



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, SEPTEMBER 9, 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. Authorize Town Manager to Sign Affordable Housing Grant Agreement
 - 2. Update on Fiscal Year 2026 Budget
 - 3. Update on Meeting Schedule Through the End of the Year
- II. 6:10 P.M. Items for Select Board Consideration and Action
- 1. Authorize Gift Fund for the Invasive Species Committee
 - 2. Consider Approving a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for the Friends of Prescott for Open Mic Night to be held on Friday, September 13, 2024 from 6:30 p.m.- 9:30 p.m.
- III. 6:15 P.M. In Joint Session with the Finance Committee – Public Hearing on the Warrant for the 2024 Fall Town Meeting
- IV. 6:20 P.M. Public Hearing – Road Layout Hearing – Monarch Path

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

- V. Public Comment Period #2
- VI. Minutes: Regularly Scheduled Meeting of August 26, 2024

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.



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

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

To: *Select Board*

From: *Mark W. Haddad – Town Manager*

Subject: *Weekly Agenda Update/Report*

Date: *September 9, 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 are two items scheduled on Monday's Agenda. First, the Select Board will be meeting in joint session with the Finance Committee to conduct the Public Hearing on the Warrant for the 2024 Fall Town Meeting. Attached to this Report are the following documents to assist in the review of the Warrant:

- a. Latest draft of the Warrant with Town Counsel's edits.
- b. A memorandum from me to the Select Board and Finance Committee explaining all the funding requests, along with an updated Tax Recap Calculation
- c. A memo from DPW Director-In-Training Brian Callahan providing the pros and cons of keeping/removing the Squannacook River Dam.

Second, we have scheduled a Public Hearing for the Board to consider accepting the Layout of Monarch Path. As you know, Article 24 requests that the Town Meeting accept Monarch Path as a Town Way. A precursor to Town Meeting acceptance is the Select Board accepting the Layout of the Road. Also enclosed with this Report are recommendations from the Planning Board and Public Works Director with regard to Monarch Path.

1. The Housing Trust approved the CPA Affordable Housing Grant Agreement and authorized their Chair, Becky Pine, to sign on behalf of the Trust. The agreement is substantially similar to the grant agreement executed a year or so ago for the \$200k grant. The Trust has requested that the Select Board authorize the Town Manager to sign the Agreement on behalf of the Board. Once approved, the agreement will go to the Community Preservation Committee for their review and "acknowledgment" of the agreement.

Select Board
Weekly Agenda Update/Report
September 9, 2024
page two

2. It is my intention to add a weekly update on the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget during my Town Manager’s Report at every Meeting of the Select Board going forward until the Budget is approved. I will use this time to keep the Board apprised of our progress relative to the development of the Budget. For this week’s update, I am pleased to report that the Town Manager’s and Town Administrator’s Tri-Comm Working Group held their first meeting to “map” out the FY 2026 Budget Process. I will provide an update at Monday’s meeting. In addition, I will be requesting that the Select Board and Finance Committee meet in Joint Executive Session on September 30th to provide Collective Bargaining Guidance. As you know, all six (6) Union Agreements are up for renegotiation and we need to start bargaining on successor Agreements as they will have a major impact on the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. We can discuss this in more detail at Monday’s meeting.

3. Please see an update to the Select Board’s Meeting Schedule through the end of the Year:

Monday, September 16, 2024	-Finalize the 2024 Fall Town Meeting Warrant
Monday, September 23, 2024	-No Meeting
Monday, September 30, 2024	-Executive Session Collective Bargaining Guidance -Interview Applicants - Charter Review Committee
Saturday, October 5, 2024	-2024 Fall Town Meeting
Monday, October 7, 2024	- Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, October 14, 2024	-No Meeting (Indigenous People’s Day)
Monday, October 21, 2024	-Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, October 28, 2024	-In Joint Session with Finance Committee – Provide FY 2026 Budget Guidance
Monday, November 4, 2024	-Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, November 11, 2024	-No Meeting (Veteran’s Day)
Monday, November 18, 2024	-Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, November 25, 2024	-Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 2, 2024	-No Meeting
Monday, December 9, 2024	-Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 16, 2024	-Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 23, 2024	-No Meeting
Monday, December 30, 2024	-No Meeting
Monday, January 6, 2025	-Regularly Scheduled Meeting

ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND ACTION

1. The Invasive Species Committee has received a gift to eradicate/remove invasive species around the GELD Building. To that end, they need the Select Board to accept the gift and establish a Gift Fund. I would respectfully request that the Select Board vote to create this Fund.

2. I would respectfully request that the Select Board approve a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for the Friends of Prescott for Open Mic Night to be held on Friday, September 13, 2024 from 6:30 p.m.- 9:30 p.m.

MWH/rjb
enclosure

Warrant, Summary, and Recommendations

TOWN OF GROTON



2024 FALL TOWN MEETING

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

Beginning Saturday, October 5, 2024 @ 9:00 AM

Attention Voters

Please bring this Document to Town Meeting

Introduction to Groton Town Meeting

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

What is Town Meeting?

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

What is a warrant?

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

How does Town Meeting proceed?

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

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

² *Id.*

Who can attend?

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

How long is Town Meeting?

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

Explanation of a Consent Agenda

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

How Consent Agendas Work

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

Electronic Voting at Town Meeting



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

Voter Check-In

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

Test Vote

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

Proxy Voting Prohibited

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

Voting

When the Moderator announces it is time to vote:

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



Handset Display

The display on the handset:

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

Help Desk

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

Handset Return

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



Town Meeting Access for Voters with Disabilities

Parking – Universally accessible parking spaces are available in the parking lot in front of the Groton Dunstable Middle School South. There is a ramp providing access from the parking lot to the front door of the Middle School.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**FALL TOWN MEETING WARRANT
OCTOBER 5, 2024**

Middlesex, ss.
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
To any Constable in the Town of Groton

Greetings:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby required to notify and warn said inhabitants of the Town of Groton qualified to vote on Town affairs to assemble in the Marion Stoddart Building Auditorium, 344 Main Street, Groton, Massachusetts in said Town on Saturday, the fifth day of October, 2024 at Nine O'clock in the morning, to consider the following:

ARTICLE LISTINGS

Article 1*	Prior Year Bills	6
Article 2*	Amend the Fiscal Year 2025 Town Operating Budget	6
Article 3*	Transfer Money Into Capital Stabilization Fund	7
Article 4*	Transfer Money Into Stabilization Fund	7
Article 5*	Transfer Money Into the GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund	8
Article 6*	Revoke Opioid Settlements Special Purpose Stabilization Fund	8
Article 7*	Transfer Within the Water Enterprise Fund	9
Article 8*	Transfer Within the Center Sewer Enterprise Fund	9
Article 9*	Transfer Within the Four Corners Sewer Enterprise Fund	9
Article 10*	Debt Service for Middle School Track – Fiscal Year 2025	10
Article 11	Water Supply System for Heritage Landing	10
Article 12	Funding for Security Improvements at Sargisson Beach	11
Article 13	Funding To Purchase Budget Software for the Town of Groton5	11
Article 14	Engineering Funds for Complete Streets Grant Work	12
Article 15	Amend Purpose of CPA Project for Improvements to Baseball Diamond	12
Article 16	Squannacook River Dam	13
Article 17	Disposition of Town Owned Land on Hoyts Wharf Road	13
Article 18	Authorize the Lease of Town Owned Land	14
Article 19	Amend Chapter 81 “Town Meetings” of the Code of the Town of Groton	15
Article 20	Zoning Amendment - Firearms Retail Sales Establishments	16
Article 21	Zoning Amendment – Solar Parking Canopies	20
Article 22	Zoning Amendment – Accessory Dwelling Units	22
Article 23	Amend Chapter 198 Stormwater Management – Low Impact Development	26
Article 24	Accept Monarch Path as a Town Way	26
Article 25	Citizens’ Petition – Reduce Statutory Speed Limit from 30 MPH to 25 MPH	27
	Report of the Town Manager to the 2024 Fall Town Meeting	29

*Will be presented as one motion as a Consent Agenda

Article 1: Prior Year Bills

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds a sum or sums of money for the payment of unpaid bills from prior fiscal years, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Select Board

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Summary: *Town Meeting approval is required to pay bills from a prior fiscal year. A list of unpaid bills will be provided at Town Meeting. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 29 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 2: Amend the Fiscal Year 2025 Town Operating Budget

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Fiscal Year 2025 Operating Budget as adopted under Article 15 of the May 18, 2024 Special Town Meeting and vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds a sum or sums of money as may be necessary to defray the expenses of the Town for Fiscal Year 2025, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Finance Committee
Select Board
Town Manager

Select Board: *See Town Manager's Report for Recommendation Beginning on Page 29*
Finance Committee: *See Town Manager's Report for Recommendation Beginning on Page 29*

Summary: *The Fiscal Year 2025 Town Operating Budget was approved at the May 18, 2024 Special Town Meeting. Any changes to this Budget would have to be made prior to setting the tax rate. The purpose of this article is to make any necessary changes to balance the FY 2025 Operating Budget. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 29 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 3: *Transfer Money Into the Capital Stabilization Fund*

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds and/or borrow, pursuant to any applicable statute, a sum or sums of money to be added to the sum already on deposit in the Capital Stabilization Fund, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Select Board

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *As of the printing of this Warrant, the Fund has a balance of \$90,394. The financial management goal is to achieve and maintain a balance in the Capital Stabilization Fund equal to 1.5% of the total annual budget. The target amount for the Capital Stabilization Fund will be provided at Town Meeting. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 29 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 4: *Transfer Money into the Stabilization Fund*

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow, pursuant to any applicable statute, a sum or sums of money to be added to the sum already on deposit in the Stabilization Fund, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Select Board

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *As of the printing of this Warrant, the balance in this fund is \$2,617,198. The financial management goal is to achieve and maintain a balance in the Fund equal to 5% of the total annual budget. The target amount for the Fund will be provided at Town Meeting. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 29 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 5: *Transfer Money into the GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund*

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow, pursuant to any applicable statute, a sum or sums of money to be added to the sum already on deposit in the Town of Groton Capital Stabilization Fund for the Groton Dunstable Regional School District, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Manager

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *As of the printing of the Warrant, the balance in this fund is \$21,996. This fund covers the Town of Groton’s share of the Groton Dunstable Regional School District Committee’s long-range Capital Plan to address its capital needs. The target amount will be provided at Town Meeting. Please see the Town Manager’s Report starting on page 29 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 6: *Terminate Opioid Settlements Special Purpose Stabilization Fund*

To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to Chapter 40, Section 5B of the Massachusetts General Laws, to (i) transfer any funds held in the Opioid Settlement Stabilization Fund to the Opioid Special Revenue Fund and (ii) terminate the Opioid Settlement Stabilization Fund as created by Article 7 of the 2023 Spring Town Meeting, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Manager

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *The Town of Groton has been eligible to receive settlement payments from various opioid makers for the prevention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery of individuals harmed by the use of opioids. Opioid settlement funds currently on deposit as well as all future settlement funds received will be deposited into the Special Revenue Fund. Groton is expecting to receive approximately \$40,000 through 2038. At the time of the initial settlement payments, the State had the Town’s create a Special Purpose Stabilization Fund to receive and disburse funds. They have since simplified the process to allow Municipalities to create a Special Revenue Fund instead that will allow communities better access to the Funds for purposes identified in the settlement agreements. As the Special Purpose Stabilization Fund is no longer needed, this Article seeks to revoke its creation.*

Article 7: *Transfer Within the Water Enterprise Fund*

To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum or sums of money from the Water Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2025 Water Enterprise Budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Board of Water Commissioners

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Summary: *This Article will seek a transfer from the Water Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2025 Water Department’s General Expense Budget for the purchase of a new Pick-Up Truck as identified in the Capital Plan. Please see the Town Manager’s Report starting on page 29 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 8: *Transfer Within the Center Sewer Enterprise Fund*

To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum or sums of money from the Center Sewer Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2025 Center Sewer Enterprise Department Budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Board of Sewer Commissioners

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Summary: *This article allows the Sewer Department to transfer money from its surplus account to cover any deficit in the Fiscal Year 2025 Center Sewer Budget. Please see the Town Manager’s Report starting on page 29 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 9: *Transfer Within the Four Corners Sewer Enterprise Fund*

To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum or sums of money from the Four Corners Sewer Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2025 Four Corners Sewer Enterprise Department Budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Board of Sewer Commissioners

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Summary: *This article allows the Sewer Department to transfer money from its surplus account to cover any deficit in the Fiscal Year 2025 Four Corners Sewer Budget. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 29 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 10: *Debt Service for Middle School Track – Fiscal Year 2025*

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds, an additional sum or sums of money, pursuant to Chapter 44B, Section 5, of the Massachusetts General Laws, for debt service for Fiscal Year 2025 for the Middle School Track Project, as authorized under Article 7 of the May 1, 2021 Spring Town Meeting, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Community Preservation Committee

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *Article 7 of the May 21, 2021 Spring Town Meeting appropriated \$1,405,374 for the new Middle School Track. The May 18, 2024 Special Town Meeting appropriated \$235,072 for Debt Service for this project. The Community Preservation Committee would like to increase this amount by \$100,000 to \$335,072 by increasing the amount toward the principal debt.*

Article 11: *Water Supply System for Heritage Landing*

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds and/or borrow, pursuant to any applicable statute, a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager, for the design, bid specifications, bidding, construction, and construction administration of a water supply system at Heritage Landing at Cow Pond Brook Road, and to authorize the Town Manager to apply for a MassWorks Development Grant for such project; provided, that no funds may be expended hereunder for construction purposes unless and until the Town has received a MassWorks Development Grant reimbursing the Town for all costs associated with the project, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Board of Water Commissioners

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *This article will allow the Select Board to borrow \$2,509,600 for the design and construction of a water supply system on Cow Pond Brook Road for the Heritage Landing Housing Development Project. The Town would borrow these funds contingent upon a successful award of a Mass Works Development Grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Said funds shall not be expended unless the grant is awarded to the Town.*

Article 12: Funding for Security Improvements at Sargisson Beach

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow, pursuant to any applicable statute, a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager, for security improvements at Sargisson Beach and the Sargisson Beach Parking Area, including the purchasing of cameras, servers, installation of a structure to house equipment, and all related equipment and expenses to carry out these improvements, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Manager

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *For the past two years, Sargisson Beach and the Parking Area has seen an increase in illegal dumping of trash and other related items that has impacted not only the ecosystem, but the recreational integrity of the Beach. The Town has taken some steps to improve security, but better cameras and related equipment is necessary to provide protection and oversight of the area. The Town does not have the personnel to patrol the area at all times and these security improvements will mitigate these issues at the Beach and parking area. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 29 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 13: Funding To Purchase Budget Software for the Town of Groton

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow, pursuant to any applicable statute, a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager, to purchase budget software, and all costs incidental and related thereto, for the Town of Groton, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Manager

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *This Article seeks funding for the Town’s Finance Department to purchase software for the creation of the Town’s Annual Operating and Capital Budgets. For the last 16 years, the Town Manager has relied on Excel to create the Town’s Budget. While this has been an adequate format, it is time to move the Town forward. With the current Town Manager expected to retire in the next few years, establishing a new formal Budget Process with strong historical data will allow for a seamless transition with regard to budgeting. Please see the Town Manager’s Report starting on page 29 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 14: *Engineering Funds for Complete Streets Grant Work*

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow pursuant to any applicable statute, a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager, for the purpose of paying engineering costs, and other related costs, for work associated with successfully receiving grant funding from the Commonwealth under the Complete Streets Grant Program, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Complete Streets Committee

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *The Complete Streets Committee has successfully received over \$750,000 in grant funding from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under their Complete Streets Program. Some of the projects covered by the funding have been sidewalks on West Main Street and Lowell Road, along with Pedestrian Crossing Devices along Main Street. The Committee is in the process of preparing another Grant Application this Fall. One of the requirements for this program is that the Town has to cover engineering costs for any approved project. The Committee is seeking \$35,000 for this purpose.*

Article 15: *Amend Purpose of CPA Project for Improvements to Baseball Diamond*

To see if the Town will vote to amend the purpose of CPC Proposal D “Rebuild Major League Baseball Diamond”, as voted under Article 14 of the 2023 Spring Town Meeting, to allow for a comprehensive study and development of bid specifications for improvements to Town Field, including the Major League Diamond, Little League Field, Gazebo and Playground, and all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Community Preservation Committee
Town Manager***

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *The 2023 Spring Town Meeting appropriated \$80,000 for improvements to the major league diamond at Town Field. This funding is not enough to design and construct the improvements. The Town Manager has approached the Community Preservation Committee and asked them to use these funds to conduct a comprehensive study of Town Field and come back with proposed improvements to enhance the recreational facility. It is the intent of the Town Manager to submit a formal project to the CPC for Fiscal Year 2026.*

Article 16: Squannacook River Dam

To see if the Town will vote to authorize Select Board and the Town Manager to remove the Squannacook River Dam and to authorize the Town Manager to apply for and spend any and all State and Federal Grants to pay for said removal, and to authorize the Town Manager to take all necessary steps for said removal, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Select Board

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *This Article is being brought before the Town Meeting to advise the Select Board on the matter of the future of the Squannacook River Dam. The Dam, located in West Groton near the RiverCourt Residences, has two owners. The Town of Groton, which owns half the Dam, has spent funds to repair and annually test the Dam. This half is in reasonably good shape. The other owner, a Shirley Resident (half the Dam is located in Shirley), has neglected the other half of the Dam and it is not in good shape. The Town of Groton is faced with either finding a way to repair the Shirley side of the Dam or move forward with its removal. The Town applied for a State Grant that conducted a Study on removing the Dam and its environmental impact. While there is still the opportunity for repair, removal is a reasonable alternative. More information on the impact of removal and the cost of repair will be provided at Town Meeting.*

Article 17: Disposition of Town Owned Land on Hoyts Wharf Road

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to dispose of by sale, or lease for a period not to exceed 99 years, that certain property or portions thereof located off Hoyts Wharf Road containing approximately 22 acres consisting of portions of Assessors Parcels 249-51 and 249-57, as shown on the concept plan entitled "Plan of Land in Groton Massachusetts for the Record Owner Town

of Groton, Massachusetts” by Dillis & Roy, dated August 22, 2024, a copy of which is on file in the Town Clerk’s office, for such minimum consideration and on such terms and conditions as the Select Board deems advisable, for the purpose of providing affordable housing, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Affordable Housing Trust

**Select Board:
Finance Committee:**

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

Article 18: *Authorize the Lease of Town Owned Land*

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to dispose of by lease for a period of up to thirty (30) Years a 5.24 acre portion of Town owned land located at 600 Cow Pond Brook Road consisting of portions of Assessors’ Parcel 248 -41, as shown on the plan entitled “Sketch Plan of Compost Facility at DPW Facility” dated August 30, 2024, a copy of which is on file in the Town Clerk’s office, for such minimum consideration and on such terms and conditions as the Select Board deems advisable, for the purpose of providing a composting facility, or to take any action relative thereto.

***Town Manager
DPW Director***

**Select Board:
Finance Committee:**

Summary: *The Town entered into a lease arrangement with Black Earth to install a composting center at the DPW Facility on Cow Pond Brook Road. The facility has been successful and the operator has been working with the DPW and Board of Health to address neighborhood concerns. The Town would like to solicit proposals to have a composting center at this location. The Town would like to be able to offer a longer term lease for up to Thirty (30) years. Town Meeting approval is required for leases of land.*

Article 19: Amend Chapter 81 "Town Meetings" of the Code of the Town of Groton

To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 81 "Town Meetings" of the General Bylaws of the Town by deleting Sections 81-2 and 81-4 in their entirety and replacing said sections with the following:

§81-2 Quorum

There shall be no quorum requirement for any Annual or Special Town Meeting.

§81-4 Time of Town Meetings and Town Elections

- A. Town Meetings - Town meeting sessions shall commence at times set forth in the warrants for said meetings approved by the Select Board.
- B. Town Elections - The annual election of officers and other voting by ballot shall be held on the fourth Tuesday following the first session of the Spring Town Meeting, or on such other date in March, April or May as may be determined by the Select Board in consultation with the Town Manager and Town Clerk, so long as the Select Board provides formal public notice of that date at least six weeks prior to the date established. Special town elections may be called by the Select Board. Polls at any town election shall remain open at hours determined by the Select Board in consultation with the Town Manager and Town Clerk.
- C. No elected or appointed Town board shall hold a regular meeting when a Town Meeting is in session.

or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Manager

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *Currently, Section 81-2 of the Bylaw requires a quorum of 2% for any Special Town Meeting but has no quorum requirement at the Spring and Fall Town Meetings. The proposed amendment would eliminate the quorum requirement at Special Town Meetings and make it consistent with the Spring and Fall Town Meetings. Section 81-4 currently requires business to be held at the first session of the Town Meeting at 7:00 p.m. Removing this requirement will allow for greater flexibility in the calling of Town Meetings, including the start time. In addition, this Section requires polls to be open for the Annual Election from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. There are times when the Ballot for the Annual Election has no contested races and turn out is extremely light. Having the polls open for 13 hours in these instances is excessive and costly. Allowing the Select Board to set the hours on an annual basis, after consulting with the Town Manager and Town Clerk, will address this issue.*

Article 20: Zoning Amendment - Firearms Retail Sales Establishments

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

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

“FIREARMS RETAIL SALES ESTABLISHMENT”

A commercial business, possessing a Federal Firearms License (FFL), with established business hours, which derives its principal income from the sale and service of firearms, such as handguns and long guns, to individuals in an open shopping format. It may also provide repairs for firearms and their parts. Other firearms related or sporting equipment, such as accessories, ammunition, hunting and fishing products, food, or clothing, may be sold in the store as well. This definition shall not apply to small ‘by appointment only’ FFL licensed holders/collectors consistent with the provisions of Section 218-5.3.B Home Occupations, as permitted by Massachusetts General Laws and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives Regulations (BATFE)

2. Amend **Section 218—5.2 Schedule of Use Regulations** by inserting the following entry in the Section titled “Business” after the entry numbered 80 and renumbering subsequent entries accordingly:

	USE	R-A ¹⁰	R-B ¹⁰	NB	VCB ¹⁰	GB	I	P ¹⁰	O
“81	Firearms Retail Sales Establishment	N	N	N	N	PB	PB	N	N”

3. Amend **Section 218-10 Special Regulations** by inserting a new **Section 218-10.5 Firearms Retail Sales Establishments** to read as follows:

“218-10.5 Firearms Retail Sales Establishments

A. Purpose.

- (1) To provide reasonable regulations and standards for the placement and operation of Firearms Retail Sales Establishments in appropriate places in the Town of Groton.
- (2) To minimize the adverse impacts of Firearms Retail Sales establishments on adjacent properties, residential neighborhoods, schools, and other places where children congregate, local historic districts, and other sensitive land uses.
- (3) To regulate the siting, design, placement, security, safety, monitoring, modification, and discontinuance of Firearms Retail Sales establishments.

B. Applicability.

No Firearms Retail Sales Establishment shall be operated in the Town of Groton except in compliance with the provisions of § 218-5.2 (Schedule of Use Regulations) and this § 218-10.5 (Firearms Retail Sales Establishments).

C. General requirements and conditions for all Firearms Retail Sales Establishments.

- (1) All Firearms Retail Sales Establishments shall be located within a building or structure.
- (2) The hours of operation of Firearms Retail Sales establishments shall be set by the special permit granting authority.
- (3) No Firearms Retail Sales Establishment entrance shall be located closer than 500 feet from the entrance of a preexisting public or private preschool, school providing education in kindergarten or any grades 1 through 12, junior college, college, licensed day-care center, church, library, park, playground, or other firearms retail sales establishment. Distance shall be measured in a straight line from the geometric center of the Firearms Retail Sales Establishment's entrance door to the geometric center of the entrance door or primary public entrance location of the nearest facility listed in the previous sentence, unless there is an impassable barrier within those 500 feet that renders any part of the 500-foot straight-line distance inaccessible by a pedestrian or automobile, in which case the 500-foot distance shall be measured along the center of the shortest publicly accessible pedestrian travel path from the geometric center of the Firearms Retail Sales Establishment's entrance door to the geometric center of the entrance door or primary public entrance location of the nearest facility listed in the previous sentence.
- (4) The on-site discharge of firearms at all licensed Firearms Retail Sales Establishments is prohibited in the Town of Groton.
- (5) The maximum number of licensed Firearms Retail Sales Establishments in the Town of Groton shall not exceed three (3) such establishments.
- (6) No person under the age of 18 shall be allowed on the premises unless accompanied by a parent or legal guardian and notice of such limitation shall be posted outside the establishment.
- (7) No Firearms Retail Sales Establishment shall be located inside a building containing residential units, including transient housing such as motels and dormitories, or inside a movable or mobile structure such as a van or truck.
- (8) Firearms Retail Sales Establishments shall be located within a permanent building and may not be in a trailer, cargo container, motor vehicle or other similar nonpermanent enclosure. Firearms Retail Sales Establishments shall not have drive-through service.

- (9) No outside storage of Firearms Retail Sales, related supplies or promotional materials is permitted.
- (10) No more than one Firearms Retail Sales Establishment shall be operated from the same lot.
- (11) The special permit for a Firearms Retail Sales Establishment shall be granted to the FFL license holder rather than the owner of the property and shall not be transferrable absent an amendment to the special permit.
- (12) No display of firearms shall be visible from the building exterior.

D. Special permit requirements.

- (1) A Firearms Retail Sales Establishment shall only be allowed by special permit from the Planning Board in accordance with MGL c. 40A, § 9 and **§ 218 2.3** (Special permits) and **§ 218 5.5** (Performance standards for business and industrial special permits uses in R-B, VCB, NB, GB, and I Districts) of this chapter subject to the following statements, regulations, requirements, conditions, and limitations.
- (2) No special permit for any Firearms Retail Sales Establishment shall be issued without major site plan approval having been issued by the Planning Board, **§ 218-2.5**, Site Plan Review, of this chapter. In addition to the standards set forth within, the site plan must meet all dimensional, parking, landscaping, and signage requirements within this chapter.
- (3) A Firearms Retail Sales Establishment shall not sub-lease space from another Firearms Retail Sales Establishment in any building or establishment and is prohibited from sub-leasing space to another Firearms Retail Sales Establishment.
- (4) In addition to the application requirements set forth above, a special permit application for a Firearms Retail Sales Establishment shall include the following:
 - (a) The name and address of owner(s) of the Firearms Retail Sales Establishment licensee/applicant.
 - (b) Copies of all FFL licenses and permits issued to the applicant by the BATFE and any other agencies for the establishment.
 - (c) Evidence of the applicant's right to use the site of the establishment for the establishment, such as a purchase and sale agreement, deed, owner's authorization, or lease agreement.
 - (d) Proposed security plan with measures for the Firearms Retail Sales Establishment, including lighting, fencing, after-hours storage, security surveillance, alarms, and systems, etc., to ensure the safety of persons and to protect the premises from theft. A letter from the Town of Groton Police Chief, or designee, acknowledging review and

approval of the Firearms Retail Sales Establishment security plan is required. To the extent allowed by law, all such documents shall be confidential.

- (e) All application requirements for major site plan review as specified in § 218-2.5.D.(2) of this chapter unless certain nonapplicable requirements are waived by the Planning Board.

- (5) Mandatory findings. The special permit authority shall not issue a special permit for a Firearms Retail Sales Establishment unless it finds that:
 - (a) The establishment is designed to minimize any adverse impacts on abutters and other parties in interest, as defined in MGL c. 40A, § 11.
 - (b) The establishment demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Planning Board that it will meet all the permitting requirements of all applicable agencies within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and will comply with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations; and
 - (c) The applicant has satisfied all the conditions and requirements set forth herein.

- (6) A special permit granted under this section shall have a term limited to the duration of the applicant's ownership of the business and licensure of the Firearms Retail Sales Establishment. Transfer of the establishment to another licensed proprietor or termination/expiration of applicant's FFL license shall render the special permit invalid. Transfer of the establishment or the reissuance of an expired FFL license shall require the approval of the special permit granting authority in the form of an amendment to the special permit with all information required.

- (7) The special permit granting authority may waive the buffer requirement set forth in Section 218-10.5.C(3) by a supermajority (2/3) vote as part of the issuance of a special permit provided that:
 - (a) The application is for a new Applicant (change of Applicant) for an existing Firearms Retail Sales Establishment; or
 - (b) The Applicant demonstrates that the Firearms Retail Sales Establishment would otherwise effectively be prohibited within the Town; or
 - (c) That the project can be conditioned to reasonably satisfy the purpose and intent of the setback requirements.

E. Abandonment or discontinuance of use.

- (1) A special permit shall lapse if the special permit holder’s Federal Firearms License (FFL) is terminated or not renewed by the BATFE unless the applicant can demonstrate reissuance of an FFL is highly probable.
- (2) A Firearms Retail Sales Establishment shall be required to remove all material, equipment, and other items subject to federal and state licensing within six months of ceasing operations.

or to take any other action relative thereto.

Planning Board

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Planning Board:

Summary: *The proposed Zoning Bylaw amendment defines firearms retail sales establishments as a use category, identifies the zoning districts where such establishments are allowed, and specifies the provisions under which such establishments may be permitted.*

Article 21: Zoning Amendment – Solar Parking Canopies

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

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

“SOLAR PARKING CANOPY” — A roof application of a solar photovoltaic array that is installed on top of a supporting structure built on a functional and striped parking surface so as to maintain the function of the area beneath the canopy (also known as "solar carports.")

- 2. Amend **Section 218—5.2 Schedule of Use Regulations** by inserting the following entry in the Section titled “Business Accessory (use)” after the entry numbered 108 and renumbering subsequent entries accordingly:

USE	R-A ¹⁰	R-B ¹⁰	NB	VCB ¹⁰	GB	I	P ¹⁰	O
“80 Solar Parking Canopy	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y”

3. Amend **Section 218-5.3 Accessory Uses** by inserting a new **Section 218-5.3.E. Solar Parking Canopy** to read as follows:

“Section 218-5.3.E. Solar Parking Canopies

- (1) Solar Parking Canopies in the R-A District shall meet setback requirements for Accessory Structures.
- (2) Solar Parking Canopies and Surface-integrated Solar Energy Systems in non-R-A Districts shall be allowed where parking is permitted in accordance with the requirements defined in Section 218-8.1, Off-Street Parking and Loading. The requirements for the planting of trees in landscaped strips within the parking area as defined in Section 218-8.1.C.(7) Parking Lot Planting may be met elsewhere on the lot. Landscaping for parking lots located under a canopy shall be designed to manage runoff from the panels and to be shade tolerant.
- (3) Solar Parking Canopies in all zoning districts except the R-A District shall be subject to Section 218-2.5 Site Plan Review.
- (4) Solar Parking Canopies shall not exceed seventeen (17) feet in height from grade. The Planning Board may allow an increase in the maximum height based on site conditions.”

4. Amend **Section 218-2.5 Site Plan Review** by inserting the following entry under Section 518-2.5.C.(2) Threshold of Review / Major to read as follows:

“(e) Solar Parking Canopy”

Planning Board

- Select Board:**
Finance Committee:
Planning Board:

Summary: *The purpose of this Zoning Bylaw amendment is to allow for the as-of-right installation of solar parking canopies in areas where off-street parking is provided, subject to certain requirements*

Article 22: Zoning Amendment – Accessory Dwelling Units

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

- Amend Section 218-3 Definitions by deleting the definition for Accessory Apartment in its entirety and replace it with the following definition**

“Accessory Dwelling Unit

A self-contained housing unit, inclusive of sleeping, cooking and sanitary facilities on the same lot as a principal dwelling, subject to otherwise applicable dimensional and parking requirements, that: (i) maintains a separate entrance, either directly from the outside or through an entry hall or corridor shared with the principal dwelling sufficient to meet the requirements of the state building code for safe egress; (ii) is not larger in gross floor area than 1/2 the gross floor area of the principal dwelling or 900 square feet, whichever is smaller.

- Amend Section 218-5.2 Schedule of Use Regulations** by deleting the entry under Accessory Uses “Accessory apartments, as regulated under § 218-9.4” in its entirety and replace it with the following entries:

	R-A	R-B	NB	VCB	GB	I	P	O
One Accessory Dwelling Unit	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
More than One Accessory Dwelling Unit	PB	PB	N	N	N	N	N	N

- Amend Section 9.4 Accessory Apartment** by deleting it in its entirety and replace it with the following:

§ 218-9.4. Accessory Dwelling Unit.

§ 218-9.4.1. Purpose.

- To provide property owners in the R-A and R-B Districts with a means of sharing space and the burdens of home ownership, companionship, security, and services, thereby enabling them to stay more comfortably in homes and neighborhoods they might otherwise be forced to leave.
- Develop housing units in neighborhoods that are appropriate for households at a variety of stages in their life cycle.
- Provide small additional housing units for rent without substantially altering the appearance of the Town.
- Provide housing units for persons with disabilities.

- e. Protect stability, property values, and the residential character of a neighborhood.

§ 218-9.4.2. Attached accessory dwelling unit.

Use or rental of an accessory dwelling unit, an independent dwelling unit not to exceed 900 square feet of habitable floor area or 50% of the gross habitable floor area contained within the principal dwelling unit, whichever is less. The gross floor area shall include the interior finished habitable area to be used exclusively for the accessory dwelling unit.

No more than one accessory dwelling unit shall be allowed by right on a lot in the RA and RB Districts providing the following criteria are met:

- a. The accessory dwelling unit shall conform to the provisions of Title V of the State Sanitary Code, 310 CMR 15.00, and applicable regulations of the Groton Board of Health or be served by public sewer.
- b. Approval from the Fire Department.
- c. Building, plumbing, electrical and any other required permits are obtained.
- d. The attached accessory dwelling unit is contained within or attached to a principal dwelling.
- e. All staircases required to access an attached accessory dwelling unit must not change the general appearance of a dwelling.
- f. Space for the attached accessory dwelling unit may be provided by either raising the roof, or extending the dwelling, but only in accordance with current height and setback requirements.
- g. To maintain the character of the neighborhood, the entrance to the attached accessory dwelling unit should be on the side or rear, if possible, but may be through the front door, if there is a vestibule.
- h. The accessory dwelling unit and the principal dwelling to which it is accessory shall remain under the same ownership to preserve the principal/accessory relationship .
- i. Sufficient and appropriate area for at least one additional parking space shall be provided by the owner to serve the accessory dwelling unit. Said parking space shall be constructed of materials consistent with the existing driveway and, to prevent on-street parking, and shall have vehicular access to the driveway.

- j. The footprint of the structure in which the attached accessory dwelling unit is to be located shall not be increased by more than 900 square feet or 50% of the habitable gross floor area of the existing principal dwelling, whichever is less, and shall retain the appearance of the principal structure. Any such increase in the footprint shall not exacerbate an existing nonconformity nor create a new nonconformity.
- k. The provisions of MGL c. 40A, § 3 shall apply to any accessory dwelling units intended for occupancy by a person with a disability relative to access ramps used solely for the purpose of facilitation ingress and egress to person with physical limitations as defined in MGL c. 22, § 13A.

§ 218-9.4.3. Detached accessory dwelling unit.

