



Town Manager
Mark W. Haddad

TOWN OF GROTON

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

Select Board

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

SELECT BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2022
AGENDA
SELECT BOARD MEETING ROOM
2nd FLOOR
GROTON TOWN HALL

6:15 P.M. Executive Session – Pursuant to M.G.L., c. 30A, §21(a), Clause 2 – “To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non-union personnel” – Purpose – Fire Chief Contract Negotiations

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. Update from Finance Team on New Growth and Its Impact on the Operating Budget
2. Consider Accepting the Nomination by the Town Manager and Appointing Chris Furcolo to the Williams Barn Committee
3. Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Development Update
4. Consider Proposed Meeting Schedule Through 2023 Spring Town Meeting

II. 7:10 P.M. Items for Select Board Consideration and Action

1. Consider Increasing the Maximum Abatement for Individuals Participating in the Senior Work Off Program from \$750 to \$1,000
2. Consider Amending Charge of the Capital Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC) to Limit the Number of Members Serving on Both the CPAC and Finance Committee

III. 7:15 P.M. In Joint Session with the Finance Committee – Discuss Guidance Issued to Town Manager on Fiscal Year 2024 Proposed Operating Budget

OTHER BUSINESS –Consider Issuing Letter of Support to the Community Preservation Committee for the Application by Squannacook Greenways (#2024-09) for a Grant for the Completion of the Squannacook River Rail Trail

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

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

SELECT BOARD LIAISON REPORTS

IV. Minutes: Regularly Scheduled Meeting of December 12, 2022

ADJOURNMENT

Votes 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: *December 19, 2022*

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Please note that Monday's Meeting will begin at 6:15 p.m. with an Executive Session to discuss Fire Chief Contract Negotiations. I will provide you with information relative to this issue under separate cover. The Regular Meeting will commence at 7:00 p.m. In addition to the Town Manager's Report, Items for Select Board Consideration and Action and a review of the On-going Issues List, there is one scheduled Item on Monday's Agenda. The Board will be meeting in Joint Session with the Finance Committee to provide the Town Manager with additional guidance for FY 2024 Budget Development. Enclosed with this report is a memorandum from me updating you on the status of the Proposed Operating Budget and the request for additional guidance. Members of the GDRSD Committee and Administrative Staff will be in attendance to assist with this discussion

1. One of the Select Board's Goals this year is to meet with the Finance Team to review and get a better understanding of how New Growth impacts the Operating Budget. Members of the Finance Team will be in attendance to make a presentation to the Board/Public on this subject. We can discuss this in more detail at Monday's meeting.
2. At the request of the Williams Barn Committee, I am nominating Chris Furcolo for appointment to the Committee. I would respectfully request that the Select Board accept this nomination and consider appointing Chris Furcolo to the Committee.
3. With regard to the FY 2024 Budget Development, we will be meeting in Joint Session with the Finance Committee to discuss additional FY 2024 Budget Guidance.

Select Board
Weekly Agenda Update/Report
December 19, 2022
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4. Since this is the last meeting of the year, I would like to provide the Board with a proposed schedule that would take you through the 2023 Spring Town Meeting. Obviously, this schedule is subject to change by the Select Board. Please consider the following schedule:

Monday, January 9, 2023	-FY 2024 Town Manager's Budget Presentation -Open Warrant for 2023 Spring Town Meeting
Wednesday, January 11, 2023	-Public Hearing on Broadmeadow Improvements
Monday, January 16, 2023	-No Meeting (MLK Holiday)
Monday, January 23, 2023	-Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Saturday, January 28, 2023	-Potential FinCom Budget Hearing
Monday, January 30, 2023	-Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Saturday, February 4, 2023	-Potential FinCom Budget Hearing
Monday, February 6, 2023	-Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, February 13, 2023	-Regularly Scheduled Meeting (Town Manager Absent)
Monday, February 20, 2023	-No Meeting (President's Day Holiday)
Monday, February 27, 2023	-Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, March 6, 2023	-Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, March 13, 2023	-Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, March 20, 2023	-No Meeting
Monday, March 27, 2023	-Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, April 3, 2023	-Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, April 10, 2023	-Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, April 17, 2023	-No Meeting (Patriot's Day)
Saturday, April 22, 2023	-Potential Date for 2023 Spring Town Meeting
Monday, April 24, 2023	-Default Date for 2023 Spring Town Meeting
Saturday, April 29, 2023	-Potential Date for 2023 Spring Town Meeting

We can review this schedule in more detail at Monday's meeting.

ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND ACTION

1. In an effort to assist some of our Seniors offset the property tax impact of the Florence Roche Elementary School Construction project, I would respectfully request that the Select Board consider increasing the maximum abatement for individuals participating in the Senior Work-Off Program from \$750 to \$1,000. This would increase the number of hours from 50 to 66. We can discuss this in more detail at Monday's meeting.
2. Select Board Member Pine has requested that the Select Board consider amending the Charge of the Capital Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC) to limit the number of members serving on both the CPAC and Finance Committee. She is recommending that no more than two members of the Finance Committee can serve on the CPAC. Enclosed with this report is a red-lined Draft of the Charge proposing this change.

MWH/rjb
enclosures



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Town Manager
Mark W. Haddad

To: *Select Board
Finance Committee*

From: *Mark W. Haddad – Town Manager*

Subject: *Additional Budget Guidance Request*

Date: *December 14, 2022*

On October 24, 2022, the Finance Team and I met with the Select Board and Finance Committee in joint session to receive guidance to develop the Proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget. At that time, the Select Board and Finance Committee voted the following guidance:

1. The Town Manager shall prepare a balanced budget for Fiscal Year 2024 with no proposed Override of Proposition 2½.
2. The Town Manager shall work with representatives of the Groton Dunstable Regional School District and Nashoba Valley Technical School District to balance the budget.

Since that time, the Finance Team and I have been working on the Proposed Operating Budget in compliance with this guidance, including working with Representatives of the Groton Dunstable Regional School District.

In order to balance the budget, the Finance Team and I pushed Revenues to the highest level we have ever considered in developing a proposed operating budget. In addition to the normal two and one half (2½%) percent increase in the levy, we have estimated New Growth at Eighteen (\$18,000,000) Million Dollars, generating an additional \$281,520 in levy capacity, increased State Aid by Seventy-Five (\$75,000) Thousand Dollars to account for full reimbursement for the Senior Van Service, increased Ambulance Receipts to support the Operating Budget by \$50,000, and increased Estimated Receipts by \$568,764, or 11.8% (the highest increase in my 14 years as Town Manager).

All this said, we are estimating an increase in Revenues of \$1,859,881, or 4.5%. Please see the following chart showing this increase in revenues:

<u>Revenue Source</u>	<u>Budgeted FY 2023</u>	<u>Proposed FY 2024</u>	<u>Dollar Change</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Property Tax	\$ 35,383,886	\$ 36,550,003	\$ 1,166,117	3.30%
State Aid	\$ 1,077,749	\$ 1,152,749	\$ 75,000	6.96%
Local Receipts - Excluding Country Club	\$ 4,209,907	\$ 4,683,938	\$ 474,031	11.26%
Country Club Revenue	\$ 605,267	\$ 700,000	\$ 94,733	15.65%
EMS Receipts	\$ 300,000	\$ 350,000	\$ 50,000	16.67%
TOTAL	\$ 41,576,809	\$ 43,436,690	\$ 1,859,881	4.47%

The Finance Team and I are confident that these revenues will be achievable in Fiscal Year 2024. Based on this, we developed a Municipal Budget Proposal for FY 2024 that would increase by \$367,660 over the Fiscal Year 2023 Final Budget, or 2.21%. That said, due to needs within the Fire Department and Town Clerk's Office, the FY 2023 Budget used one-time revenues totaling \$223,823, which will not be repeated in FY 2024. This means that the actual increase in recurring revenues to fund the proposed FY 2024 Municipal Operating Budget is \$591,483, or 3.5%. This leaves \$1,218,398 to support an increase in the Operating Assessment for the Groton Dunstable Regional School District (an increase of 5.01%). The amount of new revenues set aside for the Groton Dunstable Regional School District Operating Assessment in FY 2024 is Sixty-Six (66%) Percent of anticipated new revenues.

In addition to developing the Operating Budget, we also had to address Debt Service in FY 2024, specifically, Excluded Debt Service. In FY 2024, we anticipate borrowing an additional \$27 million for the Florence Roche Elementary School Construction Project. We would use Bond Anticipation Notes (BANs) for this borrowing and pay only interest in FY 2024 (estimated interest payment of \$1,217,250). Based on all of this, the current anticipated impact on the tax rate for Fiscal Year 2024 is as follows:

	<u>Actual FY 2023</u>	<u>Proposed FY 2024</u>	<u>Dollar Change</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Levy Capacity Used	\$ 35,383,886	\$ 36,550,003	\$ 1,166,117	3.30%
Tax Rate on Levy Capacity Used	\$ 14.13	\$ 14.49	\$ 0.36	2.55%
Average Tax Bill	\$ 8,958	\$ 9,186	\$ 228	2.55%
Excluded Debt	\$ 3,783,842	\$ 4,911,930	\$ 1,128,088	29.81%
Tax Rate on Excluded Debt	\$ 1.51	\$ 1.95	\$ 0.44	29.14%
Average Tax Bill	\$ 957	\$ 1,236	\$ 279	29.14%
Final Levy Used	\$ 39,167,728	\$ 41,461,933	\$ 2,294,205	5.86%
Final Tax Rate	\$ 15.64	\$ 16.44	\$ 0.80	5.12%
Average Tax Bill	\$ 9,916	\$ 10,423	\$ 507	5.12%

It needs to be understood that in developing the FY 2024 Proposed Operating Budget, the Finance Team's intent was to provide a Budget that maintained services. At this time, we believe the Proposed Budget meets this goal on the Municipal side, but it appears it will not provide adequate funding for the Groton Dunstable Regional School District based on preliminary numbers provided to the Finance Team by the School District.

This past week, we met with School Superintendent Dr. Laura Chesson, Assistant School Superintendent Kristin DeFrancisco and Director of Business and Finance Sherry Kersey to receive an update on where they stand in their budget development. It should be noted that they are just beginning their budget process and the School Committee will not begin their deliberations in budget development until early next year. Attached to this memorandum is a document provided by the School District that outlines their anticipated needs in FY 2024. It appears that they will need an increase in the Operating Assessment of \$3,230,982, or 13.3%. This Anticipated Assessment is based on an Operating Budget Increase of 9.84%. This anticipated Assessment would put the current Proposed Operating Budget out of balance by \$2,012,584.

There is no way to provide a balanced budget in FY 2024 that meets the Anticipated Operating Assessment of the Groton Dunstable Regional School District. To cut \$2,012,584 out of the Municipal Budget would eviscerate the Municipal Budget. The Town Manager is required to submit a balanced budget that does not require an override of Proposition 2½. The Finance Team and I need additional guidance from the Select Board and Finance Committee to address this issue.

For discussion purposes, an Override of Proposition 2½ in the amount of \$2,012,584 would have the following impact on the Tax Bill:

		<u>Actual</u> <u>FY 2023</u>		<u>Proposed</u> <u>FY 2024</u>	<u>Dollar</u> <u>Change</u>	<u>Percent</u> <u>Change</u>
Levy Capacity Used	\$	35,383,886	\$	36,550,003	\$ 1,166,117	3.30%
Tax Rate on Levy Capacity Used	\$	14.13	\$	14.49	\$ 0.36	2.55%
Average Tax Bill	\$	8,958	\$	9,186	\$ 228	2.55%
Override	\$	-	\$	2,012,584	\$ 2,012,584	100.00%
Tax Rate on Override	\$	-	\$	0.80	\$ 0.80	100.00%
Average Tax Bill	\$	-	\$	507	\$ 507	100.00%
Excluded Debt	\$	3,783,842	\$	4,911,930	\$ 1,128,088	29.81%
Tax Rate on Excluded Debt	\$	1.51	\$	1.95	\$ 0.44	29.14%
Average Tax Bill	\$	957	\$	1,236	\$ 279	29.14%
Final Levy Used	\$	39,167,728	\$	43,474,517	\$ 4,306,789	11.00%
Final Tax Rate	\$	15.64	\$	17.24	\$ 1.60	10.23%
Average Tax Bill	\$	9,916	\$	10,930	\$ 1,014	10.23%

The Finance Team and I look forward to discussing this in more detail with the Select Board and Finance Committee at your joint meeting on Monday, December 19, 2022. I have invited the Groton Dunstable Regional School Committee, School Superintendent and Director of Business and Finance to the meeting to assist in this discussion.

MWH/rjb

cc: Patricia DuFresne – Town Accountant
Hannah Moller – Town Treasurer/Tax Collector
Michael Hartnett – Assistant Town Treasurer/Tax Collector
Megan Foster – Principal Assessor
Dawn Dunbar – Town Clerk
Melisa Doig – Human Resources Director
Kara Cruikshank – Executive Assistant to the Town Manager
Dr. Laura Chesson – GDRSD School Superintendent
Sherry Kersey – GDRSD Director of Business and Finance

enclosure

**Groton-Dunstable Regional School District
FY24 Preliminary Budget as of December 12, 2022**

The Groton-Dunstable Regional School District, as anticipated, is up against a very steep funding challenge as the FY24 preliminary budget is being developed. There are a couple of cost increases that the school committee and the member Towns have discussed several times this year:

- The 14.0 FTE's district positions that were added over the last three (3) years funded by ARPA funds to address COVID related needs (approx. \$1.4M) – **see below for more details**
- The OSD approving a 14% increase on FY24 Out of District tuitions (approx. \$300K)

There are **unforeseen increases** that are also driving the preliminary budget higher:

- Therapeutic contracted services & Medical contracted services (approx. \$250K). This is based on the current caseload for therapies and the new students that require all day medical care.
- Health insurance for active employees is currently budgeted at a 15% increase (approx. \$784K). Although recent usage reports are favorable for the District, we remain cautious with the current illnesses and the claims they may produce. We will know more when our renewal is completed in February 2023.
- The Middlesex Retirement assessment increased by 9.9% (approx. \$123K). The increase is typically 6.5%. We have no control over the assessment that is given the District.
- Although the regular education transportation contract increased by a manageable 3.2%, the transportation assessment to the towns has increased by approx. \$100K. This is because in FY23, there was more funding in the Transportation Revolving Account to offset the assessments to the Towns. The District received more reimbursement funding in FY22 from the state than it budgeted. That is not true of FY23.
- Utility costs including heating, electricity, water and sewer were budgeted to trend plus 2% to 5%, however we also estimated utility uses on the new Florence Roche Elementary for at least 3 months of expense. This was estimated at 25% of the current annual FloRo utility expense. The increase in utilities is approx. \$213K.
- The custodial contracted services renewed at a 9% increase (approx. \$81K) which is much higher than the 2% increase that is built into the 5-year plan. Labor costs to retain staff reflect an increased market correction. The contracted service is still more cost effective than if the District hired custodial staff.

There are a couple of **notable decreases** in the budget that are helping the overall budget:

- The District has negotiated for a better Dental plan at a lower premium rate. This will have a budget reduction of approx.- \$36K.
- The debt (included in the total budget) will decrease approx. -\$25K in FY24.

There are also **revenue considerations** that will affect the assessments to the member Towns:

- Per school committee guidance, we have reduced the amount of E & D funding used to offset the assessments. The preliminary budget currently has \$600K as a revenue sources in comparison to FY23 that has \$730K appropriated.
- The proportional split has increased slightly for Groton from 77.23% to 77.26%
- The level of Circuit Breaker Revolving funds used to offset out of district tuitions remains the same at \$1.3M.

Other things the District is trying to accomplish in the FY24:

- The step, lane and COLA increases are approx. \$765K or 3.05% of FY23 salaries (net retirements).
- The school committee has provided guidance to Administration to budget an amount to fund OPEB liability and the Stabilization Fund. The amounts that may appear on those budgeted line items will be transfers from the Contingency line in the budget. This will have a net zero affect on the Town's assessments.
- The school committee has provided guidance to Administration to present a plan to eliminate the Full Day Kindergarten fee over some number of years. The preliminary general fund budget currently does not include adding any portion of kindergarten salaries currently funded in the revolving fund. We are currently looking at using the remaining fund balance at the end of this fiscal year to partially offset the cost of tuition in FY24. This has not been vetted nor approved by the school committee at this early time.
- The Administration is currently assessing all the ARPA added positions and using data to either retain, reduce or eliminate the positions. However, it is important to realize that there are a **few positions that we must retain** as they are Special Education related. Specifically, that would be the Integrated Preschool Teacher and Integrated Preschool Paraprofessional that has been added to Boutwell Early Childhood Center due to an explosive enrollment.
 - It should be noted that we are looking at all of our retirements and evaluating the replacements. Although there are salary savings of replacing these positions, there are one time costs including retirement incentive that minimize the savings.
 - The District has already identified alternative funding for one (1) ARPA position in a revolving fund.
 - The District has eliminated two (2) ARPA positions in FY23 as they addressed COVID restrictions (6' rule) that was not in play for this current year.
 - The District has absorbed two (2) ARPA positions in FY23 into the general fund using attrition savings.
 - The District is considering eliminating one (1) ARPA position in FY24 due to reduced class size.

Preliminary budget and assessment (capital is not complete):

The total FY23 Operating Budget (no capital) is:	\$45,094,388
The prelim FY24 Operating Budget (no capital) is:	\$49,530,606
\$ increase	\$ 4,436,218
% increase	9.84%

Groton Assessment Comparison	FY 2023	FY 2024	\$ Change	% Change
Operating Assessment (includes transportation)	\$24,319,318	\$27,550,300	\$3,230,982	13.3%
Capital Assessment	\$577,026	\$0	-\$577,026	-100.0%
Debt Assessment	\$482,904	\$465,796	-\$17,108	-3.5%
Total Assessment	\$25,379,248	\$28,016,096	\$2,636,848	10.4%

How does this compare to 5-Year projection?

The total operating budget in the 5-year projection was \$46,993,054 or a 4.2% increase

Validity check of FY24 Preliminary Budget Increase:

Projected Budget per 5 year plan:	\$46,993,054
Add: ARPA Positions	\$ 1,400,000
Less: ARPA Positions addressed in FY23	\$ - 635,000
Add: 14% increase in OOD	\$ 300,000
Add: Unforeseen increases	\$ 1,551,000
Less: Notable decreases	\$ - 61,000
Validity total:	\$49,548,054 compared to \$49,530,606 reported above

CAPITAL PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Number of Members	Method of Selection	Length of Term	Remuneration
5	Appointed	3 Year(s)	None

A. Establishment

There shall be a Committee to study the requirements and needs for capital expenditures for all buildings, playing fields and courts, recreation structures, large equipment, vehicles, and municipal buildings in the Town of Groton. The Committee shall be known as the "Capital Planning Advisory Committee" and shall advise the Town Manager, Select Board and Finance Committee on the results of its work. Said Committee will also provide advice to the Town Manager in planning for the management of building projects as charged by the Town pursuant to votes of Town Meeting and Massachusetts General Laws.

