

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**MONDAY, MARCH 10, 2025**  
**S.B. and FINCOM APPROVED**

**Select Board Members Present:** Alison Manugian, Chair; Becky Pine, Vice Chair; Peter Cunningham, Clerk; Matt Pisani; John Reilly;

**Also Present:** Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; Patricia DuFresne, Assistant Finance Director/Town Accountant; Melisa Doig, Human Resource Director; Hannah Moller, Treasurer/Tax Collector; Megan Foster, Principal Assessor; Dawn Dunbar, Town Clerk; Fire Chief Arthur Cheeks; Megan Foster, Principal Assessor; Vanessa Abraham, Groton Public Library Director; Charlotte Weigel, Sustainability Committee Member; Tom Delaney, DPW Director; Brian Callahan, DPW Director in Training; Jeff Gordon, Greg Sheldon, Joni Parker Roach, Brian Bolton, Members of the Destination Groton Committee; Ebi Masalehdan, Monarch Path Owner; Megan Donovan, Prescott Director; Jim Gmeiner, Groton Sewer Commission Chair;

**Groton Finance Committee Members:** Bud Robertson, Chair; Mary Linskey, Vice Chair; Kristina Lengyel; Scott Whitefield; Gary Green; David Manugian.

Ms. Manugian called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Cunningham attended Tree House Cannabis's Grand opening over the weekend and said it was a very nice event, and he wished them the best.

Ms. Dawn Dunbar, the Groton Town Clerk, reminded residents and voters that the deadline to pull nomination papers for the Annual Town Election is Friday, March 28th, by 5:00 p.m. The last day to submit completed nomination papers to the Town Clerk's office is Tuesday, April 1st, by 5:00 p.m. Ms. Dunbar said 55 signatures were required.

Mr. Robertson called the Finance Committee to order.

Ms. Vanessa Abraham, the Director of the Groton Public Library, announced that it is Groton Reads Month. This year's book selection is about a former Groton resident titled "Finding Margaret Fuller."

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD #1**

Mr. Haddad explained they received a letter from the Town of Ayer Select Board that was sent to Governor Healey. The letter expressed their disappointment regarding the lack of response concerning the closure of the Nashoba Valley Medical Center. It also urges her to take action in response to the Nashoba Valley Fire Chiefs' request for \$ 9.1 million to stabilize the Emergency Medical Response System. Mr. Haddad tailored the letter from the Town of Ayer for Groton. He respectfully requested that the Select Board vote to sign and issue the letter to Governor Healey.

*Mr. Pisani made a motion to sign and issue the letter to Governor Healey. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

**1. Update on Fiscal Year 2026 Budget.**

During the public hearing, Mr. Haddad said he would update the Board on the Fiscal year 2026 Budget.

**2. Update on the Select Board Meeting Schedule through the 2025 Spring Town Meeting.**

Monday, March 17, 2025	No Meeting
Monday, March 24, 2025	Review Prescott Building Assessment- Determine if any Action Needs to be taken
Monday, March 31, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, April 7, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, April 14, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, April 21, 2025	No Meeting- Patriot's Day Holiday
Saturday, April 26 <sup>th</sup>	Spring Town Meeting

**ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL**

**1. Consider Approving the Settlement Agreement with the Estate of Laura Elizabeth Woodson.**

Mr. Haddad explained that the estate of Laura Woodson had left money for the Groton Fire Department to be used for ambulance-related matters. Initially, the funds were left to the Groton Ambulance Association, which no longer exists. After working with Town Counsel, it was determined that the money should be left to the Groton Fire Department to address ambulance-related issues. The Board was provided copies of the Settlement and Release Agreements for review. Mr. Haddad respectfully requested that the Select Board vote to approve and sign this Agreement.

*Mr. Pisani made a motion to approve and sign the Settlement and Release Agreements with the estate of Laura Elizabeth Woodson. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**6:05 P.M. Consider Discussion/Potential Decision on Seeking an Override of Proposition 2 ½ to Add Six (6) full-time Firefighters/EMTs to the Groton Fire Department in FY 2026.**

Fire Chief Arthur Cheeks was in attendance for the continued discussion.

Mr. Haddad said he wanted to continue the lengthy discussion from last week's joint session meeting with the Finance Committee and Select Board. They discussed whether to consider seeking an override of Proposition 2 ½ to add six (6) Full-time Firefighters/EMTs to the Groton Fire Department in FY 2026. Based on the conversation from last week's meeting, Mr. Haddad and Chief Cheeks did a lot of research and concluded that increasing staffing within the Fire Department was crucial. They explained that the Fire Department experienced an extremely busy day on Friday, as several emergency calls came in simultaneously.

Mr. Haddad explained that he and Chief Cheeks had worked together to come up with a proposal, taking into consideration the impact on Groton's residents and taxpayers by seeking overrides for both the Groton Dunstable Regional School District and the Groton Fire Department in Fiscal Year 2026. Chief Cheeks proposed a "band-aid" approach that should help support the department. Mr. Haddad provided the Board with a memo detailing the proposal and reviewed it with them. He explained that both former Fire Chief Steele McCurdy and current Fire Chief Arthur Cheeks have demonstrated the need for additional staffing since 2021, long before the closure of the Nashoba Medical Center. The history of the need was documented in the provided memo.

Mr. Haddad stated that, based on the statistics presented in the memo, they would propose adding two additional Firefighters/EMTs in FY 2026, although having six full-time Firefighters/EMTs would be ideal. Two additional Firefighters/EMTs, combined with the two new Firefighters added last fall, would ensure that three Career Firefighters/EMTs are available during all shifts. This proposal would also provide at least one Firefighter/EMT to respond to a medical call if the other ambulance is already on an extended call. Additionally, it would position the department to respond more effectively to emergencies, requiring only one additional call Firefighter/EMT to respond to a call. Mr. Haddad said this proposal would address the issue of conducting inspections, plan reviews, etc. The memo outlined the Staffing Plan that would be implemented to address the staffing and response challenges (identified in the Request for Additional Staffing), which is approximately \$260,301. The actual allocation for FY 2026 would be \$210,301, as the pension cost (\$50,000) would be assessed to the Town until the next Fiscal year or FY 2028.

Ms Pine thanked Chief Cheeks for his efforts and believes the proposal of two Full-time Firefighters/EMTs is the right move for this year. Mr. Reilly said he was a little disappointed in the proposal of only two Firefighters/EMTs, and he has been getting a lot of phone calls regarding this. Chief Cheeks said six Firefighters/EMTs would be the optimum, offering better protection for Groton's residents. He explained this was an opportunity for them to be proactive, ensuring every resident received the same level of protection day and night. Chief Cheeks said you can't schedule emergencies, and their timing is unpredictable. He said that with two Firefighters/EMTs, when everyone is home at night, they won't get the same level of protection, and he believes that is unfair. He thinks this should be presented at the town meeting so taxpayers can vote. Mr. Haddad clarified the differences in the FY 2026 tax bill: approximately \$210,000 for two Firefighters/EMTs versus approximately \$633,000 for six Firefighters/EMTs. He explained that he tried to provide the Boards with enough information to make an informed decision. Mr. Cunningham said it is a difficult decision, and the more palatable, the better it will be for the taxpayers. Ms. Manugian said she was still struggling with what two new Firefighters/EMTs do, even with the current staffing model, and wanted to understand the detriment of hiring someone specifically to go on inspections, etc. Chief Cheeks responded that the person would be dedicated to only that and not covering the department's needs. Mr. Robertson believes they have enough information to bring two additional Firefighters/EMTs forward. He said adding these two will ensure that each shift has three personnel available to respond to calls. He said it is still necessary to assess how much the response time improves over the next year and to analyze the factors contributing to any increase in call volume. Mr. Robertson suggested starting with the two additional hires and returning with more data for review in the next year or so. Ms. Pine expressed her appreciation for the Chief's dedication and believes a phased approach is the best strategy. Ms. Manugian inquired whether it

would be possible to structure the request to include both an ask for two (2) Firefighters/EMTs and another ask for six (6) Firefighters/EMTs. Mr. Haddad explained they could take a tiered approach and have one ballot question that asks for two additional Firefighter/EMTs and another ballot question that would ask for six (6) additional Firefighter/EMTs.

Ms. Pine believes combining the School and Firefighter/EMTs request override questions may create a stronger case. Ms. Manugian believes a tiered option would be best and disagrees with combining the School and Firefighters/EMTs. Mr. Haddad also shared his concern about combining them, stating that the School District override question aims to maintain current services, and the Fire Department question aims to expand services.

Mr. Green mentioned that if money were not a concern, he would recommend going with six (6) Firefighters/EMTs. He inquired about the alternative plan (Plan B) and noted that it involves having zero firefighters. He suggested that having two (2) Firefighters makes the most sense, as it would improve coverage for all shifts. Given the current uncertainties, he expressed that he could support the decision for two (2) Firefighters. He also pointed out that there is no clarity about the budget for next year.

After careful consideration and a spirited debate, the Board was prepared to make a motion.

*Ms. Pine made a motion to place an override question for funding two (2) Firefighters/EMTs on the Annual Election Ballot requesting an additional \$260,301. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion.*

#### Discussion

*Ms. Manugian believes six (6) Firefighters/EMTs are necessary, as she does not support asking for only two. Mr. Cunningham suggested that a second motion could be made. Ms. Manugian stated that a two-tier motion would be ideal. Mr. Haddad suggested one motion with two questions.*

Ms. Pine withdrew the motion.

*Mr. Cunningham made a motion to offer a two-tiered override question: One Question for an override request of six (6) Firefighters/EMTs at \$ 780,904 with a Fiscal Year 2026 tax impact of \$630,904 and one Question for two (2) Firefighters/EMTs requesting \$260,301 with a Fiscal Year 2026 tax impact of \$210,301.*

*The Board discussed voting on the motions separately. Mr. Cunningham withdrew his motion.*

*Mr. Cunningham made a motion for a stand-alone override question on the ballot for six (6) Firefighters/EMTs, totaling \$780,904, with Fiscal Year 2026 tax impact of \$630,904. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion.*

#### Discussion

*Ms. Pine believes this would be too confusing and a losing proposition. Mr. Cunningham believes there is a value in saying we need six Firefighters/EMTs.*

*The motion carried 4 in favor, one against- Pine.*

*Ms. Pine made a motion to include a second stand-alone override question to the ballot question for two (2) Firefighters/EMTs, totaling \$260,301, with a Fiscal Year 2026 tax impact of \$210,301. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Mr. Haddad summarized that there will be two override questions related to the Fire Department. One question is for six (6) Firefighters/EMTs in the amount of \$780,904, and another is for two (2) Firefighters/EMTs in the amount of \$260,301.

Mr. Haddad then explained that he would present to the Finance Committee a contingent budget to add six (6) Firefighters/EMTs contingent on an override and two (2) Firefighters/EMTs contingent on an override. A third budget for the School District will be contingent on an override. He explained there would be a ballot question book that would explain everything.

**7:00 P.M. In Joint Session with the Finance Committee- Public Hearing on the Warrant for the 2025 Spring Town Meeting.**

Mr. Haddad read the Public Hearing notice into the record.

Mr. Haddad respectfully requested the Board to open the public hearing.

*Ms. Pine made a motion to open the public hearing. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. The motions carried unanimously.*

*Mr. Robertson made a motion to open the public hearing. Mr. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

The Select Board and Finance Committee held a joint session to conduct a public hearing on the articles contained in the 2026 Spring Town Meeting Warrant. Mr. Haddad provided the Board with a copy of the latest draft of the Warrant and reviewed it with the Board.

Article 1: Hear Reports

There were no questions.

Article 2: Elected Officials Compensation

The Town Moderator is proposed to receive a salary of \$1,000 in FY 2026.

Article 3: Wage and Classification Schedule

Mr. Haddad said this Article is for the three Bylaw employees. There were no questions.

Article 4: Appropriate FY 2026 Contribution to the OPEB Trust Fund

This is the annual contribution to the OPEB Trust Fund, which is necessary to prevent the net present liability from increasing. Mr. Haddad explained that the appropriation had been raised to \$200,000

to cover the liabilities associated with the two new firefighters added in this year's budget. Mr. Haddad believes an extra \$30,000 may be necessary, contingent upon an override passing, bringing the total to \$230,000. This increase will help manage long-term liabilities related to OPEB.

Articles 1-4 will be presented as one Consent Motion.

#### Article 5: Fiscal Year 2026 Annual Operating Budget

Mr. Haddad stated that the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District has a revised budget due to lower health insurance rates. As a result, the budget has decreased by \$200,000. He wanted to clarify that while the funding sources have changed, their overall budget remains the same. He explained that the Town must add \$673,250 to the Proposed FY 2026 budget to meet the proposed Assessment of the Groton Dunstable Regional School District. He explained that the base budget would be a balanced budget, with a contingent budget (based on the successful override of Proposition 2½ for the school district and adding additional Firefighters). By having the additional funding contingent on an override (after voting the Balanced Budget), we would not need to return to the Town Meeting if the overrides failed.

*Mr. Cunningham made a motion to add a third override question to the Annual Town Election Ballot, in the amount of \$673,250 for the Groton Dunstable Regional School District Assessment. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion.*

#### Discussion

Ms. Manugian inquired whether this would affect the level service budget with restoring the nurse and the guidance counselor. Mr. Haddad confirmed that the total of \$673,250 includes funding for both the nurse and the guidance counselor. He also explained that on Wednesday, March 12th, the School District will certify the District's budget.

*The motion carried unanimously.*

Diane Hewitt, a resident of 57 Long Hill Rd., stated that they have an optimal budget of funding six (6) Firefighters/EMTs and a less optimal budget of two (2) Firefighters/EMTs. She believes the school should also have a contingent budget, as well. Her main concern is that she would like to see the override questions combined.

#### Article 6: Fiscal Year 2026 Capital Budget –

Mr. Haddad stated that the Select Board has reviewed each capital item, all endorsed by the Capital Planning Committee. No questions were raised about any of the items.

#### Article 7: Community Preservation Funding Accounts

Mr. Haddad explained that this article is standard for allocating CPC funds to subaccounts, making the money available for Article 8: Community Preservation Funding recommendations. There were no questions.

#### Article 8: Community Preservation Funding Recommendations:

CPC Proposal A: West Groton Rail Trail- \$70,000

The West Groton Rail Trail is requesting \$70,000 to initiate the legal process of securing the rights to a section of the rail line from the river bordering Ayer to Cutler Field. This funding would be used for environmental filings. Mr. Cunningham stated it would cost approximately \$900,000 to construct roughly four miles of the trail, but he explained most of the funding they receive is from Mass Trails Grants.

CPC Proposal B: Conservation Fund- FY 2026-\$200,000

Mr. Haddad stated that the Conservation Commission has reduced their funding request from \$400,000 to \$200,000. This allows the Conservation Commission to have funds available to purchase property as it becomes available without needing a Town Meeting appropriation. Ms. DuFresne stated the current balance is \$962,000.

CPC Proposal C: FY 2026 Housing Funds Request- \$400,000

Ms. Pine stated that they submitted a request for \$400,000 and acknowledged that there is competition for funding this year; however, they are willing to accept whatever amount may be available. She explained that they are seeking funding to explore the option of working with a community development corporation to develop affordable housing. This corporation would purchase the property and handle the permitting process. They need to secure funding through the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the Commonwealth expects a contribution from the town as a show of support. Mr. Cunningham inquired about the current funding availability. Ms. Pine responded that \$400,000 was available last year and the year before that there was \$200,000 available.

CPC Proposal D: Cow Pond Brook Fields Improvements- \$100,000

The Town Manager's Office and the Park Commission had proposed a \$4.8 million plan for a complete renovation of the Cow Pond Brook Fields facility. The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) did not support taking on more debt in FY 2026. The Park Commission decided to reduce the request to \$100,000 to do more planning and allow the user groups more involvement in the planning process. The allocated \$100,000 will be used to hire a consultant to conduct preliminary design work with the Park Commission and user groups.

CPC Proposal E: Housing Coordinator FY 2026-\$63,401

This proposal pays the Housing Coordinator salary and benefits. Mr. Haddad said this is money well spent.

CPC Proposal F: Bancroft Castle Preservation- \$153,000

Mr. Aubrey Theall, Chair of the Historical Commission, was present. He said the Historical Commission put a proposal together to address the urgent repairs needed at the castle. There were no questions.

CPC Proposal G: Prescott Community Center-\$135,000

Ms. Megan Donovan, Director of Prescott, was present. She stated that Prescott is requesting \$135,000 for necessary historic renovations and various updates to make Prescott more usable for the community.

CPC Proposal H: Cow Pond Baseball Improvement-\$84,330

Mr. Haddad explained that the Groton-Dunstable Youth Baseball League, with the support of the Parks Commission, is requesting funding to remodel eight dugouts, renovate four batting cages, and rebuild the pitching mounds on all four baseball fields at the Cow Pond Brook Fields.

CPC Proposal I: Town Field Improvements- \$378,963

Mr. Haddad noted that the project was scaled down based on feedback received. This funding will renovate the major league baseball diamond at Town Field. The project builds upon a previously funded design study. It will include renovations to the infield, installation of new backstops, the placement of players' benches on concrete pads with chain-link fences, and reseeding of the outfield. Mr. Haddad stated that this is an excellent project, and he has met with the Groton Dunstable Youth Baseball and the designer to finalize the design.

CPC Proposal J: Curatorial Storage- \$62,675

Mr. Aubrey Theall explained this funding request is for temporary storage to improve conditions on the third floor of the Boutwell House.

CPC Proposal K: Williams Barn Restoration- \$158,972

Mr. Haddad stated that the Williams Barn Committee is seeking funding to renovate the historic structure, which is 185 years old. The barn requires several repairs, including work on the foundation wall, replacement of sills, gable end fascia, and soffit boards; two cracked support beams need to be replaced, and handrails should be added for safety.

Article 9: Proposed Amendments to the Groton Charter –

Mr. Haddad explained that they voted to have the Park Commission remain elected at last week's Charter Review Committee meeting. There will be one article for the Proposed Amendments to the Groton Charter. The proposal includes eleven amendments, eliminating the Personnel Board and allowing the Town Manager to appoint the Police Chief, Fire Chief, and Town Clerk subject to the Board's Policy. Mr. Haddad said a provision was added to allow a member of the Select Board to run for another elected Board.

Article 10: Act to Adopt Alternative Methods for Notice of Public Hearings-

Mr. Haddad explained that this act would allow the Town of Groton to adopt alternative methods for notifying the public about hearings. Seven other towns in Massachusetts have adopted this.

Article 11: Amend Chapter 81, "Town Meetings" of the Code of the Town of Groton-

This article sets the Town Election for the third Tuesday of May every year, aligning it with the Town of Dunstable.

Article 12: Disposition of Town Owned Landon Hoyts Warf Road-



This would allow the Affordable Housing Trust to develop Affordable Housing. Ms. Pine explained this article would authorize the Affordable Housing Trust to issue an RFP for the development of one lot. Ms. Manugian asked for a copy of the plan for the lot that would be disposed of. Ms. Pine said there would be an updated plan before the Spring Town Meeting.

Article 13: Amend Chapter 125, "Demolition Delay" of the Code of the Town of Groton-

Mr. Theall stated that this proposal was encouraged by the Massachusetts Historical Commission, which had consulted with the Historical Commission for preserving the Prescott House, though that effort was unsuccessful. The Historical Commission and Town Counsel worked together to review the Town's Demolition Delay Bylaw; Two amendments were made. He explained that the most significant change was extending the demolition delay period from 18 months to 24 months. Ms. Pine asked whether they had accepted the suggested edits from Town Counsel. Mr. Theall said they reviewed them and accepted the changes. Mr. Haddad will resend the red-lined changes for the Board's review. Ms. Manugian expressed that she would have difficulty supporting this change as it would delay too many properties for an extended period.

Article 14: Adopt Resolution- Reduce Statewide Greenhouse Gas Emissions-

Ms. Charlotte Weigel of the Sustainability Commission was present. Mr. Haddad explained the purpose of the article was to determine whether the Town would vote to adopt a resolution to reduce the Town's Greenhouse Emissions in compliance with State policy. He said the Select Board had previously voted to place this on the warrant. Ms. Weigel had to make revisions after working with the state and reviewed those changes with the Board. Ms. Weigel said this resolution was a goal, not a mandate. Mr. Haddad thanked Charlotte Weigel and Ken Horton for all of their efforts.

Article 15: Amend Flood Plain Zoning District-

The Town Planner, Mr. Takashi Tada, was present for the public hearing. He said that in January, the Town of Groton received a notice from FEMA stating that the new flood plain maps were finalized and official on July 8<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Tada said that municipalities have six months from the date of the letter to comply with the new requirements.

The first requirement is to update the Town's floodplain regulations. Mr. Tada explained that Groton has a Floodplain Overlay District in the zoning Bylaw. Two actions that need to be taken are: 1. Updating the reference in the Bylaw to the new maps, and 2. Adopting the relevant provisions of the Massachusetts Model Floodplain Bylaw.

If the Town complies within 6 months from January, then they would be eligible to remain a participant in the National Floodplain insurance program. The public hearing is open, and the Planning Board is working on strategies to promote it.

Article 16: Endorse Master Plan-

Mr. Tada said the Planning Board finalized and voted to approve the Groton Master Plan, which is required by the zoning act of state law. This article will be brought forward to vote to endorse the "Groton Master Plan' at the Town Meeting.

Article 17: MBTA Communities Multi-Family Overlay District (MCMOD)-

Mr. Tada explained that this is a requirement for Groton, as Groton is designated as an MBTA Community. Mr. Tada reviewed the article provided by the Planning Board, which would create a zoning overlay district in which multi-family developments may be allowed “as of right” at a maximum density of 15 units per acre. The zoning map for the Town of Groton will be amended to include the properties that fall within the Multi-Family Development Overlay District. The Planning Board will advertise another public hearing since the list of parcels may be incorrect. The updated map will be included in the Town Meeting handout.

Article 18: Accessory Dwelling Unit Amendments-

Mr. Tada said the purpose of this article is to make additional amendments to the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) provisions of the zoning bylaw to be fully consistent with the ADU regulations of the Affordable Homes Act.

Article 19: Accept Monarch Path as a Town Way-

Ebi Masalehdan, owner of Monarch Path, and Tom Delaney, DPW Director, were present for the public hearing. This article is to see if the Town will accept Monarch Path as a public way. Mr. Tada indicated that the Planning Board would need the final as-built plan sent to the Planning Board’s consulting engineer, and then Monarch Path would be inspected. Mr. Delaney stated that he was comfortable with taking on the road. Mr. Masalehdan will send the final as-built with the requested information. A public hearing for the Road Acceptance will be scheduled for April 14, 2025.

Article 20: Citizens Petition-Town Wide Speed Limit-

Mr. Haddad stated that his office received a call from the proponent of the article requesting its removal. Mr. Haddad explained that it could be removed if the ten individuals who added their names to the citizen's petition signed the removal request. Mr. Cunningham announced that there would be a meeting with Destination Groton on Friday, March 21st, and their consultant, Stantec, to discuss a traffic study.

Mr. Haddad stated that Articles 21 through 31 will be presented as one motion.

Article 21: Funding For Destination Groton Committee-

The Destination Groton Committee members in attendance were Greg Sheldon, Jeff Gordon, Joni Parker Roach, and Brian Bolton. This article is to provide \$15,000 in funding for the Destination Groton Committee to carry out its charge.

Article 22: Funding For Sustainability Committee-

This is a placeholder.

Article 23: Transfer Within the Water Enterprise Fund-

This is a placeholder.

Article 24: Transfer Within the Sewer Enterprise Fund-

This is a placeholder.

Article 25: Transfer Within Four Corner Sewer Enterprise Fund-  
The Four Corner Sewer Enterprise Fund will need to transfer \$20,000 to the Fiscal Year 2025 Four Corners Sewer Enterprise Department Budget.

Article 26: Prior Year Bills-  
There are no bills for the prior year at this time. This is a placeholder.

Article 27: Current Year Line-Item Transfers-  
Mr. Haddad presented the anticipated line-item transfers that will be brought to the Town Meeting. He reviewed the requests, which totaled \$173,000. He said that the transfers would come from health insurance funds. Town Accountant Patricia Dufresne explained that the line-item transfer list may change, as they are projections. Ms. Dufresne said that this process is done for transparency. Mr. Robertson and Ms. Pine stated that the transfers shouldn't be included in the Warrant if they can be handled at the end of the Fiscal Year by a vote of the Select Board and Finance Committee. Mr. Haddad said he would withdraw this article from the warrant.

Article 28: Appropriate Funding to Offset Snow and Ice Deficit-  
Ms. DuFresne said they were currently in a deficit for Snow and Ice in the amount of \$91,000.

Article 29: Debt Service for the Middle School Track-  
Ms. Hannah Moller stated that the amount to be transferred for debt service for FY 2025 for the Middle School Track Project is \$202,488, which is subject to change.

Article 30: Transfer Bond Proceeds-  
Mr. Haddad said they want to transfer \$24,530.27 from the \$1,131,041 borrowed under Article 8 of the April 29, 2019, Spring Town Meeting for the Library Roof to the Florence Roche Elementary School Construction Project. This will lower the bond authorization by utilizing the library funds that have already been borrowed at a lower interest rate.

Article 31: Establishing Limits for Various Revolving Funds-  
Mr. Haddad explained that this is an annual article to amend the Revolving Fund Bylaw to set the limits of the various revolving funds.

Article 32: Funding For the Repair of the Town Hall Sprinkler System-  
Mr. Tom Delaney and Mr. Brian Callahan, the DPW Director in Training, were present. Mr. Delaney said that the Sprinkler System at Town Hall needs repairs due to rust in the pipes. A Bid has already gone out and a contractor was hired as this is an emergency.

Mr. Haddad respectfully requested the Board to close the public hearing on the warrant.

*Mr. Cunningham made a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Mr. Robertson made a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. Green seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

##### **Pursuant to the Charter, Authorize the Town Manager and One Member of the Select Board to Sign Warrants for the Next 30 days.**

Ms. Pine made a motion to authorize the Town Manager and one member of the Select Board to sign the Warrants for the next 30 days. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Haddad explained that there are three override questions on the ballot. He noted that the Town Meeting is scheduled at the Performing Arts Center (PAC). He explained that holding the Town Meeting at the High School would cost approximately \$9,538 while keeping it at the PAC would cost around \$3,649. Mr. Haddad asked the Board whether they believed the Town Meeting should be held at the High School. The Board decided it should be held at the High School due to its larger capacity. The PAC accommodates 800 people, and the gymnasium at the High School can hold 1,700. They all agreed to change the location to the High School Gymnasium, which will take place on April 26th at 9:00 a.m.

#### **SELECT BOARD LIASON REPORTS**

None

#### **On Going issues**

- A. PFAS—Mr. Haddad explained that construction of the PFAS waterline is ongoing and has now started in the Town of Dunstable.
- B. Nashoba Valley Medical Center Working Group—The Nashoba Valley Medical Center Working Group's next meeting will be on Wednesday, March 12<sup>th</sup>.
- C. Charter Review Committee—The update was provided during the public hearing.
- D. PILOTs- No update

#### **Approval of the Special Meeting/Joint Session Meeting Minutes of February 25, 2025.**

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to approve the minutes of the special meeting/joint session with the Finance Committee of February 25, 2025. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Finance Committee member Mr. Manugian made a motion to approve the minutes of the special meeting/joint session with the Select Board. Ms. Linskey seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **Approval of the Regularly Scheduled Meeting Minutes of March 3, 2025.**

The regularly scheduled meeting minutes of March 3, 2025, will be considered for approval at the March 24th Select Board meeting.

**Executive Session**

Mr. Haddad requested that the Board enter Executive Session Pursuant to M.G.L., c.30A, §21(a), Clause 3– “To conduct strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining to litigation position of the public body and the chair so declares.

And not to return to open session.

**Select Board**

*Ms. Pine made a motion to enter into Executive Session. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Cunningham-aye.*

**Finance Committee**

*Mr. Green made a motion to enter into Executive Session. Mr. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Robertson-aye; Linskey-aye; Lengyel-aye; Whitefield-aye; Green-aye; Manugian-aye.*

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Respectively submitted by Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager.

# Request for Additional Firefighter/EMTs in Fiscal Year 2026

## Summary of History of Request for Additional Staffing

### Brief History:

From Fiscal Year 2021 through Fiscal Year 2025, former Fire Chief Steele McCurdy and current Fire Chief Arthur Cheeks have demonstrated a need for additional staffing in the Groton Fire Department. It should be made clear that the request for additional staffing has been discussed and requested long before the closure of the Nashoba Valley Medical Center. The call volume alone since 2021 has required a consideration of additional staffing. Please consider the following:

**- April 2021:** The Fire Chief presented data to the Select Board explaining that 1/3 of the time within critical incidents, first level supervision forcing inexperienced Firefighters/EMTs to be expected to assume roles that were undesignated and outside of their job description. In addition, the Fire Chief proposed the following optimum level of staffing based on call volume and response times:

- Chief, Deputy Chief, 16 career Firefighters (4 of which are officers), 3 on call officers, & 25 + call/volunteer FF/EMTs. This request would result in adding 8 career Firefighters in FY 2022.

**Town decided not to bring this forward.**

**- FY 2022 Budget Proposal:** Select Board and Finance Committee presented with the need for an additional Firefighter to free up the Deputy Chief to allow for a more focused and efficient fire prevention Community Risk Reduction activities without interfering with the day-to-day operations. While this has not been solidified yet and with the increase in call volume, the Fire Department is required to cancel or reschedule inspections, miss plan review meetings, not fulfill required school inspections in a timely manner etc.

**Town decided not to bring this forward.**

**-FY 2023 Budget Proposal:** Then Chief McCurdy requested 2 additional firefighter/EMTs to bolster staffing needs and allow for a more level service. During his Budget Presentation, the following was presented:

- Presented that one more significant staffing increase was on the horizon to ultimately bring the staffing to 16.
- Proposed for the first time the idea of transforming the level of service we provide from a Basic Life Support System to an Advanced Life Support System.

- The Chief and Deputy Chief were assessed to have logged an extra 196 and 172 extra hours respectively. This number continues to grow due to increases in call volume and the lack of staffing. This results in burnout and low morale.

Town decided not to bring this forward.

**-FY 2024 Budget Proposal:** Then Chief Steele McCurdy and Deputy Chief Arthur Cheeks addressed the need for additional staffing by 2 Firefighter/EMTs and presented the goal to raise our staffing levels to an optimum 16 career Firefighter/EMTs. Doing this would allow for the following:

- This would allow the Department to provide consistent service, response, safety for the town and for the Firefighters on initial fire assignments.
- Further, it allow for a decrease in overall overtime costs, improve the Department's ability to fulfill and complete all Community Risk Reduction planning efforts as well as perform all day-to-day tasks, i.e. inspections, plan reviews, apparatus and equipment maintenance and readiness checks, training.

Town decided not to bring this forward.

**-FY 2025 Budget Proposal:** Continued the same message as previous years, including adding the following statistics (Please note that all of this was before the closure of Nashoba Valley Medical Center):

- Included the National Fire Protection Agencies minimum requirements (minimum of 6 firefighters on an initial fire response within 14 minutes).
- ISO ratings - Public Protection Classification - Lack ability to meet minimum requirements. This does have an impact on insurance premiums for our town homeowners.

Town decided to add two additional Firefighters at the 2024 Fall Town Meeting.

**-FY 2026 Budget Proposal:** Based on the foregoing and the closure of the Nashoba Valley Medical Center, the Fire Chief requested six additional Firefighter/EMTs to allow for four Firefighters on every shift, which matches the request in April, 2021.

---

## Statistical Need

The Groton Fire Department call volume continues to increase causing a strain on its ability to complete day to day tasks and provide level coverage for the town regardless of time of day. Please see the increase in call volume since 2019:

year	calls	% change from previous	
		Increase #	year
2019	1312		
2020	1318	6	0.46
2021	1381	63	4.78
2022	1423	42	3.04
2023	1470	47	3.30
2024	1720	250	17.01

Currently, the Department is on pace for 1930 calls in 2025, which would amount to an additional increase of 12% in volume.

## Mutual Aid

Mutual Aid requests have also increased over the last two years (again, before the closure of the Nashoba Valley Medical Center). Please consider the following:

- 2023: 299 total mutual aid services -
  - Of those 16 were for Structure Fires
  - 35 mutual aid services provided for EMS calls to other towns
- 2024: 421 total mutual aid services
  - Of those 20 for structure fires
  - 75 mutual aid EMS services provided to other towns

## Overlapping Calls

From January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022, out of 1423 total incidents, there were 163 overlapping incidents, or 11% of the total calls.

From January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023, out of 1470 total incidents, there were 207 overlapping calls, or 14% of the total calls.

From January 1, 2024 through August 31, 2024 (closure of Nashoba Valley Medical Center), out of 1085 total incidents, there were 140 overlapping calls, or 13% of the total calls.

From September 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024, out of 635 total incidents, there were 112 overlapping calls, or 18% of the total calls. This represents a 62% increase of the calls over the first 8 months of 2024.



## Conclusion

- The Fire Department has increased its call average of transport by 50 minutes, or 116% . This has led to a 10,000 minute increase in Q4 2024 alone (682% increase) which translates to 7 man days. Given the fact that the Department is required by law to transport with 2 EMTs, 14 additional man days per quarter have increased our per call average transport by 50 minutes (116%). This led to a 10K minute increase in Q4 2024 alone (682%) which translates to 7 man days and as the Department is required by law to transport with 2 EMTs, or 14 additional man days per quarter in transport time alone.
- At current staffing levels this is a 1:1 correlation of an additional 14 man days per quarter that the town is not able to staff an ambulance or safely staff any fire apparatus to meet the response time standard, which is six Firefighters arriving on the scene within 14 minutes of the call.
- Mileage on the Town's ambulances is now 3x what it was, possibly indicating that the Department will need to replace the ambulance 3x faster than it has in the past.

## Proposal

1. The residents and taxpayers of Groton should decide the level of service they want to receive from the Fire Department. That said, any proposal to increase the number of Firefighter/EMTs for the Groton Fire Department must take into consideration the impact on Groton's residents and taxpayers by seeking overrides for both the Groton Dunstable Regional School District and the Groton Fire Department in Fiscal Year 2026. It is incumbent on the Town Manager and Fire Chief to come up with a proposal that addresses the staffing issue at the Fire Department, while minimizing the tax impact on the residents and taxpayers.
2. To that end, the Fire Chief and Town Manager are proposing that an Override of Proposition 2½ to balance the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget in the amount of \$260,301 be requested to add two (2) Firefighter/EMTs to the Groton Fire Department. This proposal would begin to address staffing/response issues identified in this Request for Additional Staffing. The Budget is as follows:

Wages:	\$131,846
Holiday Pay:	\$ 17,055
Gear and Uniforms:	\$ 11,400
Health Insurance:	\$ 50,000
Future Pension Costs:	\$ 50,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$260,301</b>

The actual amount that would be used in Fiscal Year 2026 would be \$210,301, as the pension cost (\$50,000) would not be assessed to the Town until Fiscal Year 2028. However, the Town should be prepared to cover the additional cost. The \$50,000 would remain in unexpended tax capacity until needed to fund the Pension Budget.

3. The impact on the Tax Rate by adding \$210,301 to the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget would be \$0.07, or \$49.51 on the average tax bill (a home valued at \$707,877), or \$7 per \$100,000 of value.
4. The following Staffing Plan will be implemented by the Fire Chief (Current Staffing vs. Staffing with adding two additional Firefighter/EMTs):

**Current Staffing = 4 Groups (A, B, C, D)**

Two groups consist of 2 Career Firefighters/EMTs and two groups consist of 3 Firefighter/EMTs that work 24 hr. shift. (7am - 7am) 7x24x365

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Wk. 1	A	B = 3	C	D = 3	A	B = 3	C
Wk. 2	D = 3	A	B = 3	C	D = 3	A	B = 3
Wk. 3	C	D = 3	A	B = 3	C	D = 3	A

Monday - Friday from 8am - 4pm additional staffing consists of the Chief, Deputy Chief and a Per Diem, (if available), providing a total of 5 personnel on average.

**8am - 4pm (day)**

C = Chief; DC = Deputy Chief

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
2 FF/EMTs	3 + Per-Diem C & DC	2 + Per-Diem C & DC	3 + Per-Diem C & DC	2 + Per-Diem C & DC	3 + Per-Diem C & DC	2 FF/EMTs
	6	5	6	5	6	

The results are that every other day the Department can staff two ambulances and continue to provide other services.

**4pm - 7am (night)**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
2 FF/EMTs	3 FF/EMTs	2 FF/EMTs	3 FF/EMTs	2 FF/EMTs	3 FF/EMTs	2 FF/EMTs

In the evening however, the Department runs short being able to provide a full ambulance crew and does not meet OSHA and NFPA standards.

**Impact of Adding two more Firefighter/EMTs in FY 2026**

Each group as outlined above would now consist of 3 Career Firefighters that work 24 hr. shift. (7am - 7am) 7x24x365

8am - 4pm (day)

C = Chief; DC = Deputy Chief

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
A	B	C	D	A	B	C
3 FF/EMTs	3 FF/EMTs +Per-Diem C & DC	3 FF/EMTs +Per-Diem C & DC	3 FF/EMTs +Per-Diem C & DC	3 FF/EMTs +Per-Diem C & DC	3 FF/EMTs +Per-Diem C & DC	3 FF/EMTs

4pm - 7am (night)

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
A	B	C	D	A	B	C
3 FF/EMTs	3 FF/EMTs	3 FF/EMTs	3 FF/EMTs	3 FF/EMTs	3 FF/EMTs	3 FF/EMTs

This proposal will provide, at a minimum, a single Firefighter/EMT to initially respond to a medical call if the other ambulance is out on an extended call. It will also put the Department in a better position to respond to an emergency by only needing one additional Call-Firefighter/EMT to respond to a call. It will also free up staff during the day to address inspections, plan review, etc. While this is not the optimum solution, it does improve the staffing of the Department. Please note that the optimum staffing level is to have four (4) Firefighter/EMTs on every shift to meet OSHA and NFPA standards.

This proposal will allow the Fire Chief and the Town Manager the time to evaluate how additional staff impacts the delivery of services. As stated above, there has been a need for additional staff since at least 2021. Adding the two Firefighter/EMTs in FY 2026 will help address the increase in call volume. Waiting to add additional staff in future years will allow the Town to understand the proposed solutions to address the closure of the Nashoba Valley Medical Center and whether or not a standalone Emergency Medical Facility is constructed in the Nashoba Valley.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Cheeks, Fire Chief

Mark Haddad, Town Manager

Revised: 03/7/2025

## Warrant, Summary, and Recommendations

# TOWN OF GROTON



## 2025 SPRING TOWN MEETING

Marion Stoddart Building Auditorium  
344 Main Street, Groton, Massachusetts 01450

Beginning Saturday, April 26, 2025 @ 9:00 AM

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Attention – Voters and Taxpayers

Please bring this Report to Town Meeting

*THE BUDGET HANDOUT FOR ARTICLE 5 IS AVAILABLE  
IN THE BACK OF THE WARRANT*

# Introduction to Groton Town Meeting

Voters are familiar with casting ballots in local and state elections, but they have another important civic duty in towns, the Town Meeting.

## What is Town Meeting?

The Town Meeting is the legislative body in the town form of government in Massachusetts. Town Meeting is a formal gathering of registered voters who propose, debate and vote on measures. Groton holds at least two Town Meetings per year.

## What is a warrant?

The warrant is the official notice to voters that a Town Meeting is scheduled. The warrant includes the date, time, location and a description of each subject to be acted on at Town Meeting. In Groton, the warrant must be posted in two public places and mailed to each household 14 days in advance of Town Meeting. “The warrant must contain a sufficient description of what is proposed so as to constitute an adequate warning to all the inhabitants of the town.”<sup>1</sup> “Every action taken at the meeting must be pursuant to some article in the warrant and must be within the scope of such article.”<sup>2</sup>

## How does Town Meeting proceed?

Voters attending Town Meeting must first check in with the clerks and receive an electronic voting handset which is required to vote. The meeting typically acts on the articles in the order that they are printed in the warrant. For each article, a main motion is made and seconded by voters and placed by the moderator on the floor for debate. Permission of the moderator is required to speak. The moderator presides and regulates the proceedings, decides all questions of order, and calls and declares all votes. After debate has ended, the moderator will call for a vote by use of the electronic voting handset. Please see page 3 of this Warrant for a full explanation of how Electronic Voting will work at Town Meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> *Town Meeting Time: A Handbook of Parliamentary Law* (page 12) Johnson, Trustman and Wadsworth, Third Edition, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

## **Who can attend?**

Town Meeting is open to the public. Only Groton voters are entitled to attend, speak and vote. Non-voters may be required to sit in a separate section. Non-voters may ask the moderator to speak on the topic of the debate.

## **How long is town meeting?**

Town Meeting concludes when all articles on the warrant have been acted upon. Town Meeting may conclude in one session or adjourn for subsequent sessions.

## **Explanation of a Consent Agenda**

A consent agenda is a procedure to group multiple main motions into a single motion for voting. A consent agenda saves time by eliminating the reading of multiple motions and explanations when there are no objections or questions. In Groton, a consent agenda generally consists of articles unanimously supported by the Select Board and Finance Committee. Articles that change by-laws or introduce new spending are typically not included. In this warrant, the Select Board has grouped articles in consent agendas and labeled them for easy reference.

## **How Consent Agendas Work**

As the first step to act on a consent agenda, the moderator will read the titles of the included articles. A voter who wishes to remove an article from the consent agenda for separate debate and vote should state "hold." The held article will be set aside and acted on after the vote on the consent agenda. After the meeting agrees on the contents of the consent agenda, there will be no debate and the moderator will immediately call for a vote. Every motion included in the consent agenda will either pass or fail as a group. Voters should read the warrant and review the proposed consent agendas to identify articles they wish to remove for separate consideration.

# Electronic Voting at Town Meeting

Voting at Town Meeting will be conducted using an electronic voting system purchased by the Town of Groton as authorized by Town Meeting in October, 2022. Instead of using placards to be raised and counted, voters will use wireless handsets to cast their vote quickly, accurately and privately.



## Voter Check-In

At check-in, voters will be given a handset. No record is made of which voter receives which handset. All handsets will be tested prior to the meeting. Voters physically unable to use a handset will be seated in a manual-count section and their votes will be counted by tellers. For those with visual impairments, large handsets with braille are available.

## Test Vote

At the beginning of the meeting, the Moderator will conduct a test vote to get everyone comfortable with the voting procedures.

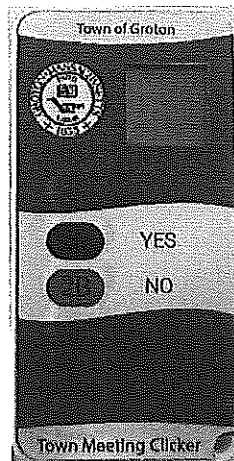
### Proxy Voting Prohibited

The handset given to a voter at check-in is for the exclusive use of that voter. Voting with a handset that has been issued to another individual is strictly forbidden.

## Voting

When the Moderator announces it is time to vote:

- Press 1A (green button) for YES →
- Press 2B (red button) for No →
- If you wish to not vote, press no buttons



## Handset Display

The display on the handset:

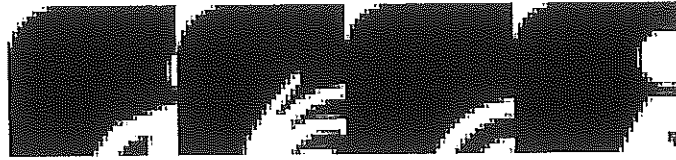
- OK means the system receiver has received your vote
- A "1" for Yes or "2" for No shows the vote the system received.
- The small "R" at the top of the screen indicates the handset is communicating with the receiver
- The icons in the top left indicate the WiFi signal strength.

## Help Desk

A Help Desk will be able to assist voters who have trouble with using the handset. If a handset malfunctions, a voter will receive a new handset.

### Handset Return

If you leave the meeting temporarily, please keep the handset with you. If the meeting ends or you leave, return the handset to the check-in table.



## Town Meeting Access for Voters with Disabilities

**Parking** – Universally accessible parking spaces are available in the parking lot in front of the Marion Stoddart Building (former Middle School South). There is a ramp providing access from the parking lot to the front door of the Building.

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

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

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

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

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

**Questions or concerns** - If you or a member of your household has questions or would like to request a sign language interpreter, please contact the Select Board's Office at Town Hall at 978 448-1111 at least one week before the Town Meeting.



**SPRING TOWN MEETING WARRANT  
APRIL 26, 2025**

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 Marion Stoddart Building Auditorium in said Town on Saturday, the twenty-sixth day of April, 2025 at Nine O'clock in the morning, to consider all business other than the election of Town Officers and on the twentieth day of May, 2025, between the hours of 7:00 A.M. and 8:00 P.M., at an adjourned session thereof at the following locations:

Precinct 1	The Groton Center 163 West Main Street	Precincts 2 & 3 Marion Stoddart Bldg. Gymnasium 344 Main Street
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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 Two	Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee	3 Years
Vote for One	Groton Electric Light Commission	3 Years
Vote for Two	Park Commission	3 Years
Vote for Two	Planning Board	3 Years
Vote for One	Planning Board	2 Years
Vote for One	Sewer Commission	3 Years
Vote for One	Sewer Commission	1 Year
Vote for Two	Trustees of the Groton Public Library	3 Years
Vote for One	Trustee of the Groton Public Library	1 Year
Vote for One	Water Commission	3 Years
Vote for One	Groton Housing Authority	5 Years
Vote for One	Groton Housing Authority	3 Years

**ARTICLES LISTING**

*	<b>Article 1:</b>	Hear Reports	7
*	<b>Article 2:</b>	Elected Officials Compensation	7
*	<b>Article 3:</b>	Wage and Classification Schedule	7
*	<b>Article 4:</b>	Appropriate FY 2026 Contribution to the OPEB Trust Fund	8
	<b>Article 5:</b>	Fiscal Year 2026 Annual Operating Budget	8
	<b>Article 6:</b>	Fiscal Year 2026 Capital Budget	9
	<b>Article 7:</b>	Community Preservation Funding Accounts	13
**	<b>Article 8:</b>	Community Preservation Funding Recommendations	14
	<b>Article 9:</b>	Proposed Amendments to the Groton Charter	17
	<b>Article 10:</b>	Act to Adopt Alternative Methods for Notice of Public Hearings	17
	<b>Article 11:</b>	Amend Chapter 81 "Town Meetings" of the Code of the Town of Groton	18
	<b>Article 12:</b>	Disposition of Town Owned Land on Hoyts Wharf Road	19
	<b>Article 13:</b>	Amend Chapter 125 "Demolition Delay" of the Code of the Town of Groton	19
	<b>Article 14:</b>	Adopt Resolution – Reduce Statewide Greenhouse Gas Emissions	25
	<b>Article 15:</b>	Amend Flood Plain Zoning District	26
	<b>Article 16:</b>	Endorse Master Plan	30
	<b>Article 17:</b>	MBTA Communities Multi-Family Overlay District (MCMOD)	31
	<b>Article 18:</b>	Accessory Dwelling Unit Amendments	36
	<b>Article 19:</b>	Accept Monarch Path as a Town Way	37
	<b>Article 20:</b>	Citizens Petition – Town Wide Speed Limit	38
***	<b>Article 21:</b>	Funding For Destination Groton Committee	38
***	<b>Article 22:</b>	Funding For Sustainability Commission	39
***	<b>Article 23:</b>	Transfer Within the Water Enterprise Fund	39
***	<b>Article 24:</b>	Transfer Within the Sewer Enterprise Fund	40
***	<b>Article 25:</b>	Transfer Within Four Corner Sewer Enterprise Fund	40
***	<b>Article 26:</b>	Prior Year Bills	40
***	<b>Article 27:</b>	Current Year Line-Item Transfers	41
***	<b>Article 28:</b>	Appropriate Funding to Offset Snow and Ice Deficit	41
***	<b>Article 29:</b>	Debt Service for the Middle School Track	41
***	<b>Article 30:</b>	Transfer Bond Proceeds	42
***	<b>Article 31:</b>	Establishing Limits for Various Revolving Funds	42
***	<b>Article 32:</b>	Funding For the Repair of the Town Hall Sprinkler System	43
		Budget Report of the Town Manager and Finance Committee to Town Meeting	45
		Fiscal Year 2026 Revenue Estimates	
		Fiscal Year 2026 Tax Levy Calculations	
		Appendix A – Fiscal Year 2026 Proposed Operating Budget	
		Appendix B – Fiscal Year 2026 Wage and Classification Schedule	
		Appendix C – Proposed Groton Charter	
		Appendix D – Red-Lined Chapter 125 – Demolition Delay	

\*Will be presented as one Consent Motion

\*\*CPA Funding Recommendations will be presented as One Consent Motion

\*\*\*Annual Consent Agenda. To be presented as one Motion

**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.

**Town Manager**

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *To provide compensation for elected officials as proposed by the Town Manager. The Town Moderator is proposed to receive a salary of \$1,000 in FY 2026.*

---

**Article 3: Wage and Classification Schedule**

To see if the Town will vote to amend and adopt for Fiscal Year 2026 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 (Executive Assistant to the Town Manager, Human Resources Director and IT Director) 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 \_% cost-of-living adjustment in Fiscal Year 2026.*

---

**Article 4:      *Appropriate FY 2026 Contribution to the OPEB Trust Fund***

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 Chapter 32B, Section 20, of the Massachusetts General Laws, 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 2026, the anticipated amount necessary for this purpose is estimated to be \$200,000. This Article will seek an appropriation of \$200,000 from Free Cash to add to the OPEB Liability Trust Fund.*

---

**Article 5:      *Fiscal Year 2026 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 (2026), 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 January 31<sup>st</sup>; meeting with department heads and boards; holding public budget hearings in preparation for issuing its recommendations to Town Meeting; and presenting its budget recommendations at 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 6: Fiscal Year 2026 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 in Fiscal Year 2025 and thereafter, for the purpose of funding the Fiscal Year 2026 Capital Budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**Town Manager**

**Summary:** *The following is the proposed Town Manager's Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2026:*

**Item #1 – Pick-Up Truck** **\$75,000** **Highway**

**Summary:** *This is a scheduled replacement. The average life of a pick-up truck is approximately 7 years. By replacing one vehicle every couple of years, this will allow the fleet to stay in good shape. They are front line pick-ups used for day-to-day operations as well as snow plowing.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Item #2 – Excavator** **\$200,000** **Highway**

**Summary:** *This piece of equipment has turned out to be a tremendous time saver for the Department. The versatility from digging, tree pruning, log splitting and grapple work, setting curb and loading debris is outstanding. Trading in the machine a little sooner rather than later will retain its trade value tremendously. GELD contributed 75k to the last machine.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

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

**Summary:** *This item in the Capital Budget was established over ten years ago and has been very successful. In Fiscal Year 2026, the following items will be purchased/upgraded with this allocation: 10 replacement computers; Replace aging servers and storage arrays; Investment to expand the network and keep equipment and maintenance costs current; Network switch upgrades and increased wireless coverage and improve door lock and security system maintenance.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Item #4 – Municipal Building Exterior Repairs            \$50,000            Town Facilities**

**Summary:**    *This appropriation will be used to continue to maintain all municipal buildings by performing various maintenance activities to prevent major breakdowns in all municipal building infrastructure. Priorities continue to change when it comes to the minor repairs and upgrades in the municipal buildings. With a set line item which is separate from minor capital, the Department can be flexible and change priorities instead of just doing it because it is on a list. Furnaces, a/c units, flooring and painting are some of the small items this capital program could handle with the flexibility provided.*

**Select Board:  
Finance Committee:**

**Item #5 – Fork Lift/Mini Loader                                \$125,000            Transfer Station**

**Summary:**    *This is a vital piece of equipment at the Transfer Station. It is used to load the two balers located at the facility. In addition, it is used to move the various recyclables around the facility. This piece of equipment is a work horse and this should be considered a scheduled replacement.*

**Select Board:  
Finance Committee:**

**Item #6 – Repaint Library Interior                            \$50,000            Library**

**Summary:**    *The Library needs a color refresh. The original paint, applied over 25 years ago, shows wear and tear throughout, and is also an outdated color scheme. By repainting the ceilings, walls, door jams, and interior window trim, and updating the color scheme of the three-story, 17,000 sq. ft. building, space can be revitalized to create a more modern but still warm, welcoming, and inviting interior to complement the other large-scale improvements made since 1999. This investment will not only enhance all public space as a whole but will be in keeping with the library's continued adaptation of services and resources to meet the community's ever evolving wants and needs. To reduce the disruption to our patrons and staff, this is a two-year phased painting project.*

**Select Board:  
Finance Committee:**

**Item #7 – Property Improvements                            \$25,000            Park Department**

**Summary:**    *The Park Commission has been working over the past several years developing a strategy to address deficiencies in the various Park Department Properties located throughout Groton. Since FY 2015, the Town has appropriated \$25,000 each year so that the Park Commission can develop a capital improvement program that will allow them to keep the various park locations in good shape and avoid a major construction project to much success.*

**Select Board:  
Finance Committee:**



**Item #12 – Portable Light Tower** **\$14,000** **Police Department**

**Summary:** *This will be used to purchase an additional tower for recurring large events requiring multiple light towers to be used at the same time, (Fireworks, Halloween, serious motor vehicle accidents).*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Item #13 – Search and Rescue Drone** **\$14,000** **Police Department**

**Summary:** *This Search & Rescue Drone will replace an obsolete drone that is used for large area searches for lost people/suspects.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Item #14 – Golf Carts** **\$25,553** **Country Club**

**Summary:** *In FY 2023, the Town replaced the fleet of twenty-five golf carts with new 21 Yamaha gas powered carts and four Yamaha electric carts using a five year lease to purchase agreement at an annual cost of approximately \$25,000. This is the fourth of five payments.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Item #15 – Ventrac Attachments** **\$10,918** **Country Club**

**Summary:** *In FY 2024, the Town purchased a Ventrac unit using a five year lease-to-purchase agreement at an annual cost of \$10,918. This is the second payment of five payments. The Ventrac unit is a most versatile piece of equipment. The attachments already in use include units for plowing, aeration, seeding, landscaping and mowing difficult terrain. This vehicle is used on a daily basis.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Item #16 – Greens Equipment – Truckster XD** **\$14,736** **Country Club**

**Summary:** *This is a heavy payload 4x4 utility truck that will allow the transfer of up to 3,500 lbs. of debris, sand and loam to and from areas of the Course. This utility cart will replace the other utility cart in the Club's fleet that is over a decade old and is becoming unreliable. This vehicle will be used on a daily basis in the Spring and Fall when course cleanup is a daily occurrence. During the Summer months, it will be used for various Course projects. This vehicle will be paid for over five years. This is the third of five payments.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**



**Item #17 – Greens Equipment – Greens Mower      \$10,000      Country Club**

**Summary:**    *This item replaced a greens mower. The old mower will be converted to a tee & collar unit, and the old tee & collar unit will be converted to a greens roller unit. Ideally, the Club will purchase a new mower every five years. This is the second of four payments for this equipment.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Item #18 – PFAS Free Structural FF Gear      \$80,000      Fire and EMS**

**Summary:**    *PFAS has been used in firefighting gear for a long time due to its ability to withstand high temperatures and repel water and oils. Firefighters have long been known to suffer from a highly increased rate of cancers that are caused by the use of PFAS. These chemicals are shown to contribute or are responsible for cases of breast, kidney, and testicular cancers within the fire service. Effective January 1, 2027, manufacturers and sellers of personal protective equipment for firefighters will be prohibited from knowingly selling gear containing “intentionally-added PFAS” chemicals, meaning PFAS chemicals or products that break down into PFAS chemicals that are intentionally added to the product during manufacturing. The Town needs to replace this equipment over the next two years.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Town Manager**

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**Article 7:      Community Preservation Funding Accounts**

To see if the Town will vote to make the following appropriations from the Community Preservation Fund: Allocation of Community Preservation Funds to the following sub accounts:

CPC Operating Expenses:	\$ 29,000
Open Space Reserve:	\$113,241
Historic Resource Reserve:	\$113,241
Community Housing Reserve:	\$113,241
Unallocated Reserve:	\$763,687

or to take any other action relative thereto.

**Community Preservation Committee**

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**  
**Community Preservation Committee:**

**Summary:**    *This is an accounting procedure that is necessary so that the Community Preservation Committee will have access to the funds raised during Fiscal Year 2026. Except for the CPC Operating Expenses, none of these funds will be spent without additional approval at Town Meeting.*

**Article 8: 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 2026, 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 Massachusetts 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 Massachusetts General Laws, as may be necessary or proper to carry out the foregoing, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**CPC Proposal A: West Groton Rail Trail \$70,000**

**Summary:** *The West Groton Rail Trail Committee is requesting \$70,000 to initiate the legal process of securing the rights to a section of rail line, from the river bordering Ayer to Cutler Field, from the MBTA, as well as funding the relative environmental filings.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**  
**Community Preservation Committee:**

**CPC Proposal B: Conservation Fund – FY 2026 \$200,000**

**Summary:** *The Conservation Commission is requesting \$200,000 to be added to Groton’s Conservation Fund to help preserve land for open space, agricultural recreation, and forestry activities, as well as to protect water resources and wildlife habitat. The Conservation Fund allows the Town to act swiftly when a priority parcel becomes available. In the past, the Conservation Fund has been used to purchase conservation restrictions, agricultural preservation restrictions, and fee ownership of conservation land within Groton.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**  
**Community Preservation Committee:**

**CPC Proposal C: FY 2026 Housing Funds Request \$400,000**

**Summary:** *The Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) is requesting \$400,000 from the Community Housing Reserve in order to continue its work of creating and supporting Affordable Housing in Groton. This money will allow the AHT to respond swiftly if suitable property for Affordable Housing becomes available on the market. Community Housing Funds can be used to acquire, create, support, rehabilitate and/or restore affordable housing if acquired or created with CPA funds.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**  
**Community Preservation Committee:**

**CPC Proposal D: Cow Pond Brook Fields Improvements \$100,000**

**Summary:** *The Town Manager's Office and Park Commission are requesting \$100,000 to conduct an existing condition review for the large area owned by the Town of Groton between Cow Pond Brook Road and Hoyts Wharf Road, this area is currently used by athletic groups and residents for recreation. The funding will also support the development of a schematic design for the space, including preliminary permitting discussions, as well as the completion of 50% of the design development.*

**Select Board:  
Finance Committee:  
Community Preservation Committee:**

**CPC Proposal E: Housing Coordinator – FY 2026 \$63,401**

**Summary:** *This application is requesting \$63,401 in CPA funding from the Community Housing category to fund the wages and benefits of the Housing Coordinator position for the Town of Groton (25-hours/week).*

**Select Board:  
Finance Committee:  
Community Preservation Committee:**

**CPC Proposal F: Bancroft Castle Preservation \$153,000**

**Summary:** *The Groton Historic Commission is requesting \$153,000 to implement the restoration work recommended in the previously funded Phase 1 engineering analysis. This funding will help preserve the Bancroft Castle structure, and to address the public safety hazards for visitors.*

**Select Board:  
Finance Committee:  
Community Preservation Committee:**

**CPC Proposal G: Prescott Community Center \$135,000**

**Summary:** *The Friends of Prescott and Town Manager's Office are requesting \$135,000 to renovate the deteriorated building. The proposed work includes replace failing wall materials, remove failing suspended ceilings and replacing them with new, period-appropriate tin ceiling system, eliminating suspended tubular fluorescent lighting and replacing it with new period appropriate lighting, removing carpeting and restore the hardwood flooring, and replacing the front doors with custom-designed doors to match the building's historical style.*

**Select Board:  
Finance Committee:  
Community Preservation Committee:**

**CPC Proposal H: Cow Pond Baseball Improvements \$84,330**

**Summary:** *The Groton Dunstable Youth Baseball League with the support of the Park Commission, is requesting \$84,330 to remodel eight dugouts, remodel four batting cages, and rebuild the pitching mounds on all four baseball fields at the Cow Pond Brook Fields.*

- Select Board:**
- Finance Committee:**
- Community Preservation Committee:**

**CPC Proposal I: Town Field Improvements \$378,963**

**Summary:** *The Town Manager's Office and Park Commission are requesting \$378,963 to renovate the major league baseball diamond at Town Field. This project builds on the previously funded design study and will renovate the infield, place new backstops, the placement players benches on concrete pads with chain-link fences, and landscape of the outfield.*

- Select Board:**
- Finance Committee:**
- Community Preservation Committee:**

**CPC Proposal J: Curatorial Storage \$62,675**

**Summary:** *The Groton Historical Society is requesting \$62,675 to improve storage conditions on the third floor of the Boutwell House, where approximately 30% of the GHS's collection of historic objects are house. The project will include minor conservation of items, repairs to the walls and ceilings, installation of storage shelving, and the addition of mechanical ventilation to reduce extreme summer temperatures.*

- Select Board:**
- Finance Committee:**
- Community Preservation Committee:**

**CPC Proposal K: Williams Barn Restoration \$158,972**

**Summary:** *The Williams Barn Committee is requesting \$158,972 to renovate the 185-year-old historic structure. The work will include repairing a section of the foundation wall, replacing sills, the gable end fascia, and soffit boards, replacing two cracked support beams, and adding handrails to improve safety for all.*

- Select Board:**
- Finance Committee:**
- Community Preservation Committee:**

**Community Preservation Committee**

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**Article 9: Proposed Amendments to the Groton Charter**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to petition the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for a special act to amend the Town Charter as set forth in Appendix C of this Warrant, provided, however, that the General Court may make clerical or editorial changes of form only to the bill, unless the Select Board approves amendments thereto before enactment by the General Court, which amendments shall be within the public purposes of said petition, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**Charter Review Committee**

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee:**

**Charter Review Committee:**

**Summary:** *The Groton Charter requires periodic review every ten years. In 2024, a Committee was formed to review the Charter and determine if changes were warranted. The Committee solicited input from the public and has reviewed suggestions and concerns during meetings over the last six months. The revised Charter seeks to (1) address this input; (2) address the appointment of the Police Chief, Fire Chief and Town Clerk; (3) clear up inconsistencies in the current Charter; and (4) address the responsibilities of the Department of Public Works with regard to the Town's parks and commons. A vote in favor of this Article will be the first step in adopting the revised Charter. A vote against this Article will allow the current Charter to remain in force.*

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**Article 10: Act to Adopt Alternative Methods for Notice of Public Hearings**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to petition the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for a special act regarding notice of public hearings as follows:

**AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE TOWN OF GROTON TO ADOPT ALTERNATIVE METHODS FOR NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:*

**Section 1.** Notwithstanding section 11 of chapter 40A of the general laws, or any general or special law to the contrary, the town of Groton may adopt and further amend general by-laws that regulate the publishing of legal notices of public hearings on the official website operated by the town.

**Section 2.** The town's general by-laws may provide that all legal notices of public hearings shall be published: (i) (A) in a local newspaper, either in electronic or paper format; or (B) on the bulletin board outside the town clerk's office; and (ii) on the official website operated by the town.

**Section 3.** This act shall take effect upon its passage.

provided, however, that the General Court may make clerical or editorial changes of form only to the bill, unless the Select Board approves amendments thereto before enactment by the General Court, which amendments shall be within the public purposes of said petition, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**Select Board**

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *In an effort to continually look for ways in which reductions can be made in the municipal budget, this article seeks Town Meeting approval for the Select Board to petition the General Court for alternative methods for posting notices of public hearings. This will allow for more flexibility in how public hearing notices are posted for public viewing. Currently, Chapter 40A, Section 11 of the General Laws requires the Town to print all legal notices for public hearings in a newspaper of general circulation. This Home Rule Petition would allow the Town to save on newspaper printing and publishing costs by allowing town departments, boards, committees, and commissions the added flexibility to post in the local newspaper electronically, or on the bulletin board located near the Town Clerk's Office and on the Town's website. Publishing legal notices in the local newspaper will still be an option for those choosing that method of posting. There are currently seven (7) cities and towns in the Commonwealth that recently had similar Home Rule Petitions approved by the General Court and enacted by the Governor.*

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**Article 11: Amend Chapter 81 "Town Meetings" of the Code of the Town of Groton**

To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 81 "Town Meetings" of the General Bylaws of the Town by deleting Section 81-4(A) in its entirety and replacing said section with the following:

**§81-4 Scheduling of Business**

- A. All business, other than the election of officers and the determination of such matters as by law are required to be by ballot, shall commence at times set forth in the warrants for said town meetings approved by the Select Board. The annual election of officers and other voting by ballot shall be held on the third Tuesday in May of each year, at which time the polls shall remain open from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m.

or to take any other action relative thereto.

**Town Manager**

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *The current bylaw states that the Annual Election shall be held on the fourth Tuesday following the first session of the Spring Town Meeting. In some years, when the Town Meeting is not held prior to the last Monday in April, the current wording could set the Annual Town Election the day after Memorial Day. To avoid that in the future, this Article proposes setting the Annual Town Election every year on the third Tuesday in May, regardless of when the first session of Town Meeting is held.*

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**Article 12: Disposition of Town Owned Land on Hoyts Wharf Road**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to dispose of by sale, or lease for a period not to exceed 99 years, that certain property or portions thereof located off Hoyts Wharf Road consisting of portions of Assessors Parcels 249-51 and 249-57, containing approximately 8.3 acres, and shown as “Lot 2” and “Parcel A” on a plan entitled “MESA Site Plan” by Dillis & Roy, dated February 12, 2025, a copy of which is on file in the Town Clerk’s office, for such minimum consideration and on such terms and conditions as the Select Board deems advisable, to provide affordable housing, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**Affordable Housing Trust**

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *The Affordable Housing Trust has identified a parcel of Town owned land suitable for development of affordable housing. The purpose of this article is to allow the Affordable Housing Trust to issue a Request for Proposals to invite a response from a developer to create affordable housing on this site. More information will be shared at the Town Meeting.*

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**Article 13: Amend Chapter 125 “Demolition Delay” of the Town Bylaws**

To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 125 “Demolition Delay” of the General Bylaws of the Town by deleting Chapter 125 in its entirety and replacing it with a new Chapter 125 “Demolition Delay” as follows (please see Appendix D of this Warrant for the red-lined changes to the current Chapter 125):

**Chapter 125 Demolition Delay**

**§ 125-1. Intent and purpose.**

- A. The Demolition Delay Bylaw is enacted for the purpose of preserving and protecting significant buildings within the Town of Groton. Such buildings reflect distinctive features of the architectural, cultural, economic, political or social history of the Town, and their preservation protects these historic architectural assets which contribute to the overall culture of the community.
- B. The intent of the bylaw is to provide an opportunity to develop preservation solutions for distinctive and preserved historic properties threatened with demolition. The bylaw is intended to encourage owners and townspeople, with assistance from the Groton Historical Commission, to seek out persons who might be willing to purchase, preserve, rehabilitate or restore such buildings rather than demolish them, and to limit the detrimental effect of demolition on the historical architectural resources of the Town. To achieve these purposes, the Groton Historical Commission is empowered to advise the Building Inspector with respect to the issuance of permits for demolition of significant buildings, and, where appropriate and consistent with the intent and purpose of this chapter, to allow demolition under conditions designed to minimize the loss of distinctive features of significant buildings. The issuance of demolition permits is regulated as provided by this bylaw.

**§ 125-2. Definitions.**

As used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

**APPLICANT** — Any person or persons who is either the owner or legally representing the owner and applying for a permit to demolish any building or structure. The applicant may not apply for a permit to demolish any building or structure on behalf of a future owner. The process outlined in this Bylaw resets upon the transfer of ownership of a property.

**BUILDING** — A structure enclosed within exterior walls or firewalls, built, erected and framed of a combination of any materials to form a structure for the shelter of persons, animals or property.

**BUILDING INSPECTOR** — The Town of Groton Building Commissioner, who is charged with the administration and enforcement of the State Building Code, 780 CMR, and is authorized to issue demolition permits.

**COMMISSION** — The Groton Historical Commission, which is charged with the identification, documentation and preservation of the historical resources of Groton.

**DEMOLITION** — Any act of pulling down, destroying, removing, razing or moving a building or commencing the work of moving or of total or substantial destruction with the intent of completing the same. Substantial demolition is defined as irreparably removing or altering any historically significant feature of a structure or removing twenty-five (25) percent of the volume of the structure or twenty-five (25) percent of the roof structure. This includes rebuilding any portion of a structure in which more than fifty (50) percent of the materials are replaced.

**DEMOLITION PERMIT** — The permit issued by the Building Inspector as required by the State Building Code for the demolition, substantial demolition or removal of a building.

**HISTORICALLY OR ARCHITECTURALLY SIGNIFICANT BUILDING** — Any building which, in whole or in part, is at least 75 years old, or is of unknown age and:

- A. Is listed on, or is a contributing building within an area listed on, the National Register of Historic Places, or is the subject of a pending application for such listing, or is eligible for such listing; or
- B. Is included in the Cultural Resources Inventory prepared by the Historical Commission; or
- C. Has been determined by vote of the Historical Commission to be a significant building after a finding by the Historical Commission that the building meets one or more of the following three criteria:
  - (1) Historical importance. The building meets the criterion of historical importance if it:
    - (a) Has character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the Town of Groton, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or the nation; or
    - (b) Is the site of an historic event; or
    - (c) Is identified with a person or group of persons who had significant influence on society; or
    - (d) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historic heritage of the community.



- (2) Architectural importance. The structure meets the criterion of architectural importance if it:
  - (a) Portrays the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or
  - (b) Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type; or
  - (c) Is the work of an architect, master builder or craftsman whose individual work has influenced the development of the Town of Groton or a wider region; or
  - (d) Contains elements of architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship, which represents a significant innovation.
  
- (3) Geographic importance. The structure meets the criterion of geographic importance if:
  - (a) The site is part of or related to a square, park, or other distinctive area; or
  - (b) The structure, as to its unique location or its physical characteristics, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, village center, or the community as a whole.

**§ 125-3. Procedure.**

- A. No permit for the demolition of a significant building or part thereof shall be issued except as provided in this chapter, as well as in conformity with the provisions of other laws and bylaws applicable to the demolition of buildings and the issuance of permits generally.
  
- B. Application contents. Every application for a demolition permit shall be filed with the Building Inspector and shall contain the following information:
  - (1) The address of the building to be demolished;
  - (2) The owner's name, address and telephone number;
  - (3) A brief description of the type of building and the condition requiring issuance of the permit;
  - (4) Age of building as established by the Board of Assessors, deed or documentation verifying year of construction;
  - (5) A brief description of the proposed reuse, reconstruction or replacement;
  - (6) Photographs clearly depicting the building in question.
  
- C. Within seven (7) days after receipt of any application for a demolition permit, the Building Inspector shall forward a copy to the Commission. No demolition permit shall be issued during this time.
  
- D. Within thirty (30) days after receipt of a copy of the application for demolition permit from the Building Inspector, the Historical Commission or its designee shall make a determination of architectural and/or historical significance ("determination of significance"). Upon determination by the Historical Commission that the building is not architecturally and/or historically significant, the Historical Commission shall so notify the Building Inspector and the applicant in writing. Upon receipt of such notification, or after the expiration of thirty (30) days from the date of application submission to the Building Department if the Building Inspector has not received notification from the Historical Commission, the Building Inspector may issue the demolition permit. Upon determination by the Historical Commission that the building is historically and/or architecturally significant, the Building Inspector and the applicant shall be so notified by the Historical Commission in writing within thirty (30) days from the date of application submission to the Building Department, and a demolition permit shall not be issued.
  
- E. The Historical Commission shall hold a public hearing within thirty (30) days of the determination of significance to determine whether the building should be preferably preserved. Public notice of the time, place and purpose of the hearing shall be published by the Historical Commission at the

expense of the applicant in a newspaper of general circulation in the Town or online platform of comparable reach, as approved by the Commission, not less than fourteen (14) days before the day of said hearing and shall be posted on the Town's website for the same period.

- F. The Commission shall decide at the public hearing or within fourteen (14) days after the public hearing whether the building should be preferably preserved. If agreed to in writing by the applicant, the determination of the Commission may be postponed.
- G. If after a public hearing the Historical Commission determines that the significant building should not be preferably preserved, the Historical Commission shall, within twenty-one (21) days after the hearing, notify in writing the Building Inspector and the applicant of the determination and the Building Inspector may issue a demolition permit upon receipt of the written determination.
- H. If after a public hearing the Historical Commission determines that the significant building should be preferably preserved ("preservation determination"), the Historical Commission shall, within twenty-one (21) days after the hearing, notify in writing the Building Inspector and the applicant, and no demolition permit may be issued until twenty-four (24) months after the date of the preservation determination by the Historical Commission, and the applicant has met the requirements outlined in section 125-4.I. Upon a determination by the Commission that a building is preferably preserved, no building permit for new construction or alterations to the subject building shall be issued for a period of twenty-four (24) months from the date of the determination unless otherwise agreed to by the Commission.
- J. Following the twenty-four (24) month delay period, no permit for demolition of a building determined to be a preferably preserved building shall be granted until all plans for future use and development of the site have been filed with the Building Inspector and have found to comply with all laws pertaining to the issuance of a building permit and any other approvals necessary for the intended use. All approvals necessary for the issuance of such building permit or certificate of occupancy including without limitation any necessary zoning variances or special permits, must be granted and all appeals from the granting of such approvals must be concluded, prior to the issuance of a demolition permit under this section.
- K. If the site is proposed to be vacant, the property owner must file a signed affidavit with the Building Inspector attesting that no development is planned for the site and that it will remain in a vacant state for the foreseeable future. No permit for any type of construction may be granted for the property in question under this subsection for an additional period of twenty-four (24) months following the expiration of the demolition delay, unless an exemption is granted by the Historical Commission.
- L. Notwithstanding anything contained in Subsection G, the Building Inspector may issue a demolition permit for a building with a preservation determination at any time after receipt of written advice from the Historical Commission to the effect that either:
  - (1) The Historical Commission is satisfied that there is no reasonable likelihood that either the owner or some other person or group is willing to purchase, preserve, rehabilitate or restore such building; or
  - (2) The Historical Commission is satisfied that for at least twenty-four (24) months the applicant has made continuing, bona fide and reasonable efforts to locate a purchaser to preserve, rehabilitate or restore the subject building, and that such efforts have been unsuccessful.

#### **§ 125-4. Responsibility of owners.**

- A. Once a significant building is given a determination of significance by the Historical Commission,

the applicant and owner shall be responsible for properly securing the building to the satisfaction of the Building Inspector, whether occupied or vacant. Should the applicant fail to so secure the building and the significant building is destroyed at any time during the twenty-four (24) month demolition delay period and such destruction could have been prevented by the required security measures as determined by the Building Inspector, it shall be considered a demolition in violation of this chapter.

- B. Also, the applicant shall allow the Historical Commission or a designee appointed by the Historical Commission access to the significant building and property, for the purpose of documenting the building under the survey process of the Massachusetts Historical Commission and for the purpose of showing the building to prospective purchasers or preservers.
- C. During the entire twenty-four (24) month demolition delay period, the property owner shall make a good faith effort to sell the property in order to preserve the building, unless granted an exemption by vote of the Historical Commission. "Good faith efforts" shall include the following:

- (1) The significant building must be sold along with the land on which it currently sits to maintain its historic context. For the avoidance of doubt this requirement cannot be satisfied by the owner offering the building to be moved to another location, unless such relocation is approved by the Historical Commission. The amount of land to be sold with the significant building shall be governed by all applicable zoning regulations. If legally permitted, this may include the subdivision of the property. Any related expenses will be borne by the applicant.

- (2) The property in question must be publicly advertised for sale. This includes the conspicuous posting of such notice on the property, as well as in at least one (1) other suitable public outlet typically utilized by persons offering real estate for sale (including, but not limited to, the Multiple Listing Service). This shall be done at the owner's sole expense. The twenty-four (24) month demolition delay period shall not begin until the provisions of this section are met and the applicant informs the Commission of such. If at any time during the demolition delay period the applicant ceases to meet the provisions of this section, the delay period may be paused until the provisions are once again met. The Commission will notify the applicant of any such pause, and the reason for the same.

- (3) The offer for sale must be constructed in a bona fide and commercially reasonable manner. The object of this provision is limited to preventing the owner from impeding the preservation of the property by offering the property for sale other than on commercially reasonable terms.

- (4) If the owner declines an offer to purchase the property in question and does not accept another offer within two (2) weeks, the applicant must inform the Commission, in writing, of the offer price and the reason that the offer was declined. The owner shall document such good faith efforts and provide reports to the Commission, at least once every two (2) months during the delay period, of such good faith efforts.

#### **§ 125-5. Emergency demolition.**

- A. Notwithstanding the other provisions of this chapter, the Building Inspector may issue a demolition permit at any time in the event of imminent and substantial danger to the health and safety of the public due to deteriorating conditions. Prior to doing so, the Building Inspector shall inspect the building and document, in writing, the findings and reasons requiring an emergency demolition, a copy of which shall be forwarded immediately to the Historical Commission. Before allowing emergency demolition, the Building Inspector shall make every effort to inform the Chairperson of the Commission of his intention to allow demolition.

- B. No provision of this chapter is intended to conflict with or abridge any obligations or rights conferred by Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 143, regarding removal or demolition of dangerous or abandoned structures. In the event of a conflict, the applicable provisions of Chapter 143 shall control.

**§ 125-6. Enforcement and remedies.**

- A. The Historical Commission is authorized to adopt rules and regulations to carry out its duties and functions under this chapter
- B. The Historical Commission is specifically authorized to institute any and all actions and proceedings, in law or equity, as it may deem necessary and appropriate to obtain compliance with the requirements of this chapter or to prevent a threatened violation thereof.
- C. No building permit for any premises upon which a significant building has been voluntarily demolished in violation of this chapter shall be issued for a period of two years after the date of the completion of such demolition. The design shall first be reviewed, and must be accepted by, the Historical Commission. As used herein, "premises" refers to the parcel of land upon which the demolished significant building was located and all adjoining parcels of land under common ownership or control.
- D. Notwithstanding the foregoing, whenever the Historical Commission shall, on its own initiative or on application of the applicant, determine that earlier reconstruction, restoration or other remediation of any demolition in violation of this chapter better serves the intent and purpose of this chapter, it may, prior to the expiration of said period of two years, authorize issuance of a building permit, upon such conditions as the Historical Commission deems necessary or appropriate to effectuate the purposes of this chapter, and may so notify the Building Inspector.
- E. If the property owner fails to abide by the terms of section 125-4, the Historical Commission may pause the demolition delay period until the provisions are met.
- F. The Commission is authorized to adopt a schedule of reasonable fees to cover the costs associated with the administration of this bylaw.
- G. Any owner of a building subject to this bylaw that demolished the building without first obtaining a demolition permit in accordance with the provisions of this bylaw shall be subject to a fine of not more than Three Hundred Dollars (\$300). Each day the violation exists shall constitute a separate offense until a faithful recreation of the demolished building is completed or unless otherwise agreed to by the Commission.

**§ 125-7. Historic District Act.**

Nothing in this chapter shall be deemed to conflict with the provisions of the Historic Districts Act, Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40C. If any of the provisions of this chapter do so conflict, that act shall prevail. Following a determination that the building is significant and preferably preserved, the Commission may recommend to town meeting that the building be protected through the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40C, the Historic Districts Act. The steps required under M.G.L. Chapter 40C shall be followed prior to the establishment of a local historic district. Buildings included within the boundaries of a local historic district established under M.G.L Chapter 40C shall not be subject to this bylaw so long as the proposed demolition is regulated by the local historic district bylaw.

**§ 125-8. Severability.**

In case any section, paragraph or part of this chapter is for any reason declared invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, every other section, paragraph and part shall continue in full force and effect.

or to take any other action relative thereto.

**Historical Commission**

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *The Groton Historical Commission is proposing a set of revisions to increase the effectiveness of the Town’s Demolition Delay Bylaw, which provides the only formal protections for historic structures in Groton located outside of the Town’s Historic Districts. The revisions are intended to clarify the process and align it with best practices adopted by other municipalities and those recommended by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Key changes include extending the maximum length of the delay from 18 to 24 months; defining the tools available to the Groton Historical Commission to regulate the process; and clarifying the responsibilities of property owners regarding the (previously existing) requirement to offer the historical structure in question for sale to a party interested in preserving it during the term of the demolition delay.*

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**Article 14: Adopt Resolution – Reduce Statewide Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

To see if the Town will vote to adopt the following resolution in support of reducing Statewide Greenhouse Gas Emissions:

*“Groton affirms its support for the goal established by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050. Groton commits to evaluate and implement strategies to reduce emissions in municipal activities with a goal of eliminating all onsite burning of fossil fuels in municipal buildings and vehicles by 2050 and support residents and businesses in reducing emissions.”*

or to take any other action relative thereto.

**Select Board**

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *The Climate Action Working Group was a multi-stakeholder group formed by the Town Manager to assess attitudes towards climate action in the Town. The Working Group convened over a five-month period in 2024, meeting with fourteen community stakeholder groups and Town departments, and surveying over 300 residents. The group discovered strong support for local climate action from residents, the business community and town departments, including support for the Massachusetts mandate for statewide greenhouse gas emissions to reach net zero by 2050. This resolution is intended to formally declare the town’s support for the state mandate, to continue municipal efforts to reduce emissions from*

*municipal operations and to assist residents and businesses in reducing their emissions. In addition, passing this resolution is a mandatory step in the process of becoming a Climate Leader community, a state designation that provides increased funding assistance for municipal projects aimed at reducing emissions through energy efficiency, electrification and clean energy, all of which can also reduce municipal operating costs.*

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**Article 15: Amend Floodplain Overlay District**

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw of the Town of Groton as follows:

1. **Delete Section 218-7.1 Floodplain District Regulations** in its entirety.
2. **Insert the following new Section 218-7.1 Floodplain Overlay District.**

**Section 218-7.1 Floodplain Overlay District**

- A. The purpose of the Floodplain Overlay District and this Floodplain Bylaw is to:
- 1) Ensure public safety through reducing the threats to life and personal injury
  - 2) Eliminate new hazards to emergency response officials
  - 3) Prevent the occurrence of public emergencies resulting from water quality, contamination, and pollution due to flooding
  - 4) Avoid the loss of utility services which if damaged by flooding would disrupt or shut down the utility network and impact regions of the community beyond the site of flooding
  - 5) Eliminate costs associated with the response and cleanup of flooding conditions
  - 6) Reduce damage to public and private property resulting from flooding waters
- B. The Floodplain Overlay District is established as an overlay district. The Floodplain Overlay District includes all special flood hazard areas within the Town of Groton designated as Zone A, AE on the Middlesex County Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) dated July 8, 2025 issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the administration of the National Flood Insurance Program. The exact boundaries of the Floodplain Overlay District shall be defined by the 1%-chance base flood elevations shown on the FIRM and further defined by the Middlesex County Flood Insurance Study (FIS) report dated July 8, 2025. The FIRM and FIS report are incorporated herein by reference and are on file with the Town Clerk, Planning Board, Building Commissioner, and Conservation Commission.
- C. The Building Commissioner shall be the official floodplain administrator for the Town.
- D. No new building or structure shall be erected in the Floodplain Overlay District except in accordance with this Section 218-7.1.
- E. The Town of Groton requires a special permit issued by the Planning Board for all other development in the Floodplain Overlay District, including changes to existing buildings, placement of agricultural facilities (subject to M.G.L. c. 40A, Section 3), fences, sheds, storage facilities or drilling, mining, paving and any other development that might increase flooding or adversely impact flood risks to other properties.

F. The Town's special permit review process includes the requirement that the proponent obtain all local, state and federal permits that will be necessary in order to carry out the proposed development in the Floodplain Overlay District prior to the commencement of work authorized by the floodplain administrator or Planning Board. The proponent must acquire all necessary permits and must demonstrate that all necessary permits have been acquired to the floodplain administrator prior to the commencement of any work authorized by the floodplain administrator or Planning Board.

G. In Zones A and AE, along watercourses that have not had a regulatory floodway designated, the best available Federal, State, local, or other floodway data shall be used to prohibit encroachments in floodways which would result in any increase in flood levels within the community during the occurrence of the base flood discharge.

In Zone AE, along watercourses that have a regulatory floodway designated on the Town's FIRM encroachments are prohibited, including fill, new construction, substantial improvements, and other development within the adopted regulatory floodway unless it has been demonstrated through hydrologic and hydraulic analyses performed in accordance with standard engineering practice that the proposed encroachment would not result in any increase in flood levels within the community during the occurrence of the base flood discharge.

H. In A Zones, in the absence of FEMA BFE data and floodway data, the building department will obtain, review and reasonably utilize base flood elevation and floodway data available from a Federal, State, or other source as criteria for requiring new construction, substantial improvements, or other development in Zone A and as the basis for elevating residential structures to or above base flood level, for floodproofing or elevating nonresidential structures to or above base flood level, and for prohibiting encroachments in floodways.

I. All subdivision proposals and development proposals in the Floodplain Overlay District shall be reviewed to assure that:

- (a) Such proposals minimize flood damage.
- (b) Public utilities and facilities are located & constructed so as to minimize flood damage.
- (c) Adequate drainage is provided.

J. When proposing subdivisions or other developments greater than 50 lots or 5 acres (whichever is less), the proponent must provide technical data to determine base flood elevations for each developable parcel shown on the design plans.

K. In A and AE Zones, all recreational vehicles to be placed on a site must be elevated and anchored in accordance with the zone's regulations for foundation and elevation requirements or be on the site for less than 180 consecutive days or be fully licensed and highway ready.

L. In a riverine situation, the Building Commissioner shall notify the following of any alteration or relocation of a watercourse:

- Adjacent Communities, especially upstream and downstream
- Bordering States, if affected
- NFIP State Coordinator  
Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
- NFIP Program Specialist

Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region I

M. If the Town acquires data that changes the base flood elevation in the FEMA mapped Special Flood Hazard Areas, the Town will, within 6 months, notify FEMA of these changes by submitting the technical or scientific data that supports the change(s.) Notification shall be submitted to:

- NFIP State Coordinator  
Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
- NFIP Program Specialist  
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region I

N. Variances to building code floodplain standards. The Town will request from the State Building Code Appeals Board a written and/or audible copy of the portion of the hearing related to the variance, and will maintain this record in the community's files.

O. Variances to local Zoning Bylaws related to community compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). A variance from this Floodplain Bylaw must meet the requirements set out by State law, as applicable, and may only be granted if: 1) Good and sufficient cause and exceptional non-financial hardship exist; 2) the variance will not result in additional threats to public safety, extraordinary public expense, or fraud or victimization of the public; and 3) the variance is the minimum action necessary to afford relief. A variance under this Floodplain Bylaw shall be distinct from a variance under M.G.L. c. 40A, Section 10 and Section 218-2.4 of the Zoning Bylaw.

P. The floodplain management regulations found in this Floodplain Overlay District section shall take precedence over any less restrictive conflicting local laws, ordinances or codes.

Q. The degree of flood protection required by this Floodplain Bylaw is considered reasonable but does not imply total flood protection.

R. If any section, provision, or portion of this Floodplain Bylaw is deemed to be unconstitutional or invalid by a court, the remainder of the ordinance shall be effective.

S. Definitions not found in the State Building Code, which are applicable only within this Floodplain Bylaw and do not govern other sections of the Zoning Bylaw.

DEVELOPMENT means any man-made change to improved or unimproved real estate, including but not limited to building or other structures, mining, dredging, filling, grading, paving, excavation or drilling operations or storage of equipment or materials. [US Code of Federal Regulations, Title 44, Part 59]

FLOODWAY. The channel of the river, creek or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than a designated height. [Base Code, Chapter 2, Section 202]

FUNCTIONALLY DEPENDENT USE means a use which cannot perform its intended purpose unless it is located or carried out in close proximity to water. The term includes only docking facilities, port facilities that are necessary for the loading and unloading of cargo or passengers, and ship building and ship repair facilities, but does not include long-term storage or related manufacturing facilities. [US Code of Federal Regulations, Title 44, Part 59] Also [Referenced Standard ASCE 24-14]



HIGHEST ADJACENT GRADE means the highest natural elevation of the ground surface prior to construction next to the proposed walls of a structure. [US Code of Federal Regulations, Title 44, Part 59]

HISTORIC STRUCTURE means any structure that is:

- (a) Listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places (a listing maintained by the Department of Interior) or preliminarily determined by the Secretary of the Interior as meeting the requirements for individual listing on the National Register;
- (b) Certified or preliminarily determined by the Secretary of the Interior as contributing to the historical significance of a registered historic district or a district preliminarily determined by the Secretary to qualify as a registered historic district;
- (c) Individually listed on a state inventory of historic places in states with historic preservation programs which have been approved by the Secretary of the Interior; or
- (d) Individually listed on a local inventory of historic places in communities with historic preservation programs that have been certified either:

(1) By an approved state program as determined by the Secretary of the Interior or

(2) Directly by the Secretary of the Interior in states without approved programs.

[US Code of Federal Regulations, Title 44, Part 59]

NEW CONSTRUCTION. Structures for which the start of construction commenced on or after the effective date of the first floodplain management code, regulation, ordinance, or standard adopted by the authority having jurisdiction, including any subsequent improvements to such structures. *New construction includes work determined to be substantial improvement.* [Referenced Standard ASCE 24-14]

RECREATIONAL VEHICLE means a vehicle which is:

- (a) Built on a single chassis;
- (b) 400 square feet or less when measured at the largest horizontal projection;
- (c) Designed to be self-propelled or permanently towable by a light duty truck; and
- (d) Designed primarily not for use as a permanent dwelling but as temporary living quarters for recreational, camping, travel, or seasonal use. [US Code of Federal Regulations, Title 44, Part 59]

REGULATORY FLOODWAY - see FLOODWAY.

SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREA. The land area subject to flood hazards and shown on a Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard map as Zone A, AE, A1-30, A99, AR, AO, AH. [Base Code, Chapter 2, Section 202]

START OF CONSTRUCTION. The date of issuance for new construction and substantial improvements to existing structures, provided the actual start of construction, repair, reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition, placement or other improvement is within 180 days after the date of issuance. The actual start of construction means the first placement of permanent construction of a building (including a manufactured home) on a site, such as the pouring of a slab or footings, installation of pilings or construction of columns. Permanent construction does not include land preparation (such as clearing, excavation, grading or filling), the installation of streets or walkways, excavation for a basement, footings, piers or foundations, the erection of temporary forms or the installation of accessory buildings such as garages or sheds not occupied as dwelling units or not part of the main building. For a substantial improvement, the actual "start of construction" means the first alteration of any wall, ceiling, floor or other structural part of a building,

whether or not that alteration affects the external dimensions of the building. [Base Code, Chapter 2, Section 202]

STRUCTURE means, for floodplain management purposes, a walled and roofed building, including a gas or liquid storage tank, that is principally above ground, as well as a manufactured home. [US Code of Federal Regulations, Title 44, Part 59]

SUBSTANTIAL REPAIR OF A FOUNDATION. When work to repair or replace a foundation results in the repair or replacement of a portion of the foundation with a perimeter along the base of the foundation that equals or exceeds 50% of the perimeter of the base of the foundation measured in linear feet, or repair or replacement of 50% of the piles, columns or piers of a pile, column or pier supported foundation, the building official shall determine it to be substantial repair of a foundation. Applications determined by the building official to constitute substantial repair of a foundation shall require all existing portions of the entire building or structure to meet the requirements of 780 CMR. [As amended by MA in 9th Edition BC]

VARIANCE means a grant of relief by a community from the terms of a flood plain management regulation. [US Code of Federal Regulations, Title 44, Part 59]

VIOLATION means the failure of a structure or other development to be fully compliant with the community's flood plain management regulations. A structure or other development without the elevation certificate, other certifications, or other evidence of compliance required in §60.3 is presumed to be in violation until such time as that documentation is provided. [US Code of Federal Regulations, Title 44, Part 59]

or to take any other action relative thereto.

#### ***Planning Board***

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee:**

**Planning Board:**

**Summary:** *This article amends the existing floodplain regulations in the zoning bylaw to comply with the requirements of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The amendments required by FEMA include updating the references to the new Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) for Groton and incorporating the applicable provisions of the Massachusetts Model Floodplain Bylaw. The new FIRM for Groton will become effective on July 8, 2025.*

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#### **Article 16: Endorse Comprehensive Master Plan**

To see if the Town will vote to endorse the "Groton Master Plan" dated February, 2025, filed in the Office of the Town Clerk on February 28, 2025, or to take any other action relative thereto.

#### ***Planning Board***

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee:**

**Planning Board:**

**Summary:** *The Planning Board will present the Master Plan to Town Meeting for its endorsement. Copies of the plan are available in the Planning Board office in the Town Hall, at the Groton Public Library and on the Town's web site: [www.grotonma.gov](http://www.grotonma.gov)*

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**Article 17: MBTA Communities Multi-Family Overlay District (MCMOD)**

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

**Amend Section 218-3 Definitions by Deleting the definition for “Multifamily Use” in its entirety,**

**Amend Section 218-3 Definitions by inserting the following definition in alphabetical order.**

**AFFORDABLE UNIT.**

A multi-family housing unit that is subject to a use restriction recorded in its chain of title limiting the sale price or rent or limiting occupancy to an individual or household of a specified income, or both.

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Any combination of Affordable Units restricted in perpetuity to persons of families qualifying as low or moderate income under the guidelines of EOHLC earning less than 50% of median income for low income and less than 80% of median income for moderate income.

**AS OF RIGHT.**

Development that may proceed under the Zoning Bylaw without the need for a special permit, variance, zoning amendment, waiver, or other discretionary zoning approval. Also known as “by right” development.

**MBTA COMMUNITIES MULTI FAMILY OVERLAY DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT (MCMODD).**

Multi-family use that is located in the Multi-Family Development Overlay District (MCMOD) in accordance with the provisions of Section 218-7.5 MBTA Communities Multi Family Development Overlay District.

**MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT.**

Development containing a mix of residential uses and non-residential uses, including, commercial, institutional, industrial, or other uses.

**MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING**

A building with three or more residential dwelling units or two or more buildings on the same lot with more than one residential dwelling unit in each building. Also known as “multifamily use.”

**Amend Section 218-4 Zoning Districts as follows:**

Insert under subsection 218-4.1 E, Overlay Districts the following:

“(6) MBTA Communities Multi-Family Overlay District (MCMOD)”

Insert under subsection 218-4.2 Intention of Districts the following sub sections:

“J. MCMOD – MBTA Communities Multi-Family Overlay District is intended to provide for higher density residential development at locations in proximity to infrastructure, services, and nexuses of activity, amenities, and development.

Insert a new Section 218-7.5 Multi Family Development Overlay District to read as follows:

**218-7.5 – MBTA COMMUNITIES MULTI-FAMILY OVERLAY DISTRICT (MCMOD)**

**A. Purpose**

- To transition from a case by case permitting process for Multi-Family Development and establish a transparent and predictable process for the permitting of MBTA Communities Multi-Family Overlay District Development (MCMODD) in designated locations with specific guidelines and criteria.
- To encourage MCMODD in sensible locations in terms of services, infrastructure, transportation access, economic opportunity, and compatibility with surrounding uses.
- To accommodate compatible uses that serve residents and the general public.
- To increase housing choice and diversity and address the local and regional need for additional housing
- Preserve open space in a community by locating new housing within or adjacent to existing developed areas and infrastructure.

**B. Applicability.**

This MCMOD is an overlay district that is superimposed over the underlying zoning district (s) and is shown on the Zoning Map. Within the boundaries of the MCMOD, all of the uses permitted in the underlying District(s) in which the subject land is located are permitted, subject to the same use and development regulations as may otherwise apply thereto and shall remain in full force. Alternatively, one or more of the uses set forth in Section 218-7.5.C shall be permitted as part of a MCMODD in accordance with this Section 218-7.5 subject to Site Plan Review by the Planning Board in accordance with Section 218-2.5.

**C. Permitted Uses**

1. As of Right Uses

Any or combination of multi-family residential uses are permitted as of right including but not limited to the following uses

- a. Duplex attached units
- b. Townhouses
- c. Garden Flats
- d. Uses exempt by statute (MGL c.40A §3)
- e. Mixed-Use Development
  - i. Non-residential uses allowed as-of-right in the underlying zoning district located on the ground floor of a mixed-use building
  - ii. Multi-family use allowed on any floor of a mixed-use building

2. Accessory Uses

The following uses are considered accessory to any of the permitted uses in Section D.1 and allowed as of right:

- a. Parking, including surface parking and parking within a structure such as an above ground or underground parking garage or other building on the same lot as the principal use.
- b. Home occupation employing only household members and no on-site clients.

c. Accessory Dwelling Unit.

**D. Development Standards.**

1. The minimum lot area for a MCMODD shall be 10,000 square feet and may be comprised by one or more contiguous parcels.
2. The minimum Lot Frontage shall be 75 feet.
3. No building or structure within a MCMODD shall be less than 15 feet from the exterior lot line.
4. Lot coverage of a MCMODD by buildings and other impervious surface shall not exceed 75% of the lot area, unless the applicant provides sufficient justification for a waiver and the Planning Board determines, as part of Site Plan Review that a greater lot coverage will not adversely affect adjacent properties.
5. No structure shall exceed four (4) stories, fifty-five (55) feet in height, measured in accordance with the Building Height standards set forth in Section 218-3.
6. No structure or group of structures, except one-story garages or carports, shall be nearer to each other than twenty (20) feet. Carports or garages, if not directly attached, shall be at least ten (10) feet from the main buildings.
7. The maximum permitted density shall not exceed 15 (fifteen) dwelling units per acre.
8. A MCMODD shall conform with the provisions of Section 218-8.2. Off-Street Parking and Loading. Parking areas shall otherwise comply with the provisions of Section 218-8.2 unless the applicant provides sufficient justification for a waiver and the Planning Board determines, as part of Site Plan Review, that the grant of such waiver will not adversely affect the neighborhood.
9. All dwelling units in a Multi-Family Development shall be without age restrictions and shall be suitable for families with children.
10. Sewage shall be disposed of by means of adequate connections to the municipal sewer system or a system Approved by the Board of Health pursuant to Title 5.

**E. Design Standards**

To the maximum extent feasible, projects shall comply with the following design standards:

1. Site Design, Open Space and Landscaping
  - a. Projects shall be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated Open Space.
  - b. Acceptable activities within the minimum required Open Space include natural areas (including wetlands and surface waters), wildlife and native plant habitat, landscape plantings, agricultural activities, low-impact design stormwater management, non-motorized trails, and other low-impact activities. Open Space shall not contain habitable structures.
  - c. Open Space shall be planned as a single contiguous area and, to the extent practicable, configured contiguously with any abutting conservation open areas.
  - d. Open Space intended for public use shall have direct access from one or more streets, pedestrian paths, sidewalks, and/or other public access.
  - e. Landscape design shall strive to provide greenery so that streets and access drives are lined with shade trees, large, paved areas are visually divided and screened, and buffers are provided within and around the Project.

- f. Landscaped areas shall be planted with drought-tolerant species which do not require any automatic irrigation systems.
- g. Plantings shall include species that are native or adapted to the region. Plants on the Massachusetts Prohibited Plant List and Invasive Plant List, as may be amended, shall be prohibited.
- h. Lighting shall comply with Dark Sky standards and provide illumination necessary for safety and convenience while preventing glare and overspill to adjoining properties and reducing the amount of skyglow. The color temperature of exterior lighting shall not exceed 3000 Kelvin.

Parking and circulation on the site shall be organized to reduce the amount of impervious surface.

## 2. Building Siting

- a. There shall be a landscaped buffer between buildings or structures and properties adjacent to the MCMOD;
- b. Buildings shall be oriented to any adjacent usable open space, with access to the building onto or accessible to the usable open space;
- c. Structures shall be oriented to provide pedestrian entrances to any adjoining sidewalks
- d. Trash collection and dumpsters shall be located in appropriate areas and screened to avoid adverse impacts on properties adjacent to the MCMOD
- e. Project shall minimize the visual impact of the development from the street by locating lower buildings closest to the street frontage and taller buildings in the interior of the parcels.

## 3. Building Design Features

- a. Architecture shall demonstrate the cohesive planning of the development and present a clearly identifiable design feature throughout. It is not intended that buildings be totally uniform in appearance or that designers and developers be restricted in their creativity. The following standards shall apply:
- b. To reduce a building's perceived mass, building facades shall be divided into smaller scale horizontal and vertical components, through use of changes in plane and changes in color, material, and texture.
- c. For multi-family buildings of three or more stories, building design shall maintain a distinction between upper and lower floors. Primary building entrances shall be accentuated. Design features can include covered porches, porticos, and other pronounced architectural forms.
- d. Buildings with pitched roofs shall have a pitch between 5:12 and 12:12.
- e. Side and rear facades shall be generally consistent with the primary facade's architectural style.
- f. Accessory buildings shall be in the same style as the primary building(s).
- g. Mechanical equipment at grade, attached to, or on the rooftops shall be screened from view or made an integral part of the overall design of the building.
- h. All utility, service, loading, and trash collection areas shall be screened or enclosed by plantings, walls, or solid fencing, or a combination thereof. Enclosures shall be designed to be compatible with the architecture of the adjacent building.
- i. Materials such as brick, stone, wood clapboard, and cementitious siding such as Hardiplank shall be used for siding, particularly where visible at the pedestrian level.

j. Architectural asphalt shingles are preferred for buildings with pitched roofs.

4. Circulation and Walkability

- a. Development shall be made pedestrian-friendly by use of amenities such as wide sidewalks/pathways, outdoor seating, and/or appropriate landscaping. Structures, parking, pathways and other pedestrian amenities shall be accessible by people with disabilities and designed to maximize ease of pedestrian access. Bicycle features shall include bike racks and be designed to provide pathways connecting to any existing and proposed bicycle routes.
- b. A paved pedestrian network shall connect parking to the entries to all buildings and the buildings to each other.

**G. Affordable Component**

MCMODDs shall provide affordable units as follows:

- 1. 10 (ten) percent of the units in an MCMODD shall be affordable units.
- 2. Affordable Units shall be dispersed throughout the project. The Affordable Units shall be indistinguishable in external appearance from any market-rate housing units in the MCMODD.
- 3. In computing this requirement, the total number of dwelling units shall be used.

**4. Amend Section 218-2.5 Site Plan Review By inserting a new subsection (e) under Section 218-2.5.C.(2) Threshold of Review Major Project to read as follows:**

“(e) MCMODD pursuant to Section 218-7.5”

**5. Amend Section 218-6.2 Schedule of Intensity Regulations Notes #1. By adding the following at the end of the note:**

“For MBTA Communities Multi-Family Overlay District Development see **Section 218-7.5**”

**6. Amend the Groton Zoning Bylaw by deleting the words “ Department of Housing and Community Development” and “DHCD” wherever they appear and inserting the following words in their place respectively, “Executive Office of Housing and Liveable Communities” and “EOHLC”**

**7. Amend the Zoning Map of Groton by establishing the Multi Family Development Overlay District (MCMOD).**

The zoning map of the Town of Groton is hereby amended by designating the following properties to be included in the Multi Family Development Overlay District:

Assessors Map & Parcel	Address	Area	Owner
216-94	Main Street	2.04 acres	500MG LLC
216-95	Main Street	25.42 acres	500MG LLC
216-96	Main Street	9.32 acres	500MG LLC
216-12	Main Street	5.2 acres	Groton Residential Gardens
216-98	Main Street	1.2 acres	Quality Green Homes LLC
216-99	Main Street	3.36 acres	Quality Green Homes LLC



## TOWN OF GROTON

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

## Select Board

Alison S. Manugian, *Chair*  
Rebecca H. Pine, *Vice Chair*  
Peter S. Cunningham, *Clerk*  
John F. Reilly, *Member*  
Matthew F. Pisani, *Member*

**Town Manager**  
Mark W. Haddad

**To:** *Select Board  
Finance Committee*

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

**Subject:** *Update – Fiscal Year 2026 Proposed Operating Budget*

**Date:** *March 7, 2025*

On Wednesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, I provided the Select Board and Finance Committee with an email updating you on the proposed FY 2026 Operating Budget. At that time, I provided you with the tax impact of an \$827,090 override to fund the anticipated Assessment from the Groton Dunstable Regional School District and a \$780,904 override to add six (6) Firefighter/EMTs to the Groton Fire Department. Since that time, there have been two significant changes that have lowered the Override Requests for both issues.

First, the Health Insurance Rates have come in lower for the Groton Dunstable Regional School District. This has resulted in an overall budget reduction in the Superintendent's Proposed Budget of \$2000,000, of which Groton will see a savings of \$153,840 in our Assessment, which will lower the Override Request to fund the anticipated Assessment from the School District to \$673,250 (overall Assessment will increase by \$2,038,814, less the \$1,365,564 set aside in the Town Manager's Proposed Operating Budget).

Second, as requested at last Monday's meeting, Fire Chief Cheeks and I have reevaluated our request to add six (6) Firefighters to the Fire Department. We are now proposing that we only add two (2) Firefighters in FY 2026 at an anticipated cost of \$260,301. While the total request is \$260,301, the actual levy increase in FY 2026 is for \$210,301, leaving excess levy capacity of \$50,000 to address an increase in the Pension Budget when the new Firefighters are charged to the Town (most likely in FY 2027).

Attached to this memorandum for your review and consideration are the following four documents:

1. Updated FY 2026 Proposed Operating Budget to reflect the following:
  - A. An increase of \$673,250 in the Assessment for the Groton Dunstable Regional School District.



- B. An increase of \$148,901 in Fire Department Wages to reflect adding two new Firefighter/EMTs.
  - C. An increase of \$11,400 in Fire Department Expenses to reflect Uniform and FF Gear needed for the additional Firefighters.
  - D. An increase of \$50,000 in the Health Insurance Budget to reflect six family plans for the additional Firefighters.
2. Updated FY 2026 Levy Limit Calculation to reflect a total override of \$883,551 for both issues.
  3. Updated Tax Bill Impact for the FY 2026 increase.
  4. Updated Tax Bill Impact broken down by override request and impact by \$100,000 of value.

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

MWH/rjb

cc: Kara Cruikshank - Executive Assistant  
Patricia DuFresne – Assistant Director of Finance/Town Accountant  
Hannah Moller – Treasurer/Collector  
Megan Foster – Principal Assessor  
Melisa Doig – Human Resources Director  
Michael Hartnett – Assistant Treasurer/Collector

enclosures