The Planning Board shall authorize the installation and use and rental of a detached accessory dwelling unit not to exceed 900 square feet of habitable floor area or 50% of the gross habitable floor area contained within the principal dwelling unit, whichever is less, in a detached structure on a lot in the R-A or R-B Districts, subject to Site Plan Review pursuant to § 218-2.5 provided the following criteria are met:

- a. Sections a-c, e, h, i, and k of § 218-9.4.2 are met.
- b. A plot plan of the existing dwelling unit and proposed accessory dwelling unit shall be submitted, showing the location of the building on the lot, the proposed accessory dwelling unit, location of any septic system and required parking.
- c. The detached accessory dwelling unit shall be a complete, separate housekeeping unit. No more than one accessory dwelling unit shall be allowed by right on a lot in the RA and RB District, except by special permit.
- d. Any new construction shall be in accordance with current height and setback requirements for the district in which it is located.
- e. No building permit shall be granted without a condition that the accessory dwelling unit shall conform to the provisions of Title V of the State Sanitary Code, 310 CMR 15.00, and applicable regulations of the Groton Board of Health.
- f. Any property that has been granted a building permit for a detached accessory dwelling unit shall be further divided unless all zoning requirements can be met for the district in which it is located.
- g. Prior to approval under Site Plan Review a for a detached accessory dwelling unit the Planning Board shall make the following findings:
 - (1) The detached accessory dwelling unit meets the requirements of this section.

(2) The detached accessory dwelling unit will provide housing opportunities in conformance with the purpose of this section.

4. Amend Section 218-2.5 Site Plan Review by adding the following at the end of Section B.(2) Applicability

“(d) Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit (refer to Section 218-9.5)”

or to take any other action relative thereto.

Planning Board

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Planning Board:

Summary: *This article amends the Zoning Bylaw to conform with newly adopted changes to the Massachusetts Zoning Act relative to Accessory Dwelling Units while retaining much of the local regulatory framework. The major regulatory requirements include:*

- *The term Accessory Dwelling Units replaces the nomenclature for Accessory Apartments and the definition tracks definition from the State legislation*
- *An occupancy requirement of either the Accessory or Principal unit by the property owner is no longer permitted under the State legislation.*
- *Accessory unit size is limited to 900 square feet or 50% of the gross habitable floor area of the principal unit, whichever is smaller. Current zoning limits size to 800 square feet.*
- *No more than one accessory unit is to be allowed as of right on a lot, however the proposed zoning amendment does require detached accessory units to be subject to site plan review by the Planning Board. The current zoning allowed attached units as of right and detached by special permit. Special permits are no longer permitted unless more than one accessory dwelling is contemplated. This bylaw does not contain provisions for more than one accessory dwelling unit per lot in a single-family district, which may be allowed by special permit.*
- *The bylaw leaves many of the dimensional, bulk, parking, and site requirements consistent with the State legislation.*

Article 23: Amend Chapter 198 Stormwater Management – Low Impact Development

To see if Town will vote to amend the Code of the Town of Groton by deleting Chapter 198, “Stormwater Management – Low Impact Development,” in its entirety and replacing it with a new Chapter 198, “Stormwater Management – Low Impact Development” as on file in the Office of the Town Clerk, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Earth Removal Stormwater Advisory Committee

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *The Committee is proposing an amendment to the Stormwater Management By-law to update the by-law so that it is consistent with the new Massachusetts Stormwater Handbook and Regulations.*

Article 24: Accept Monarch Path as a Town Way

To see if the Town will vote to accept Monarch Path as a public way, as recommended by the Planning Board and laid out by the Select Board and as shown on a plan entitled “Right-of-Way As-Built of Monarch Path, Groton, Massachusetts, Owned by Ebrahim Masalehdan”, prepared by TFM Civil Engineers, Bedford, NH for Ebrahim Masalehdan, dated May 2, 2022, and on file with the Town Clerk; to authorize the Select Board to acquire, by gift, purchase or eminent domain such land and easements for the creation, maintenance and operation of a public way, including but not limited to easements for access, grading, drainage, sloping, construction and utilities, in all or any portions of such way and the parcels on such way, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Select Board

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *To accept Monarch Path as a public way.*

Article 25: Citizens’ Petition – Reduce Statutory Speed Limit from 30 MPH to 25 MPH

To see if the Town will vote to amend Groton Traffic Rules and Orders, Article XI Speed Regulations, Town of Groton Speed Limits, by adopting MGL, c. 90, §17C Sections 193 of Chapter 218 of the Acts of 2016. Mass.gov: “Section 193 allows a municipality to opt-in to Section 17C of Chapter 90 of the MGL, thereby reducing the statutory speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph on any or all city or town-owned roadways within a thickly settled or business district. The legislation also requires cities and towns to notify MassDOT of these changes,” or to take any other action relative thereto.

Citizens’ Petition

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>
James A. Barisano	15 Longley Road	Paul Barstow	283 Old Dunstable Road
Lynne Burmeister	37 Throne Hill Road	Jeff Gordon	161 Main Street
Sadie Guichard	15 Whiting Ave	Lisa Murray	85 Wharton Row
Karen Tucker-Barisano	15 Longley Road	David Butz	532 Longley Road
Paul F. Murray, Jr.	85 Wharton Row	Greg Sheldon	62 Whispering Brook Road

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Summary: The following summary was prepared by the petitioners and represents their view on the Article: *Groton has approximately 110 miles of roads and no sidewalks or bike lanes on 80% of them. Vehicles traveling on Groton’s roads routinely exceed the posted speed limits by five to ten miles per hour. At the Groton Master Plan Public Session held at the Groton Center, the Barrett Planning Group revealed that the risk of death to a pedestrian hit by a vehicle is 18% at 20 miles per hour, 50% at 30 miles per hour and 88% at 40 miles per hour. Risks vary significantly by age. This is commonsense solution, which has been adopted by eighty-one Massachusetts cities and towns, including towns adjacent to Groton. It will help reduce the risk of injury and death to those walking, jogging and on bicycles. This is a multi-step process. If approved by Town Meeting, the Select Board will appoint a committee to conduct a traffic study in cooperation with the MassDOT. Currently posted speed regulations on streets within business and thickly settled districts will each be evaluated. When all steps in the process are complete and approval has been granted by the MassDOT, the Town will remove all speed restriction signs applicable to the previous speed limit and begins enforcement of the 25 MPH speed limit. All citizens of Groton are urged to support this pedestrian safety initiative.*

Hereof fail not and make return of your doings to the Town Clerk on or before time of said meeting.

Given under our hands this 16th Day of September in the year of our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Four.

Alison S. Manugian

Alison S. Manugian, Chair

Rebecca H. Pine

Rebecca H. Pine, Vice Chair

Peter S. Cunningham

Peter S. Cunningham, Clerk

John F. Reilly

John F. Reilly, Member

Matthew F. Pisani

Matthew F. Pisani, Member

**OFFICERS RETURN
Groton, Middlesex**

Pursuant to the within Warrant, I have this day notified the Inhabitants to assemble at the time, place, and for the purpose mentioned as within directed. Personally posted by Constable.

Constable

Date Duly Posted



Town of Groton

Select Board

Town Manager

Mark W. Haddad

173 Main Street

Groton, Massachusetts 01450-1237

Tel: (978) 448-1111

Fax: (978) 448-1115

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

To: *Select Board
Finance Committee*

From: *Mark W. Haddad – Town Manager*

Subject: *2024 Fall Town Meeting Expenditures*

Date: *September 5, 2024*

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Select Board and Finance Committee with information and recommendations for the various Articles that will be requesting funding in the 2024 Fall Town Meeting Warrant. Please note the following balances in the Town’s various Reserve Accounts:

Stabilization Fund:	\$2,617,198
Capital Stabilization Fund:	\$ 90,394
GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund:	\$ 21,996
Unexpended Tax Capacity:	\$ 62,811
Estimated Free Cash:	\$2,663,000

These balances are important as we determine how to address the various requests. Please consider the following recommendations:

Article 1: Unpaid Bills Requested: \$0

At this time, there are no unpaid bills.

Article 2: Amend the Fiscal Year 2025 Town Operating Budget

We have been reviewing the various budgets for any potential additions/reductions. As of the writing of this memorandum, we would request the following adjustments with recommended funding source:

1. Select Board Expenses Requested: \$28,500

As owners and Landlords of the Prescott School, the Town is responsible for and major capital expenditures/repairs. Currently the front entrance doors are in disrepair and need to be replaced. They are difficult to lock and are a security liability. The cost to replace the doors is estimated to be \$28,500. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).

2. Town Manager Expenses Requested: \$8,100

I have been working with the Trails Committee and the Park Commission to upgrade the Storage Shed located at Town Field. The DPW Maintenance Division has made several improvements to the Shed. This Shed will be used by the Trails Committee and Park Commission. The Trails Committee has received funding from the Community Preservation Act to purchase tools to help them maintain the various trails in Town. Most of these new tools are battery powered, which will require re-charging the batteries. There is no electricity at the Shed. It will cost \$8,100 to bring electricity to the Shed. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).

3. Town Counsel Expenses Requested \$40,000

The Town is currently facing three Arbitration Cases with the Police Union. These cases are very expensive to defend. Based on the number of hearings anticipated, the Legal Budget will need an additional \$40,000 for this purpose. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).

4. Insurance and Bonding Requested: \$20,000

Due to a number of natural events (lightning strikes, etc.), the Town has seen an 18% increase in Liability Insurance for Fiscal Year 2025. When the original budget was set, the Town had not received the final estimate and did not budget enough to cover the increase. There is currently an anticipated shortfall of \$20,000 in this Account. This funding, since it is a recurring cost, will come from the Unexpended Tax Capacity.

5. Police Expenses Requested: \$6,400

At the beginning of the Fiscal Year, there were three vacancies in the Police Department. Two of those vacancies have been filled with new recruits who need to attend the Police Academy. The cost to the Town for sending these recruits to the Academy is \$3,200 each, for a total of \$6,400. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).

6. Fire Wages

Requested: \$139,411

The closing of the Nashoba Valley Medical Center (NVMC) has had an adverse impact on the Fire Department creating a severe situation for emergency medical responses by the Department. The NVMC was only three miles from the Center Fire Station. The Department now has the following distances to new primary hospitals: Emerson Hospital - 26 minutes at 18.5 miles; Leominster Hospital - 26 minutes at 16.3 miles; and St. Joseph Nashua - 23 minutes at 13.2 miles. In addition, other alternative hospitals have the following distances: Lowell General Hospital - 30 minutes at 14.2 miles; and Southern New Hampshire Medical Center - 30 minutes at 14.4 miles. These distances and travel times are from the geographic center of Town; thus the actual times and distances will vary. Depending on the time of day and traffic conditions, these locations can add as much as 15 minutes to the transport time. The Department has already seen the impact of delayed response times based on these distances and the influence this has had on the health and safety of Groton residents. On Tuesday, August 27th, between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., the Department made several transports to Emerson and St. Joseph’s Hospitals. During those transports, the Ambulance averaged 1 hour 30 minutes total transport time. What is not included is the additional 20 minutes to refuel the ambulance prior to returning to the Station. The Station is not staffed for two hours during these transports, which is unacceptable, especially if another emergency call is received. This very situation happened and what is usually a 1-2 minute response time to leave the station is now is taking over 10 minutes (Call EMTs or Mutual Aid Response). To address this, the Fire Chief has requested funding for two additional Firefighter/EMTs for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2025. This is a short-term solution and allows the Department to guarantee staffing for that second ambulance which is desperately needed. The increase to the budget would be an additional \$171,182.00 as follows:

Wages:	\$139,411
Gear and Clothing:	\$ 7,425
Health Insurance:	\$ <u>24,346</u>
 Total	 \$171,182

This additional staffing will provide the time needed for the Department/Town to evaluate the total impact of the closure of NVMC and bring back a formal proposal to the 2025 Spring Town Meeting as part of the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. As the Town is unsure of the final expense at this time, I am recommending that the initial funding come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash) until a final formal proposal is presented.

7. Fire Expenses

Requested: \$7,425

See Explanation #6 above.

8. Council on Aging Expenses

Requested: \$7,500

The Council on Aging Director has requested funding for the mailing of a bi-monthly newsletter as well as a twice per year mailing to all registered voters in Groton . The goal of this newsletter mailing is to allow for more inclusivity, greater reach and to enhance community involvement in The Groton Center. The cost is approximately \$7,500. The bi-monthly newsletter mailing would be available to Groton residents aged 60 and older; those younger and/or residing outside of Groton will be encouraged to receive their newsletter in person at The Groton Center, or to access it online. The twice yearly newsletter mailing would be mailed to all registered voters in the town of Groton. At least once per year, this mailing will include a programming survey to determine the needs and wants of residents. Currently, the Council produces a bi-monthly newsletter that contains information on ongoing and upcoming programs as well as outreach information, such as health insurance reminders and updates, financial assistance programs and mental health resources. This newsletter is available via email, on the COA website as well as at the Center. A small number of Groton residents (6 currently) pay a \$5 per year fee to receive the newsletter via USPS. This cost is often a barrier for many Seniors who live on a limited income. In 2023 The Groton Center hosted 884 residents 16,526 times for various programs, events and outreach purposes. In order to reach those who are not currently visitors of The Groton Center, those who visit infrequently and those who are not able to utilize a computer/email or have transportation limitations, mailing the newsletter is a vital piece of the puzzle. This funding, since it is a recurring cost, will come from the Unexpended Tax Capacity.

9. Weed Management – Great Lakes

Requested: \$75,000

In 2012, the Town appropriated approximately \$100,000 to fund a major herbicide treatment of Lost Lake/Knops Pond to eradicate invasive weeds. This was a very successful endeavor. In 2019, the Lakes required another major treatment and this funding came from the Community Preservation Fund. Solitude Lake Management, the firm utilized by the Groton Lakes Association (GLA) to treat the Lakes, has determined that a major treatment is required in May 2025. The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) has determined that these periodic treatments are “maintenance” and not “preservation”, therefore CPA funds cannot be used again. While this is something that could be added to the Capital Budget, the optimal treatment time is May. Capital Budget Funds are not available until July. Waiting another year would be disastrous according to our consultant. To that end, funding is being requested at the 2024 Fall Town Meeting. The estimated cost for the treatment is \$100,000. To help offset the total cost, the GLA will privately raise \$25,000 toward the cost. The Town would then need to appropriate \$75,000 for the Treatment. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).

10. Debt Service

Requested: (\$124,159)

Based on final borrowing terms on FY 2025 Bond issues, the total Debt Service Budget will be reduced by \$125,159. The primary reduction, and good news for Groton’s Taxpayers, is the interest rate on the Bond Anticipation Note for the remaining Florence Roche Elementary School Construction Project came in under the original estimates, saving the taxpayers \$255,614 in Fiscal Year 2025. The Debt Budget will be adjusted to reflect borrowing for the Fire Department Ambulance approved at the 2023 Spring Town Meeting, as well as paying down the debt on the Highway Dump Truck approved at the 2022 Spring Town Meeting. The following is the proposed new Debt Budget for Fiscal Year 2025:

			<u>Original</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
2000	Long Term Debt - Principal Excluded	\$	2,025,000	\$ 2,025,000
2001	Long Term Debt - Principal Non-Excluded	\$	165,000	\$ 160,000
2002	Long Term Debt - Interest - Excluded	\$	1,340,252	\$ 1,340,252
2003	Long Term Debt - Interest - Non-Excluded	\$	110,364	\$ 106,974
2004	Short Term Debt - Principal - Town - Non Excluded	\$	123,526	\$ 247,532
2005A	Short Term Debt - Interest - Town - Non Excluded	\$	8,644	\$ 24,483
2005B	Short Term Debt - Interest - Town - Excluded	\$	1,283,825	\$ 1,028,211
DEPARTMENTAL TOTAL		\$	5,056,611	\$ 4,932,452

These issues will be funded as follows:

- Excluded Debt will be Decreased by \$255,614 from \$4,649,077 to \$4,393,463
- Debt within the Tax Levy will be decreased by \$8,390
- To fund the Short Term Principal and Short Term Interest Increases (total of \$139,845), \$104,955 will come from Ambulance receipts and \$34,890 will come from Free Cash.

11. Health Insurance

Requested: \$24,346

See Explanation #6 above.

Article 3: Transfer - Capital Stabilization Fund

Requested: \$900,000

The current balance in this fund is \$90,394. The Town's Financial Policies call for a balance in this Fund of 1.5% of the Operating Budget. If all the transfers and appropriations are approved under Article 2 of this Warrant, the total Fiscal Year Operating Budget will be \$51,299,820. This would require a Capital Stabilization Fund Balance of \$769,497. However, the anticipated Fiscal Year 2026 Capital Budget is \$898,991. Therefore, I am recommending that we transfer \$900,000 from Free Cash to add to this Fund.

Article 4: Transfer - Stabilization Fund

Requested: \$0

The current balance in the Stabilization Fund is \$2,617,198. Our Financial Policies state that this Fund should have a balance of five (5%) percent of our Operating Budget (\$51,299,820). This would require a balance of \$2,564,991. Therefore, I am recommending we not add anything to the fund at this time. This Article is being left on the Warrant in the event there is a market adjustment that would reduce the current fund to a level below the requisite 5%.

Article 5: Transfer - GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund

Requested: \$0

The current balance in the GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund is \$21,996. As of the writing of this report, the Town has not received the anticipated Fiscal Year 2026 Capital Plan of the Groton Dunstable Regional School District. This Article should be considered a place holder in the event we receive the Plan prior to the 2024 Fall Town Meeting. Should we not receive the Plan, funding for the District's Capital Plan will be provided at the 2025 Spring Town Meeting.

Article 7: Transfer Money into Water Enterprise Fund

Requested: \$60,000

This Article seeks the transfer of \$60,000 from the Water Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2025 Water Department's General Expense for the purchase of a new Pick-Up Truck for the Water Department.

Article 8: Transfer Money into Center Sewer Enterprise Fund

Requested: \$0

At this time, the Center Sewer Enterprise does not anticipate a need and will wait until Spring, 2025 to fund any need that arises. At this time, this article will remain on the Warrant should some need arise. In the event there is no need, this Article will be withdrawn.

Article 9: Transfer Into Four Corners Sewer Enterprise Fund

Requested: \$0

Similar to the Center Sewer Enterprise, the Four Corner Enterprise Article will most likely be withdrawn and dealt with in the Spring, 2025. Nevertheless, this Article will remain on the Warrant should some need arise.

Article 10: Debt Service for Middle School Track

Requested: \$100,000

From the Summary in the Warrant: Article 7 of the May 21, 2021 Spring Town Meeting appropriated \$1,405,374 for the new Middle School Track. The May 18, 2024 Special Town Meeting appropriated \$235,072 for Debt Service for this project. The Community Preservation Committee would like to increase this amount by \$100,000 to \$335,072 by increasing the amount toward the principal debt.

Article 11: Water Supply System – Heritage Landing

Requested: \$2,509,600

From the Summary in the Warrant: This article will allow the Select Board to borrow \$2,509,600 for the design and construction of a water supply system on Cow Pond Brook Road for the Heritage Landing Housing Development Project. The Town would borrow these funds contingent upon a successful award of a Mass Works Development Grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Said funds shall not be expended unless the grant is awarded to the Town.

Article 12: Security Improvements at Sargisson Beach

Requested: \$40,000

From the Summary in the Warrant: For the past two years, Sargisson Beach and the Parking Area has seen an increase in illegal dumping of trash and other related items that has impacted not only the ecosystem, but the recreational integrity of the Beach. The Town has taken some steps to improve security, but better cameras and related equipment is necessary to provide protection and oversight of the area. The Town does not have the personnel to patrol the area at all times and these security improvements will mitigate these issues at the Beach and parking area. The Town will be requesting \$40,000 to fund these security improvements. This funding will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).

Article 13: Purchase Budget Software

Requested: \$35,000

From the Summary in the Warrant: This Article seeks funding for the Town’s Finance Department to purchase software for the creation of the Town’s Annual Operating and Capital Budgets. For the last 16 years, the Town Manager has relied on Excel to create the Town’s Budget. While this has been an adequate format, it is time to move the Town forward. With the current Town Manager expected to retire in the next few years, establishing a new formal Budget Process with strong historical data will allow for a seamless transition with regard to budgeting. The Town will be requesting \$35,000 to fund the Software. This funding will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).

Article 14: Complete Streets Grant Engineering

Requested: \$35,000

From the Summary in the Warrant: The Complete Streets Committee has successfully received over \$750,000 in grant funding from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under their Complete Streets Program. Some of the projects covered by the funding have been sidewalks on West Main Street and Lowell Road, along with Pedestrian Crossing Devices along Main Street. The Committee is in the process of preparing another Grant Application this Fall. One of the requirements for this

program is that the Town has to cover engineering costs for any approved project. The Committee is seeking \$35,000 for this purpose. This funding will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).

Article 15: Amend Purpose of CPA Project – Baseball Diamond Requested: \$80,000

From the Summary in the Warrant: The 2023 Spring Town Meeting appropriated \$80,000 for improvements to the major league diamond at Town Field. This funding is not enough to design and construct the improvements. The Town Manager has approached the Community Preservation Committee and asked them to use these funds to conduct a comprehensive study of Town Field and come back with proposed improvements to enhance the recreational facility. It is the intent of the Town Manager to submit a formal project to the CPC for Fiscal Year 2026.

Should the Select Board and Finance Committee agree with all the proposed Free Cash Transfers, we will need to use \$1,374,072 leaving an anticipated Free Cash balance of \$1,288,928. In the Spring of 2025, we will need about \$300,000 in Free Cash to cover Debt Service, OPEB Trust Fund and Department Head Performance Incentives, leaving a balance of \$988,928 in anticipated Free Cash. The one issue that will need to be addressed is the GDRSD Capital Plan. The request is usually around \$500,000, so there should be a sufficient amount of Free Cash to cover that expense as well. Based on final anticipated new Growth for FY 2025 and the Final Cherry Sheet Estimates received from the State, the Budget approved at Town Meeting is currently \$62,811 under the anticipated FY 2025 Levy Limit. For the line items that are reoccurring and will be funded through taxation, we estimate utilizing \$19,110 from this amount, which will leave the Town \$43,701 under the anticipated Levy Limit for Fiscal Year 2025. We had estimated a tax rate of \$15.61 at the May 18, 2024 Special Town Meeting. Based on the changes at the Fall Town Meeting that we are recommending, the anticipated tax rate is \$15.53. The following chart is a breakdown of the anticipated rate:

	<u>Actual</u> <u>FY 2024</u>	<u>Proposed</u> <u>FY 2025</u>	<u>Dollar</u> <u>Change</u>	<u>Percent</u> <u>Change</u>
Levy Capacity Used	\$ 36,587,742	\$ 38,096,508	\$ 1,508,766	4.12%
Tax Rate on Levy Capacity Used	\$ 13.36	\$ 13.80	\$ 0.44	3.29%
Average Tax Bill	\$ 9,284	\$ 9,590	\$ 306	3.29%
Excluded Debt	\$ 4,732,786	\$ 4,776,976	\$ 44,190	0.93%
Tax Rate on Excluded Debt	\$ 1.73	\$ 1.73	\$ -	0.00%
Average Tax Bill	\$ 1,202	\$ 1,202	\$ -	0.00%
Final Levy Used	\$ 41,320,528	\$ 42,873,484	\$ 1,552,956	3.76%
Final Tax Rate	\$ 15.09	\$ 15.53	\$ 0.44	2.92%
Average Tax Bill	\$ 10,487	\$ 10,792	\$ 306	2.92%

Attached to this memorandum is the updated Tax Levy Calculation that notes changes from what was proposed in the Spring, 2024. I look forward to discussing this in more detail with the Select Board and Finance Committee at Monday's Public Hearing.

MWH/rjb

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

FISCAL YEAR 2025 LEVY LIMIT CALCULATION

Revised: 9/5/2024

TO CALCULATE THE FY 2024 LEVY LIMIT

FY 2023 LEVY LIMIT	\$	35,383,886	
ADD AMENDED FY 2023 NEW GROWTH	\$	-	
ADD TWO AND ONE HALF PERCENT	\$	884,597	
ADD FY 2024 NEW GROWTH	\$	564,180	
ADD FY 2024 OVERRIDE	\$	-	
FY 2024 SUBTOTAL	\$	36,832,663	\$ 36,832,663
			FY 2024 LEVY LIMIT
FY 2024 LEVY CEILING	\$	68,459,320	

TO CALCULATE THE FY 2025 LEVY LIMIT

FY 2024 LEVY LIMIT	\$	36,832,663	
ADD AMENDED FY 2024 NEW GROWTH	\$	-	
ADD TWO AND ONE HALF PERCENT	\$	920,817	
ADD FY 2025 NEW GROWTH	\$	343,028	
ADD FY 2025 OVERRIDE	\$	-	
FY 2025 SUBTOTAL	\$	38,096,508	\$ 38,096,508
			FY 2025 LEVY LIMIT
FY 2025 LEVY CEILING	\$	68,459,320	

Increased by
\$41,228 based on
current expected
New Growth of
\$22,732,120

TOWN OF GROTON, MASSACHUSETTS FY 2025 TOTAL TAX LEVY CALCULATION

FY 2025 LEVY LIMIT	\$	38,096,508
CAPITAL EXCLUSION	\$	-
DEBT EXCLUSION - TOWN	\$	4,393,463
FY 2025 EXCLUDED BOND REDUCTION	\$	(1,109)
DEBT EXCLUSION - SEWER	\$	-
DEBT EXCLUSION - WATER	\$	-
DEBT EXCLUSION - GDRSD	\$	384,622
SUB-TOTAL - EXCLUSIONS	\$	4,776,976
TOTAL TAX LEVY	\$	42,873,484

Decreased by
\$255,614 based
on lower interest
rate on FloRo
Short Term Debt

**TOWN OF GROTON
FISCAL YEAR 2025
REVENUE ESTIMATES**

	BUDGETED FY 2024	ESTIMATED FY 2025	CHANGE
PROPERTY TAX REVENUE	\$ 36,832,663	\$ 38,096,508	\$ 1,263,845
DEBT EXCLUSIONS	\$ 4,732,786	\$ 4,776,976	\$ 44,190
CHERRY SHEET - STATE AID	\$ 1,116,143	\$ 1,152,082	\$ 35,939
UNEXPENDED TAX CAPACITY	\$ 244,920	-	\$ (244,920)
LOCAL RECEIPTS:			
General Revenue:			
Motor Vehicle Excise Taxes	\$ 1,820,583	\$ 1,820,583	-
Meals Tax and Room Occupancy Tax	\$ 400,000	\$ 400,000	-
Marijuana Revenue	\$ 150,000	\$ 75,000	\$ (75,000)
Penalties & Interest on Taxes	\$ 110,000	\$ 110,000	-
Payments in Lieu of Taxes	\$ 371,500	\$ 395,443	\$ 23,943
Other Charges for Services	\$ 99,000	\$ 15,000	\$ (84,000)
Fees	\$ 392,000	\$ 400,000	\$ 8,000
Rentals	\$ 40,000	\$ 55,000	\$ 15,000
Library Revenues	-	-	-
Other Departmental Revenue	\$ 800,000	\$ 854,063	\$ 54,063
Licenses and Permits	\$ 429,300	\$ 429,300	-
Fines and Forfeits	\$ 20,000	\$ 10,000	\$ (10,000)
Investment Income	\$ 90,000	\$ 243,744	\$ 153,744
Recreation Revenues	\$ 700,000	\$ 750,000	\$ 50,000
Miscellaneous Recurring	\$ 75,000	\$ 94,000	\$ 19,000
Sub-total - General Revenue	\$ 5,497,383	\$ 5,652,133	\$ 154,750
Other Revenue:			
Free Cash	\$ 818,137	\$ 1,062,205	\$ 244,068
Capital Stablization Fund for GDRSD	\$ 253,407	\$ 295,767	\$ 42,360
Stabilization Fund for Tax Rate Relief	-	-	-
Capital Asset Stabilization Fund	\$ 620,142	\$ 683,500	\$ 63,358
EMS/Conservation Fund Receipts Reserve	\$ 525,951	\$ 454,955	\$ (70,996)
Community Preservation Funds	-	-	-
Water Department Surplus	-	-	-
Sewer Department Surplus	-	-	-
Insurance Reimbursements	-	-	-
Bond Surplus Transfer	-	-	-
Coronavirus Recovery Funds	-	-	-
Sub-total - Other Revenue	\$ 2,217,637	\$ 2,496,427	\$ 278,790
WATER DEPARTMENT ENTERPRISE	\$ 2,090,822	\$ 2,310,267	\$ 219,444
SEWER DEPARTMENT ENTERPRISE	\$ 889,499	\$ 1,250,475	\$ 360,976
LOCAL ACCESS CABLE ENTERPRISE	\$ 230,137	-	\$ (230,137)
FOUR CORNER SEWER ENTERPRISE	\$ 77,811	\$ 98,040	\$ 20,229
STORMWATER UTILITY ENTERPRISE	\$ 242,520	\$ 247,851	\$ 5,331
TOTAL ESTIMATED REVENUE	\$ 53,929,802	\$ 56,080,758	\$ 2,150,956

Increased by \$364,072 to reflect various Line Item Increases:
 Select Board - \$28,500
 Town Manager - \$8,100
 Town Counsel - \$40,000
 Police Expenses - \$6,400
 Fire Wages - \$139,411
 Fire Expenses - \$7,425
 Weed Management - \$75,000
 Short Term Prin - \$34,890
 Health Ins. - \$24,346

Increased by \$104,955 for New Ambulance Debt Service

**FISCAL YEAR 2025
TAX LEVY CALCULATIONS**

FY 2025 PROPOSED EXPENDITURES

TOWN MANAGER - Proposed Budget

General Government	\$ 2,574,970
Land Use Departments	\$ 520,749
Protection of Persons and Property	\$ 4,668,315
Regional School Districts	\$ 28,739,026
Department of Public Works	\$ 2,389,516
Library and Citizen Services	\$ 2,275,457
Debt Service	\$ 4,932,452
Employee Benefits	\$ 5,199,336

Increased by \$96,600 - Select Board by \$28,500; Town Manager by \$8,100; Town Counsel by \$40,000; and Insurance by \$20,000

Increased by \$153,236 - Police - \$6,400; Fire Wages - \$139,411; and Fire Expenses - 7,425

Increased by \$82,500 - COA - \$7,500; and Weed Management - \$75,000

Increased by \$24,346 for Health Insurance

Sub-Total - Operating Budget

- A. TOTAL DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET REQUESTS
- B. CAPITAL BUDGET REQUESTS
- C. ENTERPRISE FUND REQUESTS
- D. COMMUNITY PRESERVATION REQUEST

Decreased by (\$124,159) - Long Term Prin - (\$5,000); Long Term Int. - (\$3,390); Short Term Prin - \$124,006; Short Term Int - \$15,839; and Short Term Excluded - (\$255,614)

OTHER AMOUNTS TO BE RAISED

- 1. Amounts certified for tax title purposes
- 2. Debt and interest charges not included
- 3. Final court judgments
- 4. Total Overlay deficits of prior years
- 5. Total cherry sheet offsets
- 6. Revenue deficits
- 7. Offset Receipts
- 8. Authorized deferral of Teachers' Pay
- 9. Snow and Ice deficit
- 10. Other

- E. TOTAL OTHER AMOUNTS TO BE RAISED \$ 32,678
- F. STATE AND COUNTY CHERRY SHEET CHARGES \$ 101,446
- G. ALLOWANCE FOR ABATEMENTS AND EXEMPTIONS \$ 150,000

TOTAL PROPOSED EXPENDITURES \$ 56,037,057

FY 2025 ESTIMATED RECEIPTS

ESTIMATED TAX LEVY

Levy Limit	\$ 38,096,508
Debt Exclusion	\$ 4,776,976

- A. ESTIMATED TAX LEVY \$ 42,873,484
- B. CHERRY SHEET ESTIMATED RECEIPTS \$ 1,152,082
- C. LOCAL RECEIPTS NOT ALLOCATED \$ 5,652,133
- D. OFFSET RECEIPTS \$ -
- E. ENTERPRISE FUNDS \$ 3,906,632
- F. COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FUNDS \$ -
- G. FREE CASH \$ 1,062,205

OTHER AVAILABLE FUNDS

- 1. Stabilization Fund \$ -
- 2. Capital Asset Fund \$ 683,500
- 3. GDRSD Capital Asset Fund \$ 295,767
- 4. EMS/Conservation Fund \$ 454,955
- 5. Bond Surplus Transfer \$ -
- 6. Coronavirus Recovery Funds \$ -

- H. OTHER AVAILABLE FUNDS \$ 1,434,222

TOTAL ESTIMATED RECEIPTS \$ 56,080,758

FY 2025 SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) \$ 43,701

**TOWN OF GROTON, MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE
TAX RATE RECAPITULATION**

I. TAX RATE SUMMARY

la. Total amount to be raised (from IIe)	\$	56,037,056.72
lb. Total estimated receipts and other revenue sources (from IIIe)	\$	13,207,274.45
lc. Tax levy (Ia minus Ib)	\$	42,829,782.27
ld. Distribution of Tax Rates and Levies		

CLASS	(b) Levy Percentage (from LA -5)	(c) IC above times each percent in col (b)	(d) Valuation by Class (from LA - 4)	(e) Tax Rates (c) x (d) x 1000	(f) Levy by Class (d) x (e) / 1000
RESIDENTIAL	95.1073%	\$ 40,734,244.23	\$ 2,623,413,570.00	\$ 15.53	\$ 40,734,244.23
NET OF EXEMPT					\$ -
OPEN SPACE	0.0000%	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -
COMMERCIAL	3.4766%	\$ 1,489,032.91	\$ 95,898,407.00	\$ 15.53	\$ 1,489,032.91
NET OF EXEMPT					\$ -
INDUSTRIAL	0.4695%	\$ 201,103.52	\$ 12,951,700.00	\$ 15.53	\$ 201,103.52
SUBTOTAL	99.0535%		\$ 2,732,263,677.00		\$ 42,424,380.66
PERSONAL	0.9465%	\$ 405,401.61	\$ 26,109,140.00	\$ 15.53	\$ 405,401.61
TOTAL	100.0000%		\$ 2,758,372,817.00		\$ 42,829,782.27

Revised: 9/5/2024

Operating Budget Comparison - Fiscal Year 2024 Vs. Fiscal Year 2025

<u>Category</u>	<u>FY 2024</u>	<u>FY 2025</u>	<u>Dollar Difference</u>	<u>Percentage Change</u>
Municipal Wages	\$ 8,853,135	\$ 9,051,606	\$ 198,472	2.24%
Employee Benefits	\$ 4,930,663	\$ 5,199,336	\$ 268,673	5.45%
Sub-Total - Wages and Benefits	\$ 13,783,798	\$ 14,250,942	\$ 467,145	3.39%
Municipal Expenses	\$ 3,106,592	\$ 3,377,400	\$ 270,808	8.72%
Sub-Total -	\$ 16,890,390	\$ 17,628,342	\$ 737,953	4.37%
Debt Service - In-Levy Only	\$ 474,605	\$ 538,989	\$ 64,384	13.57%
Total - All Municipal	\$ 17,364,995	\$ 18,167,331	\$ 802,337	4.62%
Nashoba Tech	\$ 762,656	\$ 966,719	\$ 204,063	26.76%
Groton-Dunstable Operating	\$ 25,937,716	\$ 26,412,384	\$ 474,668	1.83%
Groton Operating Grant	\$ -	\$ 619,000	\$ 619,000	100.00%
Groton-Dunstable Debt	\$ 58,814	\$ 60,534	\$ 1,720	2.92%
.
Sub-Total - Education	\$ 26,759,186	\$ 28,058,637	\$ 1,299,451	4.86%
Grand Total - Town Budget	\$ 44,124,181	\$ 46,225,968	\$ 2,101,788	4.76%



Town of Groton

173 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450-1237
Tel: (978) 448-1162
Fax: (978) 448-1123

Department of Public Works

Brian Callahan
DPW Director-In-Training

To: Mark W. Haddad – Town Manager

From: Brian Callahan – DPW Director-In-Training

Subject: Squannacook River Dam Removal/Repair

Date: August 26, 2024

The purpose of this Memorandum is to update/advise you on the potential removal/repair of the Squannacook River Dam. In spring of 2023, DPW Director, Tom Delaney, began the process of applying for a grant to determine if it is feasible to remove the Dam on the Squannacook River, in West Groton. In the Fall of 2023, the feasibility study was started and on June 2024, the study found in favor of removing the Dam. The ownership of the Dam is split in ½ with the Town of Groton owning one side and Helmar Neilson owning the second half - the Shirley side. The Dam on the Shirley side is privately owned and the Town of Shirley will not work with the Town of Groton on cost of the Dam removal or improvements. Attached is a list of advantages for keeping and or removing The Squannacook Dam.

BC/jh
Enclosure

Advantages of Removal of The Squannacook Dam:

- **The Town of Groton is responsible for inspection of the Dam.**

With it being classified as a high hazard Dam, there is a yearly inspection at a cost of \$1,500. At the completion of the inspection, a Report on the Dam's condition is sent into the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Office of Dam Safety.

- **Every 5 years the Town of Groton needs to upgrade the Emergency Action Plan for the Dam.**

As stated, the Dam is a high hazard Dam – this means the Dam is located where failure of the Dam could cause loss of life and damage to home(s), industrial or commercial facilities, secondary highway(s) or railroad(s), or cause the interruption of the use or service of relatively important facilities. Another major concern if the Dam fails is the loss of the Route 225 Bridge over the Squannacook River, as the head wall of the Dam supports the Bridge.

- **Unpredictable costs may materialize.**

In addition to the above mentioned costs, there are other issues that arise from time to time that the Town is responsible to handle. For example, in the spring of 2024, removal of trees was needed at the top of Dam. The DPW had to hire a contractor and crane at a cost of \$3,400.00. In addition, in 2015 the Town of Groton had already made improvements to the Groton side of the Dam at a cost of \$300,000. A recent Engineering Report has estimated the cost of repairing the remaining Dam (Shirley side) would be between \$500,000 and \$800,000.

- **Other Factors**

- The removal of Dam will have positive impact on the fishery and wildlife.
- The Town can apply for grants to cover the cost of removal of the Dam. The Town would be required to provide a financial contribution (match) to any grant. The Town's match could include in-kind services (DPW time and labor) or an annual contribution of \$35,000 to \$70,000 over a two to five year period. The DPW would also need to help with removal of debris.
- Removal of the Dam will result in restoring the aquatic habitat of the Squannacook River.
- Liability will be eliminated from the town.
- The Squannacook River is a cold-water fish resource. Removing the Dam is expected to lead to higher dissolved oxygen in the former Dam impoundment and lower water temperatures both in the former impoundment and up to 0.8 miles downstream from the Dam. Both water quality changes would enhance the river habitat for cold - water fish.

Advantages of Keeping the Squannacook Dam:

- The Squannacook Dam is in the center of West Groton and offers a beautiful waterfront view from route 225 and RiverCourt Residences.
- Removal construction will be a burden on RiverCourt Residences and local homes.
- With removal of the Dam the water level will drop the water in the pond to approximately 3 feet.
- Some wells in Shirley would be of concern and would possibly need attention.
- At one time, the Dam was used for hydro power for the mill. It is possible that this may again be an option.
- Once major repairs of the Dam are completed, it is estimated that annual maintenance costs will only be approximately \$5,000 a year.

Other issues for consideration

- Town Counsel has begun a review of the issues related to repairing/removing the Squannacook River Dam. An issue that has arisen is the actual ownership of the Dam in Shirley. According to Town Counsel's current review, a Deed from 2000 states that the Town of Groton sold 10.1 acres of land with the mill buildings to RiverCourt Limited Partnership. The deed specifically excludes the Dam as shown on a 1978 plan. The Town also agreed to maintain the Dam at its cost to prevent loss or damage to RiverCourt. The reservation is for the entire Dam, not just the portion located in Groton. While Town Counsel is still trying to determine if the Town acquired the entire interest in the Dam, it appears that the Town could only reserve the entire Dam if it owned the entire Dam in the first place. He expects to find that Groton owns the entire Dam.
- Should it be determined that the Shirley side of the Dam remains in private ownership, the Town could sue the owner for the other portion, either in contribution for costs or for nuisance. The Town cannot compel the Town of Shirley to take the Dam through the tax foreclosure procedure. That said, the Town of Groton can purchase the Shirley side of the Dam from the current owner.



Town of Groton

173 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450-1237
Tel: (978) 448-1105
Fax: (978) 448-1113

Office of the PLANNING BOARD

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 4, 2024

TO: Mark Haddad, Town Manager

FROM: Takashi Tada, Land Use Director/Town Planner

RE: 2024 Fall Town Meeting – Road Acceptance Article for Monarch Path

On July 25, 2024, the Planning Board held a public hearing to review the proposed modifications of the Definitive Plan for Monarch Path Subdivision. The Definitive Plan modifications were needed to resolve some discrepancies observed during the Planning Board's review of the As Built Plan submitted for Monarch Path in 2023. The construction of the stormwater management system shown on the 2023 As-Built Plan did not entirely match the approved Definitive Plan from 2007.

Based on recommendations from Nitsch Engineering and DPW Director Tom Delaney, the Planning Board voted unanimously to approve the modifications to the Definitive Plan for Monarch Path at the conclusion of the public hearing on July 25, 2024. At this time, the Planning Board anticipates receiving a revised As-Built Plan from the developer soon. The revised As-Built Plan will be reviewed by Nitsch Engineering and the DPW Director. The Planning Board will take a position on the road acceptance article following the recommendations of Nitsch Engineering and the DPW Director.

Thank you.



Town of Groton

173 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450-1237
Tel: (978) 448-1162
Fax: (978) 448-1123

Department of Public Works

Robert T. Delaney, Jr.
DPW Director

RE Monarch Path

Dear Mark

I have been watching this subdivision for a few years now and all appears to be in good shape. Basins are clean and we will inspect other manholes that were covered during paving, an error from the paving company, once they are uncovered this week. Asphalt surface is in acceptable condition for the age. Detention basins are mowed and modified to be in compliance with regulations. Trees are alive and thriving.

I recommend the taking at this time.

Any questions let me know.

Robert "Tom" Delaney Jr

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
VIRTUAL MEETING
MONDAY, AUGUST 26, 2024
UN-APPROVED**

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

Also Virtually Present: Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; Hannah Moller, Treasurer/Tax Collector; Patricia DuFresne, Assistant Director of Finance/Town Accountant; Melisa Doig, Human Resource Director; Fire Chief Arthur Cheeks; Bud Robertson, Finance Committee Chair; Sachin Patel.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Cunningham announced a demonstration at the Nashoba Valley Medical Center starting at 6:00 p.m. that evening for those supporting efforts to keep the hospital open.

Ms. Pine happily announced the installation of a new sign renaming the Groton Dunstable Regional Middle School South to the "Marion Stoddart School." Last week, a celebration with Ms. Marion Stoddart took place so she could see the new sign. Ms. Pine mentioned that generous anonymous donations from friends of Ms. Stoddart funded the sign.

Mr. Reilly attended the dedication of a garden bench at the Boutwell House on August 17th in honor of Mr. Leroy Johnson, Jr., a longtime Groton resident and rescue squad member.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD #1

Residents Mr. Paul Fitzgerald, Ms. Ginny Babin, Mr. Jamie King, and several other Pay Your Fair Share Initiative members were virtually present. During the meeting, the members provided the Select Board with comments relative to the PILOT Study (See attached).

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Update from the Town Manager on Fiscal year 2024 Country Club Budget/Operation.

Mr. Haddad said Fiscal Year 2024 was another successful year for the Groton Country Club. It was a record year of revenue. The Club generated \$867,331 in revenue for FY 2024, \$72,962 more than the previous FY 23 revenue record of \$794,369. Based on the final expenditure total of \$854,972 (\$172,568 in salaries, \$253,111 in wages, \$223,824 in expenses, and \$205,469 in capital expenditures), the Club made a slight profit of \$12,359. Mr. Haddad said when factoring in overhead costs such as health insurance, there was a taxpayer subsidy of \$49,016. Last year, the Club generated a profit of \$119,713. Therefore, the Club has returned \$70,697 to the General Fund over two years. Mr. Haddad pointed out that FY 24 saw a major increase in capital expenditures, including a pool deck at a cost of \$110,000. He said this is the most they have ever spent on Capital Projects at the Club. These capital improvements are an important factor in

bringing new members to the Club, which has generated a record amount of revenue in FY 24. Mr. Haddad said he was extremely pleased with the Club's operation and would like to thank Mr. Shawn Campbell for his continued outstanding ongoing work at the Club. The Club is successful. Mr. Cunningham asked if most capital improvements had been completed. Mr. Haddad said that the focus will be on improving the golf course. Ms. Pine said the Public House is a very successful part of the property. Mr. Pisani noted you have to invest in these things; more people will go to play golf and go to the pool. It is a revenue generator.

2. Fiscal Year 2024 Fourth Quarter Financial Update.

Mr. Bud Robertson, Finance Committee Chair, and Ms. Patricia Dufresne, Assistant Finance Director, were virtually present for the meeting to review and discuss the Fourth Quarter Revenue and Expenditure Report. Mr. Haddad explained that total revenues from FY 24 exceeded last year's total revenues in terms of the budget percentage. Last year, there was an approximate \$1.6 million variance, while this year, there is an approximate \$1.7 million variance. The budget has increased to \$50 million due to the Florence Roche Debt. In terms of revenues, Mr. Haddad mentioned that the marijuana revenue is not generating the expected income, so they will keep a close eye on it. The local option meals tax continues to be strong; payment in lieu of taxes (PILOTs) is up by \$14,000 year over year, and investment income is significantly higher. He said that the Town of Groton had an excellent year in terms of revenue and expenditures. The requested encumbrances were not as high as last fiscal year, which Ms. DuFresne stated was great. Mr. Haddad stated that the department heads continued running their budgets cost-efficiently and was very pleased.

3. Review the First Draft of the 2024 Fall Town Meeting Warrant.

Mr. Haddad provided the Board with the first draft of the 2024 Fall Town Meeting Warrant. He requested a few minutes to review the Warrant with the Board:

Articles 1-10, with the possible exception of Article 2, will be presented as one Consent Motion.

Article 1: Prior Year Bills- There are no unpaid bills at this time.

Article 2: Amend the Fiscal Year 2025 Town Operating Budget-

Mr. Haddad invited Fire Chief Cheeks to attend the meeting to have a preliminary discussion about the Fire Department's operating budget. He explained this is needed because they will have to address issues within their operating budget and will require additional funding due to the impending closing of the Nashoba Valley Medical Center on August 30th. Chief Cheeks explained the severity and impact of the closure. He mentioned that several surrounding Chiefs supported each other during this difficult time. He said they want to maintain level services. The Chief explained that the response time to Emerson Hospital would be much longer than that of Nashoba. He explained that the driving times to Emerson Hospital depend on the time of day. Chief Cheeks has proposed a short-term solution to maintain current service levels by adding one additional firefighter and EMT to work 42 hours. The starting salary for this position will be approximately \$93,000 (including overtime) until the end of FY 25, plus benefits and insurance, totaling around \$115,000 per person. Mr. Haddad mentioned that the increase in pensions would occur two years after starting employment. Chief Cheeks stated that the department aims to provide the

highest level of care possible. He also explained that hiring eight new firefighters would allow four firefighters on each overnight shift and cost approximately one million dollars. Mr. Pisani said that Basic Life Support (BLS) communities rely on their partners in Advanced Life Support (ALS) communities. He said the conversation concerns investing in the community's residents for comfort. Mr. Cunningham emphasized the importance of ALS calls and suggested that local representatives work with the administration to address community needs. Mr. Reilly said that time is critical in an ambulance, which can be catastrophic. Mr. Haddad said this would be discussed further during the public hearing on September 9th.

Article 3: Transfer Money into Capital Stabilization Fund

Article 4: Transfer Money into the Stabilization Fund

Article 5: Transfer money into the GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund. Groton Dunstable Regional School District Director of Business and Finance, Sherry Kersey, is unable to provide this number at this time. Mr. Haddad said he may recommend holding off on this until the Spring Town Meeting.

Article 6: Revoke Opioid Settlements Special Purpose Stabilization Fund—Mr. Haddad stated that the state has changed its spending requirements for the money. He explained that Article 6 revokes the Opioid Stabilization Fund to allow spending from the Special Revenue Fund.

Article 7: Transfer Within the Water Enterprise Fund- This is a placeholder.

Article 8: Transfer Within the Center Sewer Enterprise Fund- This is a placeholder.

Article 9: Transfer Within the Four Corners Sewer Enterprise- This is a placeholder.

Article 10: Debt Service for the Middle School Track—Fiscal Year 2025—The middle school track received two appropriations. The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) has paid off one million dollars and is now paying the remaining 1.4 million dollars in debt service.

Article 11: Water Supply System for Heritage Landing—The town has applied for a Mass Works grant, and the water supply system for Heritage Landing would be contingent upon receiving the grant.

Article 12: Funding for Security Improvements at Sargisson Beach—The beach has a trash dumping problem. Mr. Haddad believes installing good security would solve this issue and considers the money well-spent to protect the town's assets.

Article 13: Funding to Purchase Budget Software for the Town of Groton—Mr. Haddad uses Excel to prepare the budget, and said they should start planning for budgeting software for when the Town Manager retires. He anticipates that the conversion process will take a few years. Although it would be an annual expenditure, he believes it is a worthwhile investment.

Article 14: Engineering Funds for Complete Streets Grant Work- Complete Streets is seeking grant applications for two potential projects this fall.

Article 15: Amend Purpose of CPA Project for Improvements to Baseball Diamond- This is to see if the Town will vote to amend the purpose of the CPC Proposal to allow for a comprehensive study and development of bid speculation for improvements to Town Field. Mr. Haddad said he has advertised an RFP, and proposals are due September 9th.

Article 16: Squannacook River Dam—Mr. Haddad requested the DPW Director in Training, Brian Callahan, and Conservation Administrator, Charlotte Steeves, to compile a list of the advantages and disadvantages of removing the dam. Mr. Callahan is working on this and will present the information to the Board. Mr. Haddad said this article was a placeholder.

Article 17: Disposition of Town-Owned Land on Hoyts Wharf Road—The Affordable Housing Trust initiated this project. Mr. Haddad stated that they aim to develop affordable housing per CPA rules.

Article 18: Authorize the Lease of Town-Owned Land—This determines whether the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to lease a portion of Town-owned land located at 600 Cow Pond Book Road to continue a composting operation for thirty years. A positive meeting took place between the Board of Health and the neighbors. The neighbors are pleased with changes by the Company running the Composting Facility to address their concerns.

Article 19: Special Act for PILOTs for Certain Tax-Exempt Properties- Mr. Cunningham suggested they withdraw this article at the Town Meeting. Mr. Robertson said that he believes this issue requires further study over a period of time. Mr. Haddad stated that he thinks it's premature to discuss this until the PILOT Working Group's work is completed. Mr. Pisani mentioned the need first to establish the process for evaluating each specific PILOT and, therefore, considers it premature to act now. Ms. Pine does not favor bringing the Home Rule Petition to the Fall Town meeting, as it is premature.

Mr. Reilly made a motion to request that the Town Manager withdraw Article 19 from the Fall Town Meeting Warrant. Ms. Pine seconded the motion.

Discussion-

Mr. Cunningham doesn't believe they are ready for the Fall Town Meeting regarding the Special Act for PILOTs for Certain Tax-Exempt Properties, but they need to be prepared to discuss the potential contents of a future agreement. Ms. Manugian and Ms. Pine said they do not have that information now. Mr. Pisani hopes that their work from now until the Spring Town Meeting will result in something they can show to the residents.

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

Article 20: Amend Chapter 81, "Town Meetings" of the Code of the Town of Groton – This Article is to remove the quorum requirement for any Special Town Meeting. This also allows the Select Board to set the Annual Town or Special Town Election hours. Ms. Pine is uneasy about removing the quorum for a Special Town Meeting. Mr. Haddad clarified that this would address the Bylaw, not the Charter.

Article 21: Zoning Amendment- Firearms Retail Sales Establishment

Article 22: Zoning Amendment- Update/Clarify Definition- Age Restricted Housing- The Planning Board voted to withdraw this article on August 22, 2024.

Article 23: Zoning Amendment- Solar Parking Canopies

Article 24: Zoning Amendment- Accessory Dwelling Units- Mr. Haddad explained that state law will change in February 2025. The new law will require different wording for accessory dwelling units to comply with the updated state regulations. Ms. Pine is interested in reviewing the existing wording that must be replaced. Mr. Haddad will send the redlined version to the Board for their review.

Article 25: Amend Chapter 198 Stormwater Management- Low Impact Development- Mr. Haddad will send the redlined version of Chapter 98 to the Board.

Article 26: Accept Monarch Path as a Town Way—The Road Acceptance public hearing will be held on Monday, September 9th.

Article 27: Citizens’ Petition- Reduce Statutory Speed Limit from 30 MPH to 25 MPH

4. Authorize the Town Manager to Sign the Host Community Agreement Waiver for United Cultivation.

The Cannabis Control Commission has changed the regulations with regard to Host Community Agreements (HCA). They have made those changes retroactive to the beginning of the legalization of Recreational Marijuana in Massachusetts. Mr. Haddad explained that any HCA previously entered into would be subject to a new regulation requiring justification of the Impact Fee. The Town entered into an HCA with United Cultivation, in which they would provide an Impact Fee of 3% of Gross Revenues for five years. He said they would be unable to establish justification for this fee. Therefore, it would be in the best interest of the Town to enter into a Waiver Agreement with United Cultivation to eliminate the Fee. Mr. Haddad provided the proposed Waiver Agreement for the Board’s review. He respectfully requested that the Board vote to authorize the Town Manager to execute the Waiver on behalf of the Town. He noted that he would recommend the same Waiver Agreement with the other Marijuana establishment once they open for business.

Mr. Pisani made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to sign the Host Community Agreement Waiver for United Cultivation on behalf of the Town. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. Roll Call: Cunningham-aye; Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Manugian-aye.

5. Proposed Select Board Meeting Schedule through the End of the Year.

Monday, September 2, 2024	No Meeting (Labor Day)
Monday, September 9, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, September 16, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, September 23, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, September 30, 2024	No Meeting
Saturday, October 5, 2024	2024 Fall Town Meeting
Monday, October 7, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, October 14, 2024	No Meeting (Indigenous People’s Day)
Monday, October 21, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, October 28, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, November 4, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, November 11, 2024	No Meeting (Veteran’s Day)
Monday, November 18, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, November 25, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 2, 2024	No Meeting
Monday, December 9, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 16, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 23, 2024	No Meeting
Monday, December 30, 2024	No Meeting
Monday, January 6, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting

ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL

1. Preliminary Discussion- Potential Liquor License for 9 West Main Street.

Mr. Sachin Patel was virtually present for the discussion. Mr. Patel had contacted the Town to express an interest in obtaining the Liquor License designated for West Groton at the former Clover Farm. Mr. Haddad explained that Mr. Patel is doing his due diligence by meeting with various Boards and Departments. He has met with the Building Commissioner, Health Agent, Land Use Director, Planning Board, Park Commission, and Mr. Haddad to discuss his plans. The feedback thus far has been very positive for his plans, including parking and trash control, which were concerns from the Board from a previous request. Mr. Patel wanted to continue his due diligence by meeting with the Select Board to see if they would consider issuing any license before entering into any lease or purchasing the property. Mr. Patel is planning to apply for a liquor license for the location at 9 West Main Street. He mentioned that he has already met with the Planning Board, and they raised concerns about the limited parking availability at the location. Following this, Mr. Patel visited the Park Commission to discuss using the parking lot at Carol Wheeler Park. The Park Commission requested that Mr. Patel ensure the parking lot remains clean once the store opens. He noted to the Board that he left a voicemail for Police Chief Luth to schedule a meeting with him. Mr. Patel intends to apply for an All-Alcohol License and stock some convenience store items. The Building Commissioner provided him with a list of items allowed for a convenience store. Mr. Cunningham encouraged Mr. Patel to apply for the license, as seeing a store down in West Groton would be nice. He explained that 700 square feet will be used for the convenience store items and 1,800 to 1,900 square feet for the All-Alcohol section. Ms. Pine mentioned that she remembered the building needed repairs. Mr. Patel is currently working with the realtor. Ms. Pine asked if there was a bathroom in the building. Groton's health agent clarified that customers cannot use the bathroom there. Mr. Reilly suggested reaching out to the neighbors in the area. He said the residents of West Groton really love that building. Fire Chief Cheeks emphasized that the intersection there is dangerous. Mr. Haddad explained the Park Commission must vote on an agreement if they designate the parking lot. He stated that a site plan would not be necessary since they were not renovating the building. Mr. Patel would need to ensure that the building is up to code, obtain a tobacco license from the Board of Health, and acquire a building permit for renovations. Ms. Manugian appreciated Mr. Patel starting the conversation and looks forward to working together.

2. Award Prescott School Lease to Friends of Prescott.

Mr. Steve Lane was virtually present for the discussion. Mr. Lane thanked the Board for letting the Friends of Prescott continue with the Lease. Mr. Haddad explained that the Friends of Prescott has leased the Prescott School since 2018. Their current lease expired at the end of the month. Mr. Haddad has advertised a Request for Proposals for the lease of the Prescott School, and one proposal was received from the Friends. Mr. Haddad has reviewed the proposal, and he found it in compliance with the requirements of the RFP and rated it advantageous based on the criteria outlined in the RFP as well. They are proposing the same terms: a \$20,000 annual rental fee plus 5% of gross revenues less donations and grants. Mr. Haddad enthusiastically recommended that the Select Board award the RFP to the Friends of Prescott and authorize Mr. Haddad to negotiate another lease that would run from September 1, 2024, through December 31, 2027. He said the Friends have been doing very well, paying their rent on time and generating 5% revenue. They have been very good tenants to the town. Mr. Robertson added that they

have been good at keeping up with the building. Ms. Pine asked if there would be an option for a lease longer than three years. Mr. Haddad said they could return to the Town Meeting to extend the lease for a longer period. Mr. Cunningham said he fully supported this. Mr. Lane thanked the Board.

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to enter into negotiations with the Friends to extend the Lease from September 1, 2024, through December 31, 2027. Ms. Pine seconded. Roll call: Cunningham-aye; Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Manugian-aye.

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.

Mr. Cunningham 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 are going out to bid in September and hopefully can start the project in October/November.
- B. Fiscal Year 2026 Budget—The first Tri-Comm Working Group meeting will be held on August 28, 2024. Mr. Haddad is excited to get started on this topic and will provide an update to the Board.
- C. Florence Roche School Construction Project—Mr. Haddad mentioned that the school will open on Wednesday, August 28th. He also confirmed that the parent drop-off is ready for use. Ms. Pine inquired about the closed gate at Champney Street and whether children walking to school from Hollis Street would have access. Mr. Haddad stated that he would look into this further.

SELECT BOARD LIASON REPORTS

None

Public Comment Period #2

None

Approval of the Regularly Scheduled Meeting Minutes of August 12, 2024

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to approve the minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of August 12, 2024. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll call: Cunningham-aye; Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Manugian-aye.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m. Respectively submitted by Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager.