



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

SELECT BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, AUGUST 12, 2024
AGENDA
SELECT BOARD MEETING ROOM
2nd FLOOR
GROTON TOWN HALL

- 6:00 P.M. Announcements and Review Agenda for the Public
- 6:01 P.M. Public Comment Period #1
- I. 6:05 P.M. Town Manager's Report
1. Consider Ratifying the Town Manager's Appointments of Johnna Brissette as Departmental Assistant for the Police Department and Andrew Glanville to the Groton Country Club Golf Staff
 2. Notification of the Temporary Absence of the Town Manager and the Appointment of Takashi Tada as Acting Town Manager During the Temporary Absence
 3. Call for the Establishment of a Charter Review Committee Pursuant to Chapter 7-6 of the Groton Charter
 4. Determine Final Solution for Repairs of the Island Road Bridge
 5. Update on Select Board Meeting Schedule through Labor Day
- II. 6:10 P.M. Items for Select Board Consideration and Action
1. Approve Request from Town Clerk to Create Marriage Certificate Corrections Fee
 2. Establish the Stormwater Fee for Fiscal Year 2025
 3. Consider Approving a One Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for The Groton Business Association for the GBA Meeting to be held at United Cultivation, 489 Main Street, on Wednesday, September 18, 2024 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
 4. Consider Approving a One Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for the Groton Historical Society for the Tarbell Exhibit Opening to be held at the Boutwell House, 172 Main Street on Saturday, September 21, 2024 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
 5. Consider Approving a One Day All Alcoholic Beverages License for the Friends of Prescott for Do You Think You Know About Vodka to be held on Friday, August 16, 2024 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
- III. 6:15 P.M. Consider Adopting and Issuing a Resolution to Governor Healey to Declare a State of Emergency Regarding the Closure of Nashoba Valley Medical Center.

OTHER BUSINESS

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

- A. PFAS Issue
- B. Fiscal Year 2026 Budget
- C. Green Communities Application and Implementation
- D. Florence Roche Elementary School Construction Project
- E. PILOTS

SELECT BOARD LIAISON REPORTS

- IV. Public Comment Period #2
- V. Minutes: Regularly Scheduled Meeting of July 29, 2024

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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Mark W. Haddad

To: *Select Board*

From: *Mark W. Haddad – Town Manager*

Subject: *Weekly Agenda Update/Report*

Date: *August 12, 2024*

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

In addition to the Town Manager's Report, Items for Select Board Consideration and Action and a review of the Ongoing Issues List, there is one item scheduled on Monday's Agenda. The Board will be considering adopting and issuing a resolution to Governor Maura Healey on the closure of the Nashoba Valley Medical Center. A copy of the Proposed Resolution is attached to this report for your review and consideration.

1. I have appointed Johnna Brissette as a Police Department Departmental Assistant and Andrew Glanville to the Groton Country Club Golf Staff. I would respectfully request that the Board consider ratifying these appointments at Monday's meeting.
2. I will be on vacation from August 17th through August 25th. In my absence, I have appointed Takashi Tada as Acting Town Manager. Enclosed with this Report is the official notification of my absence and requisite appointment of an Acting Town Manager.
3. One of the Select Board's Annual Goals is to establish a Charter Review Committee to update (along with a formal review) the Groton Charter to allow for changes in the way the positions of Police Chief, Fire Chief and Town Clerk are selected/filled. Section 7-6 of the Charter reads as follows:

"Not less than once in every 10-year period after the effective date of this charter, a charter review committee shall, by an affirmative vote of the majority of the full select board, be established to review this charter and report its recommendations to an annual town meeting concerning any proposed amendments that the committee may determine to be necessary or desirable. The charter review committee shall consist of 7 members, 3 of whom shall be appointed by the select board, 2 of whom shall be appointed by the finance committee, 1 of whom shall be appointed by the Groton-Dunstable Regional District school committee and 1 of whom shall be appointed by the town moderator. An appointed person may be a member of the agency from which they are appointed; provided, however, that the charter review committee shall not include more than 1 select board member, more than 1 member of the finance committee or more than 1 member of the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District school committee. The charter review committee shall meet to organize immediately after the full charter review committee has been appointed. The charter review committee shall hold a public hearing not more than 60 days after the date on which it meets to organize and shall hold at least 1 additional public hearing before filing its final report."

Continued on next page – Over >

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3. **Continued:**

I would respectfully request that the Board, pursuant to this Section, vote to establish a Charter Review Committee. In addition, I would further respectfully request that I be one of the Board's appointees to this Committee. The specific goal relates to the appointment of the positions of Police Chief, Fire Chief and Town Clerk. There is no one more involved or aware of the current appointment process than me. I have been involved in the hiring process of all three positions (Fire Chief twice). I believe this experience is crucial to the successful review/change when it comes to this Section of the Charter. In addition, the previous Charter Review Committee ignored everything I had to offer during the last review which led to the establishment of provisions in the Charter that have been problematic and cumbersome over the last several years. As Groton's Town Manager for the last sixteen years, there is no one in Groton more qualified to participate in this review. I appreciate the Select Board's consideration of this request. As far as the other two Select Board appointees, I would recommend that the Select Board designate a current member of the Board and then advertise for the third vacancy. I will alert the Finance Committee, Moderator and School Committee of their need to make appointments to this Committee. We should also establish a deadline for the appointments. I look forward to discussing this in more detail at Monday's Meeting.

4. At your July 15th Meeting, the Board reviewed the proposed repair to the Island Road Bridge as proposed by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). Their proposed repair calls for the installation of a 54" culvert to replace the current dilapidated bridge. During that discussion, several members of the Community objected to the is proposed repair and offered other solutions. MassDOT made it clear that they would not pay for any other solution than the one they are proposing. To assist the Boards in making a final decision, I held a meeting with representatives of MassDOT, along with Tom Delaney, Kara Cruikshank, Alison Manugian and Bud Robertson. I invited both Ron Hersch and Alex Woodle of the Great Ponds Advisory Committee to the meeting. During the meeting, we reviewed the proposed solution proposed by MassDOT along with some of the ideas others raised at the July 15th meeting. During this discussion, MassDOT made it very clear that the State will not pay for any other solution proposed and that the amount of testing required to propose a new solution would cost in the neighborhood of \$150,000+. The Select Board is left with the choice of either agreeing with the State's proposed solution or having the Town appropriate upwards of \$200,000 to further study potential bridge repairs and then ultimately pay for those repairs. As Town Manager and Chief Financial Officer of the Town, I cannot recommend to the Select Board and Finance Committee that we take on this liability when the State is proposing and paying for a solution that will solve the issue. I should further note that the State committed to study whether or not the size of the culvert can be increased from 54" to 60". I should have an answer to that study at the Meeting. Based on all of this, I would recommend that the Select Board vote to move forward with the MassDOT's proposed solution.

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Weekly Agenda Update/Report
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5. Please see an update to the meeting schedule that will take the Select Board through Labor Day:
- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Monday, August 19, 2024 | -No Meeting |
| Monday, August 26, 2024 (Remote) | -First Review of the Fall Town Meeting Warrant
-Consider Award of RFP for the Lease of the Prescott School |
| Monday, September 2, 2024 | -No Meeting |

ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND ACTION

- The Town Clerk is requesting that the Board establish a “Marriage Certificate Corrections” Fee. Due to the fact that a majority of weddings are now being performed by either a Justice of the Peace or by those obtaining a one day solemnization certificate from the Commonwealth, errors are being made on the marriage license application because those conducting the ceremonies are not experienced when it comes to filling out their portion of the marriage licenses after the ceremony occurs. The Town Clerk’s Office is spending quite a bit of time correcting the licenses and communicating with the couples and/or their officiant to have them recomplete their portion of the license. Vital Records is extremely particular with how these are filled out and therefore the Town Clerk’s Office is required to make sure they are filled out properly. To help cover the extra time, a fee of \$30 is being requested. I would respectfully request that the Board vote to establish this fee at Monday’s meeting.
- The 2024 Spring Town Meeting approved the following budget for the Stormwater Utility for Fiscal Year 2025:

LINE	DEPARTMENT/DESCRIPTION	FY 2024 APPROPRIATED	FY 2025 TOWN MANAGER BUDGET	PERCENT CHANGE
STORMWATER UTILITY				
	Stormwater Wages/Benefits	\$ 79,520	\$ 84,851	6.70%
	Stormwater Expenses	\$ 112,000	\$ 112,000	0.00%
	Stormwater Capital Outlay	\$ 51,000	\$ 51,000	0.00%
<hr/>				
500	DEPARTMENTAL TOTAL	\$ 242,520	\$ 247,851	2.20%

The Budget had a very minor increase for FY 2025 to cover Union Obligations. For the past two years, the Select Board has set the fee at \$60. Based on the parcel count of 4,046, I would recommend that the Select Board vote to set the Stormwater Fee at \$60 for the third consecutive year. We can discuss this in more detail at Monday’s meeting.

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3. I would respectfully request that the Board consider approving a One Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for The Groton Business Association for the GBA Meeting to be held at United Cultivation, 489 Main Street, on Wednesday, September 18, 2024 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
4. I would respectfully request that the Board consider approving a One Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for the Groton Historical Society for the Tarbell Exhibit Opening to be held at the Boutwell House, 172 Main Street on Saturday, September 21, 2024 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
5. I would respectfully request that the Board consider approving a One Day All Alcoholic Beverages License for the Friends of Prescott for Do You Think You Know About Vodka to be held on Friday, August 16, 2024 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

MWH/rjb
enclosure



Town Manager
Mark W. Haddad

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RESOLUTION AND EMERGENCY DECLARATION GROTON SELECT BOARD PROPOSED CLOSURE OF THE NASHOBA VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER

August 12, 2024

This Resolution and Emergency Declaration is presented by the Groton Select Board. Given the impending closure of the Nashoba Valley Medical Center (NVMC) scheduled for August 31, 2024, the Select Board implores Governor Maura Healey of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to exert her leadership and official powers to prevent the closure of the NVMC. Such powers include, but are not limited to, declaring a State of Public Health Emergency to prevent the closure of the NVMC and enforcing the 120-day closure process in accordance with Massachusetts State Law.

The Nashoba Valley Medical Center, located in Ayer, Massachusetts is a 46-bed community hospital opened in 1964, serving the fifteen towns of the Nashoba Valley Region: Ayer, Ashby, Bolton, Boxborough, Devens, Dunstable, Groton, Harvard, Lancaster, Littleton, Pepperell, Shirley, Stow, Townsend, and Westford. The Nashoba Valley Medical Center, has continuously provided primary critical healthcare, including emergency health services to the approximately 114,390 residents of the Nashoba Valley Region. This region does not have access to public mass transportation enabling travel beyond the region for health care and emergency health services.

The NVMC is only 3 miles from the Groton Center Fire Station, and currently the Town of Groton's Fire Department Emergency Response Ambulance averages a 15 to 20 minute return to service when transporting to the NVMC. The closest alternative hospitals to the Town of Groton are Leominster Hospital, 17 miles away; Emerson Hospital, 19 miles away; Lowell General Hospital, 15 miles away; and Southern N.H. Medical Center (Nashua), 17 miles away. If NVMC closes, each Groton Emergency Response transport is estimated to take critical services out of the response areas for up to an additional 1 to 1.5 hours (assuming no traffic and ideal weather conditions).

Whereas, the Nashoba Valley Medical Center provides critical secondary emergency care to the other communities of North Central Massachusetts and Southern New Hampshire; and

Whereas, the NVMC annually receives approximately 16,000 Emergency Room visits and 91,000 outpatient visits; and

Whereas, the NVMC is the only locally accessible alternative for direct health care and emergency services for our most vulnerable populations, including the elderly, disability community, and children; and

Whereas, loss of the NVMC would increase Fire Department Emergency Response times and have a significant negative impact on emergency survival rates as well as increased, unfunded costs for emergency services for the Towns of the Nashoba Valley; and

Whereas, the NVMC is one of the largest employers of the Nashoba Valley Region, employing approximately 500 people; the loss of jobs and negative impact to the local and regional economy will be devastating; and

Whereas, the NVMC to date has not received a viable bidder to assume the operations of the hospital and the Federal Bankruptcy Judge on July 31, 2024 ruled that Steward Medical (the current owner and operator of NVMC) proceed with closing the hospital by August 31, 2024; in only 30 days as opposed to the 120 days required by Massachusetts State Law; and

Whereas, the impending closure of the NVMC by August 31, 2024 creates an unnecessary and dangerous man-made public health emergency; and

Whereas, Governor Maura Healy has the power set forth in Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 17, Section 2A as follows:

Upon declaration by the governor that an emergency exists which is detrimental to the public health, the commissioner may, with the approval of the governor and the public health council, during such period of emergency, take such action and incur such liabilities as he may deem necessary to assure the maintenance of public health and the prevention of disease. The commissioner, with the approval of the public health council, may establish procedures to be followed during such emergency to insure the continuation of essential public health services and the enforcement of the same.

Now, Therefore, the Groton Select Board joins the Ayer Select Board to respectfully request that Governor Maura Healy take the following immediate actions within her powers as Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts:

1. Per MGL Chapter 17, Section 2A declare that a public health emergency exists with the impending closure of the NVMC and further instruct Dr. Robert Goldstein, Commissioner of the Department of Public Health to take such action to assure the maintenance of public health by keeping the NVMC open and operational.
2. Do everything in her powers as Governor to ensure the required 120-day closure period is followed, as promised in her public statements on August 1, 2024.
3. Work with Federal, State, and Local Leaders of the Nashoba Valley to develop a permanent transition plan with funding to ensure that the NVMC remains open and operational and ultimately transfers to a responsible operator.

We, the Groton Select Board, formally transmit this Official Resolution to Governor Maura Healey, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and Dr. Robert Goldstein, Commissioner of the Department of Public Health of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with official copies transmitted to Congresswoman Lori Trahan; State Senator Jamie Eldridge; State Senator John Cronin; State Senator Edward Kennedy; State Representative Danillo Sena; State Representative Margaret Scarsdale; State Representative James Arciero; State Representative Michael Kushmerek; State Representative Natalie Higgins and the Select Boards of the fifteen aforementioned Towns of the Nashoba Valley Region.

Signed, this 12th day of August 2024 by:

GROTON SELECT BOARD

Alison S. Manugian, Chair

Rebecca H. Pine, Vice Chair

Peter S. Cunningham, Clerk

John F. Reilly, Member

Matthew F. Pisani, Member



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Town Manager
Mark W. Haddad

August 5, 2024

Honorable Select Board
Honorable Town Clerk
Town of Groton
173 Main Street
Groton, MA 01450

RE: Temporary Absence of the Town Manager

Dear Members of the Select Board and Town Clerk:

The purpose of this letter is to advise you, pursuant to Section 4.4.2 of the Groton Charter, that I will be temporarily absent from my duties as Town Manager from August 17, 2024 through August 25, 2024. I will return to the Office on August 26, 2024. Pursuant to this Section, I am designating Takashi Tada as Acting Town Manager to perform the duties of the Town Manager during my temporary absence.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Mark W. Haddad
Town Manager

cc: Kara Cruikshank – Executive Assistant
All Department Heads

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JULY 29, 2024
UN-APPROVED**

SB Members Present: Matt Pisani; John Reilly; Peter Cunningham, Clerk; Becky Pine, Vice Chair;

SB Members Virtually Present: Alison Manugian, Chair;

Also Present: Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; Dawn Dunbar, Town Clerk; Deputy Fire Chief Arthur Cheeks; Police Chief Michael Luth; Deputy Police Chief Rachael Bielecki; The Groton Fire Department; The Groton Police Department; Melisa Doig, Human Resource Director; Hannah Moller, Treasurer/Tax Collector; Patricia DuFresne, Assistant Director of Finance/Town Accountant; Robert Garside, Building Commissioner; Takashi Tada, Land Use Director; Charlotte Steeves, Conservation Administrator; Tom Orcutt, Groton Water Superintendent; Tom Delaney, DPW Director; Brian Callahan, DPW Director In Training; Raquel Majeski, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee;

Others Virtually Present: Susie Bresney, Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game, and Jonas Procton, Horsley Written Group.

Ms. Pine called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Vice Chair Pine clarified that Chair Manugian would be attending the meeting virtually, and according to the law, she cannot act as chair. Ms. Pine would serve as Chair instead.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Dunbar, the Town Clerk, announced the State Primary on September 3, 2024. She mentioned that the early mail-in ballots would be sent out by Friday, August 2, 2024. The deadline to request a ballot by mail is August 26th by 5:00 pm. In-person early voting is scheduled for Saturday, August 24, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm; Monday, August 26th, from 8:00 am to 7:00 pm; Tuesday, August 27th through Thursday, August 29th, from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm; and Friday, August 30th from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm. Ms. Dunbar said the deadline to register to vote in the Primary is Saturday, August 24th, by 5:00 pm. In the hope of eliminating confusion during the Primary Election, she explained that Groton has two different representatives for general court districts. Precinct One votes for the representative of the 37th Middlesex District, while Precincts Two and Three vote for the representative of the First Middlesex District. Sample ballots can be found on the website, but if you have any questions, please contact the Town Clerk's office.

RATIFY THE CONTRACT AND SWEAR IN FIRE CHIEF ARTHUR CHEEKS

Deputy Chief Arthur Cheeks was present, accompanied by family, friends, and colleagues from the Groton Fire and Police Departments, along with several of the Town's Department Heads.

Mr. Haddad explained that the Select Board's packet contained the Final Negotiated contract negotiated by Mr. Haddad, Chair Manugian, and Deputy Fire Chief Arthur Cheeks. Mr. Haddad respectfully requested that the Board vote to ratify and sign the Agreement that evening and have the Town Clerk swear in Art Cheeks as Groton's Fire Chief.

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to ratify the Agreement of Fire Chief Arthur Cheeks. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll call: Cunningham-aye; Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Manugian-aye; Pisani- abstained.

Fire Chief Arthur Cheeks signed the contract along with the Board. Ms. Dawn Dunbar, the Town Clerk, was present to swear in Fire Chief Arthur Cheeks, and his wife pinned him. Mr. Haddad and members of the Board Congratulated Groton's new Fire Chief, Chief Cheeks.

While Chief Cheeks was present, Ms. Pine explained that, unfortunately, the Nashoba Valley Medical Center was announced to close due to bankruptcy. Chief Cheeks and Mr. Haddad crafted a letter to explain why the medical center should remain open and send it to Governor Healey, Senator Cronin, and Representatives Scarsdale and Sena.

Mr. Reilly motioned to approve the letter for issuance to the state delegation. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion.

Discussion

Mr. Cunningham stated he was upset by the news. Mr. Haddad announced that a press conference would take place at the Ayer Town Hall on Tuesday, July 30th, at 9:00 a.m. to discuss the closure of the Nashoba Valley Medical Center. Chief Cheeks commented that it was encouraging to see people voicing their concerns and emphasized the need for all the support they could get.

Roll call: Cunningham-aye; Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Manugian-aye.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD #1

None

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- 1. Consider Ratifying the Town Manager's Appointments of Ian Pereira and Tyler Melanson as Police Officers for the Groton Police Department.**

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Ian Pereira, effective August 8, 2024, and Tyler Melanson, effective August 9, 2024, as Police Officers for the Groton Police Department. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. Roll call: Cunningham-aye; Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Manugian-aye.

- 2. Consider Ratifying the Town Manager's Appointment of Allison Knell as a Lifeguard and Donald Atwood to the Golf Staff at the Country Club.**

Mr. Pisani made a motion to ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Allison Knell as a Lifeguard and Donald Atwood to the Golf Staff at the Country Club. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. Roll call: Cunningham-aye; Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Manugian-aye.

- 2. Update from the Town Manager on the PILOT Annual Goal.**

Mr. Haddad said one of the Annual Goals of the Select Board is to work with various non-profits to codify PILOT Agreements that support the strong relationships in place. Principal Assessor Megan Foster provided Mr. Haddad with a list of exempt properties in Groton. He refined the list and removed all

properties owned by the Town of Groton, the Groton Conservation Trust, the Groton Conservation Commission, the Groton Water and Sewer Commission, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Groton Cemetery Association, New England Forestry Foundation, and the West Groton Water District. He noted they would not seek PILOTs from any of those organizations and that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts provides Groton with \$131,855 in State Aid for properties owned by the Commonwealth in Groton (Please see the included list with the minutes). Ms. Pine suggested removing places of worship. Ms. Manugian expressed concerns about the process and emphasized the need to clarify the criteria for elimination with the community. Mr. Haddad said he would like to collaborate with Chair Manugian, Ms. DuFresne, Ms. Foster, and Ms. Moller and then provide an update to the Board. Mr. Haddad said he would issue a press release concerning PILOTs from the Select Board and Town Manager. He said there is a lot of mis-information out there. Mr. Haddad wanted to clarify that attacking private schools is not the way to go. He works closely with Groton School Headmaster Temba Maqubela and Lawrence Academy's Assistant Head for Finance and Operations, Bob Kramer.

Comments/Concerns

Resident Mayra Alosco mentioned that the PILOT discussion was initially raised during the April 22 Select Board meeting. Ms. Alosco said the town was seeking transparency and asked about the status of the Home Rule Petition with Town Counsel.

Mr. Haddad explained that the Home Rule Petition will be prepared and submitted within the next 30 days. There have been no prior successful instances of this in the legislature. Ms. Pine mentioned that the alternative proposal being reviewed by the legislature might entail a 25% payment for any amount over \$15 million. Ms. Pine questioned whether they should proceed with the Home Rule Petition due to the uncertainty of its passing with the legislature.

Mr. Pisani believes they need to move forward to establish a foundation or building block, which he said needs to be properly documented.

Ms. Pine said they are trying to build a community and stick to the facts. They are releasing a statement and asking everyone to be patient. She said they hope there is some improvement in the amount.

Resident Ms. Eliot expressed concern that the Home Rule Petition could backfire on the Town. She suggested it would be beneficial to look into why non-profit organizations in Concord, MA, are not making PILOT payments and whether there was a Home Rule Petition related to the issue.

Mr. Haddad said there will be an article on the warrant for a Home Rule Petition for the Select Board to consider for the 2024 Fall Town Meeting.

Proposed Select Board Meeting Schedule through Labor Day.

Monday, August 5, 2024	No Meeting
Monday, August 12, 2024	Call for Establishment of Charter Review Committee Decision on Island Road Bridge
Monday, August 19, 2024	No Meeting
Monday, August 26, 2024 (Remote)	First Review of the Fall Town Meeting Warrant

ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL

1. Consider Approving and Releasing the Annual Performance Evaluation of the Town Manager

Mr. Haddad said the Annual Performance Evaluation of the Town Manager has been completed. According to the Policy, the next step was for the Select Board Chair to present the final Evaluation to the full Board at a public meeting for the Board’s approval. Once the Evaluation is approved, it will be filed with the Town Clerk. Ms. Pine said she put together a summary of the Evaluation. She mentioned that it was no surprise that Mr. Haddad received an overall rating of outstanding. All five Board members were consistent with his evaluation. His work on the PFAS problem and financial management of the Town was excellent. Mr. Haddad thanked the Board for their review. He explained that his success as the Town Manager was only possible due to the support he received from the Board, outstanding employees, and Department Heads.

Mr. Reilly made a motion to accept the Town Manager’s Annual Performance. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. Roll call: Cunningham-aye; Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Manugian-aye.

2. Consider Appointing Thomas Naughton to the Capital Planning Advisory Committee.

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to appoint Thomas Naughton to the Capital Planning Advisory Committee. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. Roll Call: Cunningham-aye; Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Manugian-aye.

3. Consider Approving a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverage License for the First Parish Church for Open Mic Night to be held on Friday, August 23, 2024, from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

M. Reilly made a motion to approve a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverage License for the First Parish Church for Open Mic Night to be held on Friday, August 23, 2024, from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. Roll Call: Cunningham-aye; Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Manugian-aye.

6:15 P.M. DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE- ANNUAL REPORT/REVIEW SELECT BOARD GOAL

Ms. Raquel Majeski and members of the Committee attended the discussion. The Select Board invited the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Committee (DEI) to attend the meeting to update the Board on their activities and review and refine the Select Board’s Goal concerning the DEI. Ms. Majeski started by thanking the Select Board for their continued support. The Committee would like to combine the two versions into one, as they felt both were complementary to each other.

Version #1- Collaborate with DEI on consistent unified responses to incidents of hatred, bigotry, or injustice. Develop a phased approach to increase awareness of and inclusion of individuals, groups, and cultures in Groton now and in our history who may have previously been unrecognized or marginalized.

Version #2- Provide guidance and assistance in identifying policies and documents that have worked to suppress cultural and socioeconomic diversity. Develop a phased approach to create inclusionary practices.

Ms. Pine said that she and Ms. Manugian could work collaboratively to merge the two versions of Goals.

Ms. Pine wanted to thank them for organizing the Juneteenth celebration. Ms. Majesky announced upcoming events, and Ms. Pine asked her to add the events to the Community Calendar on the town's website.

The DEI also wanted to discuss converting single-stall restrooms to all-gender restrooms. The Select Board was okay with this proposal, and Mr. Haddad said new signage could be ordered. The Board thanked the DEI for their attendance.

6:30 P.M. DISCUSSION/NEXT STEPS- SQUANNACOOK RIVER DAM REPORT

DPW Director Tom Delaney and DPW in Training Brian Callahan were present. Mr. Jonas Procton from the Horsley Written Group and Susie Bresney from the Massachusetts Fish and Game attended virtually to review the Squannacook River Dam Report, now available on the Town of Groton website. Other interested parties were also in attendance. Ms. Pine stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the next steps. Mr. Delaney suggested adding this to the Town Meeting Warrant to accept or reject the dam. This would allow the town to accept or reject the dam, enable the town to vote, and provide the Board with direction.

Mr. Procton provided a presentation on the Squannacook River Dam Removal Feasibility Study. He outlined the goals, which include safety, resilience, and nature. He said the Squannacook River Dam is 18 feet tall and creates an impoundment. The presentation explained the potential full removal of the Squannacook River dam and discussed areas needing further study. One concern is the potential impact on homes in Shirley near the impoundment area that rely on well water. It is important to assess the potential drawdown of wells if the impoundment area is lowered.

The next step in the project is the town discussion, as the removal of the dam removal is a town decision. Permits will be required, and several state agencies, including DEP and MHC, will be involved in the review process.

Ms. Susie Bresney explained the benefits of removing the dam. While the construction costs are high, various state and federal funding options can help offset these expenses.

Board Comments/Questions

Ms. Manugian inquired whether the river might break free elsewhere. Mr. Procton explained that rivers sometimes have a memory and changing their course would require significant effort.

Mr. Procton said this change would result in less vegetation and a more natural landscape and wetland environment.

Mr. Pisani asked how far the distance was from the Dam to Hollingsworth & Vose (H&V). It was shared that it was 1.3 miles away. Mr. Cunningham said that below the H&V dam, there is a facility they use for their water treatment.

Members of the Public Comments/Questions

Mr. Charles Shadan from Lost Lake Drive mentioned that Mr. Procton explained the direction of water flow into Thompson Mill Pond. Shadan emphasized the importance of educating the public at a Town Meeting to ensure everyone is fully informed and can make well-informed decisions. He also highlighted the opportunity to revitalize West Groton through future business development. Mr. Shadan suggested taking measures to ensure bank stabilization, including removing the dam and planting afterward.

Resident Mr. Karl Canner stated that the river would drain if the dam were removed. He mentioned that fixing the Shirley side would require remedial repair, estimated at \$300,000. He said the cost to fix the dam is \$400,000, with an extra \$300,000 needed for dredging. He expressed that the ecology is already beautiful and does not need enhancement. Mr. Canner also provided the Board with a packet for review and expressed interest in forming a committee.

Ms. Pine said that, as a Board, the option of rejecting this plan alone is unviable. If so, a plan or an alternative plan needs to be developed.

Resident Ms. Ginger Volmar mentioned that the dam has been in place for over 300 years, and if it were to be removed, it's uncertain how the area would look. She suggested that the Town Counsel could take legal action against the Town of Shirley to repair their side of the dam, as Shirley is responsible for it due to the owner's neglect and unpaid taxes.

Ms. Carol Carter said the Squannacook River is beautiful, and people kayak and fish there. She is opposed to removing the dam.

Mr. Haddad asked the Board if they wanted him to investigate Ms. Volmar's suggestion, determine their legal options, and reach out to Town Counsel, although he is against suing another town. He also asked if the Board would advise him to craft a Warrant Article for the 2024 Fall Town Meeting and have the Town decide. Ms. Pine thought Mr. Haddad should ask Town Counsel to see what legal actions exist and believes it should go to a Town Meeting.

Ms. Bresney wanted to make clear that not all grants are open to private dam owners. She also explained that advancing doesn't commit the town to removing the dam but to moving forward with the next phases of the study. Dam removals require multiple permits, extensive investigation, and regulators to proceed with these projects.

Mr. Haddad believes it would be premature for this matter to be discussed at the 2024 Fall Town Meeting until they get more information. The Board directed him to work with Ms. Bresney, Mr. Procton, and Mr. Delaney to determine the next steps. Ms. Pine recommended gathering information in the most neutral way possible.

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. Manugian 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. Roll Call: Cunningham-aye; Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Manugian-aye.

ON-GOING ISSUES

- A. PFAS ISSUE- Mr. Haddad said they need to buy back land that the Town Meeting authorized for the chlorine booster station. He said they are prepared to move forward, and several documents require

signatures. Town Counsel has requested the Board to vote to authorize the Town Manager to sign all documents relative to that purchase on behalf of the Town of Groton.

Mr. Pisani motioned to authorize the Town Manager to sign on behalf of the Town of Groton to purchase the land at the Groton Cemetery as authorized by the Town Meeting. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll call: Cunningham-aye; Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Manugian-aye.

- B. Fiscal Year 2026 Budget—Mr. Haddad said the first Tri-COMM meeting would be held on August 28, 2024. The Tri-Comm members will consist of representatives from Groton, including Finance Committee Member Bud Robertson, Select Board Chair Alison Manugian, Assistant Director of Finance/Town Accountant Patricia DuFresne, and Mr. Haddad. The Dunstable representatives will include Select Board member Leah Basbanes, Jake Lewon, Advisory Committee member, and Town Administrator Jason Silva. The School Committee representatives are Lacey McCabe and Fay Raynor. Director of Finance Sherry Kersey and Groton Dunstable Regional School District Superintendent Geoff Bruno will also work with the Committee.

- C. Florence Roche School Construction Project—All inspections for the Florence Roche School have been completed, and affidavits have been submitted. The teachers will start moving in on August 5th. The old building has been demolished, and the asbestos removal went as expected, so there will be no additional costs. The soil will be tested as the final step. Mr. Haddad mentioned that everything is progressing very well. Substantial completion is expected on July 30th. The school will be added to the Town's insurance starting Tuesday, July 29th

SELECT BOARD LIASON REPORTS

None

Public Comment Period #2

Ms. Manugian wanted to provide an update that Representative Margaret Scarsdale organized a meeting with the six communities in her area. They met with various school committees, town administrators, superintendents, the Department of Education and DESE, and Representative Margaret Scarsdale to discuss Chapter 70 and address their concerns about it not working. They are still working on the next steps to advocate with other surrounding entities. Mr. Haddad mentioned that the meeting was hosted at the Center and went well.

Approval of the Regularly Scheduled Meeting Minutes of July 15, 2024

Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of July 15, 2024. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. Roll call: Cunningham-aye; Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Manugian-aye.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m. Respectively submitted by Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager.