

## FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Approved Meeting Minutes  
Monday, March 29, 2021 @ 6:00 P.M.  
Virtual Meeting

BROADCAST ON ZOOM AND THE GROTON CHANNEL  
PURSUANT TO GOVENOR'S EXECUTIVE ORDER  
CONCERNING THE OPEN MEETING LAW  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84011103898>  
WEBINAR ID: 840 1110 3898  
Approved as Amended 7/12/21

**FinCom Members Virtually Present:** Bud Robertson, Chair; Gary Green, Vice Chair; Arthur Prest, David Manugian, Mary Linskey, Clerk; Scott Whitefield, Colby Doody

**Also Virtually Present:** Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Patricia Dufresne, Town Accountant; M. Gilbert, GDRSD Committee Chair, K. Lindemer, Resident Property Owner

6:00 P.M. Chairman Bud Robertson called his respective meeting to order.

### Taking Positions on Spring Town Meeting Warrant Articles

#### Article 12 GRANT EASEMENT FOR SEWER CONNECTION-227 BOSTON ROAD.

B. Robertson discussed Article 12 by describing the Grant Easement for a sewerage disposal line that will run from the Lindemer property on 227 Boston Road and connect to the Groton Sewer line located across the street from Johnsons. K. Lindemer proposes drilling a hole 5 feet under the current pipe, which is located under the trees. There will be no disturbances to the golf course. The applicant will be able to build a barn, or condos which would allow for earned income. The Town itself will benefit from the additional taxes and the manhole at no cost.

K. Lindemer stated that the easement is estimated at 1200 square feet and is entirely in the outer bound area under the trees. He stated when the manhole is complete it will provide access for future development and will be fully paid by private funds. The line will be under ground and as mentioned there will be no interruption to the golf course. K. Lindemer discussed heavily researching for similar grants of easement where a private line is under the surface of Town owned property and has not found any examples. The Lindemers have spoken with an appraiser who said that this request is the first one in thirty years. As of right now they are trying to receive an appraisal and debating how to proceed.

B. Robertson stated that the cost for the easement is required to be negotiated. The Select Board will wait this out because there is no concrete information. For any future easements a driveway could go right over it due to the line being below existing grade surfaces. The other concern is the decrease in value if the Golf Course were to ever be

sold. B. Robertson does not foresee the Town selling the property and it ever being an issue.

D. Manugian stated that he researched this Article and agreed there are very few known cases. He explained the access to 119 is technically possible, however, is very expensive. K. Lindemer stated the State Highway Department required soil boring every 300 feet to prevent hitting rock. The State HD also restricted the pipe to one size. D. Manugian stated if the Article passes at Town Meeting the Select Board can begin negotiations. Also, questioning if there is any public interest to create an opportunity for development making the proposal more compelling. With more public interest there might not be a requirement for a full appraisal. K. Lindemer stated there is a requirement for negotiations for the easement and reiterated that he is not purchasing the property, just the easement.

G. Green questioned whether if the drilling hits rock and must stop, will the applicant be responsible for returning the land back to its original state. K. Lindemer replied that drilling will commence next to his parcel and after speaking with an engineer they are very confident that they will not encounter ledge. There is also a B plan be for any challenges that may arise. G. Green then questioned if the project would be connecting to the Center Sewer District and if any additional capacity would be used. K. Lindemer noted that he had spoken with the Sewer Commission and was told that there is more than enough capacity for what they are requesting. G. Green was concerned that there would not be enough remaining capacity for other projects in the future. K. Lindemer stated that Sewer Commission approved the design and the extension of the Sewer District back in the fall. D. Manugian questioned whether being an individual property owner has it made it more difficult to deal with the Massachusetts DOT (rather than as a representative of the Sewer District). K. Lindemer clarified that it was the Sewer District and explained that DOT would be more hesitant about a private system.

G. Green stated that he believes Article 12 is less about the revenue and more about the down-side risks, there are always a lot of "unknowns." B. Robertson disagreed and stressed the revenue the Town would gain from taxes. K. Lindemer stated that they would be responsible for any maintenance from the line to the manhole cover. D. Manugian agrees with G. Green's concern, however, the FinCom is only advancing the Lindemers the opportunity to build and is not endorsing the sale, stating we are here to make sure that the applicant can go to Town Hall and receive a good faith negotiation. S. Whitefield questioned if the FinCom is changing their policy to take position on this Article when there is no financial impact on the Town currently. D. Manugian stated that it is worthwhile to identify the Article as having a possible strong financial impact. A. Prest commented that he supports this with the possibilities of the increased taxes.

*Upon a motion by D. Manugian, seconded by M. Linskey, it was: Voted to approve article 12 as written. The motion passed by a roll call vote: (Aye- BR, AP, DM, ML, SW Defer: GG, CD) (5-0-2)*

## **Article 7      CPA RECOMMENDATION MIDDLE SCHOOL TRACK**

Marlena Gilbert discussed the Building Committee request to include the track as part of the construction project due to it being a community asset. After analyzing multiple locations such as Prescott, The Country Club, and Deluxe for the new school and taking into consideration the challenges of traffic, security, pick up, and drop off, they decided the best option was to push the school back further on its current location. In the

process the existing track would be destroyed. She noted that the recent expense on resurfacing the track would be fully returned by the time the project is completed. M. Gilbert explained that the CPA funds would match at least 40% of the \$1.4 million being requested and is a significant amount of money being saved by the tax payers. The match could also increase up to 60% over the following years. M. Gilbert stated that the project is trying to maximize state funds. If CPC Article 7 passes first, it will decrease the amount of the construction project from \$77.9 million to \$76.5 million; if Article 7 does not pass then Article 8 will include authorization for the full \$77.9 million.

*Upon a motion by D. Manugian, seconded by A. Prest, it was: Voted to approve Article 7 as written. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote: (Aye: BR, DM, AP, ML, SW, GG, CD). (7-0-0)*

#### **Article 8 FLORENCE ROCHE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CONSTRUCTIONS**

Marlena Gilbert stated if the school construction article does not pass a second article is not required. A. Prest stated based on the presentation submitted that he supports Article 8, even though costly, the school is necessary based on the current conditions.

*Upon a motion by D. Manugian, seconded by A. Prest, it was: Voted to approve article 8 as written. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote: (Aye: AP, BR, DM, ML, SW, GG, CD). (7-0-0)*

G. Green commented that the school needs to be addressed and that the School Building Committee is doing a great job. This project will likely be painful for our senior citizen population who are on a fixed income. M. Gilbert stated that the Select Board is working on mitigating this but we need to get out in the Town and educate residents and explain what it means if the articles does not pass.

#### **Article 1 HEAR REPORTS**

Finance Committee takes no position

#### **Article 2 ELECTED OFFICIALS' COMPENSATION SCHEDULE**

*Upon a motion by D. Manugian, seconded by A. Prest, it was: Voted to approve article 2 as written. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote: (Aye: AP, BR, DM, ML, SW, GG, CD). (7-0-0)*

#### **Article 3 WAGE AND CLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE**

*Upon a motion by D. Manugian seconded by A. Prest, it was: Voted to approve Article 3 as written. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote: (Aye: BR, DM, AP, ML, SW, GG, CD). (7-0-0)*

#### **Article 4 APPROPRIATE FY 2022 CONTRIBUTION TO THE OPEB TRUST**

*Upon a motion by D. Manugian, seconded by A. Prest, it was: Voted to approve Article 4 as written. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote: (Aye: BR, DM, PA, ML, SW, GG, CD). (7-0-0)*

#### **Article 5 FISCAL YEAR 2022 ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET**

B. Robertson explained that the two items that were adjusted in the Operating Budget showed the cost for restoring a patrol officer back to the force. \$70,000 was listed for the salary and an additional \$20,000 was noted for providing health insurance. G. Green questioned the Pros and Cons of hiring a new police officer versus using existing employees for overtime. B. Robertson stated he, Michael Luth, and Josh Degen, researched the difference between the two. The total overtime cost calculated to \$105,000 and hiring a brand-new officer came out to \$120,000. M. Luth, Chief of Police, was concerned with employees being tired and overworked, and it was unacceptable not to meet the public safety standards while being understaffed. The police department's budget had originally funded 18 officers and it made more sense to add the additional full time officer. G. Green clarified that the net dollar difference would be \$15,000.

*Upon a motion by D. Manugian, seconded by A. Prest, it was: Voted to approve Article 5 as written. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote: (Aye: BR, DM, AP, ML, SW, GG, CD). (7-0-0)*

#### **Article 6 FISCAL YEAR 2022 CAPITAL BUDGET**

Item #1 Engine 1 Refurbishment - no discussion

Item #2 Dump Truck

B. Robertson explained that the FY18 Dump Truck note was \$40,000 each year for 5 years. \$20,000 would be transferred from the Tractor Trailer budget (which will be fully paid off in FY22) to allow for that Dump Truck to be paid down sooner. M. Haddad stated he updated the Warrant to separate the two Dump Trucks: 2a. \$60,000 to pay off the FY18 Dump Truck and 2b. To authorize a bond of \$185,000 for the new FY23 truck. The first payment on that note will not be made until FY23 although the borrowing authorization is included on this warrant.

Item #3 IT Infrastructure -- no discussion

Item #4 Municipal Building Repairs- no discussion

Item #5 Tractor Trailer Unit – no discussion

Item #6 Reconstruct Library Parking Lot – no discussion

Item #7 Property Improvements

D. Manugian explained that there were multiple questions raised regarding the capital budget being the most ideal way to provide funds for the Park Commission compared to appropriating as part of the operating budget. The Park Commission identified some ongoing activities and in the future they will develop a more detailed plan. G. Green questioned if the \$25,000 is a justifiable

amount and agrees that the Park Commission should present with a more detailed plan.

Item #8 Golf Carts

B. Robertson led a discussion focused on updating the Country Club's gas-powered golf carts with an environmentally sound alternative (electric). M. Haddad had explained previously that electric carts cost more and require a charging station. Large expenditures would come from acquiring the necessary infrastructure and creating an electric strategy. G. Green questioned if the \$25,000 being requested would purchase a new set of carts and when the last lease was paid off. B. Robertson explained that it is a 5-year lease at \$25,000 per year, with the previous lease ended in FY20 leaving the Town with no payment in FY21. G. Green and S. Whitfield questioned what would happen if the lease is terminated early. B. Robertson assumed there would be a penalty as in a car lease. B. Robertson explained he would love to "go green," however, there are two considerations: 1. Can the carts qualify for the Green Community Fund and what is the time frame for applying for the grant? 2. The concern of presenting at the Town Meeting and requesting additional money for the Country Club when the Club has historically struggled to break-even. It was pointed out that the carts are needed sooner rather than later. M. Linskey commented that it is a great idea to be green but at this point in time, does the Town want to take this on without knowing the financial impact of Covid-19 for the current year. S. Whitefield stated owning green carts would be nice but is not necessary. G. Green commented that there are many problems in this world to be addressed and if the Town has the opportunity to move forward and improve the environment then we should proceed; the bigger issue is being locked into a 5-year lease.

Item #9 Cart Path/Tee Box repairs – no discussion

Item #10 Country Club Roof – no discussion

Item #11 Police Cruisers - no discussion

*Upon a motion by D. Manugian, seconded by S. Whitefield, it was: Voted to approve items 1,3,4,5, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 11 as written, items 2a and 2b as amended by M. Haddad in his email of 03/29/21. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote: (Aye: BR, DM, AP, ML, SW, GG, CD). (7-0-0)*

S. Whitefield questioned if the Town can research shorter cart leases, and then work to develop a plan to implement greener carts even if it may cost more. G. Green requested deferring item 8 to the Town Meeting to receive other recommendations and identify what is monetarily acceptable.

*Upon a motion by D. Manugian, seconded by B. Robertson, it was: Voted to approve item 8 as written. The motion did NOT carry and was deferred by a roll call vote: (Defer: BR, DM, AP, ML, SW, GG, CD). (0-0-7)*

**Article 9 ENGINEERING FUNDS -WHITNEY POND TREATMENT FACILITY**

**Article 10 ENGINEERING WHITNEY POND WELL**

*Without a detailed discussion, the FinCom unanimously agreed to support Articles 9 and 10 (Engineering Funds for Whitney Pond Projects) for Town Meeting. (7-0-0)*

**Article 11 EXTEND GROTON CENTER SEWER DISTRICT**

The FinCom questioned if Article 11 was being pulled. M. Haddad confirmed that Article 11 had been pulled.

**Article 13 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FUNDING ACCOUNTS**

*Without a detailed discussion, the FinCom unanimously agreed to support Article 13 for Town Meeting. (7-0-0)*

**Article 14 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS**

CPC Proposal A Maintenance and Mausoleum Restoration – no discussion

CPC Proposal B Field and Recreation Feasibility Study – no discussion

CPC Proposal C Non-Point Sources of Pollution

A. Prest explained that in 2017 he completed a study as Chairmen of the Lost Lake Watershed Advisory Committee where they had identified two sources of phosphates, one being at Martins Pond Brook and another on a small stream. The next step is to be able to identify where the non-point sources of pollution are located throughout the Town. In 2015 the State of Massachusetts and New Hampshire both outlawed the use of phosphates in fertilizer. It still can be found in pigs, horses, and cows. A. Prest also stated in 2017 there were no opportunities for Federal money to mitigate whereas those funds are now available to the Town.

CPC Proposal D Site Assessment Study -deferred to town meeting

B. Robertson stated the Select Board Meeting discussed Proposal D in large and voted down the Site Assessment Study. (1-0-4) G. Green commented that they do not have any specific parcels listed and the requested \$150,000 is a significant amount of money for a Site Assessment Study. B. Robertson explained the requested amount is for potential parcels. The FinCom agreed to request more information and deferred Proposal D to the Town Meeting.

CPC Proposal E Squannacook River Rail Trail – no discussion

CPC Proposal F Duck Pond Restoration, Phase 2 – no discussion

CPC Proposal G Housing Coordinator – no discussion

CPC Proposal H Groton Dunstable Field Restoration Plan – no discussion

CPC Proposal I Conservation Fund FY 2022

G. Green questioned the amount requested by the Conservation Committee and why it was so high. P. Dufresne explained that the Conservation Committee received \$221,000 last fall and depleted their funds when they purchased a large property. They are currently trying to rebuild their balance.

CPC Proposal J Multi Use Recreational Courts

G. Green questioned the number of tennis and basketball courts. B. Robertson stated that there are 3 tennis courts currently in poor condition. This project proposes to restore one of the tennis courts, and use the others to create pickle ball courts and half a basketball court. B. Robertson commented that the Country Club agreed to maintain the courts. D. Manugian questioned if there was lighting at the courts. B. Robertson was unsure.

CPC Proposal K Original Interior Skylight Restoration

*Upon a motion by D. Manugian, seconded by B. Robertson, it was: Voted to approve Proposals A, B, C, E, F, G, H, I, J, K in Article 14 as written. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote: (Aye: BR, DM, AP, ML, SW, GG, CD)*

*Proposal D was deferred to Town Meeting*

**Article 15 AMEND ZONING BYLAW- MEDICAL MARIJUANA**

Finance Committee takes no position

**Article 16 AMEND ZONING BYLAW-CLARIFICATIONS**

Finance Committee takes no position

**Article 17 BYLAW PROHIBITING USE OF POLYSTYRENE CONTAINERS**

Finance Committee takes no position

**Article 18 CITIZENS PETITION- TRANSFER CONTROL OF LAND**

Finance Committee takes no position

**Article 19 CURENT YEAR LINE-ITEM TRANSFERS**

Postponed Indefinitely

**Article 20 APPROPRIATE MONEY TO OFFSET SNOW AND ICE DEFECIT**

Postponed Indefinitely

**Article 21 TRANSFER WITHIN WATER ENTERPRISE FUND**

**Article 22      TRANSFER WITHIN CENTER SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND**

**Article 23      TRANSFER WITHIN FOUR CORNERS SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND**

**Article 24      TRANSFER WITHIN CABLE ENTERPRISE FUND**

*Upon a motion by D. Manugian, seconded by M. Linskey, it was: Voted to approve Articles 21, 22, 23, and 24 as written. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote: (Aye: BR, DM, AP ML, SW, GG, CD). (7-0-0)*

**Article 25      PRIOR YEAR BILLS**

G. Green questioned if the prior year bills were paid. P. Dufresne stated that the \$862.50 will be paid when it is approved at the Town Meeting. D. Manugian questioned the difference between Article 25 and Article 26. P. Dufresne explained that there is an actual invoice for Article 25 and will be paid out of free cash. Whereas Article 26 is a grant deficit for which the State disallowed funding of a portion of FY20 expenses. Article 27 is very similar: the fire department paid an officer for a detail that ended up being uncollectible from the company requesting that detail.

**Article 26      AUTHORIZATION TO TRANSFER MONEY FROM FREE CASH**

**Article 27      AUTHORIZATION TO TRANSFER MONEY FROM FREE CASH**

*Upon a motion by G. Green, seconded by D. Manugian, it was: Voted to approve Articles 25, 26, and 27 as written. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote: (Aye: BR, DM, AP, ML, SW, GG, CD). (7-0-0)*

**Article 28      DEBT SERVICE FOR SURRENDEN FARMS**

*Upon a motion by D. Manugian, seconded by S. Whitefield, it was: Voted to approve Article 28 as written. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote: (Aye: BR, DM, AP ML, SW, GG, CD). (7-0-0)*

G. Green questioned if the Surrenden Farms debt service was always funded by the CPC. P. Dufresne answered yes, it was always funded by CPC but the request is usually positioned toward the back of the warrant rather than with the other CPC projects.

**Article 29      ASSESSORS QUINQUENNIAL CERTIFICATION**

**Article 30      ESTABALISHING LIMITS FOR THE VARIOUS REVOLVING FUNDS**

**Article 31      ACCEPT LAW INCREASING REAL ESTATE TAX EXEMPTIONS**

**Article 32      ACCEPT PROVISIONS OF MGL chapter Accept Provisions of MGL Chapter 59 CLAUSE 22F**

*Upon a motion by D. Manugian, seconded by B. Robertson, it was: Voted to approve Articles 29, 30, 31, 32 as written. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote: (Aye: BR, DM, AP, ML, SW, GG, CD). (7-0-0)*



### **Comments on Joint Budget Message (FinCom/Town Mgr.)**

B. Robertson recommended that the FinCom read the Joint Budget Message and submit any comments to M. Haddad within the next couple days.

### **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

*Upon a motion by A. Prest, seconded by D. Manugian, it was: Voted to approve the meeting minutes for February 1, 2021 as written. The motion passed by a roll call vote: (Aye: BR, DM, AP, ML, SW, GG, CD). The motion passed unanimously. (7-0-0)*

*Upon a motion by D. Manugian, seconded by B. Robertson, it was: Voted to approve the meeting minutes for March 1, 2021 as written. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote: (Aye: BR, DM, AP, ML, SW, GG, CD.). (7-0-0)*

*Upon a motion by A. Prest, seconded by M. Linskey, it was: Voted to approve the meeting minutes for March 15, 2021 as written. The motion passed by a roll call vote: (Aye: BR, AP, ML, SW, GG, CD) D. Manugian-abstain (6-0-1)*

### **FinCom meeting Schedule**

The next FinCom meeting is scheduled for April 12, 2021 at 6:00 P.M.

### **Adjournment**

B. Robertson officially adjourned the meeting at 8:02 P.M.

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Kristine Fox (Per Diem Minute Taker)*

# **BUDGET MESSAGE FROM THE TOWN MANAGER AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

## **TOWN OF GROTON FISCAL YEAR 2022**

Pursuant to Article 6 "Finance and Fiscal Procedure", Section 6.4 "The Budget", of the Charter of the Town of Groton, Massachusetts, the Finance Committee, Select Board and Town Manager are pleased to submit for your consideration the Proposed Fiscal Year 2022 Operating Budget for the Town of Groton. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Town has had to take extraordinary action to provide a Balanced Budget to the 2021 Spring Town Meeting that continues to provide the same level of services with a Budget that has seen its revenues significantly impacted by the Pandemic. Receipts and Other Revenue Sources were reduced for Fiscal Year 2021, resulting in these revenues for Fiscal Year 2021 being budgeted below Fiscal Year 2020 by \$30,235. While it is expected that the Town will see a slight rebound and have increased them for Fiscal Year 2022, the Finance Committee, Select Board and Town Manager are concerned that if the COVID-19 Pandemic does not continue to improve, these increases may not materialize.

In accordance with the Groton Charter and the Town's Financial Policies, in October, 2020, the Finance Committee and Select Board issued the following guidance to the Town Manager prior to the development of the initial Proposed Operating Budget:

1. The Town Manager shall prepare a balanced budget for Fiscal Year 2022 with no proposed Override of Proposition 2½.
2. There shall be no increase in the Municipal Budget for Fiscal Year 2022.
3. It shall be level funded at the Fiscal Year 2021 level of \$15,175,486 without In-Levy Debt Service and \$15,521,525 including In-Levy Debt Service.
4. The Town Manager shall work with representatives of the Groton Dunstable Regional School District and Nashoba Valley Technical School District to balance the budget.
5. There shall be no new benefited positions proposed in the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget as the hiring freeze shall remain in effect.
6. Depending on how the budget is balanced, the Select Board and Finance Committee have acknowledged that Free Cash may have to be used to maintain services.

As stated above, the COVID-19 Pandemic has made the process of developing estimated revenues for Fiscal Year 2022 the most difficult the Town has faced. Based on sound financial policies and a complete review of revenues over the last ten years, the Finance Committee and Town Manager have developed the following estimated revenues for Fiscal Year 2022:

<u>Revenue Source</u>	<u>Budgeted FY 2021</u>	<u>Proposed FY 2022</u>	<u>Dollar Change</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Property Tax**	\$ 32,985,370	\$ 34,074,005	\$ 1,088,635	3.30%
State Aid	\$ 950,546	\$ 1,002,840	\$ 52,294	5.50%
Local Receipts - Excluding Country Club	\$ 3,599,341	\$ 3,890,312	\$ 290,971	8.08%
Country Club Revenue	\$ 491,939	\$ 600,000	\$ 108,061	21.97%
Enterprise Fund Reimbursement for Benefits	\$ 256,264	\$ 271,148	\$ 14,884	5.81%
Free Cash	\$ 341,505	\$ 367,679	\$ 26,174	7.66%
Other Available Funds <i>EMS</i>	\$ 300,000	\$ 300,000	\$ -	0.00%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 38,924,965</b>	<b>\$ 40,505,984</b>	<b>\$ 1,581,019</b>	<b>4.06%</b>

\*\*Includes 2½ percent increase allowed by law and \$15 million in new growth.

In developing the level funded budget pursuant to the guidance, the Town Manager and Finance Team conducted a thorough review of all submitted budgets. The Town's Department Heads continue to do an amazing job creating and presenting their budgets. While some increases in the budget are considered discretionary, there are two line items in the budget that the Town had no choice but to fund. Due to the decision to provide full-time 24-hour coverage at the Fire Department, the Town added four (4) new Group 4 Employees. This has required the Pension Budget to increase by 14.11%, or \$294,966. Ordinarily, this budget increases by approximately 5.6% annually. Fiscal Year 2022 is the worst possible year to absorb such an increase, but the Town has no choice but to fund it at the required level. Health Insurance is another budget that requires the Town to fund at the required level. Based on a four (4%) percent increase in rates, this Budget has increased by \$83,064, or 4.82%. These two accounts alone have required an increase in spending of \$378,030. Therefore, in order to meet the Budget Guidance, this amount needed to be reduced from the Fiscal Year 2021 approved Budget.

In addition to the Pension and Health Insurance Budgets, there are some areas of the budget that the Finance Committee and Town Manager would like to call to your attention as you review the Proposed Fiscal Year 2022 Operating Budget. First, the Town has seven (7) Collective Bargaining Units. All Contracts were up for renegotiation in Fiscal Year 2022. In order to meet the Guidance and deal with the mandatory increases, the Town needed to level fund all salary and wage line items that would require tax revenues to fund. Over the last several years, the Town and the Unions have formed a strong partnership. The Unions have always worked cooperatively with the Town to meet the Town's financial challenges. This year was no different. All seven (7) Unions agreed to freeze their salaries in Fiscal Year 2022 in exchange for a one-time cash bonus of 1.5% that can be paid for from the Town's Excess and Deficiency Fund ("Free Cash"). This amounted to a transfer of \$98,611 from Free Cash to meet this obligation. The Finance Committee and Town Manager would like to take this opportunity to thank our employees and the individual Unions for their continued cooperation and willingness to work with the Town. Without this partnership and cooperation, balancing the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget would have been even more challenging.

Second, the Town experienced a significant increase in Excluded Debt in Fiscal Year 2021 as it was the first full year on the new DPW Facility and the Library Roof. For Fiscal Year 2022, Municipal Excluded Debt will increase from \$1,473,787 to \$1,541,752, an increase of \$67,965 or 4.6%. Excluded Debt from the Groton Dunstable Regional School District will decrease by \$163,071, or 25% from \$648,497 to \$485,426. Overall, Excluded Debt will decrease in Fiscal Year 2022 by \$95,106, or 4.5% from \$2,122,284 to \$2,027,178. In addition, the Town is continuing with its practice to stabilize debt service within the Levy Limit at approximately \$250,000 annually. In Fiscal Year 2022, the Town continues to follow the plan by using the Excess and Deficiency ("Free Cash") Account to pay down the Principal and Interest on the Police and Fire Radio Project with the intent of paying that off in FY 2025. Last year, the Budget called for a transfer from Free Cash of \$91,574 for this purpose and committed \$254,465 from taxation to cover non-excluded Debt Service. In Fiscal Year 2022, the Town we will continue to use Free Cash for the Police and Fire Radio Project (\$91,974). The following chart shows a comparison between FY 2021 and FY 2022:

	<u>FY 2021</u>	<u>FY 2022</u>
Long Term Debt - Principal Non-Excluded	\$ 159,394	\$ 159,154
Long Term Debt - Interest Non-Excluded	\$ 95,071	\$ 88,007
Short Term Debt - Principal	\$ 85,174	\$ 85,174
Short Term Debt - Interest	<u>\$ 6,400</u>	<u>\$ 6,800</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 346,039</b>	<b>\$ 339,135</b>
Less Free Cash Offset	\$ 91,574	\$ 91,974
<b>Total Taxation for Debt Service</b>	<b>\$ 254,465</b>	<b>\$ 247,161</b>

Third and final, the collaboration between the Town of Groton and the Groton Dunstable Regional School District continues to be strong. The relationship between the Finance Committee, Select Board, Town Manager and the Groton Dunstable Regional School District is one of strong collaboration and respect. This collaboration was very important in balancing the Fiscal Year 2022 Operating Budget. In an effort to assist both Groton and Dunstable in meeting budgetary challenges, for the third year in a row, the District School Committee voted to use their Excess and Deficiency Fund to offset increases in their operational assessment for Fiscal Year 2022. This has allowed the Town of Groton to fund the proposed Operating Assessment without either a further reduction in the Municipal Budget or an override of Proposition 2½. The proposed Operating Assessment from the Groton Dunstable Regional School District for Fiscal Year 2022 is \$23,481,350, an increase of \$1,460,755, or 6.63%.

With regard to the Nashoba Valley Regional Technical High School, the Town has been informed that the number of Groton students attending the School has increased from 38 to 46. This is a substantial increase that will require a significant increase in the Nashoba Tech Assessment. The proposed Assessment for Nashoba Tech is \$807,474, an increase of \$119,201, or 17.32%

Section 6-5 of the Groton Charter requires the Finance Committee to provide a report that details the differences between the Town Manager's Proposed Budget and their final Proposed Budget. The primary adjustments to the original budget submitted by the Town Manager were for collective bargaining (as discussed above), restoring funding for a Police Officer position in the Police Budget and

an increase in the Liability Insurance Budget to reflect a high number of claims over the past three years. The following Chart shows the differences between the budget received by the Finance Committee from the Town Manager on December 31, 2020 and the budget that will be proposed to the 2021 Spring Town Meeting:

<u>Line</u>	<u>Department/Description</u>	<u>Original Proposed</u>	<u>Committee Approved</u>
1030	Town Manager Salaries	\$ 226,111	\$ 227,220
1031	Town Manager Wages	\$ 112,786	\$ 115,172
1050	Town Accountant Salaries	\$ 95,021	\$ 96,408
1051	Town Accountant Wages	\$ 49,873	\$ 50,865
1060	Board of Assessors Salaries	\$ 78,581	\$ 80,000
1061	Board of Assessors Wages	\$ 64,728	\$ 61,763
1071	Treasurer/Tax Collector Wages	\$ 114,246	\$ 115,693
1090	Human Resources Salary	\$ 81,598	\$ 82,822
1100	Information Technology Salary	\$ 113,491	\$ 115,193
1101	Information Technology Wages	\$ 61,095	\$ 62,317
1130	Town Clerk Salaries	\$ 89,510	\$ 90,853
1131	Town Clerk Wages	\$ 63,982	\$ 65,205
1160	Insurance & Bonding	\$ 250,000	\$ 290,000
1200	Conservation Commission Salary	\$ 68,454	\$ 69,481
1210	Planning Board Salaries	\$ 82,774	\$ 84,016
1220	Zoning Board of Appeals Wages	\$ 20,607	\$ 21,017
1240	Building Inspector Salaries	\$ 92,000	\$ 93,380
1241	Building Inspector Wages	\$ 55,395	\$ 56,503
1300	Police Department Salaries	\$ 265,916	\$ 269,791
1301	Police Department Wages	\$ 1,891,089	\$ 1,981,381
1310	Fire Department Salaries	\$ 235,403	\$ 238,928
1311	Fire Department Wages	\$ 988,064	\$ 997,893
1370	Police & Fire Communications Wages	\$ 408,978	\$ 423,552
1400	Nashoba Tech Operating Assessment	\$ 828,273	\$ 807,474
1410	GDRSD Operating Expenses	\$ 23,440,050	\$ 23,481,350
1414	GDRSD Capital Assessment	\$ 519,078	\$ 217,298
1500	Highway Department Salaries	\$ 112,216	\$ 113,877
1501	Highway Department Wages	\$ 636,449	\$ 656,364
1540	Municipal Buildings Wages	\$ 147,363	\$ 149,751
1600	Council on Aging Salaries	\$ 79,554	\$ 80,747
1601	Council on Aging Wages	\$ 70,819	\$ 72,429
1610	Senior Center Wages	\$ 52,091	\$ 52,530
1660	Library Salary	\$ 408,050	\$ 412,593
1661	Library Wages	\$ 276,295	\$ 279,389
1700	Groton Country Club Salary	\$ 159,524	\$ 162,214
3010	Employee Benefits Health Insurance	\$ 1,850,268	\$ 1,805,544

<u>Line</u>	<u>Department/Description</u>	<u>Original Proposed</u>	<u>Committee Approved</u>
1030	Town Manager Salaries	\$ 226,111	\$ 227,220
1031	Town Manager Wages	\$ 112,786	\$ 115,172
1050	Town Accountant Salaries	\$ 95,021	\$ 96,408
1051	Town Accountant Wages	\$ 49,873	\$ 50,865
1060	Board of Assessors Salaries	\$ 78,581	\$ 80,000
1061	Board of Assessors Wages	\$ 64,728	\$ 61,763
1071	Treasurer/Tax Collector Wages	\$ 114,246	\$ 115,693
1090	Human Resources Salary	\$ 81,598	\$ 82,822
1100	Information Technology Salary	\$ 113,491	\$ 115,193
1101	Information Technology Wages	\$ 61,095	\$ 62,317
1130	Town Clerk Salaries	\$ 89,510	\$ 90,853
1131	Town Clerk Wages	\$ 63,982	\$ 65,205
1160	Insurance & Bonding	\$ 250,000	\$ 290,000
1200	Conservation Commission Salary	\$ 68,454	\$ 69,481
1210	Planning Board Salaries	\$ 82,774	\$ 84,016
1220	Zoning Board of Appeals Wages	\$ 20,607	\$ 21,017
1240	Building Inspector Salaries	\$ 92,000	\$ 93,380
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1661	Library Wages	\$ 276,295	\$ 279,389
1700	Groton Country Club Salary	\$ 159,524	\$ 162,214
3010	Employee Benefits Health Insurance	\$ 1,850,268	\$ 1,805,544
		\$ 34,089,732	\$ 33,981,013
			\$ (108,719)

The following is a breakdown of the Finance Committee's Proposed Fiscal Year 2022 Operating Budget by function:

<u>Category</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>	<u>FY 2022</u>	<u>Dollar Difference</u>	<u>Percentage Change</u>
General Government	\$ 2,197,833	\$ 2,153,410	\$ (44,423)	-2.02%
Land Use	\$ 448,055	\$ 452,856	\$ 4,801	1.07%
Protection of Persons and Property	\$ 4,395,632	\$ 4,362,268	\$ (33,364)	-0.76%
Department of Public Works	\$ 2,294,853	\$ 2,202,359	\$ (92,494)	-4.03%
Library and Citizen Services	\$ 1,695,650	\$ 1,660,560	\$ (35,090)	-2.07%
<b>Sub-Total - Wages and Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 11,032,023</b>	<b>\$ 10,831,453</b>	<b>\$ (200,570)</b>	<b>-1.82%</b>
Debt Service	\$ 1,819,826	\$ 1,880,887	\$ 61,061	3.36%
Employee Benefits	\$ 4,143,463	\$ 4,516,593	\$ 373,130	9.01%
<b>Sub-Total - All Municipal</b>	<b>\$ 16,995,312</b>	<b>\$ 17,228,933</b>	<b>\$ 233,621</b>	<b>1.37%</b>
Nashoba Tech	\$ 688,273	\$ 807,474	\$ 119,201	17.32%
Groton-Dunstable Operating	\$ 22,020,595	\$ 23,481,350	\$ 1,460,755	6.63%
Groton-Dunstable Excluded Debt	\$ 648,497	\$ 485,426	\$ (163,071)	-25.15%
Groton-Dunstable Debt	\$ 58,147	\$ 56,358	\$ (1,789)	-3.08%
Groton Dunstable Capital	\$ 265,172	\$ 217,298	\$ (47,874)	-18.05%
<b>Sub-Total - Education</b>	<b>\$ 23,680,684</b>	<b>\$ 25,047,906</b>	<b>\$ 1,367,222</b>	<b>5.77%</b>
<b>Grand Total - Town Budget</b>	<b>\$ 40,675,996</b>	<b>\$ 42,276,839</b>	<b>\$ 1,600,843</b>	<b>3.94%</b>

The total Fiscal Year 2022 Proposed Operating Budget, including Regional School Assessments and excluded debt, is \$42,276,839 or an increase of 3.94%. This proposed balanced budget is slightly under the anticipated FY 2022 Proposition 2½ Levy Limit. When you take into consideration the proposed Capital Budget, Enterprise Fund Budgets and additional appropriations raised on the recap sheet, the total proposed balanced budget is \$45,747,197. The Fiscal Year 2021 Tax Rate has been certified at \$17.60. Based on the Proposed Balanced Budget, the estimated Tax Rate in Fiscal Year 2022 is \$18.09, or an increase of \$0.49. In Fiscal Year 2021, the average Tax Bill in the Town of Groton (based on a home valued at \$507,000) is \$8,923. Under this proposed balanced budget, that same homeowner can expect a tax bill of \$9,172 or an increase of \$249. The following chart shows a comparison between FY 2021 and FY 2022:

	<u>Actual</u> <u>FY 2021</u>	<u>Proposed</u> <u>FY 2022</u>	<u>Dollar</u> <u>Change</u>	<u>Percent</u> <u>Change</u>
Levy Capacity Used*	\$ 32,727,034	\$ 34,074,005	\$ 1,346,971	4.12%
Tax Rate on Levy Capacity Used	\$ 16.53	\$ 17.07	\$ 0.54	3.27%
Average Tax Bill	\$ 8,381	\$ 8,654	\$ 274	3.27%
Excluded Debt	\$ 2,122,284	\$ 2,025,303	\$ (96,981)	-4.57%
Tax Rate on Excluded Debt	\$ 1.07	\$ 1.02	\$ (0.05)	-4.67%
Average Tax Bill	\$ 542	\$ 517	\$ (25)	-4.67%
Final Levy Used	\$ 34,849,318	\$ 36,099,308	\$ 1,249,990	3.59%
Final Tax Rate	\$ 17.60	\$ 18.09	\$ 0.49	2.78%
Average Tax Bill	\$ 8,923	\$ 9,172	\$ 249	2.80%

\*The FY 2022 Levy Limit includes FY 2021 unexpended tax capacity of \$280,997 and \$15 million in New Growth.

The Town Manager and Finance Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank the Select Board, Town Accountant Patricia DuFresne, Town Treasurer/Collector Michael Hartnett, Assistant Treasurer/Collector Hannah Moller, Principal Assistant Assessor Megan Foster, Human Resources Director Melisa Doig, Executive Assistant Dawn Dunbar and all of the Departments, Boards, Committees and Commissions for their outstanding work and cooperation in assisting in the preparation of the Proposed Operating Budget. In addition, the outstanding support and cooperation by Superintendent Dr. Laura Chesson, Business Manager Sherry Kersey and the Groton Dunstable Regional School District Committee was extremely important in developing this budget.

The Finance Committee encourages the public to attend its meetings and contribute through asking questions, providing comments, and listening to others debate the many important financial issues before the Town today.

Respectfully submitted,

*Mark W. Haddad*

Groton Town Manager

Respectfully submitted,

*Bud Robertson, Chair*

*Gary Green, Vice Chair*

*Colby Doody*

*Mary Linskey*

*David Manugian*

*Arthur Prest*

*Scott Whitefield*

Town of Groton Finance Committee





## TOWN OF GROTON

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Groton, Massachusetts 01450-1237  
Tel: (978) 448-1111  
Fax: (978) 448-1115

## Select Board

Alison S. Manugian, *Chair*  
Joshua A. Degen, *Vice Chair*  
Rebecca H. Pine, *Clerk*  
John R. Giger, *Member*  
John F. Reilly, *Member*

### Town Manager

Mark W. Haddad

**To:** *Select Board*

**From:** *Mark W. Haddad – Town Manager*

**Subject:** *Update – 2021 Spring Town Meeting Warrant*

**Date:** *March 24, 2021*

The purpose of this memorandum is to update the Select Board on the 2021 Spring Town Meeting Warrant based on discussions at your March 22, 2021 Meeting. The following is a summary of issues raised at the meeting, along with new information to help you finalize your recommendations on the various Articles contained in the Warrant.

#### **Article 5 – Fiscal Year 2022 Operating Budget**

The Finance Committee will be meeting prior to the Select Board's March 29<sup>th</sup> Meeting to take their positions on the various Articles. The Proposed Operating Budget is set at \$42,276,839. I hope to have the Finance Committee's position on the Budget for you at Monday's meeting.

#### **Article 6 – Fiscal Year 2022 Capital Budget – Item #8 – Golf Carts**

At your March 22, 2021 Meeting, the Select Board requested that we investigate purchasing electric carts, instead of the proposed gas-powered carts. Based on our investigation thus far, I respectfully request that the Select Board withdraw its request and allow us to purchase the gas-powered carts. While we are still working on developing a cost of construction of the necessary facilities to provide electricity, the cost of maintaining and operating electric carts exceeds the cost of maintaining and operating gas-powered carts. Please consider the following:

##### Gas vs. Electric

Estimate of Annual gas/electric cost over 8 years

Gas fleet \$20,000 (\$2,500 per year)

Electric fleet \$10,000 (\$1,250 per year)

Estimate of Cart Purchase

Gas cart \$6,468 x 25 carts = \$161,700

Electric cart \$6,705 x 25 carts = \$167,625

Estimate of standard maintenance over 8 years

Gas Carts \$9,750 (Starter Generator, Oil, Filter, Belts, Battery)

Electric Cart \$23,250 (Replace batteries)

Total Estimate Cost over 8 years

Gas Carts \$191,450

Electric Carts \$200,875

***Continued on next page – Over >***

**Article 6 – Fiscal Year 2022 Capital Budget – Item #8 – Golf Carts – continued:**

Once you add in the cost of construction, we will be taking on an expense that I am not comfortable pursuing. The reason for this is simple. For the last several years, I have been taken to task by members of the Finance Committee, Select Board and public on the impact of the operation of the Country Club on the taxpayers. We have been criticized that the taxpayers have had to subsidize the cost of the Club. A member of the Finance Committee once stood before the Town Meeting and put a picture of a taxpayer on the screen with a screw through his heart signifying that the Groton Country Club is screwing the taxpayers. For the last several years, Shawn Campbell and I have worked extremely hard to make the Club taxpayer neutral. Now that we have achieved this (pandemic impact aside), the Select Board, ignoring their past criticism of the expenses, have requested that we spend more money on the Club. Given the above scenario, even before we construct the facility to house and charge these Carts, we would be adding a \$10,000 expense to the operation of the Club. As far as construction of the facility, the cheapest option is to construct a "bird box" facility that would house the electric components. The carts would not be covered and exposed to the elements as they would stay there all winter as they must be left on the charger. The carts will not age as well being in the winter elements for 3-4 months each season. I will provide the Board with the construction costs as soon as we receive them. While I understand the environmental impact, I cannot justify this added expense given the charge of the Select Board and Finance Committee over the last several years to make the Club taxpayer neutral.

**Article 7 – CPA Recommendation – Middle School Track**

Select Board Member Giger had deferred his recommendation until Town Meeting at last week's meeting.

**Article 10 – Engineering Funds – Whitney Pond Well #3**

Select Board Member Degen had deferred his recommendation and requested to know the total amount to be requested. The total amount to be requested is \$300,000 for engineering services.

**Article 14 – CPA Funding Recommendations – Proposal C – Non-Point Sources of Pollution**

Select Board Member Manugian deferred her recommendation until Town Meeting at last week's meeting.

**Article 14 – CPA Funding Recommendations – Proposal J – Multi-Use Recreational Courts**

Select Board Members Degen and Giger deferred their recommendations until Town Meeting at last week's meeting.

**Article 19 – Current Year Line-Item Transfers**

At this time, the only issues are wage and payroll related. Based on this, it is likely that this Article will be withdrawn and we will handle all line-item transfer at the end of the year with the Select Board and Finance Committee.

**Article 20 – Appropriate Money to Offset the Snow and Ice Deficit**

As of the writing of this memo, the Snow and Ice Deficit is at approximately \$17,000. It is likely that there are another \$15,000 worth of bills that will bring the final deficit to \$32,000. I would like to use this Article to eliminate the deficit by either transferring funds from Free Cash or from the Overlay Surplus. Please note that the proposed Operating Budget is carrying \$100,000 to cover the snow and ice deficit. If we eliminate the deficit, that will put the budget \$100,000 under the levy limit. We can discuss this further at Monday's meeting.

**Article 21 – Transfer Within Water Enterprise Fund**

The Water Commissioners are requesting a transfer of \$122,000 from their E&D to complete the Fiscal Year.

**Article 22 – Transfer Within Center Sewer Enterprise Fund**

The Sewer Commissioners are requesting a transfer of \$210,000 from their E&D to complete the Fiscal Year.

**Article 23 – Transfer Within Four Corners Sewer Enterprise Fund**

The Sewer Commissioners are requesting a transfer of \$35,000 from their E&D to complete the Fiscal Year.

**Article 24 – Transfer Within Cable Enterprise Fund**

The Cable Advisory Committee is requesting a transfer of \$10,000 from their E&D to complete the Fiscal Year.

**Article 25 – Prior Year Bills**

We have four bills totaling \$862.55. The bills are as follows:

Turf Unlimited	\$193.25
Tuft Unlimited	\$219.30
Turf Unlimited	\$200.00
A-1 Odd Jobs	\$250.00
Total	\$862.55

**Article 26 – Transfer from Free Cash**

This Article requests a transfer of \$239.08 from Free Cash to offset deficits in our 911 Grants.

**Article 27 – Transfer from Free Cash**

This Article requests a transfer of \$1,861.04 from Free Cash to offset a deficit in the Fire Details Agency Account.

**Article 28 – Debt Service for Surrenden Farms**

This is the final payoff on the Debt Service for Surrenden Farms. The amount needed is \$204,150 and it will come from CPA Funds.

**Article 29 – Assessors Quinquennial Certification**

From the Summary in the Warrant: Assessors in every city and town are responsible for developing a Revaluation program to completely analyze and revalue all property within its borders every year. Revaluation annually, is required under Massachusetts law and is regulated by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue's Bureau of Local Assessment (BLA). The rationale for revaluation is to always maintain property at fair market or fair cash value to ensure equity for all classes of property. Every fifth year the Massachusetts Department of Revenue requires a full certification with BLA oversight. The Assessors are seeking \$29,200 to cover the cost for appraisal services of Real Property to be conducted by Vision Government Solutions.

**Select Board**  
**Update – 2021 Spring Town Meeting Warrant**  
**March 24, 2021**  
**page four**

**Article 30 – Establishing Limits for the Various Revolving Funds**

From the Summary in the Warrant: 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 31 – Accept Law Increasing Real Estate Tax Exemptions**

From the Summary in the Warrant: 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 32 – Accept Provisions of M.G.L., c.59, §5, clause 22F**

From the Summary in the Warrant: 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.

I look forward to discussing this in more detail with the Board at Monday's meeting.

MWH/rjb

cc: Finance Committee  
Patricia DuFresne – Town Accountant  
Megan Foster – Principal Assistant Assessor  
Michael Hartnett – Treasurer/Tax Collector  
Hannah Moller – Assistant Treasurer/Tax Collector  
Melisa Doig – Human Resources Director

## Patricia DuFresne

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**From:** Mark Haddad  
**Sent:** Monday, March 29, 2021 2:21 PM  
**Cc:** Dawn Dunbar; Patricia DuFresne; Megan Foster; Melisa Doig; Hannah Moller; Michael Hartnett; Michael Bouchard; Shawn Campbell; Kevin Kelly  
**Subject:** Golf Cart Update

Good afternoon Members of the Select Board, Finance Committee and Capital Planning Advisory Committee:

The purpose of this email is to update the Select Board and Finance Committee on the issue of switching to electric golf carts for the Country Club. As you know, the Capital Plan calls for the leasing of 25 gas powered carts this summer. The Select Board believes that we should change over to electric carts. For the past week, Shawn Campbell, Tom Delaney, Kevin Kelly and I have been working on developing a plan and costs to make this happen.

There are two issues that we need to take into consideration when making this final decision. First, we need to replace the carts this summer. The current carts are over 9 years old and are overdue for replacement. This purchase has been in the Capital Plan for the last five years and we need to act this summer. Second, I do not have a budget to convert to electric carts, so if we decide to pursue that option, we will need to come up with a funding source. That said, please note the following:

The Light Department will provide the labor and materials to bring the necessary electricity to the Country Club to install an electric cart station. We would need to hire an electrician to bring the power from the light poles to the electric cart station. We will need to construct a "bird box" type facility to house the electric charging ports. Based on an estimate from our maintenance department, we believe this entire construction/electricity will run between \$10,000 and \$15,000. We have also been advised that the carts would need to remain on the charging ports for the winter months. I am not comfortable leaving the carts exposed to the elements all winter (we store the current carts at the pavilion over the winter to protect them from the elements). We would want to do the same thing with electric carts, so we would need to run electricity to the pavilion and move the charging stations there. We anticipate this cost to be between \$5,000 and \$10,000. The total cost to get this done will be between \$15,000 and \$25,000. As stated, I do not have a budget for this, so we would need either a reserve fund transfer or an article added to the Warrant to transfer the necessary funds from Free Cash.

That said, this is potentially a temporary solution. Last Thursday, the Light Commission met and discussed this issue. They are considering the idea of the Groton Electric co-op purchasing the electric golf carts and leasing them back to the town. In addition, they are also considering the idea of the Groton Electric co-op building a shelter (primarily for the carts) but for other things as well and leasing that back to the town with a \$1 buyout at the end. We would need to study this in more detail to determine the viability. This could be a long term solution, but obviously would not be ready for this summer.

I am still recommending that we follow through with the original capital budget and replace the Carts as originally called for in the Capital Plan and then take the next year to plan to build a permanent structure for electric carts with the Light Department's potential assistance. We can discuss this further at tonight's Select Board meeting.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions or concerns.

Mark