



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, MARCH 3, 2025
AGENDA
GROTON CENTER
163 WEST MAIN STREET
WEST GROTON, MA

- 6:30 P.M. Announcements and Review Agenda for the Public
- 6:31 P.M. Public Comment Period
- I. 6:35 P.M. Town Manager's Report
1. Consider Approving Letter of Support to Make Remote and Hybrid Meetings Permanent
 2. Update on 2025 Spring Town Meeting Warrant
 3. Update on Fiscal Year 2026 Budget
 4. Update on Select Board's Meeting Schedule through the 2025 Spring Town Meeting
- II. 6:40 P.M. Items for Select Board Consideration and Action
1. Consider Appointing Po Tse to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee
 2. Consider Approving a One Day All Alcohol Beverage License for the Friends of Prescott for Whiskey 101 to be held on Friday, March 7, 2025 at the Prescott Community Center from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
 3. Consider Approving a One Day Wine and Malt Beverage License for the Friends of Prescott Open Mic Night to be held at the Prescott Community Center on Friday, March 14, 2025 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
- III. 7:00 P.M. In Joint Session with the Groton Finance Committee, Groton Dunstable Regional School District Committee, Dunstable Select Board and Dunstable Advisory Committee – Review Proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Proposals – Determine Whether or Not to Seek an Override of Proposition 2½ to Balance Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budgets

OTHER BUSINESS

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

- A. PFAS Issue
- B. Nashoba Valley Medical Center Working Group
- C. Charter Review Committee
- D. Florence Roche Elementary School Construction Project
- E. PILOTs

SELECT BOARD LIAISON REPORTS

IV. Minutes: Regularly Scheduled Meeting of February 24, 2025

ADJOURNMENT

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



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To: *Select Board*

From: *Mark W. Haddad – Town Manager*

Subject: *Weekly Agenda Update/Report*

Date: *March 3, 2025*

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Please note that Monday's meeting will commence at 6:30 p.m. and be held at the Groton Center, 163 West Main Street, West Groton, MA. In addition to the Town Manager's Report, Items for Select Board Consideration and Action and a review of the On-going Issue List, there is one item scheduled on Monday's Agenda. The Board will be meeting in joint session with the Groton Finance Committee, Dunstable Select Board, Dunstable Advisory Committee and the Groton Dunstable Regional School District Committee to discuss the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget and to determine whether or not to seek an override(s) of Proposition 2½ to balance the Budget. Please see Item #3 for a further explanation of the Budget.

1. The Legislation that authorizes remote/hybrid/virtual meetings is set to expire on March 31, 2025. There is a bill before the Legislature (HD 2863/SD 1850) that would make this permanent. At the request of Select Board Member Cunningham, we have drafted a letter of support for the Chair to sign to be sent to our State Delegation. Enclosed with this report is a copy of the letter. I would respectfully request that the Select Board vote to approve the issuance of this letter.
2. Since the Warrant closed on February 21st, I have received requests to add the following two Articles to the Warrant:

Article: *Repair Sprinkler System at Town Hall*

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow, pursuant to any applicable statute, a sum or sums of money to be expended by the Town Manager in Fiscal Year 2025 and thereafter, to pay for repairs to the Sprinkler System at Town Hall, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Summary: *The sprinkler system at the Town Hall is a dry system. When it is tested, water is put into the system and then removed. Unfortunately, remnants of water is left in the piping causing it to rust. The original system was installed when the Town Hall was renovated in 1999. Repairs were put out to bid and the low bid came in at \$118,500. This Article will seek a transfer from Free Cash to pay for the repairs.*

Continued on Next Page – Over >

2. **Continued:**

Article: 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.

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.*

I would respectfully request that the Board vote to open the Warrant and allow me to add these Articles to the Warrant.

3. With regard to the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget, a decision needs to be made on whether or not to seek/consider an override(s) of Proposition 2½ to cover the anticipated Assessment from the Groton Dunstable Regional School District to fund the Superintendents Proposed Budget and to cover the addition of six (6) Firefighter/EMTs for the Groton Fire Department. Based on the latest estimates received since I submitted the Proposed Budget on January 31st, the Town would need an additional \$827,090 to cover the full anticipated Assessment from the Groton Dunstable Regional School District (the Town Manager's Proposed Budget has \$1,365,564 set aside for the Assessment and the anticipated assessment increase is \$2,192,654). An override of \$827,090 would add \$0.29 to the FY 2026 Anticipated Tax Rate and cost the average tax payer (a home valued at \$707,877) an additional \$205 per year. With regard to adding six (6) Firefighter/EMTs in FY 2026, it would cost an additional \$780,904. This would result in an increase in the anticipated FY 2026 Tax Rate of \$0.28, or an increase in the average tax bill of \$198. The total tax increase should both Overrides be presented and pass would be \$403. Should the Select Board decide to seek an Override(s), the Board needs to determine if they will put one or two questions on the Ballot. We can discuss this in more detail at Monday's meeting.

Select Board
Weekly Agenda Update/Report
March 3, 2025
page three

4. Please see the update to the Select Board's Schedule through the 2025 Spring Town Meeting:
- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Monday, March 10, 2025 - | -Public Hearing on Spring Town Meeting Warrant |
| Monday, March 17, 2025 - | No Meeting |
| Monday, March 24, 2025 - | -Review Prescott Building Assessment – Determine if any Action Needs to be Taken |
| Monday, March 31, 2025 - | Regularly Scheduled Meeting |
| Monday, April 7, 2025 - | Regularly Scheduled Meeting |
| Monday, April 14, 2025 - | Regularly Scheduled Meeting |
| Monday, April 21, 2025 - | No Meeting – Patriot's Day Holiday |
| Saturday, April 26, 2025 | Spring Town Meeting |

ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND ACTION

1. The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee has requested that the Select Board appoint Po Tse to the Committee. I would respectfully request that the Board consider making this appointment at Monday's meeting.
2. I would respectfully request that Select Board consider approving a One Day All Alcohol Beverage License for the Friends of Prescott for Whiskey 101 to be held on Friday, March 7, 2025 at the Prescott Community Center from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
3. I would respectfully request that the Select Board consider approving a One Day Wine and Malt Beverage License for the Friends of Prescott Open Mic Night to be held at the Prescott Community Center on Friday, March 14, 2025 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

MWH/rjb
enclosures



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Town Manager
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March 4, 2025

Honorable John Cronin
Senator in General Court
Worcester and Middlesex District
State House
24 Beacon Street, Room 218
Boston, MA 02133

Honorable Margaret Scarsdale
Representative in General Court
First Middlesex District
State House
24 Beacon Street, Room 103
Boston, MA 02133

Honorable Danillo Sena
Representative in General Court
37th Middlesex District
State House
24 Beacon Street, Room 39
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Cronin, Representative Scarsdale and Representative Sena:

On behalf of the Groton Select Board, we would like to thank you and the Legislature for the extensions to allow municipalities the ability to host remote, hybrid, and in person public meetings. Launched during the height of the pandemic with the quick support and forward thinking of the Legislature, this flexibility continues to be an essential aspect of Government in Groton. The current extension is set to end on March 31, 2025, which is making it difficult for our boards and commissions to plan our upcoming public meetings.

The Groton Select Board is requesting your support to make these provisions permanent as proposed in HD.2863/SD.1850 filed by Representative Gregoire and Senator Oliveira and Governor Healey's *Municipal Empowerment Act*. This legislation will make permanent the flexibility for municipalities to hold meetings via hybrid or remote means.

The flexibility to hold public meetings is critical to ensuring that we can continue to hold public meetings in a way that makes the most sense for each of the many boards and committees in Groton. The ability to hold these meetings via remote and hybrid means has enabled more residents to participate fully in their government and allowed municipalities to hold regular meetings without interruptions. The implementation of remote participation protocols in our community has made meaningful engagement easier and is more manageable for public officials and residents alike. These changes to public meetings should be made permanent. With now over 4 years of these flexible meetings, our residents appreciate and have come to expect these options.

Additionally, in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2026 Budget and other funding deliberations, the Groton Select Board urges you to consider including funding for technology updates, staffing needs and broadband expansion and access. Increasing accessibility of our public meetings is more important than ever.

The Groton Select appreciates your support to approve the permanent flexibility for remote and hybrid meeting options before the March 31st expiration. It is crucial for municipalities to be able to engage with constituents in a transparent and meaningful way.

Sincerely
GROTON SELECT BOARD

Alison S. Manugian, Chair

ASM/mwh

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2025
UN-APPROVED**

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

Also Present: Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; Patricia DuFresne, Assistant Finance Director/Town Accountant; Melisa Doig, Human Resource Director; Hannah Moller, Treasurer/Tax Collector; Senator John Cronin; Representatives Scarsdale and Sena; Russell Burke, Planning Board Vacancy Applicant; Tom Orcutt, Groton Water Superintendent; Jim Gmeiner, Groton Sewer Commission Chair; Paul Brinkman, Pepperell DPW Business Manager; Takashi Tada, Land Use Director/Town Planner;

Planning Board Members Present: Paul Hathaway; Phil Francisco; Scott Wilson;

Planning Board Members Virtually Present: George Barringer; Lorayne Black.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Pine announced that the Non-Profit Council will meet on Thursday, February 27th, at the Groton Public Library at 9:00 a.m. She said this would be an open meeting for any non-profit organization representatives in Groton.

She also announced that Congresswoman Lori Trahan will hold a Telephone Town Hall meeting on Tuesday, February 25th at 5:30 p.m. to discuss what is happening in Washington, D.C.

Lastly, Ms. Pine acknowledged the third anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. She stated that the Board had voted in favor of a statement supporting the people of Ukraine following that event. She also stated that the Board continues to offer its support.

Mr. Cunningham announced that the Open House at Florence Roche School will take place this Saturday, March 1st, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Mr. Haddad said that the School Committee will hold a budget forum during the Open House from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD #1

Groton Water Superintendent Mr. Tom Orcutt updated the Board on the PFAS construction project to bring potable water to the Groton Dunstable Regional High School. He said that the contractor will be making a connection on Chicopee Row between the two construction crews this week and that they are ahead of schedule.

Mr. Orcutt thanked Ms. Patricia DuFresne and Ms. Hannah Moller for their hard work on the SRF paperwork. He also thanked DPW Director Tom Delaney and DPW Director in Training Brian Callahan for their coordination with the detours, as well as the Police Chief and Deputy Police Chief for coordination with the detours during the project. He said that the residents have been very understanding, and the project is moving right along.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Vote to Approve the Issuance and Details of a Loan from the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust (Loan No. DWEC-24-80) and Sign Related Closing Documents.

Treasurer/Tax Collector Ms. Moller was in attendance to answer any questions. Mr. Haddad explained that the Town was in the process of finalizing the interim loan, which required the Town's approval for the issuance. He stated that the Select Board must vote to approve the issuance and details of the note and subsequent bond that would be issued by the Trust. Mr. Haddad said it would be 0% interest, and they would not start paying the principal until the project was done.

Ms. Pine motioned to authorize the loan issuance from the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust (Loan No. DWEC-24-80) and details as outlined in the attached document. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. Roll call: Manugian- aye; Pine-aye; Reilly- aye; Pisani-aye; Cunningham-aye.

2. Review the First Draft of the 2025 Spring Town Meeting.

Mr. Haddad provided the Board with the first draft of the 2025 Spring Town Meeting Warrant. He requested a few minutes to review the Warrant with the Board and informed them that it closed on February 21st at the end of the business day. A public hearing on the warrant is scheduled on Monday, March 10th. The articles included are as follows:

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

Article 1: Hear Reports

Article 2: Elected Officials Compensation

Article 3: Wage and Classification Schedule

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

Article 5: Fiscal Year 2026 Annual Operating Budget

Article 6: Fiscal Year 2026 Capital Budget

Mr. Haddad reviewed the Capital Budget items with the Board.

Article 7: Community Preservation Funding Accounts

Article 8: Community Preservation Funding Recommendations

Article 9: Proposed Amendment to the Groton Charter-Park Commission

This is a placeholder.

Mr. Haddad explained there was one proposal left to discuss for the Charter Review Committee: the proposal to change the Park Commission from elected to appointed. The Charter Review Committee will discuss this at their March 6th meeting.

Article 10: Proposed Amendments to the Groton Charter

This is a placeholder.

Mr. Haddad explained that the Charter Review Committee had approved a proposed amendment to allow paid, benefited employees to serve on the Select Board. The Committee had approved this amendment by a vote of 5-1 (Mr. Cunningham was opposed). After further consideration, Mr. Haddad is no longer in favor of this amendment and plans on asking the Charter Review Committee to reconsider this amendment at their next meeting.

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

Article 12: Amend Chapter 125, "Demolition Delay" of the Code of the Town of Groton

Article 13: Adopt Resolution- Reduce Statewide Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Article 14: Reduce the Four Corners Sewer District

Article 15: Amend Flood Plain Zoning District

Article 16: Endorse Master Plan

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

Article 18: Accessory Dwelling Unit Amendments

Article 19: Accept Monarch Path as a Town Way

This is a placeholder.

Article 20: Citizens Petition-Town Wide Speed Limit

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

Article 21: Funding For Destination Groton Committee

Article 22: Funding For Sustainability Committee

Article 23: Transfer Within the Water Enterprise Fund

Article 24: Transfer Within the Sewer Enterprise Fund

Article 25: Transfer Within Four Corner Sewer Enterprise Fund

Article 26: Prior Year Bills

There are no bills for the prior year at this time.

Article 27: Current Year Line-Item Transfers

Article 28: Appropriate Funding to Offset Snow and Ice Deficit

Article 29: Debt Service for the Middle School Track

Article 30: Transfer Bond Proceeds

Article 31: Establishing Limits for Various Revolving Funds

3. Vote to Authorize the inclusion of the Various Elected Committee Vacancies on the 2025 Town Election Ballot.

Town Clerk Ms. Dunbar attended the meeting. Mr. Haddad said that pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 42, §10, the Select Board needed to vote on adding the following vacancies to the 2025 Spring Election Ballot. The following positions need to be added: Planning Board, Sewer Commission, Trustee of the Groton Public Library, and the Groton Housing Authority.

Ms. Pine made a motion to add the vacancies for the Planning Board, Sewer Commission, Trustee of the Groton Public Library, and the Groton Housing Authority to the 2025 Spring Election Ballot. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. Roll call: Manugian-aye; Pine-aye; Reilly- aye; Pisani-aye; Cunningham-aye.

4. Update on Fiscal Year 2026 Budget.

Mr. Haddad said the Department Heads did a great job presenting their budgets during the Saturday, February 22nd meeting. He believes that there is still more to learn regarding the Fire Department. He said the Board needs to decide on March 3rd whether they plan on pursuing an override of Proposition 2 ½ to balance the FY 2026 Proposed Budget.. The Finance Committee will meet with the Groton Dunstable Regional School District Officials on Tuesday, February 25th, in the First Floor Meeting Room of the Groton Town Hall.

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

Monday, March 3, 2025	Joint Budget Meeting at the Groton Center
Monday, March 10, 2025	Public Hearing on the Spring Town Meeting
Monday, March 17, 2025	No Meeting
Monday, March 24, 2025	Review Prescott Building Assessment- Determine if any Action Needs to be taken
Monday, March 31, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, April 7, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, April 14, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, April 21, 2025	No Meeting- Patriot’s Day Holiday
Saturday, April 26 th	Spring Town Meeting

ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL

1. In Joint Session with the Planning Board-Consider Appointing Russ Burke to the Planning Board to Fill a Vacancy on the Board.

Chairman Scott Wilson called the Planning Board meeting to order.

Mr. Haddad explained that three candidates applied for a vacancy on the Planning Board due to a resignation. These candidates were interviewed by the Planning Board. The position was properly advertised pursuant to Select Board Policy. The Planning Board recommended that Russell Burke be appointed to the vacancy until the 2025 Annual Town Election. He explained that there are two years left on the term.

Mr. Cunningham asked Mr. Burke about any changes that might have led to his resignation. Mr. Burke stated that he had served on the Planning Board for over 18 years and received a lot of negative feedback regarding his resignation. He was persuaded to reconsider. He said that he was committed to public service.

Mr. Reilly made a motion to appoint Mr. Russell Burke to the Planning Board until the 2025 Annual Town Election. Mr. Cunningham seconded. Roll call: Cunningham-aye; Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Black-aye; Barringer-aye; Wilson-aye; Francisco-aye; Hathaway-aye.

Mr. Wilson adjourned the Planning Board Meeting.

2. Consider Approving the Intermunicipal Agreement (IMA) between the Town of Groton Sewer Commission and the Town of Pepperell Department of Public Works.

Groton Sewer Commissioner Chair Jim Gmeiner and Pepperell DPW Business Manager Paul Brinkman were in attendance.

Mr. Haddad provided the Board with the proposed Intermunicipal Agreement between the Groton Sewer Commission and the Pepperell Department of Public Works for the Town to continue to send Waste from the Groton Center Sewer District to the Pepperell Wastewater Treatment Plant. Mr. Gmeiner explained that this Agreement is set up so the system acts as one, not separated by Pepperell and Groton. Mr. Haddad said Town Counsel reviewed the IMA, and the Groton Sewer

Commission adopted it. Mr. Haddad respectfully requested that the Select Board vote to approve the IMA.

Mr. Reilly made a motion to approve the Intermunicipal Agreement between the Town of Groton Sewer Commission and the Town of Pepperell Department of Public Works, as presented. Ms. Pine seconded the motion.

Discussion

Ms. Manugian inquired about the decision-making process for upgrades to the plant and how decisions are made. Mr. Brinkman responded that they are working together throughout the year and keeping Groton informed of decisions in advance. Mr. Haddad said it is a partnership. She also asked about the current capacity of the plant. Mr. Brinkman replied that the plant and Groton operate at 50% of their allotted capacity. He mentioned that there is still available capacity.

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

- 3. Consider Approving a One Day Wine and Malt Beverage License for the Groton Neighbors for their Spring Member Party to be held on Friday, May 30, 2025, at the First Parish Church from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.**

Mr. Pisani made a motion to approve a One Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for the Groton Neighbors for their Spring Member Party on Friday, May 30, 2025, at the First Parish Church from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll call: Manugian- aye; Pine-aye; Reilly- aye; Pisani-aye; Cunningham-aye.

- 4. Consider Approving a One Day Wine and Malt Beverage License for the Friends of Prescott's 10th Anniversary Celebration (Forge and Vine to Supply and Manage the Alcohol) to be held at the Groton School on Thursday, March 13, 2025, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

Mr. Reilly made a motion to approve a One Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for the Friends of Prescott's 10th Anniversary Celebration to be held at the Groton School on Thursday, March 13, 2025, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll call: Manugian- aye; Pine-aye; Reilly- aye; Pisani-aye; Cunningham-aye.

6:15 Legislative Update with Senator Cronin, Representative Scarsdale, and Representative Danillo Sena.

Mr. Haddad thanked Senator Cronin, Representative Scarsdale, and Representative Danillo Sena for attending. Mr. Haddad said he had invited them to provide a Legislative Update to the Board.

Representative Sena thanked the Select Board and Mr. Haddad for the opportunity to speak. He said his office focused on education, climate change, and immigration. He is working on bills to establish universal pre-kindergarten and improve public education, and they must look at the Chapter 70 formula, as it is not functioning effectively. He said that in the long term, they must establish a commission to study Chapter 70. He stressed the urgent need for immediate funding for the school district and full funding for regional transportation. Representative Sena explained that the closing of the Nashoba Valley Medical Center has created a demand for funding for

Groton's first responders, who are currently under significant stress. He said to please inform his office of any bills they would like him to support or advocate for.

Representative Scarsdale thanked the Board for their service. She wanted to address the fundamental issues regarding the school funding formula, which has been a long-standing problem. She said that the Student Opportunity Act was a significant piece of legislation and believes it has a lot of support. She said that there can be unintended consequences whenever you make adjustments to something very complex. She feels that the Student Opportunity Act has exacerbated the issues related to Chapters 70 and 71. She explained that in June of last year, representatives from all communities in the First Middlesex Legislative District came together to discuss the problem. She explained that they discussed the concepts of minimum aid, district designation, or hold harmless designation. She explained that 211 districts face similar situations, and a task force was formed to address these concerns. The task force came up with a list of recommendations that would provide short- and long-term relief by reviewing the formula. She said the Massachusetts Teachers Association was currently meeting to review the recommendations. Representative Scarsdale emphasized that the towns need assistance right now.

Senator Cronin stated that as a delegation, Chapter 70 is the number one priority for their offices. He said they plan to advocate for transportation improvements and that the issues discussed were complex. Senator Cronin explained that it has been a huge deal for UMASS to commit to opening a satellite facility. He said the area Chiefs approached the delegation seeking financial assistance of \$9.6 million to help address some of these issues. They are collaborating with the Department of Public Health and the Governor's office on these matters. Senator Cronin hopes to create community support until the UMASS facility opens.

Ms. Pine asked Representative Sena about his proposal of universal pre-kindergarten education and if it would be free. Representative Sena explained that there would be a cost associated with it. He explained the importance of providing education for everyone and increasing awareness of what can be done at the state level. He is considering long-term plans for implementing this initiative, saying this matter needs to be addressed. Ms. Pine said she was in favor of pre-kindergarten education but said the State must ensure full funding for the program.

Mr. Cunningham discussed the closure of Nashoba Valley Medical Center. He stressed the urgent need for relief, mentioning they might request an override from the townspeople to fund six new firefighters. Representative Scarsdale stated that a lot is going on behind the scenes concerning the hospital. Senator Cronin stated that discussions are ongoing, and the \$9.6 million will be distributed to each community based on their needs.

Mr. Pisani mentioned they face two overrides: one for the School District and another for Fire/EMS. He said that the Town was in trouble. He expressed concerns that they would lose experienced firefighters and about burnout among the staff.

Ms. Manugian said she appreciated everyone for attending the meeting, but she also shared her frustration and requested their recommendations on what the citizens were supposed to do. Mr. Reilly said they never want to create conflict between the schools and the municipality; however, this year, the Fire Department may be pitted against the Schools with two proposed overrides. Senator Cronin emphasized the importance of communicating with constituents.

The Select Board thanked Representative Scarsdale, Representative Sena, and Senator Cronin for attending the discussion.

On Going issues

- C. Charter Review Committee—Mr. Cunningham explained that a proposal was presented at the last Charter Review Committee meeting to change the Park Commission positions from elected to appointed or to eliminate the Parks Commission, assigning its responsibilities to other parties. He asked to receive feedback from the Select Board regarding this proposal. The Select Board was not in favor of this proposal.
- D. Florence Roche Elementary School Construction Project- The Open House for Florence Roche Elementary School is scheduled for Saturday, March 1, 2025, from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

SELECT BOARD LIASON REPORTS

None

Approval of the Regularly Scheduled Meeting Minutes of February 10, 2025.

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of February 10, 2025. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. 4 in Favor, 1 Abstained- Reilly

The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m. Respectively submitted by Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager.