

# Select Board Meeting Packet

November 1, 2021

*This is the Select Board preliminary preparation information packet. The content of this package is subject to change between when it is released and the start of the Select Board meeting. Such changes will not be posted to the web site before the meeting. If you see an item or items in the preliminary preparation package that are important to you, please attend the meeting in person.*



## TOWN OF GROTON

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

## Select Board

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

**Town Manager**  
Mark W. Haddad

**SELECT BOARD MEETING  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2021  
AGENDA  
SELECT BOARD MEETING ROOM  
2<sup>nd</sup> FLOOR  
GROTON TOWN HALL**

- 7:00 P.M.      **Announcements and Review Agenda for the Public**
- 7:05 P.M.      **Public Comment Period**
- I.      7:06 P.M.      **Town Manager's Report**
1. Town Manager's Explanation of Agenda Items
  2. Review Mask Mandate Criteria – Consider Adopting Rules to Lift Mandate
  3. Review Town Manager's Budget Guidance Memorandum
  4. Update on Fiscal Year 2023 Proposed Operating Budget
  5. Town Meeting Follow-up – Action Items for Board Consideration
  6. Update on Select Board Meeting Schedule Through the End of the Year
- II.      7:15 P.M.      **Items for Select Board Consideration and Action**
1. Consider Approving One Day Beer and Wine License for Prescott School for the Felt and Sip Event to be held on Thursday, November 18, 2021 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
  2. Consider Process for Issuing Host Community Agreements for Potential Recreational Marijuana Facilities

### OTHER BUSINESS

**ON-GOING ISSUES – Review and Informational Purposes – Brief Comments - Items May or May Not Be Discussed**

- A. Water Department – Manganese Issue – PFAS Issue
- B. Green Communities Application and Implementation
- C. Florence Roche Elementary School Construction Project
- D. Bystander Training

### SELECT BOARD LIAISON REPORTS

- III.      **Minutes:      Regularly Scheduled Meeting of October 18, 2021**

### ADJOURNMENT

*Notes may be taken at any time during the meeting.* The listing of topics that the Chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting is not intended as a guarantee of the topics that will be discussed. Not all topics listed may in fact be discussed, and other topics not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.



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**Town Manager**  
Mark W. Haddad

**To:** *Select Board*

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

**Subject:** *Weekly Agenda Update/Report*

**Date:** *November 1, 2021*

### TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Other than the Town Manager's Report, Items for Select Board Consideration and Action and a review of the On-going Issues, there are no scheduled Agenda Items.
2. The Board had previously established a mask mandate for all Town employee's and Town Buildings. I would like to spend some time at Monday's meeting reviewing the mandate and establishing criteria in which the Select Board would consider removing the mandate (please note that the Department of Education has extended the universal mask mandate for most public schools through January 15, 2022). That said, I have spoken with the Fire Chief and he is recommending that when the Town hits a rolling average of under 20 cases over a 14-day period, the Board considers removing the mandate. That said, I would respectfully request that the Board consider removing the mask mandate for members of our Police and Fire Departments (this requirement of course will not change the Fire Department policies that requires the use of masks while caring for the sick and injured). I have been approached by the Police Union about removing the mandate due to the difficulty our officers have when dealing with the public in many of their duties (most of which are outdoor). Voice commands, etc. are difficult to understand when masked. Please note that all of our officers and firefighters are fully vaccinated. I look forward to discussing this in more detail at Monday's meeting.
3. Based on the FY 2023 Budget Guidance provided to me by the Select Board and Finance Committee at your October 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, I have drafted budget preparation instructions that will be provided to all Departments, Boards, Committees and Commissions on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Those instructions are enclosed with this report for your review. We can discuss any issues relative to these instructions at Monday's meeting.
4. With regard to the FY 2023 Budget, as is our practice, I will schedule time on all future Agendas for updates on the Budget. As far as this week's update, Patricia DuFresne, Dawn Dunbar and I me with School Superintendent Laura Chesson to discuss the School District's Plans for FY 2023. The 5.01% increase that I have set aside in our initial projections is in line with the District's projections for FY 23.

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4. **Continued:**

That said, the Regional School Committee will be providing budget guidance to the Superintendent in the next few weeks and the Superintendent and Business Manager will be able to provide me with an estimated assessment in early December, which will allow me to finalize my proposed budget by December 31, 2021. In addition, I have invited the Fire Chief to your meeting of November 15<sup>th</sup> to update the Board on issues related to the short- and long-term goals of the Department with regard to staffing. I will provide the Board with any additional updates at Monday's meeting.

5. Now that Town Meeting has concluded, I would like to take a few moments at Monday's meeting providing the Board with follow-up/action items concerning Town Meeting. Please consider the following:

- A. **Highway Vacancy:** Town Meeting has funded and approved filling the Highway Truck Driver/Laborer Position that was eliminated from the original Fiscal Year 2022 Budget. We are in the process of filling the position. As you know, our practice is to post the position internally, and then advertise in several local publications (at a cost of about \$2500). As you know, within the last several months, we have advertised for vacancies in the Highway Department and made two appointments. During this last advertisement, there was an individual who applied who was highly considered for the vacancy and was the runner-up for the position. That said, given the fact that we have advertised vacancies recently, I would like to forgo advertising the vacancy and reach out to the runner-up to see if he is still interested. This will not only save money, but allow us to get someone on board before the busy winter plowing season. I would ask the Board to allow me to forgo advertising and allow me to contact this individual for appointment consideration. If he is not interested, we will advertise according to our practice.
- B. **Town Clerk Special Legislation:** I would respectfully request that the Board vote to petition the General Court with the approved legislation. In your vote to petition the General Court, I would ask that the Board vote 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 take any action relative thereto".
- C. **Zoning Amendment – Marijuana Establishments:** Please see my note under Number 2 of Items for Select Board Consideration and Action.
- D. **Transfer of Land to the Housing Authority:** I have discussed this transfer with Town Counsel. There are a few steps that have to take place before the transfer can happen. First, the Board has to set the value at which the Town will transfer the land. The current assessed value is \$26,400. Since the Town Meeting has authorized the Select Board to transfer the land to another governmental agency, I would ask the Board to set the transfer value at \$0. Second, once the Board does this, I will need to advertise the potential transfer in the Central Register. Once this is done, the Board can approve the deed and transfer the land. I have asked Town Counsel to draft the deed, including the five-year return provision.

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6. Please see the update to the Select Board's Meeting Schedule through the end of the year:

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Monday, November 8, 2021  | - Public Meeting with Redskin Trail Residents to Consider Changing the Name of Redskin Trail<br>- Liquor Violation Hearing – Boston Road Market<br>- Fiscal Year 2022 First Quarter Review/Goals Update |
| Monday, November 15, 2021 | - Update on Bystander Training<br>- Discuss Establishing No Place for Hate<br>- Discuss Victim Advocacy Programs<br>- Update from Fire Chief of Staffing Model  |
| Monday, November 22, 2021 | - Potential Date for Tax Classification Hearing   |
| Monday, November 29, 2021 | No Meeting (Holiday)  |
| Monday, December 6, 2021  | Regularly Scheduled Meeting   |
| Monday, December 13, 2021 | Regularly Scheduled Meeting   |
| Monday, December 20, 2021 | Regularly Scheduled Meeting   |
| Monday, December 27, 2021 | No Meeting (Holiday)  |
| Monday, January 3, 2022   | No Meeting (Holiday)  |
| Monday, January 10, 2022  | Regularly Scheduled Meeting   |

**ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND ACTION**

1. I would respectfully request that the Board approve a one-day Beer and Wine License for the Friends of Prescott for the Felt and Sip Event to be held on Thursday, November 18, 2021 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
2. Now that Town Meeting has approved the Zoning Amendment to allow for the Sale of Recreational Marijuana in the Town of Groton, the Board needs to establish a process on who and how the Town will enter into Host Community Agreements (HCA) with companies interested in establishing a retail store here in Groton. According to our Zoning Bylaw, the Board can award up to four HCA's (equal to the number of All-Alcoholic Package Store Licenses issued), however, two marijuana establishments cannot be within 500 feet (property line to property line) of the property boundary line of any lot in use as a pre-existing public or private pre-school, school providing education in kindergarten or any grades 1 through 12, junior college, college, licensed day-care center, church, library, park, playground, or other marijuana establishment. Given the fact that marijuana retail stores can only be in a General Business District, this essentially limits the location to the Four Corners area (Mill Run Plaza is eliminated due to the location of the Day Care Business in that district). For the Board's information, two firms have reached out to the Town expressing an interest in coming to Groton. I would like to recommend that the Select Board allow me to advertise that the Board is interested in receiving Letters of Interest for businesses interesting in entering into an HCA in Groton. I would recommend that we require the following in the Letters of Interest:

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**2. Continued:**

- A. Have entered into a Lease Agreement/Ownership of a property in the General Business District.
- B. Have gone through permitting for a recreational marijuana license with the Cannabis Control Commission.
- C. Outline the terms of a potential HCA with the Town of Groton.
- D. Provide background information of the principals of the business.

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

MWH/rjb  
enclosures



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**Town Manager**  
Mark W. Haddad

**To:** *All Departments, Boards, Committees and Commissions*

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

**Subject:** *Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Preparation*

**Date:** *November 2, 2021*

The Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Process for the Town of Groton will be similar to the last six fiscal years. The Select Board and Finance Committee, pursuant to the Town of Groton Charter, have continued their practice of providing specific budget instructions. That said, the Charter also requires the Town Manager to prepare and present the proposed budget to the Finance Committee and Select Board by December 31, 2021. Specific budget goals and instructions will be stated later in this memorandum.

We will continue to make the budget process as seamless as possible. The Finance Team and I will continue to work very closely with all departments, boards, committees and commissions as we develop the budget. We will continue to utilize the simplified forms we created thirteen years ago. All Department Budgets have been recreated in an Excel Document. Each individual department document contains two, and in some instances three spreadsheets. The first spreadsheet is the overall departmental budget that contains the following information:

1. FY 2019 Expended
2. FY 2020 Expended
3. FY 2021 Expended
4. FY 2022 Appropriated
5. FY 2023 Department Request
6. FY 2023 Town Manager Budget

The first four columns are already populated. The FY 2023 Department Request Column is tied to the second spreadsheet entitled "Expenses". Each Department will need to complete the second spreadsheet with their actual budget request. Any information added to the second spreadsheet will automatically populate the FY 2023 Department Request Column on the first spreadsheet.

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For those Departments that have Salary and Wage Line Items, the third spreadsheet (entitled "Payroll") will be the same as previous years. Please note that all Unions are in negotiations with the Town. Any settlement effecting pay will be adjusted upon ratification of the individual collective bargaining agreement. For now, I would ask that each Department review and confirm the information contained in this spreadsheet for accuracy with regard to current rate of pay. Under this format, all budgets can be submitted to the Town Manager electronically.

As stated earlier, the Select Board and Finance Committee have provided guidance to the Town Manager prior to Budget preparation. The Charter requires the Town Manager to comply with the guidance when developing the proposed Budget. Specifically, they have set the following guidance for the development of the Fiscal Year 2023 Proposed Operating Budget:

- A. The Town Manager shall prepare a balanced budget for Fiscal Year 2023 with no proposed Override of Proposition 2½.
- B. The Town Manager shall work with representatives of the Groton Dunstable Regional School District and Nashoba Valley Technical School District to balance the budget.

I will work with the Finance Team and Department Heads (along with the Groton Dunstable Regional School District) to bring the budget within the anticipated Fiscal Year 2023 Levy Limit. That said, please adhere to the following specific guidelines:

- 1. In preparing your FY 2023 department budget, I would ask you to take a good look at the services you provide and whether or not changes in the way you deliver those services need to be adjusted. I am requesting a budget that provides a realistic outlook for FY 2023.
- 2. I would ask for back up documentation and justification of all expense line-item requests. A summary of your expense requests will allow me to better understand your department operations and needs and make better budget decisions. Please prioritize all expense line items and indicate the impact on the Town if not funded.
- 3. **Relative to Salary and Wage line items, as stated above, please confirm the salaries and hours of your department employees. I would further request that you work with the Human Resources Director to determine if any longevity payments are owed to any of your employees in FY 2023.**



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4. Continuing with the new Budget Section introduced two years ago, please provide a narrative and budget estimate for any new initiative anticipated in the next five (5) fiscal years over \$50,000 annually, or over \$100,000 in any three-year period. If you do not anticipate any new initiative, please state that in your budget memo.
5. We will continue with the process of funding minor capital items in the Operating Budget. Any capital item under \$35,000 should be included in your FY 2023 Budget Request with the required documentation and justification. With regard to Capital Requests over \$35,000, we will be updating the five-year Capital Plan.

With regard to the schedule, I would respectfully request that all Departments, Boards, Committees and Commissions comply with the following schedule:

November 2, 2021 -	Budget Guidelines Released to Departments.
November 22, 2021-	Budgets Due in the Office of the Town Manager.
November 29, 2021 - December 1, 2021	Meetings with Town Manager to Review Budgets.
December 31, 2021 -	FY 2023 Town of Groton Proposed Operating Budget Delivered to Select Board and Finance Committee.

Thank you for your attention and cooperation. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns with regard to this matter. I look forward to working with all of you as we develop the Town of Groton FY 2023 Operating Budget.

MWH/rjb

cc: Select Board  
Finance Committee

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2021  
UN-APPROVED**

**SB Members Present:** Rebecca H. Pine, Chair; Alison S. Manugian, Vice Chair; Peter S. Cunningham, Clerk; Joshua A. Degen, Member; John F. Reilly, Member

**Also Present:** Mark W. Haddad, Town Manager; Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant; Patricia Dufresne, Town Accountant; Melisa Doig, HR Director; Mike Bouchard, Town Clerk; Michael Luth, Police Chief; Hannah Moller, Tax Collector/Treasurer; Ravilla Garthe, Assistant Assessor; Finance Committee Members: Colby Doody, David Manugian, Art Prest, Bud Robertson, Gary Green, Scott Whitefield

Ms. Pine called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and reviewed the agenda. She said that the Board and Finance Committee had just exited an Executive Session.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Cunningham said that there would be a redistricting of Groton which would mean a different senator and possibly 2 representatives for Groton. He said that the Town Clerk submitted a letter to the State because of the impact this would have on Groton. He said he wasn't sure what 2 state representative would do for Groton. Mr. Haddad said that the old lines were what the State was using and not the new lines that the Board voted on last week adding that was the issue. He said that he had a long conversation with Representative Harrington this morning about that.

Mr. Haddad said that Town Meeting was this Saturday at 9am. Ms. Pine said that the Select Board would be meeting on Thursday morning at 10am to make a final determination on the location for Town Meeting.

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

1. Mr. Haddad said that there was a vacancy in one of their custodial positions. He said that they advertised for the vacancy and both Melisa Doig and Tom Delaney were recommending that he appoint Gale Risdon of Groton to this vacancy. Mr. Haddad said that he had made this appointment and would respectfully request that the Board consider ratifying this appointment.

*Mr. Cunningham moved to affirm the Town Manager's appointment of Gail Risdon as a Custodian effective today.  
Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

2. Mr. Haddad said that the 2021 Fall Town Meeting was scheduled to take place on Saturday, October 23, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. Mr. Haddad said that he had provided the Board with their final motions and reviewed the article assignments. Mr. Haddad pointed out a scrivener's error in the Town Clerk article adding the motions in the handout would show the corrected error.
3. Mr. Haddad reviewed the Board's schedule moving forward.

**SELECT BOARD ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

1. Mr. Haddad said that The Groton Water Department was seeking a Certificate of Exemption to remove 2250 cubic yards of earth material associated with the construction of the Whitney Pond Wells Water Treatment Plant. Mr. Haddad said he had provided the Board with a memorandum from the Earth Removal Inspector which provided the Board with a recommendation to approve the exemption (with conditions) based on a determination from the Earth Removal Stormwater Advisory Committee. Mr. Haddad reviewed the conditions as outlined by the Earth Removal Committee.

*Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the exemption requested by the Water Department. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**MINUTES**

*Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of October 4, 2021 as amended. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

## **BUDGET GUIDANCE DISCUSSION**

Mr. Haddad said that the Assessors were comfortable with \$15.8M in new growth which would be used for planning purposes here. He said that \$15.8M in new growth would add \$278,080 in new levy capacity. He said that they thought the new levy limit would be set at \$34M. Mr. Haddad said that they were estimating level funding State Aid at this time. He said that they had also discussed what potential new growth (potential projects) was anticipated in FY23. He said that based on these potential projects, they were comfortable using \$15M in new growth for next year, FY23.

Mr. Haddad said that estimated receipts was the next thing the Finance Team reviewed. He said that Ms. Dufresne kept a 3 year, 5 year and 10 year list of receipts. He said that the Finance Team debated some areas in which to increase/decrease receipts. He said that they level funded motor vehicle excise tax. He said that there may be room to grow but left it level funded. He said that they were comfortable bumping up meals/room occupancy tax by \$100,000. Mr. Haddad said that because their residents were amazing and paid their taxes, there were not a lot of penalties and interest on taxes. He said that this was a double edge sword, and because of that, dropped it down \$10,000 to \$110,000. Mr. Haddad said that they increased PILOTS by \$35K adding they were hoping to negotiate with non-profits such as Groton Hill Music Center. Mr. Haddad said that with pension and health insurance increasing, other departmental revenue automatically increased. Mr. Haddad said that they also increase fines and forfeits by \$25K and investment income by \$10,000. Mr. Haddad said that based on this they thought they would take in \$173K in new revenue.

Mr. Haddad said he met with Mr. Robertson who thought they may be able to capture an additional \$200k in revenue. Mr. Robertson said that he thought motor vehicle excise could be bumped up by \$50k, and that PILOTS could go up by an additional \$50k as a couple of examples of where to increase revenue projections.

Mr. Manugian asked how often they reviewed potential revenue. Mr. Haddad said that they reviewed it monthly and again quarterly at Select Board meetings.

Mr. Haddad said that they were in line with previous years revenue estimated at 3.18%. He said that he showed in his memo what the municipal budget and school assessment had gone up in previous years as well as the total operating assessment of the school district. Mr. Haddad said that they averaged a 5.01% increase in the school assessment and a 2.76% increase in the municipal budget over that same period of time. Ms. Manugian asked that Mr. Haddad do the same assessment for Nashoba Tech.

Mr. Haddad said that he wanted to make a commitment to the municipal budget this next fiscal year. He said he had 5 areas to bring to their attention for consideration. He said that all 7 union contracts were up and needed to be negotiated next year. He said that the second area was the fire department. He said that the Chief specifically talked about fire prevention in his budget message last year. He said that the Groton Hill and the Deluxe property redevelopment were 2 major additions to the Town and for the department. Mr. Haddad said that Chief McCurdy was his own worst enemy in that because he trained his department so well, the call members were being hired for fulltime positions in other towns. He said that this fire prevention position would cost them \$100K which included salary, benefits, pension, uniforms, etc. Ms. Manugian asked for a job description. Mr. Reilly said that this person would also be a firefighter and able to respond to calls freeing up the Deputy Chief to help with administrative work. Mr. Green asked if they might be able to fund it with revenue. Mr. Green said that he would also like to hear about a recruitment and more important a retention process.

Mr. Haddad said that the next area was the Council on Aging. He said that they had a vacancy at the Center for a Volunteer Coordinator. He said he didn't want to see that position filled until the new Director had a chance to review the department. He said that the Director wanted to see a new position of Community Engagement Specialist take the place of the Volunteer Coordinator. He said that because the Center was busier, she also wanted a 19 hour a week admin for support. He said that based on what they had in the budget, they needed \$41k to fund those 2 positions the next FY. He said that the Council on Aging budget was .7% of the entire operating budget and serviced 25% of their population. He said it made sense to commit to the department and its new director and her vision. Mr. Haddad said that the Council voted unanimously this afternoon to support this. He said he wanted to fill the Community Engagement Specialist right away adding he would be able to cover the salary for the remainder of this fiscal year.

Mr. Brian LeBlanc of the GDSC, said that they had met to briefly discuss their guidance earlier which included no major additions adding they wanted to recover from COVID. He said that it would take 5 years to ramp down capital costs for Swallow Union for Groton per the regional agreement.

Ms. Pine said it made sense to increase the hours to 40 for the Community Engagement Specialist but wasn't convinced they needed admin help also because it was adding another position. Mr. Haddad said he was asking for ½ a position. Ms. Pine asked if this would allow the fitness room to be open on the weekends. Mr. Haddad said he could discuss that with Director.

Mr. Haddad said he would like permission to advertise and fill the Community Engagement Special now adding there would be no impact to the current FY budget and a \$20k increase in the budget next year.

*Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the request of the Town Manager to fill the Community Engagement Specialist through the end of this year based on what was in the current budget. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion.*

Ms. Manugian said that it would be helpful to know what additional programs the Director was envisioning. Mr. Manugian said he supported this position.

*The motion carried unanimously.*

Mr. Haddad said he was requesting that the Board and Finance Committee's guidance be to allow him to work with Groton Dunstable Schools, balance the budget and allow him to focus on adding the Fire Prevention Officer and Council on Aging positions to the budget. Ms. Pine said that balancing the budget and working with the schools should be included but was not convinced on the new positions just yet. Mr. Haddad said he didn't want them to say no new positions in FY23. Ms. Pine said she wasn't saying that but wanted to hear his case for them. Ms. Manugian said she wanted to see a list of PILOTS and have an understanding of those. Mr. Cunningham asked if they could have a coordinated approach to speaking with the non-profits about PILOTS. Mr. Haddad said that they could sit down with each organization individually to do that. Ms. Manugian asked for a list of religious non-profits also. Mr. Haddad said that they sent out a letter less than 5 years ago to those organizations. Mr. Robertson said that if the school reduced their assessment, they still had an issue. He said that working with GD and balancing the budget was a mammoth job to begin with adding that adding any new positions would be an added bonus. Mr. Haddad said he wanted to make a small commitment to the municipal budget this year.

Mr. Haddad asked if he could be allowed to work on bringing in a balanced budget, work with schools to meet their needs and if available, propose new positions on municipal side. Mr. Robertson said that balancing the budget took care of that last point.

*Mr. Cunningham moved that the Town Manager balance the budget and work with the schools and Ms. Pine added if there was money available to propose new positions for further discussion. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion.*

Ms. Manugian said that new positions were part of balancing the budget. Mr. Haddad agreed. He said that his main purpose was to let them know areas he wanted to increase the municipal budget. Mr. Robertson said that they were down to balancing the budget and working with the schools.

*The motion carried unanimously. The Finance Committee voted unanimously on the same motion.*

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to vote to appoint Judy Anderson to the Commission on Accessibility. Mr. Cunningham made the motion. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Pine adjourned the meeting at 8:26pm.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Peter S. Cunningham, Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_ respectfully submitted:  
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: