

**FINANCE COMMITTEE  
Meeting Minutes**

**APPROVED**

Monday, February 26, 2024 @ 7:00 P.M.  
The Center in Groton 163 W. Main St  
Meeting Jointly with the Select Board

**Present for the Finance Committee:** Bud Robertson, Chair; David Manugian, Colby Doody, Mary Linskey

Others Present: Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Patricia Dufresne, Asst Finance Director

At the conclusion of the public hearing on the Spring Town Meeting Warrant, the Finance Committee relocated to the back classroom to take positions on warrant articles and to conduct other business.

Positions on Warrant Articles:

**Article 1:** Hear Reports – The Finance Committee took no position on this article

**Article 2:** Elected Officials Compensation – The Finance Committee unanimously supports this article (with four members present)

**Article 3:** Wage & Classification Schedule – The Finance Committee unanimously supports this article (with four members present)

**Article 4:** FY25 OPEB Trust Contribution – The Finance Committee unanimously supports this article (with four members present)

**Article 5:** Town of Groton FY25 Operating Budget – The members briefly discussed the merits of proposing a 1-year versus a 3-year tax override. Mr. Robertson noted that the FinCom had already approved both the school district and municipal budgets, but had different opinions on the number of years that should be addressed in the tax override. Mr. Haddad said that was fine as Article 5 of the warrant authorizes spending only for a single year (FY25). The ballot question will be for \$5.5 million, and the budget previously approved by the FinCom was for one year, contingent on passage of an override. Mr. Robertson pointed out that if the tax override does not pass, deep budget cuts will have to be made, not only for FY25 but for the following year and the year after that. Soon, the town becomes a very different place to live. At the very least, keeping an eye on union negotiations and encouraging new revenue opportunities will be crucial in the upcoming years. The Finance Committee unanimously supports this article (with four members present).

**Article 6:** Capital Purchases – The group briefly discussed some of the planned equipment purchases to benefit the golf course. Mr. Manugian pointed out that the specialized mower attachments on the capital list permit effective course grooming on difficult terrain. He added that the General Manager has made the Club profitable but he needs the right tools to maintain all his progress. Mr. Robertson agreed that the course is in great shape but requires enormous upkeep. The members agreed that Mr. Campbell should be

given latitude on spending as long as revenues were covering costs. It was noted that the Capital Planning Committee has thoroughly vetted all items included in this article. The Finance Committee unanimously supports this article (with four members present).

**Article 7:** Revoke Cable Enterprise – The Finance Committee unanimously supports this article (with four members present).

**Article 8:** PEG Cable Access Receipts Reserve for Appropriation Fund – The Finance Committee unanimously supports this article (with four members present).

**Article 9:** Destination Groton Funding – The Finance Committee unanimously supports this article (with four members present).

**Article 10:** Sustainability Commission Funding - The Finance Committee unanimously supports this article (with four members present).

**Article 11:** CPC Funding Articles - The Finance Committee unanimously supports this article (with four members present).

**Article 12:** CPA Project Recommendations – The members noted that adding \$400k to the Conservation Trust keeps the balance of that fund in line with the guidelines stated in the town’s financial policies. While some members were unsure of what an “Outdoor Fitness Court” would look like, because the CPC approved the application, there was no need to second-guess the merits of the project. The members agreed that the Bancroft Castle is a particularly beautiful property and were pleased it would be preserved. The Finance Committee unanimously supports all projects recommended in this article (with four members present).

**Article 13:** Extend Central Sewer District - The Finance Committee took no position on this article.

**Article 14:** Extend Four Corners District - The Finance Committee took no position on this article.

**Article 15:** Citizens Petition Voice Vote - The Finance Committee took no position on this article.

**Article 16:** Citizens Petition Adj Speed Limits - The Finance Committee took no position on this article.

**Article 17:** Transfer E&D to Water Enterprise for FY24 - The Finance Committee unanimously supports this article (with four members present).

**Article 18:** Transfer E&D to Sewer Enterprise for FY24 - The Finance Committee unanimously supports this article (with four members present).

**Article 19:** Transfer E&D to Four Corners Enterprise for FY24 - The Finance Committee unanimously supports this article (with four members present).

**Article 20:** Transfer E&D to Cable Enterprise for FY24 - The Finance Committee unanimously supports this article (with four members present).

**Article 21:** Free Cash for Prior Year Bills - The Finance Committee unanimously supports this article (with four members present).

**Article 22:** FY24 Line-Item Transfers - The Finance Committee unanimously supports this article (with four members present).

**Article 23:** Offset Snow & Ice Deficit FY24 - The Finance Committee unanimously supports this article (with four members present).

**Article 24:** CPC Debt Service FY24 - The Finance Committee unanimously supports this article (with four members present).

**Article 25:** CPC Debt Service FY25 - The Finance Committee unanimously supports this article (with four members present).

**Article 26:** Set Limits on Revolving Funds FY25 - The Finance Committee unanimously supports this article (with four members present).

**FY25 Budget Vote** – Mr. Manugian, who was absent when the original vote was taken, added his support to the FY25 budget. With this amendment, the Finance Committee supports the FY25 Operating Budget unanimously (7-0-0).

**Meeting Minutes**

Ms. Linskey made a motion to approve the minutes from the regularly scheduled meeting of February 6, 2024. Mr. Manugian seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously. 4-0-0

Ms. Linskey made a motion to approve the minutes from the regularly scheduled meeting of January 27, 2024. Mr. Manugian seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously. 4-0-0

**Town Meeting Budget Presentation** - The members discussed the process for presenting and moving articles at the town meeting; this process will be different from recent years as each function of government will be moved and voted separately. Any member who wishes to present a particular motion was asked to let Mr. Robertson know of their preference.

**RFT Request** – Mr. Haddad requested a Reserve Fund Transfer in the amount of \$7,500. He explained that he was obliged to hire a building monitor to keep the senior center building safe and accessible when private groups are meeting there in the evenings. Unfortunately, he will not be able to charge a user fee (to offset the wage expense) until possibly next year. The \$7,500 will cover the wage expense for the remaining current fiscal year. **On a motion by Mr. Manugian, seconded by Mr. Doody, the Finance Committee voted unanimously to transfer \$7,500 from the Reserve Fund to COA General Expenses to cover costs of hiring a COA Building Monitor. The Vote: 4-0-0**

Mr. Robertson adjourned the meeting at 9:30 pm

Respectfully submitted:

Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant  
Patricia Dufresne, Assistant Finance Director