B. Appointment

The Select Board shall appoint the Capital Planning Advisory Committee consisting of five (5) regular voting members, all serving without compensation. The Select Board shall endeavor to appoint individuals who, by reason of their current or prior background have skills in the areas of capital planning, finance, construction or other relevant experience. However, at no time shall there be more than two (2) current members of the Finance Committee on the Capital Planning Advisory Committee. All members shall be residents of the Town of Groton and shall not receive compensation, in any manner, from the Town of Groton. They shall be appointed for a term of three years; provided however, that the initial members appointed shall serve for terms of one, two, or three years, and the Select Board shall arrange the terms so that the terms of approximately 1/3 of the Committees' members shall expire each year.

C. Committee Charge

The Capital Planning Advisory Committee shall have continuing responsibility in advising the Town Manager in developing the Annual Five (5) Year Capital Plan, including the capital equipment replacement plan, developing a long-range building plan and other maintenance projects for the Town. In addition, they shall advise in the development and annual updating of a long-range building maintenance capital spending plan for all municipal buildings. Working with the Town Manager, Select Board, Finance Committee and other Town committees and boards which propose building and renovation projects, the Capital Planning Advisory Committee shall advise on establishment of general criteria for significant Capital expenditures, including equipment and buildings, and offer recommendations on developing guidelines for communication regarding these projects between and among interested committees and the public. The Capital Planning Advisory Committee shall advise the Town Manger in overseeing the planning and design for construction, reconstruction, major alteration, renovation, enlargement, major maintenance, demolition, and removal of all Town buildings and recreation structures and playing fields and courts, including any significant installation, renovation or upgrade of service equipment and major systems.

More specifically the Committee shall:

1. In consultation with the Town Manager and Department Heads, inventory assets, assess ongoing space needs, and conduct periodic review and audit of the physical condition of all municipal buildings, service equipment, recreational structures, fields, and courts, and major technology and communication systems.
2. Advise the Town Manager in the development of the Annual Five (5) Year Capital Budget, including the sequencing of significant equipment replacement, building construction projects, and/or maintenance project(s) to be undertaken by the Town in the ensuing five (5) fiscal years.
3. After reviewing the rolling 5-year Capital Management Plan, and prior to November 15 of each calendar year, prepare and present to the Town Manager, Select Board and Finance Committee, a recommendation of major construction and/or maintenance project(s) to be undertaken by the Town in the ensuing fiscal year.
4. Seek comments from and coordinate activities with appropriate Town officials, including but not limited to the Town Manager, Director of Public Works, Police Chief, Fire Chief, Building Commissioner and other Town boards and committees, including but not limited to the Board of Library Commissioners, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission, Park Commission, Historical Commission, Board of Health, Finance Committee, Council on Aging, Water Commission, Sewer Commission, Cable Advisory Committee and Community Preservation Committee.
5. Review and report the financial requirements of all projects under the control of the Town.
6. Create and publish a report/memo at the close out of each Capital project summarizing the process and any deviations from the plan. A comparison of projected to actual spending must be part of this report.

D. Conduct

All meetings are to be held in a public location, properly posted and open to the public in accordance with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law. Minutes of each meeting shall be prepared and approved by the Committee within thirty (30) days of any meeting and distributed to the Town Clerk

E. Membership

Committee Members: The Committee shall consist of five (5) voting members made up of five (5) registered voters of the Town of Groton.

F. Review Charge

The Committee shall review the Charge periodically and make proposed recommendations to the Select Board that they believe are in the best interest of the purpose of the Committee.

Appointing Authority

Select Board

Legal Authority

Local: Appointed under authority of Section 3-2 of the Town of Groton Charter.

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, December 12, 2022
UN-APPROVED

SB Members Present: Rebecca H. Pine, Vice Chair; Matthew F. Pisani, Clerk; Alison S. Manugian,
SB Members Absent: John F. Reilly, Chair; Peter Cunningham, Member; Member; Peter S. Cunningham, Member

Also Present: Mark W. Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; The Sustainability Commission Members, David Southwick; Andrew Scott; Charlotte Weigel; Alison Dolbear Peterson, Phil Francisco and Bruce Easom

Ms. Pine called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and reviewed the agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Haddad wanted to congratulate Mr. Easom and the team he put together, to help secure the grant for the Prescott elevator. This afternoon they received word that the Town was awarded the \$250,000 grant. The contract was signed by Mr. Haddad earlier today for the Town. The next step is to put the contract out to bid.

Mr. Haddad also wanted to take a moment to congratulate our Town Clerk Dawn Dunbar for the work she did running the recount for the First Middlesex Representative Race here in Groton. She was assisted her two Assistant Town Clerks, and the Election Workers.

Mr. Pisani made an announcement for the Fire Chief. On Saturday, January 14, 2023 at 9:00 a.m., there will be a recruitment coffee hour at the Fire Station. This is a great opportunity if anyone wants to join the Call Fire Department and see what it's all about.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No Comments

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. **Consider Ratifying the Town Manager's Appointment of Kayla Savage as a Communications Officer and Michael Hartnett as the Alternate Member to the Minuteman Nashoba Health Group.**

Ms. Manugian made a motion to ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Kayla Savage as a Communications Officer. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Pisani made a motion to ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Michael Hartnett as the Alternate Member to the Minuteman Nashoba Health Group. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. **FY24 Budget Development Update-**

Mr. Haddad, Ms. Patricia Dufresne, and Ms. Kara Cruikshank will meet with School Superintendent Dr. Laura Chesson and Finance Director Sherry Kersey to see where the school stands with their preliminary FY24 budget development. Depending on the information that is received, Mr. Haddad said he may schedule a meeting in Joint Session with the Select Board and Finance Committee next Monday to discuss their anticipated budget impacting his proposed FY2024 Operating Budget and to receive more guidance.

3. Update on the Select Board Meeting Schedule Through the End of the Year

Mr. Haddad would like to update the meeting schedule that will take the Board through the end of the year:

Monday, December 19, 2022	Finance team Update on New Growth, etc.
Monday, December 26, 2022	No Meeting (Christmas Holiday)
Monday, January 2, 2023	No Meeting (New Year Holiday)
Monday, January 9, 2023	FY 2024 Town Manager's Budget Presentation

Mr. Haddad requested authorizing one Select Board Member and the Town Manager to sign Warrants for the next thirty days.

Ms. Manugian made a motion to authorize one Select Board Member and the Town Manager to sign Warrants for the next thirty days. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously

SELECT BOARD ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AND ACTION

1. Consider Approving Two One-Day All Alcohol Liquor Licenses for the Thurston-Krikoria wedding, to be held on Friday, January 13, 2023 (6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.) and Saturday, January 14, 2023 (10:00 a.m. to midnight) at Grotonwood.
2. *Ms. Manugian made a motion to grant the two One-Day All Alcohol Liquor licenses for the Thurston-Krikoria wedding to be held on Friday, January 13, 2023 (6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.) and Saturday, January 14, 2023 (10:00 a.m. to midnight) at Grotonwood. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION REPORT

Mr. Francisco wanted to thank the Select Board for having the Sustainability Commission at this evening's meeting. They wanted to take the time to meet with the Select Board to explain what they have accomplished over 2022 and also to show them what they have planned for the future.

Ms. Alison Dolbear Peterson gave an update on The Groton Center Pollinator Habitat. She said the pollinator habitat is a Conservation project to help offset the loss on pollinator habitats. When it is completed, it will be a long term, low maintenance habitat for native butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds. She explained the importance of Pollinators and to our echo systems. The grounds are easily accessible to the public. Accomplishments last season for the Commission are: a building the stone walking path, two stone patios, a granite bench, installing additional plants, and a birdbath with a solar fountain. Their goal for next year is to purchase and plant perennials, purchase a picnic table and umbrella, and to complete the habitat. Mr. Francisco said it has become a beautiful place to visit.

Mr. Bruce Easom said in the fall there was a Tire and Collection & Recycling Initiative. The incentive was to encourage Groton Residents to collect up old tires and be able to drop them off at the Transfer Station to be recycled. Also, they waived the normal \$4 per tire drop off charge. Mr. Easom said there were two events: On October 1, 2022, they collected 55 tires and on November 5, 2022, a total of 145 tires were collected. In the Spring they will continue.

Ms. Charlotte Weigel said the Sustainability Commission would like to work with the Select Board and other town entities towards reducing Groton's town-wide greenhouse gas emissions. Currently Groton has not done a complete inventory of town-wide emissions. Ms. Weigel said understanding the amount and distribution of town emissions can inform strategy for reductions and to hit state mandated targets.

Mr. Francisco said he thinks it would be important for the town to have a Sustainability Education initiative. This will help adults in town to have informational/educational seminars to focus on Sustainability. The big picture is to have a series of 12 Sessions, Spanning 7 Core Topic Areas. The Commission shared an outline of their curriculum.

The Commission shared their requests for Select Board support:

Workshop/working Group Meeting(s) Align 2023 initiatives Work:

- Liaison relationships with important processes- Master Plan, Green Communities, Destination Groton, GELD, Planning Board etc.
- Exploring Possibilities for more sustainable plans for Groton's Public buildings.
- Plans for increasing photovoltaic energy generation and battery use for the Town.
- Managing and preparing a potential MA Mosquito Spraying "Opt-Out" request.

Funding Support from the Select Board

- For Tire Recycling and Pollinator-garden program and Commission Communications.
- Amount Needed \$15K to support all the activities.

Mr. Haddad asked if the \$15K would be a one-time request or an Annual Appropriation? Mr. Francisco explained for each project it may be different. Mr. Haddad recommended submitting a Warrant Article making a request for the \$15K for the Spring Town Meeting. If a project takes longer than a year for completion, the Town Accountant has the ability to encumber the money into the next fiscal year. Mr. Haddad said the Warrant opens in January. The Warrant Article can always be removed if another source of funding is found.

Comments/Questions from the Select Board:

Ms. Pine said if the Board would like to update the charge for the Sustainability Commission, this would need to be brought back to Town Meeting.

Ms. Manugian asked Mr. Haddad if there is an opportunity for tires to be dropped off anywhere else, other than the transfer station? Mr. Haddad said we can ask Tom Delaney if we can get a trailer set up at the Highway Garage in West Groton.

Ms. Manugian said to the Commission she would highly encourage them to get some students/kids involved as they are eager to go along with all these things. Mr. Francisco agrees with Ms. Manugian.

Mr. Pisani thanked the Commission. He believed 2023 will be a great year great for them.

Ms. Pine said to the Sustainability Commission she is really impressed with everything the Commission has have done so far. Mr. Francisco was looking for guidance from the Select Board on what they should work on moving forward. Ms. Pine believes the Commission should work on the things that they are most passionate about. Ms. Pine said would like to print off the provided brochure to hand out at Town Meeting.

The Sustainability Commission generally meets the third Tuesday of every month at The Groton Center at 7:00pm.

DESTINATION GROTON COMMITTEE REPORT

The Destination Groton Committee had to reschedule from this evening due to illness on the committee.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Pine asked if at this time, does PFAS in the ground or in the water disrupts us from granting building permits Mr. Haddad said there has been no restrictions at this point.

There was no other business to discuss at this time.

MINUTES

Ms. Manugian made a motion to approve the amended minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting on December 5, 2022. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06PM

Approved: _____
Matthew F. Pisani, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted: Kara Cruikshank,
Executive Assistant to the Town Manager

Date Approved: