining any necessary transfers will be available at Town Meeting.*

ARTICLE 13: 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 2020 Snow and Ice Budget, as approved under Article 4 of the 2019 Spring Town Meeting, or to take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Summary: *This article will allow the Town to fund any deficit in the Snow and Ice Account in Fiscal Year 2020.*

ARTICLE 14: APPROPRIATION TO FUND TOWN FOREST EXPENSES

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum or sums of money from Receipts Reserved for the Town Forest to Town Forest Expenses, or to take any other action relative thereto.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen:
Finance Committee:

Summary: *The Town Forest Committee anticipates certain operational expenses to occur over the next several years and this appropriation allows a small amount of funds to be readily available for those expenses. The funds will remain in a special account and be used only for Town Forest operational expenditures.*

ARTICLE 15: TRANSFER WITHIN CENTER SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND

To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum or sums of money from the Center Sewer Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2020 Center Sewer Enterprise Department Budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

BOARD OF SEWER COMMISSIONERS

Select Board:
Finance Committee:
Sewer Commission:

Summary: *This article allows the Sewer Department to transfer money from its surplus account to cover any deficit in the Fiscal Year 2020 Center Sewer Budget. More information will be provided at Town Meeting to explain any transfer requested under this article.*

ARTICLE 16: TRANSFER WITHIN FOUR CORNERS SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND

To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum or sums of money from the Four Corners Sewer Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2020 Four Corners Sewer Enterprise Department budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

BOARD OF SEWER COMMISSIONERS

Select Board:
Finance Committee:
Sewer Commission:

Summary: *This article allows the Sewer Department to transfer money from its surplus account to cover any deficit in the Fiscal Year 2020 Four Corners Sewer Budget. More information will be provided at Town Meeting to explain any transfer requested under this article.*

ARTICLE 17: TRANSFER WITHIN CABLE ENTERPRISE FUND

To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum or sums of money from the Cable Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2020 Cable Enterprise Department budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Select Board:
Finance Committee:
Cable Advisory Committee:

Summary: *This article allows the Cable Advisory Committee to transfer money from its surplus account to cover any deficit in the Fiscal Year 2020 budget. More information will be provided at Town Meeting to explain any transfer requested under this article.*

ARTICLE 18: 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.

SELECT BOARD

Select Board:
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 19: 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 2021 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

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

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 2021 is \$482,891. To fund this, \$90,000 would be paid from the Open Space Reserve and \$392,891 would be paid from the Unallocated Reserve.*

ARTICLE 20: ESTABLISHING LIMITS FOR THE VARIOUS REVOLVING FUNDS

To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 44 sec 53E½ and the Revolving Fund Bylaw, to amend the Revolving Fund Bylaw to add or delete any revolving account and/or to set the FY 2021 spending limits for the various revolving funds as follows:

Program or Purpose	FY 2021 Spending Limit
Stormwater Management	\$20,000
Conservation Commission	\$50,000
Building Rental Fund	\$50,000
Affordable Housing Marketing	\$20,000
Home Recycling Equipment	\$10,000
Access for Persons with Disabilities	\$10,000
Boat Excise Tax Fund	\$ 5,000
Transfer Station Glass	\$10,000
Senior Center Fitness Equipment	\$10,000

or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *This Article sets the limit of annual spending for the various revolving funds authorized by previous Town Meeting vote and currently set forth in the Town's Bylaw for said purpose.*

ARTICLE 21: ACCEPT LAW INCREASING REAL ESTATE TAX EXEMPTIONS

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 59, §5C1/2, inserted by Section 14 of Chapter 62 of the Acts of 2014, for the purpose of increasing the real estate tax exemptions by 100 percent to all persons who qualify for property tax exemptions under Clauses 17, 17C, 17C1/2, 17D, 22, 22A, 22B, 22C, 22D, 22E, 22F, 22G, 37, 37A, 41, 41B, 41C, 41C½, 42, 43, 56 or 57 of G.L. c. 59, §5, or to take any other action relative thereto.

BOARD OF ASSESSORS

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Summary: *This article is geared toward 70+ seniors, surviving spouses (widows/widowers), legally blind persons and veterans with service-connected disabilities. It would increase the exemption under state statute up to 100% of the exemption. These state exemption programs all have different eligibility requirements (inquire within the Assessor's office for specific eligibility requirements) in order to receive the specific exemption and are designed to help the neediest within our community to continue to remain in their homes by helping to relieve some of the property tax burden.*

ARTICLE 22: ACCEPT PROVISIONS OF M.G.L., CHAPTER 59, §5, CLAUSE 22F

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 59, §5, clause 22F last paragraph, which, for clauses 22, 22A, 22B, 22C, 22D, 22E and 22F of section 5, allows the Town to reduce from five consecutive years to one year the residency requirement for, making certain veterans and their surviving spouses or parents, to be eligible for the property tax exemptions of said clauses 22 through 22F under Massachusetts General Laws, or to take any other action relative thereto.

BOARD OF ASSESSORS

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Summary: *M.G.L.Ch. 59, s.5, clause Twenty-Second F, Last Paragraph. Notwithstanding this section, in any city or town which accepts this clause, the exemptions available pursuant to clauses Twenty-second, Twenty-second A, Twenty-second B, Twenty-second C, Twenty-second D, Twenty-second E and Twenty-second F may be granted to otherwise eligible persons who have resided in the commonwealth for 1 year prior to the date of filing for exemptions pursuant to the applicable clause.*

Moderator's Consent Agenda to Save Time at Town Meeting

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 Select Board and Finance Committee. The warrant identifies which articles are proposed for the consent agenda. If the articles in the consent agenda changes prior to Town Meeting but after the printing of the warrant, voters will be advised at Town Meeting.

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 and be prepared to speak to the article later in the meeting.

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 be ready to state which article(s) they wish to hold for individual consideration

Any voter with questions about Town Meeting procedure may call Town Moderator Jason Kauppi at (978) 391-4506 or email him at moderator@townofgroton.org.