



**Town Manager**  
Mark W. Haddad

## TOWN OF GROTON

173 Main Street  
Groton, Massachusetts 01450-1237  
Tel: (978) 448-1111  
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## Select Board

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

**SELECT BOARD MEETING**  
**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2025**  
**AGENDA**  
**SELECT BOARD MEETING ROOM**  
**2nd FLOOR**  
**GROTON TOWN HALL**

- 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 Ratifying the Town Manager's Appointments of Chad Ferreria as Laborer for the Department of Public Works and Andrew Bernhardt as Transfer Station Foreman**
  - 2.    Select Board Meeting Schedule Through the End of the Year**
- II.      6:40 P.M.**      **Items for Select Board Consideration and Action**
- 1.    Finalize Recommendations on the Various Articles Contained in the 2025 Fall Town Meeting Warrant**
  - 2.    Vote to Approve and Issue the Warrant for the 2025 Fall Town Meeting Warrant**
  - 3.    Consider Appointing Lynn Holdsworth to the Affordable Housing Trust**
  - 4.    Consider Approving a One Day Wine and Malt Beverage License for the Friends of Prescott Open Mic Night to be held on Friday, October 10, 2025 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.**
- III.      7:00 P.M.**      **In Joint Session with the Groton Dunstable Regional School District Committee and Finance Committee – Review the Operational Audit for the Groton Dunstable Regional School District**

### OTHER BUSINESS

- ON-GOING ISSUES –      Review and Informational Purposes – Brief Comments - Items May or May Not Be Discussed**
- A.    PFAS Issue**
  - B.    UMass Satellite Emergency Facility**
  - C.    Fire Department Staffing**
  - D.    West Groton Dam**

### SELECT BOARD LIAISON REPORTS

- IV.                      Minutes:              Regularly Scheduled Meeting of September 15, 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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**Town Manager**  
Mark W. Haddad

**To:** *Select Board*

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

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

**Date:** *September 29, 2025*

### **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

Please note that Monday's meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. In addition to the Town Manager's Report, Items for Select Board Consideration and Action and a review of the Ongoing Issues List, there is one item scheduled on Monday's Agenda. The Select Board will be meeting in joint session with the Groton Dunstable Regional School District Committee and Finance Committee to discuss/review the Operational Audit completed for the School District. I had provided you with the full audit under separate cover a few weeks ago. In an effort to assist you with the discussion/review of the Audit, I have prepared two summary documents. The first is a summary of key insights from the Audit and the second is a summary of the recommendations contained in the Audit. They are enclosed with this Report for your review. I have also enclosed a copy of the PowerPoint Presentation prepared by Superintendent of Schools Dr. Geoff Bruno that summarizes the Audit findings.

1. I have appointed Chad Ferreria as a Laborer for the Department of Public Works to fill the vacancy caused by the retirement of Troy Conley and have appointed Andrew Bernhardt as the Transfer Station Foreman to fill the vacancy caused by the retirement of Keith Burchette. I would respectfully request that the Select Board ratify these two appointments.

2. Please see the Select Board's Meeting Schedule that will take you through the end of the year:

Monday, October 6, 2025 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, October 13, 2025 -	No Meeting (Indigenous People's Day)
Saturday, October 18, 2025 -	2025 Fall Town Meeting
Monday, October 20, 2025 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting (Possible No Meeting)
Tuesday, October 28, 2025 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting (Budget Guidance)
Monday, November 3, 2025 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 8, 2025 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 15, 2025 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 22, 2025 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 29, 2025 -	No Meeting
Monday, January 5, 2026 -	No Meeting
Monday, January 12, 2026 -	Regular Scheduled Meeting

**ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND ACTION**

1. Enclosed with this Report is the latest draft of the Warrant for the 2025 Fall Town Meeting. It has been updated to include the Town Manager's Report to the Fall Town Meeting, the proposed amendments to the Charter and the recommendations made by the Finance Committee on the various Articles. The Select Board needs to take positions on the following Articles:

Article 2 – Budget Amendments (Please see Town Manager's Report for proposed transfers)

Article 3 – Transfer Money into the Capital Stabilization Fund

Article 4 – Transfer Money into the Stabilization Fund

Article 5 – Transfer Money into the GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund

Article 22 – Citizen's Petition – Authorization to Create an Advisory Committee

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

2. I would respectfully request that the Select Board vote to approve and issue the Warrant for 2025 Fall Town Meeting. Postcards will be mailed to all households on Friday, October 3, 2025 and the Warrant will be posted by the Constable on that date as well. We will be printing five hundred (500) copies of the Warrant for anyone wishing to have one. We will leave several copies at the Senior Center and residents can contact the Town Clerk's Office or Select Board's Office and request a copy to be mailed to their house. We can discuss this in more detail at Monday's meeting.
3. The Affordable Housing Trust is requesting that the Select Board vote to appoint Lynn Holdsworth to the Trust. I would respectfully request that the Select Board make this appointment at Monday's meeting.
4. I would respectfully request that the Select Board vote to approve a One Day Wine and Malt Beverage License for the Friends of Prescott Open Mic Night to be held on Friday, October 10, 2025 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

MWH/rjb  
enclosures

# **Key Insights from Operational Audit:**

## **1. District Administration**

- **Salary and Staffing Comparisons:** The audit compared administrative salaries and staffing configurations to six other school districts. While the **Superintendent's salary is lower than four of the six comparison districts**, the **Assistant Superintendent's salary is higher than all but one**. The Director of Business and Finance, Human Resources Director, Technology Director, and Athletic Director salaries generally rank in the middle (third or fourth) among the comparison districts. The Student Services Director's salary is higher than all but one comparison district.
- **Per Pupil Expenditures:** Central office staffing expenditures per pupil are comparable to four of the six comparison districts. However, when related to the foundation budget, Groton-Dunstable and Triton have the highest spending districts.
- **Job Descriptions:** The audit found that some administrative job descriptions were not updated, leading to **potential overlapping duties and inefficiencies**.
- **Recommendations:** The audit recommends reviewing and standardizing job descriptions for middle management positions, justifying work year and job descriptions, and reviewing the need for higher-salaried candidates for vacant positions. It also suggests ensuring administrative salaries are fair and comparable.

## **2. Student Services and Support**

- **Increasing Disabilities and Declining Full Inclusion:** The **percentage of students with disabilities in GDRSD has increased over the last three years (from 15.8% in FY22 to 18.3% in FY25)**, while state averages have generally declined. The rate of full inclusion for students with disabilities has declined from 72.8% in FY23 to 66.3% in FY25, and is below the state average.
- **Referral Ineligibility:** A significant proportion of initial referrals for special education services did not result in eligibility, with **38% in FY23, 28% in FY24, and 44% in FY25 of students referred being found ineligible**. This suggests potential issues in the referral process, screening procedures, or understanding of special education eligibility criteria. There is also a concern that educators and administrators may not be consistently following the Student Support Team (SST) process.



- **Specialized Staffing and Caseloads:**

- **School Psychologists:** The district's psychologist staffing (3.0 FTE) is below the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) guideline of 1:500 students, with a **ratio of approximately 1:700 students**. The workload distribution among psychology staff may not be fully optimized, and a significant number of non-qualifying referrals indicate a need to optimize referral screening.

- **Nurses:** The district employs 6.0 FTE nursing staff for 2,300 students, but the distribution of nursing staff across buildings could offer flexibility. Recommended ratios vary based on student health needs and complexity.

- **Team Chairs:** Team chairs manage Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), with caseloads potentially reaching 100 students for some chairs. There is **potential overlap and confusion between IEP and 504 plan responsibilities**, and a budgetary shift towards full-time equivalent (FTE) allocation for team chairs has occurred.

- **Paraprofessionals:** The effective utilization of paraprofessional time and strategic integration into student schedules are crucial for meeting student needs. Scheduling practices significantly impact the perceived need for paraprofessional support.

- **Out-of-District Placements:** For FY2023, **63% of out-of-district placements were for Autism and emotional disabilities**. The district's circuit breaker claims for out-of-district and in-district placements are notably aligned with similar districts.

- **Recommendations:** The audit advises reviewing and clarifying job descriptions, roles, responsibilities, and caseloads for administration, team chairs, school counselors, and special education teachers. It also recommends improving the SST and referral process, enhancing professional development for related services staff, and evaluating tiered interventions and inclusive practices.

### **3. Current Building Usage**

- **Overall Utilization Review:** The audit analyzed the effectiveness, productivity, and cost efficiency of current school building utilization.

- **Early Education Center (Boutwell):** The Boutwell building, constructed in 1914, houses the Early Education Center for special needs students aged 3-5. It faces challenges related to **condition (e.g., HVAC, adequate space, gym, fire alarm system, playground)**. The building is assessed at \$1,733,500 and could sell for \$2 million.

- **Swallow Union School:** Built in 1895, the Swallow Union building received a "Level 3" rating for building condition by the MSBA in 2016 (indicating concerns). The original building is no longer in use.

- **Reorganization Options and Challenges:**

- Several options for reorganizing school grades and buildings were considered, including moving the Early Education Center and potentially closing the Swallow Union building.

- **Option 1** proposed moving 8th grade to the high school and making the middle school 4-7, potentially closing Swallow Union. Pros included adequate space and potential savings, but cons involved negative impacts on Dunstable elementary and potential capital assessments for Florence Roche.

- **A 2017 study concluded that moving the central office from the Prescott building to Boutwell was not viable** due to minor savings and significant costs.

- **Recommendation:** The audit outlines financial benefits associated with closing Swallow Union and relocating Dunstable students to the new Florence Roche (K-3), 4th grade to GDRMS, and the 8th grade to the high school. However, this comes at a significant educational cost to both towns and to the district as a whole. Closing Swallow Union presents major problems for the town of Dunstable and disrupts developmentally appropriate educational programming in all schools across the district. The closure of Swallow Union and relocating all Dunstable students to Groton (K-3 to Florence Roche, and 4<sup>th</sup> grade to the middle school campus) should not be considered a viable option.

## **Summary of Recommendations Contained in the Operational Audit**

### **I. District Administration Recommendations**

The audit recommends a review of administrative staffing and compensation practices.

- **Review and Standardization of Job Descriptions and Work Year:** The District should review middle management positions, standardize their job descriptions, and clarify the length of their work year. Given declining resources, it is important to confirm that job responsibilities justify the work year, especially if it means direct service employees like counselors, teachers, and nurses might be eliminated.
- **Filling Vacant Positions and Comparable Compensation:** The District needs to review the necessity of filling vacant positions, particularly those with higher salaries. This practice is costly when member towns are facing difficulties affording assessments and potential layoffs, especially considering Groton's tax bills are higher than all comparison towns, and Dunstable's are higher than all but one. When administrative vacancies are filled, the District should ensure compensation is fair and comparable.

### **II. Student Services and Support Office Staffing Levels Recommendations**

The recommendations for student services focus on comprehensive reviews, professional development, and strategic resource allocation to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

- **Job Descriptions Review for Special Education:** A comprehensive review and update of all job descriptions within the special education department is recommended to ensure accuracy, consistency, and completeness. This is essential for a thorough analysis of role clarity, potential redundancy, and for enabling more effective workforce planning, responsibility alignment, and operational efficiency.

- **Team Chair Roles and Caseloads:**

- The District should **not** conduct eligibility determination meetings simultaneously with Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Section 504 considerations, as these are distinct legal and educational purposes.

- It is recommended that school counselors or assistant principals primarily direct and manage 504 meetings, allowing team chairs to focus solely on IEPs to promote clarity and appropriate focus for each framework. This also implies that the current full-time position for team chairs is insufficient.

- The responsibility of facilitating 504 meetings should be absorbed into another role focused on general education accommodations.

- Revising team caseload numbers across the district is crucial to ensure equitable distribution of workload and prevent individual team chairs from being overwhelmed, regardless of whether they manage IEPs, 504s, or both.

- **BCBA and Interventionist Caseloads:** Caseloads and schedules for Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) and interventionist positions should be reviewed to ensure alignment across the district and equitable work expectations.

- **Student Support Team (SST) and IEP Referral Process:** The SST and IEP referral processes should be reviewed for consistency and clarity, with clear expectations for all educators to follow, aiming to reduce unnecessary special education evaluations.

- **Professional Development for Related Service Providers:** Provide professional development to related services staff to enhance their understanding of service levels and the criteria for distinguishing between student weaknesses and disabilities. This training should also clarify service delivery options (e.g., 1:1 or small group) to promote effective and efficient interventions.

- **Tiered Systems of Support:** Professional development on tiered systems of support is recommended to ensure students with disabilities access the curriculum and achieve beyond their current developmental levels, especially given Groton-Dunstable's unmet growth targets in ELA and mathematics. This training should be for both general and special education staff on providing accommodations and modifications within inclusive settings.

- **Parent Referral Process:** Provide professional development to parents and staff to improve their understanding of the IEP referral process, given a nearly 50% non-qualification rate for IEPs following parent referrals. The District could also explore incorporating parents' perspectives into the SST process for early involvement.

- **Scheduling Practices:** Administrators should receive professional development in creating building-based schedules to address identified gaps in elementary staffing schedules. When scheduling, students with IEPs should be prioritized, followed by the allocation of special education staff for efficiency, before creating the master schedule for other students and staff.

- **Middle School Therapeutic Program:** Comprehensive professional development for all educators and administrators is necessary for the success of the planned middle school therapeutic program, covering discipline, positive reinforcement, behavioral management, and effective intervention strategies.

- **Inclusive Practices:** Professional development on inclusive practices is strongly recommended for general education, special education, and administrative teams to

improve outcomes, as the district's percentage of students in full-inclusion experiences is declining.

- **Occupational Therapy (OT) Service Delivery:** Prioritizing group therapy over individual sessions where appropriate should be explored to optimize resource allocation and enhance service efficiency. Additionally, scheduling practices should be evaluated to ensure maximum efficiency.
- **School Psychologist Staffing:** Considering the ability to maintain service delivery with reduced staff, the District may be able to decrease the number of FTE school psychologists from 3.0 (and contracted services) to simply 3.0 FTE and no contracted services, aligning with NASP recommendations based on student population and accounting for high non-qualifying referrals. A more strategic approach to psychological evaluations is recommended, focusing on critical assessments for transition planning or when students may no longer require special education services.
- **Contracted Services for Physical Therapy:** The District should conduct a thorough cost-benefit analysis to determine the most effective and economical approach for delivering physical therapy services, exploring alternatives such as hiring a full-time physical therapist assistant (PTA) instead of relying solely on contracted services, which could offer financial savings and more consistent support.

### **III. Current Building Usage Recommendations**

The audit evaluated space utilization and potential reorganizations, including the relocation of the preschool program and the closure of Swallow Union Elementary.

- **Early Education Center (ECC) Relocation:** The audit recommends **against** moving the preschool program from Boutwell to Swallow Union Elementary at its current state. Significant renovations would be required at Swallow Union, and the financial savings from the move are minor, while costs are significant, requiring capital appropriation. The audit found no significant problems with Boutwell's operation, seeing no savings or value in such a move.
- **Swallow Union Elementary Closure and Reorganization:**
  - Financially, it makes sense to **close Swallow Union**, move K-3 students to Florence Roche, 4th grade to Groton-Dunstable Regional Middle School (GDRMS), and 8th grade to the high school. However, this recommendation presents two major problems for the Town of Dunstable.
  - The audit notes that Swallow Union has exceeded its serviceable life.

- If the Town of Dunstable wishes to keep Swallow Union, it would need to spend \$60 to \$100 million on a major renovation or replacement, which should include an ECC building to replace Boutwell.

- If the Town is unwilling to make this investment, they should allow the closing of Swallow Union and negotiate the best possible deal with the Town of Groton.

- The audit considered four options for redistributing students if Swallow Union were to close:

1. **Simplest Option:** Move 8th grade to the high school and make the middle school grades 4-7. This option offers adequate space, allows for the closure of Swallow Union (avoiding capital costs), may reduce the number of rooms needed for K-4 students, and can lead to reductions in specialists and support staff. The move is relatively inexpensive with no capital costs. However, Dunstable would lose its elementary school, Groton would require a capital assessment from Dunstable for using Florence Roche, and there would be some transportation costs.

2. **Split Middle School:** Split the two middle school buildings into two separate schools: GDRMS 6-7 and Stoddart Intermediate School 4-5. This option might lead to educational/curriculum improvement, with both buildings having essential facilities. It would, however, require an additional principal and shares the same cons as Option 1.

3. **Finding Room in Middle School:** Find space within existing middle school buildings without moving 8th grade to the high school. This is theoretically possible but difficult. The audit does not consider this or Option 4 to be viable approaches.

4. **Splitting 8th Grade:** Keep 8th grade at the middle school but split the district into two schools: GDRMS 7-8 and Stoddart Intermediate 4-6 or 4-5. The audit does not consider this or Option 3 to be viable approaches.

- The audit recommends that the choice between Option 1 and Option 2 is an educational decision for the district to make, as Option 3 and 4 are not seen as viable approaches.

- **Recommendation:** The audit outlines financial benefits associated with closing Swallow Union and relocating Dunstable students to the new Florence Roche (K-3), 4th grade to GDRMS, and the 8th grade to the high school. However, this comes at a significant educational cost to both towns and to the district as a whole. Closing Swallow Union presents major problems for the town of Dunstable and disrupts developmentally appropriate educational programming in all schools across the district. The closure of Swallow Union and relocating all Dunstable students to Groton (K-3 to Florence Roche, and 4<sup>th</sup> grade to the middle school campus) should not be considered a viable option.



# **Operational Audit August 27, 2025**

**Groton-Dunstable  
Regional School District**



# Why an Operational Audit?

During the FY25 budgeting season, the Town of Groton voted to gift the school district \$619,000 during the annual town meeting. These funds came with two conditions:

- Gift could only be used for non-recurring expenses
- The school district would have an independent Operational Audit performed to vet potential cost saving measures.





## Who performed the Operational Audit

The Abrahams Group LLC performed the operational audit. They are the same consultant that conducted the operational audit in 2017 that resulted in the school district implementing cost saving measures including relocating the central office, outsourcing food service management and custodial services.



## Expected outcome of the Operational Audit

Given certain school expenses growing at an inflationary rate higher than available revenues, the elimination of positions over the last three fiscal years, the goal of the operational audit was to explore various options to reduce costs, review current staffing and support and explore potential long term efficiencies.



# Operational Audit Components

This operational audit contained three areas of interest:

1. Administrator staffing
2. Student Services and Support staffing
3. Building usage





# Administr ation Staffing



## Purpose of the Administration Staffing Review

The most recent fiscal years have presented many funding challenges that resulted in staffing reductions throughout the district. The district heard comments surrounding the number of Administrative staff and the relative salaries of those positions. An independent review was conducted to provide an unbiased opinion on the Administrative positions.

## Methodology of Administration Data Collection

The consultant started with a list of Central Office staff and available job descriptions. He followed up with remote interviews with many of the Administrative team. He was provided with a comparison of salaries for our market basket as well as a statewide comparison maintained by MASBO members. The consultant also used DESE salary info to compare further.



## Appendix A - Salary Comparisons by Enrollment

The consultant chose five (5) districts with similar enrollments to compare with GDRSD Administrative positions. Those districts are different than our market basket communities and included Mansfield, Mendon-Upton, Swampscott, Wilmington and Gardner. The rationale was based on the consultant wanting to identify communities they felt were similar to GDRSD by enrollment to determine if the salary comparisons yielded a similar or different outcome than using our established market basket.

# Appendix A - Salary Comparisons by Enrollment

Comparison of FY25 Central Office Administration provided the following:

Superintendent salary out of the 6 districts	ranks 4th
Asst. Superintendent 2nd out of the 6 districts*	ranks
Director of Business & Finance out of the 6 districts	ranks 3rd
Director of Human Resources out of the 6 districts	ranks 3rd
Director of Student Services 2nd out of the 6 districts	ranks
Director of Technology out of the 6 districts	ranks 4th
Athletic Director out of the 6 districts	ranks 3rd

Note: The salary comparisons do not take into account years of experience, which could have an impact on the salary reported.



## Appendix A - Salary Comparisons by Enrollment

The consultant also included basic municipal finance data including Equalized Valuations (EQV) in Appendix A. This was to provide a sense of each community's financial status as an additional data marker for comparing the chosen communities.

## Appendix B - Administrative Staffing by Function

The consultant chose to not only look at salaries, but the number of Administrators in the district. Although it can be difficult to exactly match positions between school districts due to unique job descriptions and title variations, the selected communities were similar to Groton-Dunstable.

Appendix B illustrates the number of Administrator positions in connection with district net school spending, per pupil expenditure and school leadership per pupil expenditure.

## Appendix B - Administrative Staffing by Function

The consultant conclusions comparing staffing to spending are as follows:

- The % of spending on Administration costs is not significantly different from similar sized districts
- Central Office staffing including Superintendents, Directors and Principals is similar across the districts
- The per pupil expenditure are similar with the exception of one outlier (Triton)
- The staffing configurations are similar and appear reasonable.

## Additional observations

The operational audit also addresses what the consultants consider “middle management” which are Central Office positions. They include:

- Tier I and Tier II/III Coordinators
- 5 Team Chairs
- PreK-8 Math Supervisor
- Assistant Business Director
- Technology Department (Network Admin, Systems Admin, Data Admin and 2 Network Technicians)
- Community Education Coordinator
- Student Services Support (liaison, student registration)

Job descriptions were provided for all the positions on the previous slide. The consultant states that they accurately reflect job responsibilities, however some were job descriptions and some were job postings.

# Recommendations/Observations

While there is variation, the administrative staffing numbers are not significantly different from Groton-Dunstable.

- Central office staffing with Superintendent, Directors and Principals is similar across the districts
- Per pupil expenditures are similar to other districts (Triton = outlier)
- Staffing configurations are similar and appear to be reasonable
- Groton-Dunstable and Triton are the highest spending districts when spending is related to the foundation budget.



# Recommendations/Observations

Review “middle management” positions including the length of their work year and standardize the job descriptions. The district may want to confirm that the job responsibilities justify the accompanying work year.

Review the need to fill vacant positions as economically as possible to save the district and taxpayers money.

Review administrative salaries and as vacancies need to be filled, the district should adhere to fair, comparable compensation.

# Special Education and Student Services



# Methodology for Special Education and Student Services for data collection

The consultants gathered a wide range of information representing many aspects of Special Education and Students services including:

- Multiple years of data posted on the MA DESE website to present a profile of GD with some comparisons to other districts and state trends
- GD job descriptions; program descriptions; staff licensure, caseloads and schedules; special education referrals and eligibility; IEP services.





# DESE Special Education Data: 2022-2025 Trends

#s and %s of students eligible for Special Education has increased in GD and MA; Disability Category %s vary comparing GD and MA; Full and Partial Inclusion %s are higher in GD; GD Graduation rate is higher than MA average; Reading and math MCAS performance in meeting state targets across grade levels warrants attention to improve academic outcomes; State targets are being met at the preschool level



## Job descriptions:

Job descriptions are needed across all positions district-wide.

Job descriptions should be reviewed to ensure accuracy, consistency and completeness to increase role clarity, alignment of responsibilities and efficiency.



# Broad responsibilities of Team Chairs

Team Chairs serve as a the central point of contact for Special Education with extensive administrative responsibilities.

At GD, Team Chairs have a wide-range of responsibilities above and beyond special education compliance and coordination.

When reviewing Team Chair job descriptions, consider the varied roles and responsibilities of the Team Chairs, work year and efficiency of caseloads.



# Special Education Referrals (Evaluations to determine Special Education Eligibility)

Increasing number of special education referrals.

Approximately  $\frac{1}{3}$  of referrals are preschool aged children.

Significant number of K-12 referrals from parents result in ineligibility determinations with many not going through the SST process.

Increase communication to parents and staff about the referral process and eligibility criteria, engage and involve parents when student growth concerns arise, and provide relevant professional development.



# Strengthening Student Support Teams and Tiered Interventions in all buildings

As the Student Support Team (SST) process is not consistent, establish clear expectations and practices;

Offer professional development on tiered systems of support; providing accommodations and modifications, and inclusive practices.





# Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy Service Delivery

Given higher than typical percentages of students receiving S/L and OT services, recommend engaging in a more in-depth exploration of service delivery structures;

Given the frequency of 1:1 services, recommend reviewing service delivery decision making processes; revisiting scheduling to prioritize group therapy, and offering professional development on service delivery options, and distinguishing between weakness and disabilities.



# Scheduling:

To ensure efficiency...

Review scheduling practices across all service providers;

Provide professional development on scheduling; and prioritize students with IEPs followed by the allocation of special education staff when scheduling.



## In-district specialized programs:

Consolidation of elementary specialized programs at Florence Roche offers efficiency of shared resources, and a more seamless continuum of services;

Offer professional development to establish therapeutic programming (discipline, positive behavior strategies, collaboration and procedural expectations);

GD offers specialized programming at all levels demonstrating a cohesive and comprehensive service delivery model.





# Building Usage



# Basic Inventory of GSRSD School Buildings

- Use of MSBA and current data to review current building utilization: focus on effectiveness, productivity, and cost efficiency
- Assess and review building usage scenarios including relocating the ECC to another building and merging students into Florence Roche and closing Swallow Union



## MSBA Space Utilization Standards

Swallow Union, Groton Dunstable Regional Middle School, and Groton Dunstable Regional High School were/are rated as under-utilized by MSBA standards.

With respect to GDRMS, it is noted that this utilization rating standard did not account for the central office relocation





## Boutwell Early Childhood Center

Rated as a “1” for both building condition and environment.

“The Boutwell building serves the ECC program well. While somewhat antiquated it has been kept up to date. It has air conditioning, and a new heating system. There is a room that can serve as a play space/gym. There is an area that serves as a library. Outdoor play area is aging and should be replaced.”



# Swallow Union Elementary School

Well maintained older elementary school in need of renovation. 2016 MSBA Needs Study rated building as Level 3 for Building Condition and 1 for General Environment.

Enrollment in 2024/2025 was 211 students.

Capital improvements underway at Swallow Union as well as an application to Massachusetts School Building Authority to repair/replace the roof.



# Florence Roche Elementary School

New Building completed and  
open to students for the  
2024/2025 school year.

Designed for 645 students, 2025  
enrollment was 615.



# Groton Dunstable Regional Middle School

Split into two buildings: Stoddart  
- 5th and 6th Grade and Middle  
School North - 7th and 8th  
Grade

2025 Enrollment was 739. 2016  
MSBA study rated both buildings  
as 1 for condition and general  
environment

District Central Office housed in  
the Stoddart Building





# Groton Dunstable Regional High School

2025 Enrollment for GDRHS was 659 students. Rated 1 for Building Condition and General Environment.

Project underway to connect the high school to town water supply.



## Scenario: Moving Early Childhood Center to Swallow

While there is room, and available classroom space, the costs associated with the move are high. Swallow Union building is also in need to major renovations. Current ECC location is also preferable for the district as a whole. There would be minimal, if any, savings with respect to personnel.



## Scenario: Moving ECC to the High School

Similar to the recommendation around moving the ECC to the high school, while there would be adequate room/classroom space in the lower level, the costs of moving would exceed any benefit to having the ECC at the high school.

Savings would be minor and the the costs would be high. This would also displace the Groton TV studio.



# Closing Swallow Union & Moving all K-4 Students to Groton

Impacts educational programming across the district K-12.

Would require the new Florence Roche building, specifically designed for K-4 classroom neighborhoods, to be K-3 only. 4th grade would need to move to the middle school.

Middle school buildings would need to become 4-7, displacing the 8th grade students to the HS, or by maximizing available space, could potentially fit 4-8 graders, displacing Central Office to the high school. This shift in grade levels and use of space is highly disruptive and not educationally or developmentally appropriate for students and our educators.



## Closing Swallow Union & Moving all K-4 Students to Groton

Dunstable would lose its elementary school, a central part of the town community, and a critical part of our regional school district.

Swallow Union is one of the highest performing elementary schools in the state and a model school community.





# Closing Swallow Union & Moving all K-4 Students to Groton

The town would incur significant costs associated with sending all resident Dunstable students to Groton.

District would incur greater transportation costs associated with the closing of Swallow Union.

Capital improvements and renovations of Swallow Union are underway, as well as for the Union Building. The MSBA is reviewing an application to replace the roof.

Potential for Dunstable residents to block the decision to close Swallow Union and failed budget votes/possible legal action could follow. Audit report cites: "We do not know a solution to this problem."



## **Warrant, Summary, and Recommendations**

# **TOWN OF GROTON**



## **2025 FALL TOWN MEETING**

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

**Beginning Saturday, October 18, 2025 @ 9:00 AM**

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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.”<sup>1</sup> “Every action taken at the meeting must be pursuant to some article in the warrant and must be within the scope of such article.”<sup>2</sup>

## 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.

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<sup>1</sup> *Town Meeting Time: A Handbook of Parliamentary Law* (page 19) Massachusetts Moderators Association, Fourth Edition, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> *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.

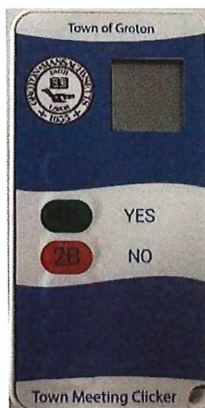
### Proxy Voting Prohibited

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 Marion Stoddart Building. There is a ramp providing access from the parking lot to the front door of the Building.

**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 18, 2025**

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 eighteenth day of October, 2025 at Nine O'clock in the morning, to consider the following:

**ARTICLE LISTINGS**

<b>Article 1*</b>	Prior Year Bills	6
<b>Article 2*</b>	Amend the Fiscal Year 2026 Town Operating Budget	6
<b>Article 3*</b>	Transfer Money Into Capital Stabilization Fund	6
<b>Article 4*</b>	Transfer Money Into Stabilization Fund	7
<b>Article 5*</b>	Transfer Money Into the GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund	7
<b>Article 6*</b>	Transfer Within the Water Enterprise Fund	8
<b>Article 7*</b>	Transfer Within the Sewer Enterprise Fund	8
<b>Article 8*</b>	Transfer Within the Stormwater Enterprise Fund	8
<b>Article 9*</b>	Cable Department Equipment Grant	9
<b>Article 10*</b>	Assessors Quinquennial Certification	9
<b>Article 11*</b>	Repair Fitch's Bridge Head Wall	10
<b>Article 12*</b>	Provide Funding to Maintain the Former Nod Road Landfill	10
<b>Article 13*</b>	Repair Fire Alarm - Function Hall and Restaurant at the Country Club	11
<b>Article 14*</b>	Engineering Funds for Complete Streets Grant Work	11
<b>Article 15*</b>	Debt Service for Middle School Track	12
<b>Article 16</b>	Proposed Amendments to the Groton Charter	12
<b>Article 17</b>	Purchase Self Containing Breathing Apparatus for the Fire Department	13
<b>Article 18</b>	Chapter 202 of the General Bylaws - "Door-to-Door Solicitation"	13
<b>Article 19</b>	Amend Chapter 161 – Licenses and Permits of the Groton Code	18
<b>Article 20</b>	Special Legislation - Prohibit Use Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides	21
<b>Article 21</b>	Accept Bluebird Lane as a Town Way	22
<b>Article 22</b>	Citizens' Petition – Authorization for Advisory Committee	22
	Report of the Town Manager to the 2025 Fall Town Meeting	24
	Appendix A – Proposed Amendments to the Groton Charter	32

\*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: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**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 24 for additional information related to this Article.*

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**Article 2:      *Amend the Fiscal Year 2026 Town Operating Budget***

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget as adopted under Article 5 of the April 26, 2025 Spring Town Meeting and amended under Article 1 of the June 23, 2025 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 2026, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Finance Committee***

***Select Board***

***Town Manager***

**Select Board: *See Select Board's Recommendations Beginning on Page 25***

**Finance Committee: *See Finance Committee's Recommendations Beginning on Page 25***

**Summary:**      *The Fiscal Year 2026 Town Operating Budget was approved at the April 26, 2025 Town Meeting and amended at the June 23, 2025 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 Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 24 for additional information related to this Article.*

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**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: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Summary:** *As of the printing of this Warrant, the Fund has a balance of \$109,199. 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 24 for additional information related to this Article.*

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**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: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Summary:** *As of the printing of this Warrant, the balance in this fund is \$2,728,838. 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 24 for additional information related to this Article.*

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**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: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Summary:** *As of the printing of the Warrant, the balance in this fund is \$22,868. 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 24 for additional information related to this Article.*

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**Article 6:      *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 2026 Water Enterprise Budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Board of Water Commissioners***

**Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Summary:**      *This Article will seek a transfer from the Water Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2026 Water Department's General Expense Budget to cover unanticipated expenses. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 24 for additional information related to this Article.*

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**Article 7:      *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 2026 Four Corners Sewer Enterprise Department Budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Board of Sewer Commissioners***

**Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Summary:**      *This article allows the Sewer Department to transfer money from its surplus account to cover any deficit in the Fiscal Year 2026 Four Corners Sewer Budget. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 24 for additional information related to this Article.*

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**Article 8:      *Transfer Within the Stormwater Enterprise Fund***

To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum or sums of money from the Stormwater Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2026 Stormwater Enterprise Budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Town Manager***

**Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Summary:**      *This article allows the Stormwater Department to transfer money from its surplus account to cover any deficit in the Fiscal Year 2026 Stormwater Budget. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 24 for additional information related to this Article.*

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**Article 9: Cable Department Equipment Grant**

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 creating a Cable Department Equipment Grant Fund for the Local Access Cable Department, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Town Manager***

**Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Summary:** *The Town's Cable Television License agreements with Verizon New England Inc. and Spectrum Northeast, LLC include Public, Educational, and Government (PEG) Grants to be used for capital funding (equipment) purposes. The Town currently collects all cable revenue in the "Cable Department Receipts Reserved for Appropriation Fund" that was established at the 2024 Special Town Meeting. When the Town closed the Cable Enterprise last year, funding designated for this equipment grant was returned to the General Fund and certified as Free Cash. It should have been set aside for equipment. This Article creates a new Equipment Grant fund for these PEG Grant payments and transfers funds from Free Cash into it.*

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**Article 10: Assessors Quinquennial Certification**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds, a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager, for the purpose of completing the five-year full certification program necessary to achieve full and fair cash value in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 40, Section 56, and Chapter 58, Sections 1, 1A, and 3, of the Massachusetts General Laws, and the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Board of Assessors***

**Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Summary:** *Assessors in every city and town are responsible for developing a Revaluation program to completely analyze and revalue all property within its borders every year. Revaluation annually is required under Massachusetts law and is regulated by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue's Bureau of Local Assessment (BLA). The rationale for revaluation is to always maintain property at fair market or fair cash value to ensure equity for all classes of property. Every fifth year the Massachusetts Department of Revenue requires a full certification with BLA oversight. The Assessors are seeking \$34,900 to cover the cost for appraisal services of Real Property to be conducted by Vision Government Solutions.*

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**Article 11:     *Repairs to Fitch’s Bridge Head Wall***

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 repair the head wall at Fitch’s Bridge, and all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Town Manager***

**Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Summary:**     *The head wall that supports the bridge abutment for Fitch’s Bridge is collapsing and needs to be repaired. The Department of Public Works will oversee the repairs of this head wall in compliance with Massachusetts State Law with regards to procurement. This Article will authorize the funding for this repair. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 24 for additional information related to this Article.*

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**Article 12:     *Provide Funding to Maintain the Former Nod Road Landfill***

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 maintain the former Nod Road Landfill in compliance with Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection requirements, and all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Town Manager***

***Department of Public Works Director***

**Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Summary:**     *Recently the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) inspected the former Nod Road Landfill and has required the Town to begin mowing the Landfill. DEP is requesting that the Town conduct a third party inspection to ensure the Landfill was “capped” properly. The DPW Director has requested funds be put aside for maintenance, mowing, inspections and monitoring well installation, along with engineering and survey work. The purpose of this Article is to provide the necessary funding. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 24 for additional information related to this Article.*

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**Article 13:     *Repair Fire Alarm - Function Hall and Restaurant at the Country Club***

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 repair and/or replace the Fire Alarm System at the Function Hall and Restaurant at the Groton Country Club, and all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Town Manager***

**Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Summary:**     *During a recent inspection, it was determined that the current Fire Alarm System at the Function Hall and Restaurant at the Groton Country Club needs to be replaced to provide proper fire protection at these facilities. The purpose of this Article is to provide the necessary funding for this purpose. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 24 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: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**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 \$30,000 for this purpose.*

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**Article 15:     *Debt Service for Middle School Track***

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds, a sum or sums of money, pursuant to Chapter 44B, Section 5, of the Massachusetts General Laws, for debt service for Fiscal Year 2026 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: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Summary:**     *The loan to cover the \$1,405,374 cost of the Middle School Track is being paid back in annual payments from Community Preservation Act Funds. This Article appropriates an additional payment in FY 2026, which will be paid by the Community Preservation Committee from the Community Preservation Fund Unallocated Reserve. All of the \$33,000 payment will be applied towards the principal.*

---

**Article 16:     *Proposed Amendments to the Groton Charter***

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to petition the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for a special act to amend the Town Charter as set forth in Appendix A of this Warrant, provided, however, that the General Court may make clerical or editorial changes of form only to the bill, unless the Select Board approves amendments thereto before enactment by the General Court, which amendments shall be within the public purposes of said petition, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Charter Review Committee***

**Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Finance Committee: *No Position***

**Charter Review Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Summary:**     *This Article proposes amendments to the Town of Groton Charter that were previously brought before the Spring 2025 Town Meeting and narrowly defeated by a margin of three votes. The proposed amendments were developed through a public process and are intended to improve clarity, efficiency, and governance within the Charter. Due to the close vote and continued public interest, these amendments are being presented again in two motions for further discussion and vote at this Town Meeting, with some slight changes. Approval of the two motions in this article would authorize the submission of the revised Charter to the Legislature for enactment. The proposed changes are shown in Appendix A of this Warrant beginning on page 32.*

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**Article 17:     *Replace Self Contained Breathing Apparatus for the Fire Department***

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 and replace the Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus of the Fire Department and all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Town Manager***

**Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Summary:**     *Self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) is a critical component of the safety gear utilized by Fire Department personnel. The ability to breathe clean air and operate in hazardous atmospheres where smoke, heat, and toxic gases are present may make the difference between life or death during emergency incidents. The Groton Fire Department requires SCBA's to be worn by personnel on structure fires, vehicle fires, hazardous materials incidents, and other incidents deemed necessary by company officers. The Town had hoped that this purchase would be covered by a Federal Grant, but the Grant Funding has not been received. The existing SCBA equipment has reached the end of its useful life and needs to be replaced immediately. The cost of this replacement is approximately \$500,000. The Town Manager is recommending that these funds be borrowed and paid off over five (5) years.*

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**Article 18:     *Chapter 202 of the General Bylaws - "Door-to-Door Solicitation"***

To see if the Town will vote to amend the General Bylaws of the Town of Groton by adding a new Chapter 202 entitled " Door-to-Door Solicitation" as follows:

**Chapter 202  
Door-to-Door Solicitation**

**§ 202 - 1       Purpose**

The purpose of this Chapter 202 is to provide for the regulation of door-to-door solicitation for commercial purposes in the Town of Groton, to promote public safety and consumer protection.

**§ 202-2 Definitions**

For the purpose of this Chapter, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated below:

**PEDDLER/HAWKER** — Any person who sells and makes immediate delivery of, or offers for sale and immediate delivery of, any goods, wares or merchandise, in possession of the seller, at any place within the Town of Groton other than from a fixed place of business.

**PERSON** — Includes the singular and the plural and shall also mean and include any person, firm or corporation, association, club, partnership or society, or any other organization.



**SOLICITOR** — Any person who sells or takes orders or offers to sell or take orders for goods, wares, or merchandise for future delivery, or for services to be performed, at any place within the Town of Groton other than a fixed place of business.

**DOOR-TO-DOOR SOLICITATION** — The transaction of any temporary business within the Town by moving from one place to another by foot, vehicle, or other conveyance, and selling or buying goods, wares, merchandise, foods, or services, or soliciting for orders, sales, subscriptions, or business of any kind, or soliciting for information or donations, including such conduct by peddlers, hawkers, and solicitors.

### **§ 202-3 License Required**

No person may engage in door-to-door solicitation in the Town of Groton without a license issued by the Chief of Police, unless otherwise exempted under this Chapter 202.

### **§ 202-4 Exemptions**

This Chapter shall not apply to:

- A. Persons, firms or corporations selling services, goods, wares, merchandise or materials at wholesale to dealers in such articles.
- B. Newspaper delivery.
- C. Persons vending and delivering goods, wares, or merchandise to regular customers on established routes in the regular course of business.
- D. Deliveries of products previously ordered or purchased.
- E. Sales on private property of the owner's or occupant's household goods and belongings.
- F. Any activity for religious, political, or public policy purposes or other noncommercial purposes, such as non-profit organizations and youth groups, regardless of whether such activity includes acts that would otherwise constitute door-to-door solicitation.
- G. Governmental officers or employees of the Town, county, state or federal government, or any subdivision thereof, when on official business.
- H. Insurance companies authorized to do business in Massachusetts.
- I. Persons under the age of 18 except in connection with a for-profit organization, newspaper carriers excepted.

### **§ 202-5 Application for License**

- A. Each person seeking to conduct door-to-door solicitation shall obtain from and file with the Police Department an application for a license and accompany said application with an investigation fee to cover the cost of investigating the applicant in an amount set from time to time by the Town Manager.
- B. The written application shall contain the required information:
  - (1) Name, permanent address and telephone number, and temporary address if any, of the person seeking to conduct door-to-door solicitation.
  - (2) Applicant date of birth.

- (3) Applicant height, weight, color of hair and eyes.
  - (4) Make, model and registration number and owner of any vehicle to be used by the applicant while conducting door-to-door solicitation.
  - (5) Period of time for which the license is needed.
  - (6) Brief description of nature of business and goods to be sold.
  - (7) Name, address and telephone number of the person or organization whom the applicant represents and the length of time the applicant has been associated with or employed by that person or organization.
- C. The applicant shall permit the Police Department to photograph said applicant for identification purposes.
- D. A license fee structure shall be issued for one day, one week, one month, or one year. The fees for each duration shall be set from time to time by the Town Manager. One-year duration licenses will be prorated from the set fee if not obtained in the month of January.

#### **§ 202-6 Investigation of Applicant; Issuance or Denial of License**

- A. Upon receipt of each such application, the Police Department shall initiate an investigation of the applicant as the Department deems necessary for the protection of the public good, subject to all applicable legal requirements, including authorized criminal history background checks.
- B. Not later than 10 calendar days after the filing of such application, the Chief of Police, or their designee, shall issue the applicant a license in the form of a photo license card showing the name and address of the licensee and authorizing them to solicit for the purposes described in their application subject to this Chapter and the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Failure by the Chief of Police to act on an application within 10 calendar days shall constitute approval of said application.
- C. Grounds for disapproval of an application shall be:
- (1) Applicant has a conviction in any state or federal court of the United States or any court of a territory of the United States for any of the following named offenses committed within the last seven years: murder/manslaughter, rape, arson, burglary, breaking and entering, larceny, robbery, receiving stolen property, assault, fraud, sexual misconduct as specified in M.G.L. c. 265, §§ 13B and 22 through 24, and M.G.L. c. 272, § 53A, unlawfully carrying weapons, or the attempt of any such offense, as such persons pose a substantial degree of danger to minors and other persons vulnerable to becoming victims of the violent crimes so listed;
  - (2) Applicant is a person who is a sex offender required to register with the Sex Offenders Registry Board and who is finally classified as a Level 2 or Level 3 Sex Offender, as such person has been found to have a moderate to high risk of re-offense and pose a substantial degree of dangerousness to minors and other persons vulnerable to becoming victims of sex crimes;
  - (3) Applicant has had a license revoked for violation of this Chapter within the previous two-year period; or
  - (4) The failure to include any of the information requested in the application.

### **§ 202-7 License Requirements**

- A. Licenses shall be issued, or denied, by the Chief no later than 10 business days after the application therefor is made in writing to the Police Department.
- B. All photo license cards shall clearly indicate the dates of issuance and expiration and the name and address of the licensee.
- C. All licenses issued under this Chapter are personal to the licensee and shall not be transferable. It shall be a violation of this Chapter for a licensee to allow a license to be used by any other person.
- D. Licensees under this Chapter shall carry their photo license card with them while engaged in authorized activities and must have such photo license card clearly visible while soliciting in the Town of Groton.
- E. Annual licenses shall expire on December 31 of the year issued.
- F. Ice creams trucks are required to print and post an 8 1/2 x 11 color copy of the photo license card in the window of vehicle, clearly visible to patrons.
- G. If while the application is pending or during the term of any license granted thereon there is a change in fact, policy, or method that would alter the information given in the application, the applicant or licensee, as the case may be, shall notify the Police Department in writing within 24 hours of such change.
- H. A license issued under this Chapter 202 does not constitute an endorsement by the Town of Groton nor by any of its departments or officers of the purpose or of the person conducting the solicitation.

### **§ 202-8 Time Limit for Operation**

No licensee under this Chapter shall conduct door-to-door solicitation between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m. or on Sundays and legal holidays, unless invited to do so by the owner or occupant of any private residence in the Town.

### **§ 202-9 No Solicitation List**

A No Solicitation List shall be established and maintained by the Groton Police Department to prohibit door-to-door solicitation at certain premises. Owners or occupants may submit their property for inclusion on the list without charge. Upon approval of the issuance of a license as provided herein, each such licensed entity or individual shall be provided with a copy of the No Solicitation List and may not conduct door-to-door solicitation at such property.

## **§ 202-10 Posted Premises**

No person shall engage in door-to-door solicitation upon any premises without a prior invitation from the occupant if such premises is posted against such solicitation by means of a notice prominently displayed near the main entrance to the premises or on or near the main door bearing the phrase "no solicitors" or words of similar effect.

## **§ 202-11 Revocation of License; Appeals**

- A. Licenses issued under this Chapter may be revoked by the Chief of Police for any of the following causes:
  - (1) Fraud, misrepresentation, or false statements contained in the application for a license.
  - (2) Fraud, misrepresentation, or false statements in the course of carrying on door-to-door solicitation.
  - (3) Any violation of this Chapter.
  - (4) Commission or conviction of a felony.
  - (5) Commission or conviction of any crime or misdemeanor of moral turpitude.
  - (6) Conducting the business of door-to-door solicitation in a threatening, abusive or illegal fashion so as to constitute a menace to the health, safety, or general welfare of the public.
- B. Notice of the revocation of the license shall be given in writing, setting forth the grounds of complaint and the opportunity to appeal the decision of revocation. Such notice shall be made in person or mailed to the licensee at their last known address, or at an address contained in the application for a license.
- C. Any person who is denied a license or whose license has been revoked may appeal by filing a written notice of appeal with the Town Manager. Such appeal must be filed within five days after receipt of the notice of denial or revocation. The Town Manager shall hear the appeal within one week of the written notice of appeal, provided, however, that if the Town Manager fails to make a determination within 30 days after the filing of the appeal, the license shall be deemed granted or reinstated as the case may be.

## **§ 202-12 Violations and Penalties**

- A. Any person violating any provisions of this Chapter shall be subject to a fine of \$300 for each offense, except as otherwise provided herein; and a separate offense shall be deemed committed on each day during or on which a violation occurs or continues.
- B. Noncriminal disposition. As an alternative to criminal prosecution or civil action, the Town may elect to utilize the noncriminal disposition procedure set forth in M.G.L. c. 40, § 21D, which has been adopted by the Town in the Code of the Town of Groton, Chapter 1, § 1-4, Complaints, in which case the Police Department or authorized agent shall be the enforcing person.

**§ 202-13 Severability**

Invalidity of any individual provision of this Chapter shall not affect the validity of the Chapter as a whole.

And further, to authorize the Town Clerk to make any numbering or formatting edits necessary to conform to the publication conventions of the Town Bylaws;

or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Town Manager  
Police Chief***

**Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously***  
**Finance Committee: *No Position***

**Summary:** *The Door-to-Door Solicitation Bylaw will establish a process for Solicitors and other Transient Vendors to obtain a license from the town. The application process will include the following: a review of the background of the vendor and suitability of the applicant. This license will prohibit door-to-door solicitation from 7PM - 9AM and prohibit soliciting on Sunday and holidays. The bylaw will also establish a "No Solicitation List." This will prohibit soliciting for any properties that are on the list, and solicitors will not be allowed to go in or on the private property or residence of such person(s) who are on the list. Residents may request to be placed on the "No Solicitation List" at any time. The bylaw establishes penalties for those who solicit in violation of the bylaw*

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**Article 19: Amend Chapter 161 – Licenses and Permits of the Groton Code**

To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 161 "Licenses and Permits" of the General Bylaws of the Town by adding a New Article 2 entitled "Criminal History Background Checks" as follows:

**Chapter 161  
Licenses and Permits**

**Article 2. Criminal History Background Checks**

**§161-2 Purpose and Authority**

- A. In order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the inhabitants of the Town of Groton, and as authorized by M.G.L. c. 6, § 172B 1/2, this Chapter shall require:
- (1) Applicants for a license listed in §161-3 below to submit to fingerprinting by the Groton Police Department; and
  - (2) The Police Department to arrange for the conduct of fingerprint-based criminal record background checks.



- B. The Town authorizes the Massachusetts State Police, the Massachusetts Department of Criminal Justice Information Systems (DCJIS), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), as may be applicable, to conduct on the behalf of the Town and its Police Department fingerprint-based state and national criminal history records checks, including FBI records, consistent with this Chapter. The Town authorizes the Police Department to receive and utilize state and FBI records in connection with such background checks, consistent with this Chapter. The Town shall not disseminate criminal record information received from the state or FBI to unauthorized persons or entities.

**§161-3 Licenses Subject to Fingerprinting**

Any applicant for a license to engage in any of the following occupational activities shall have a full set of fingerprints taken by the Police Department for the purpose of conducting a state and national fingerprint-based criminal history records check:

- A. Manager of alcoholic beverage license.
- B. Hawkers, peddlers, and solicitors (door-to-door solicitation license).
- C. Ice cream truck vendor.
- D. Junk dealers.
- E. Owner or operator of a public conveyance.

**§161-4 Police Department Procedure**

- A. The Police Department will forward the full set of fingerprints obtained pursuant to this Chapter either electronically or manually to the State Identification Section of the Massachusetts State Police.
- B. The Police Department shall provide the applicant with a copy of the results of his or her fingerprint based criminal background check and supply the applicant with opportunity to complete, or challenge the accuracy of, the information contained in it, including the state and FBI identification record. Any applicant that wishes to challenge the accuracy or completeness of the record shall be advised that the procedures to change, correct, or update the record are set forth in 28 CFR 16.34 and any applicable DCJIS policy.
- C. The Police Department shall communicate the results of fingerprint-based criminal history records check to the applicable Town licensing authority (the "licensing authority"). The Police Department shall in addition render to the licensing authority its evaluation of the applicant's suitability for the proposed occupational activity based on the results of the criminal records background check and any other relevant information known to it. In rendering its evaluation, the Police Department shall indicate whether the applicant has been convicted of, or is under pending indictment for, a crime that bears upon his or her suitability for the proposed occupational activity, or any felony or misdemeanor that involved force or threat of force, controlled substances, or a sex-related offense.

**§161-5 Reliance by Licensing Authority on Results of Background Check.**

- A. The licensing authority may utilize the results of any fingerprint-based criminal records background check performed pursuant to this Chapter for the sole purpose of determining the applicant's suitability for the proposed occupational activity. The licensing authority may deny an application for any license specified herein, including renewals and transfers

thereof, if it determines that the results of the fingerprint-based criminal records background check render the applicant unsuitable for the proposed occupational activity.

- B. No application shall be denied on the basis of information contained in a criminal record until the applicant has been afforded a reasonable time, as determined by the licensing authority, to correct or complete the information, or has declined to do so.

**§161-6 Policies and Procedures**

The Police Department, subject to the approval of the Town Manager, will develop and maintain written policies and procedures for its licensing-related criminal record background check system.

**§161-7 Fees**

Each applicant for a license listed in §161-3 shall pay a fee as set from time to time by the Town Manager.

And further, to authorize the Town Clerk to make any numbering or formatting edits necessary to conform to the publication conventions of the Town Bylaws;

or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Town Manager  
Police Chief***

**Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously***  
**Finance Committee: *No Position***

**Summary:** *The amendment will authorize the Town to require a fingerprint- based criminal background check of applicants of certain licenses to protect the safety of the inhabitants of the Town of Groton. The amendment will apply to applicants for the following licenses: Manager of alcoholic beverage license; Hawkers, peddlers, and solicitors; ice cream truck vendor; owner or operator of a public conveyance. The licensing authority shall utilize the results of any fingerprint-based criminal records background check for the sole purpose of determining the applicant's suitability for the proposed occupational activity.*

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**Article 20: Special Legislation - Prohibit Use of Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to petition the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for a special act as set forth below, provided, however, that the General Court may make clerical or editorial changes of form only to the bill, unless the Select Board approves amendments thereto before enactment by the General Court, which amendments shall be within the public purposes of said petition, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**An Act Authorizing the Town of Groton To Prohibit the Use of Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding chapter 132B of the General Laws or any other general or special law to the contrary, the town of Groton may regulate through local bylaw or board of health regulation the use of second generation anticoagulant rodenticides within the town of Groton, including prohibiting the use of such pesticides by licensed commercial applicators as defined in 333 C.M.R. 10.00.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

or to take any other action relative thereto.

**Select Board**

**Select Board: Recommended Unanimously**  
**Finance Committee: No Position**

**Summary:** *The passage of legislation - whether state-wide or local - authorizing the prohibition or restriction of so-called "second generation anticoagulant rodenticides", commonly referred to as "SGARs", is necessary for the following reasons: Despite the use of rodent poisons for generations, rodents continue to proliferate in communities that support their feeding habits; Trash control, rather than poison, is the most effective means of reducing rodent populations; SGARs have caused, and continue to cause, immense, prolonged suffering and death among natural rodent predators such as bald eagles, owls, hawks, coyotes, foxes, and in some cases, domestic pets; In May 2025, the Select Board adopted a policy prohibiting the use of SGARs on Town property; In order to prohibit or restrict the application of SGARs on private property in Groton, state-wide or local legislation is necessary; Many other communities, including Newton, Arlington, Billerica, Brookline and Newbury, have filed petitions in the General Court seeking similar special legislation; The extreme, unnecessary, and avoidable suffering of non-targeted species must be curtailed by adherence to a community-wide integrated pest management ("IPM") program that requires public education, enhanced trash management measures and that either prohibits or greatly restricts the use of SGARs; If enacted, the petitioned special legislation would permit the Town to determine the extent to which SGARs should be prohibited or restricted in Groton under a future bylaw approved by Town Meeting.*

**Article 21: Accept Bluebird Lane as a Town Way**

To see if the Town will vote to accept Bluebird Lane as a public way, as recommended by the Planning Board and laid out by the Select Board and as shown on a plan entitled "Bluebird Lane Street Acceptance Plan, Groton, Massachusetts" Owned by R.D. Kanniard Homes, Ayer, MA, prepared by Dillis & Roy, Civil Design Group, dated May 15, 2025, 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: Recommended Unanimously**  
**Finance Committee: No Position**

**Summary:** To accept Bluebird Lane as a public way.

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**Article 22: Citizens' Petition – Authorization to Create an Advisory Committee**

To see if the Town will vote to require the creation of an Advisory Committee to develop and recommend a process for delivering Major Initiative Cost - Benefit Reports to Town Meeting.

**Citizens' Petition**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>ADDRESS</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>ADDRESS</b>
John Petropoulos	18 Kemp Street	Mary A. Jennings	62 Blossom Lane
Kevin Lindemer	201 Boston Road	Diane Hewitt	57 Long Hill Road
Stephen Lane	86 Ridgewood Road	Deborah Busser	17 Broadmeadow Road
Bruce H. Easom	435 Martins Pond Road	Jonathan Strauss	38 Westview Street
Jay Prager	28 Star House Lane	Mark R. Presti	230 Fieldstone Drive

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee: Not Recommended Unanimously**

**Summary:** The following summary was prepared by the petitioners and represents their view on the Article: Town Meeting would benefit from the provision of rigorous and independently created cost-benefit reports to Town Meeting for articles projected to add significant cost to taxpayers. Phase one (this article) authorizes the creation of a five (5) person Advisory Committee charged with developing the structure, protocols and membership for creating Major Initiative Cost - Benefit Reports. The Committee will present its recommendations to a future Town Meeting for consideration and adoption. The Advisory Committee would be appointed by an affirmative vote of this Town Meeting and would consist of the first five signatories of this Citizen's Petition. The Committee will engage members of the Select Board, Fin Com, School Committee and other subject matter experts in its work.

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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 29<sup>th</sup> Day of September in the year of our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Five.

Matthew F. Pisani

Matthew F. Pisani, Chair

Rebecca H. Pine

Rebecca H. Pine, Vice Chair

Alison S. Manugian

Alison S. Manugian, Clerk

John F. Reilly

John F. Reilly, Member

Peter S. Cunningham

Peter S. Cunningham, 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



# REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER TO THE 2025 FALL TOWN MEETING

The 2025 Fall Town Meeting Warrant contains several warrant articles that seek appropriations, some of which will affect the Tax Rate and some of which will have no further impact on taxes. The purpose of this report is to provide the residents and taxpayers with a summary of these articles and what impact they will have on the Fiscal Year 2026 Tax Rate. In preparing for the Fall Town Meeting, the Select Board and Finance Committee reviewed the balances in the various reserve accounts. These accounts will either be used to fund the various articles, or money will be added to them to comply with the Town's Financial Policies. The balances as of September, 2025, are as follows:

FY 2026 Levy Capacity:	\$89,142*
Local Cable Receipts Reserved for Appropriation:	\$41,020
Certified Free Cash:	\$2,641,998
Stabilization Fund:	\$2,728,838
Capital Stabilization Fund:	\$109,199
Water Enterprise Excess and Deficiency:	\$457,406
Four Corner Sewer Excess and Deficiency:	\$434,092
GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund:	\$22,868
Stormwater Excess and Deficiency:	\$149,245

*\*The Board of Assessors is estimating that New Growth will come in at \$31.5 million, which will add an additional \$99,124 to the FY 2026 Anticipated Levy Limit. The Final State Aid allocation for Groton was reduced by \$9,982 from the last estimate, leaving \$89,142 in available Levy Capacity.*

The following is a summary of Warrant Articles requesting funding:

**Article 1: Unpaid Bills** **Requested Amount: \$1,017**

There are three unpaid bills. One is from UMass Memorial Health in the amount of \$85. Since this is a Water Department Bill, funding will come from the Water Department's Excess and Deficiency Fund. The second is from Boston Mutual in the amount of \$231 and the third is from Snap-On Industrial in the amount of \$701. The funding for these two bills will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash)

**Article 2: Amend Fiscal Year 2026 Budget** Requested Amount: \$211,587

This Article will request the following adjustments in the Operating Budget:

1.	<u>Line Item 1070 – Treasurer/Tax Collector Salaries</u>	<u>Request: \$17,658</u>
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This amount is needed to cover the vacation payout for the former Treasurer/Tax Collector. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

2.        Line Item 1070 – Treasurer/Tax Collector Salaries                      Request: \$39,334

As part of the transition to the new Treasurer/Collector and the retirement of the current part-time Assistant Treasurer/Collector, the position of Assistant Treasurer/Collector is being increased from 19 hours per week to 40 hours per week (full-time). Since this is a permanent increase in the Budget, funding will come from the FY 2026 Levy Capacity.

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

3.        Line Item 1071 – Treasurer/Tax Collector Wages                      Request: \$16,086

The position of Assistant to the Treasurer/Collector/Payroll Coordinator position will increase to 40 hours (from the current 35 hours) to add additional duties to the position. Currently, the Human Resources Director is a Department of one. The office is very busy and in desperate need of administrative support to help with benefit administration, onboarding, recruitment, training, maintaining personnel records, etc. Initially, it was contemplated to create a fifteen hour per week Human Resources Generalist position. However, it was determined to add hours to existing staff and evaluate whether or not that makes a difference in the overall operation. This amount covers the additional five hours per week, plus a salary adjustment to reflect the added responsibilities. Since this is a permanent increase in the Budget, funding will come from the FY 2026 Levy Capacity.

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

4.        Line Item 1130 – Town Clerk Salaries                                      Request: \$19,040

This amount is needed to cover the vacation payout of the former Town Clerk. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

5.        Line Item 1160 – Insurance & Bonding                                      Request: \$40,000

This amount is needed to cover the increase cost in the Town's liability, property, auto and worker's compensation premiums. The cost of insurance increased by approximately 9%, which was not known at the time the original Budget was set in May, 2025. Since this is a permanent increase in the Budget, funding will come from the FY 2026 Levy Capacity.

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

Request: \$21,808

Based on the outcome of the Collins Center Salary Study, it was determined that the Land Use Director/Town Planner is significantly below similar positions in comparable communities. To that end, the Salary of the current employee needs to be increased from \$93,192 to \$115,000. Since this is a permanent increase in the Budget, funding will come from the FY 2026 Levy Capacity.

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

Request: \$5,400

Due to the closure of the Nashoba Valley Medical Center and the shortfall in personnel within the Fire Department to deal with the additional travel times, the Fire Chief was unable to take vacation for over seven months, resulting in a loss of accrued time. To address this, the Select Board and Town Manager allowed the Chief to buy back two weeks of vacation time as a one-time adjustment. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

Request: \$80,000

At the June 23, 2025 Special Town Meeting, one of the recommendations to balance the budget was to use Free Cash to cover the retiring DPW Director's FY 2026 Salary (\$55,000) since it is was a one-time expenditure. Unfortunately, that expenditure was left off of the Town Meeting Transfer and has to be addressed this Fall. In addition, \$25,000 will be needed to cover the vacation payout of the retiring DPW Director. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

Request: \$8,819

Similar to the issue with Land Use Director/Town Planner, the position of Cable Director is also below similar positions in comparable communities. To that end, the Salary of the current employee needs to be increased from \$73,181 to \$82,000. This Funding will come from the Local Access Cable Receipts Reserved for Appropriation since that funding is available to cover the cost of funding the Cable Department.

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

10. Line Item 1711 – Local Access Cable Wages Request: \$2,798

The final position that was below similar positions in comparable communities is the Cable Production Technician. The hourly wage of the current employee needs to be increased from \$23.66 to \$25.09 . As was the case with the Local Access Cable Director, . This Funding will come from the Local Access Cable Receipts Reserved for Appropriation since that funding is available to cover the cost of funding the Cable Department.

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

11. Line Item 3010 – Health Insurance/Employee Expenses Request: **(\$36,000)**

At the conclusion of the Open Enrollment Period in May/June, an audit was completed on the Health Insurance Account and it was determined that this line item can be reduced by \$36,000 to reflect actual enrollment in the Town’s Health Insurande program.

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

12. Line Item 2005B – Short Term Interest Debt – Excluded Request: **(\$146,313 - <\$3,356 Levy>)**

Due to the lower interest rate received on the Florence Roche Elementary School Construction Bond Anticipation Note (BAN) renewal in June, Excluded Debt can be reduced by \$142,958 and short term Non-Excluded Debt by \$3,356, for a total debt reduction of \$146,313.

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

The Total Amounts in this Article requested by category:	Free Cash:	\$122,098
	Tax Levy:	\$ 77,872
	Cable Receipts:	\$ <u>11,617</u>
	Total	\$211,587

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**Article 3: Capital Stabilization Fund**

**Requested Amount: \$900,000**

The current balance in the Capital Stabilization Fund is \$109,199. The Town’s financial policies call for a balance in this fund of 1.5% of the total Operating Budget. Should Article 2 pass as presented, the total FY 2026 Operating Budget will be \$52,730,370, requiring a Capital Stabilization Fund Balance of \$790,956. Ordinarily, this would require a transfer of \$681,757. However, this Article seeks an additional \$218,243 for a total transfer of \$900,000 from Free Cash to fund the anticipated Fiscal Year 2027 Capital Budget.

**Article 4: Stabilization Fund****Requested Amount: \$0**

The current balance in the Stabilization Fund is \$2,728,838. The Town's financial policies call for a balance in this fund of 5% of the total Operating Budget. Should Article 2 pass as presented, the total FY 2026 Operating Budget will be \$52,730,370 requiring a Stabilization Fund Balance of \$2,636,519. At this time, an additional appropriation to the Stabilization Fund is not needed.

**Article 5: GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund****Requested Amount: \$250,000**

At this time, the Town has not received a preliminary capital budget from the School District. For now, this Article seeks an appropriation of \$250,000 to match what the Town paid last year for the Capital Assessment from the Groton Dunstable Regional School District. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).

**Article 6: Water Enterprise Fund****Requested Amount: \$70,000**

The Water Department is requesting a transfer from Water Surplus of \$70,000 to replace one of their pick-up trucks that has over 125,000 miles and is in need of serious repair. This was included in the Water Department's Capital Plan and they are moving it up a year.

**Article 7: Four Corner Sewer Enterprise Fund****Requested Amount: \$30,000**

The usage data at Four Corners has been volatile due to vacancies in the various lots. It is becoming more consistent, which will help with budgeting. In addition, funding will be used for bid preparation and the selection process to hire on-call services to handle emergencies with the Four Corners Sewer District. This Article seeks to transfer \$30,000 from the Four Corner Sewer Enterprise Excess and Deficiency Fund to balance the budget for FY 2025.

**Article 8: Stormwater Enterprise****Requested Amount: \$50,000**

The Department of Public Works is requesting that \$50,000 be transferred from the Stormwater Excess and Deficiency Fund to pay for additional engineering assistance to meet State Reporting requirements.

**Article 9: Cable Equipment Grant****Requested Amount: \$16,000**

**From the Summary in the Warrant:** *The Town's Cable Television License agreements with Verizon New England Inc. and Spectrum Northeast, LLC include Public, Educational, and Government (PEG) Grants to be used for capital funding (equipment) purposes. The Town currently collects all cable revenue in the "Cable Department Receipts Reserved for Appropriation Fund" that was established at the 2024 Special Town Meeting. When the Town closed the Cable Enterprise last year, funding designated for this equipment grant was returned to the General Fund and certified as Free Cash. It should have been set aside for equipment. This Article creates a new Equipment Grant fund for these PEG Grant payments and transfers funds from Free Cash into it. This Article will transfer \$16,000 from Free Cash to the Equipment Grant Fund.*



**Article 10:      Assessors Quinquennial Certification                      Requested Amount: \$34,900**

**From the Summary in the Warrant:** *Assessors in every city and town are responsible for developing a Revaluation program to completely analyze and revalue all property within its borders every year. Revaluation annually is required under Massachusetts law and is regulated by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue's Bureau of Local Assessment (BLA). The rationale for revaluation is to always maintain property at fair market or fair cash value to ensure equity for all classes of property. Every fifth year the Massachusetts Department of Revenue requires a full certification with BLA oversight. The Assessors are seeking \$34,900 to cover the cost for appraisal services of Real Property to be conducted by Vision Government Solutions. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).*

**Article 11:      Repair Fitch's Bridge Headwall                                      Requested Amount: \$60,000**

**From the Summary in the Warrant:** *The head wall that supports the bridge abutment for Fitch's Bridge is collapsing and needs to be repaired. The Department of Public Works will oversee the repairs of this head wall in compliance with Massachusetts State Law with regards to procurement. This Article will authorize the funding for this repair. The Department of Public Works is estimating that this repair will cost approximately \$60,000. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).*

**Article 12:      Maintain Former Nod Road Landfill                                      Requested Amount: \$100,000**

**From the Summary in the Warrant:** *Recently the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) inspected the former Nod Road Landfill and has required the Town to begin mowing the Landfill. DEP is requesting that the Town conduct a third party inspection to ensure the Landfill was "capped" properly. The DPW Director has requested funds be put aside for maintenance, mowing, inspections and monitoring well installation, along with engineering and survey work. The purpose of this Article is to provide the necessary funding. The Department of Public Works is estimating that this work will cost approximately \$100,000. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).*

**Article 13:      Repair Fire Alarm    Requested Amount: \$60,000**

**From the Summary in the Warrant:** *During a recent inspection, it was determined that the current Fire Alarm System at the Function Hall and Restaurant at the Groton Country Club needs to be replaced to provide proper fire protection at these facilities. The purpose of this Article is to provide the necessary funding for this purpose. It is estimated that these repairs will cost \$60,000. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).*

**Article 14: Engineering for Complete Streets****Requested Amount: \$30,000**

**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 \$30,000 for this purpose. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).*

**Article 15: Debt Service for Middle School Track****Requested Amount: \$33,000**

**From the Summary in the Warrant:** *The loan to cover the \$1,405,374 cost of the Middle School Track is being paid back in annual payments from Community Preservation Act Funds. This Article appropriates an additional payment in FY 2026, which will be paid by the Community Preservation Committee from the Community Preservation Fund Unallocated Reserve. All of the \$33,000 payment will be applied towards the principal.*

**Article 17: SCBA Equipment for the Fire Department****Requested Amount: \$500,000**

**From the Summary in the Warrant:** *Self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) is a critical component of the safety gear utilized by Fire Department personnel. The ability to breathe clean air and operate in hazardous atmospheres where smoke, heat, and toxic gases are present may make the difference between life or death during emergency incidents. The Groton Fire Department requires SCBA's to be worn by personnel on structure fires, vehicle fires, hazardous materials incidents, and other incidents deemed necessary by company officers. The Town had hoped that this purchase would be covered by a Federal Grant, but the Grant Funding has not been received. The existing SCBA equipment has reached the end of its useful life and needs to be replaced immediately. The cost of this replacement is approximately \$500,000. The Town Manager is recommending that these funds be borrowed and paid off over five (5) years.*

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If all Articles are approved as presented to the 2025 Fall Town Meeting, each account will have the following balances:

<u>Account</u>	<u>Beginning</u> <u>Balance</u>	<u>Requested</u> <u>Amount</u>	<u>Final</u> <u>Balance</u>
Levy Capacity	\$ 89,142	\$ 77,872	\$ 11,270
Local Cable Receipts	\$ 41,020	\$ 11,617	\$ 29,403
Anticipated Free Cash	\$ 2,641,998	\$ 1,573,930	\$ 1,068,068
Stabilization Fund	\$ 2,728,838	\$ -	\$ 2,728,838
Capital Stabilization Fund	\$ 109,199	\$ 900,000	\$ 1,009,199
Water Enterprise Excess and Deficiency	\$ 457,406	\$ 70,000	\$ 387,406
Four Corner Sewer Excess and Deficiency	\$ 434,092	\$ 30,000	\$ 404,092
GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund	\$ 22,868	\$ 250,000	\$ 272,868
Stormwater Excess and Deficiency	\$ 149,245	\$ 50,000	\$ 99,245

As stated above, should the Town Meeting agree with these appropriations, \$1,573,930 will come from the Town's Free Cash Account, leaving a Free Cash balance of \$1,068,068. In the Spring of 2025, it is expected that \$300,000 in Free Cash will be required to cover Debt Service, OPEB Trust Fund and Department Head Performance Incentives, leaving a balance of \$768,068 in Free Cash. Based on final anticipated new Growth for FY 2026 and the Final Cherry Sheet Estimates received from the State, the Budget approved at Town Meeting is currently \$89,142 under the anticipated FY 2026 Levy Limit. For the line items that are reoccurring and will be funded through taxation, it is requested that \$77,872 come from this amount, which will leave the Town \$11,270 under the anticipated Levy Limit for Fiscal Year 2026. The following chart is a breakdown of the anticipated rate:

	<b>Actual FY 2025</b>	<b>Proposed FY 2026</b>	<b>Dollar Change</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
Levy Capacity Used	\$ 38,052,807	\$ 39,557,852	\$ 1,505,045	3.96%
Tax Rate on Levy Capacity Used	\$ 13.55	\$ 13.09	\$ (0.46)	-3.39%
Average Tax Bill	\$ 9,592	\$ 9,965	\$ 374	3.89%
Excluded Debt	\$ 4,776,976	\$ 5,115,092	\$ 338,116	7.08%
Tax Rate on Excluded Debt	\$ 1.70	\$ 1.69	\$ (0.01)	-0.59%
Average Tax Bill	\$ 1,203	\$ 1,287	\$ 83	6.91%
Final Levy Used	\$ 42,829,783	\$ 44,672,944	\$ 1,843,161	4.30%
Final Tax Rate	\$ 15.25	\$ 14.78	\$ (0.47)	-3.08%
Average Tax Bill	\$ 10,795	\$ 11,252	\$ 457	4.23%

Respectfully submitted,

*Mark W. Haddad*

Mark W. Haddad  
Town Manager



# APPENDIX A

## PROPOSED GROTON CHARTER

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## **CHARTER (2025~~2~~)**

**[HISTORY: Enacted by the General Court as Ch. 121 of the Acts of 2019.<sup>1</sup> Amendments noted where applicable.] [ 2022 Amendments enacted by the General Court as Chapter 41 of the Acts of 2022. ]**

### **ARTICLE 1: INCORPORATION, EXISTENCE AND AUTHORITY**

#### **Section 1.1: Incorporation**

The inhabitants of the town of Groton, within the corporate limits established by law, shall continue to be a body corporate and politic with perpetual succession under the name "town of Groton."

#### **Section 1.2: Short Title**

This instrument shall be known and cited as the Groton charter.

#### **Section 1.3: Powers of the Town**

It is the intent and purpose of the voters of the town, through the adoption of this charter, to secure for the town all of the powers possible under the constitution and laws of the commonwealth as fully and as completely as though each power were specifically and individually enumerated in this charter.

#### **Section 1.4: Division of Powers**

The administration of all the fiscal, prudential and municipal affairs of the town shall be vested in an executive branch headed by a select board and a town manager. The legislative powers shall be exercised by an open town meeting.

#### **Section 1.5: Interpretation of Powers**

The powers reserved or granted to the town under this charter shall be construed liberally and interpreted broadly in the town's favor and the specific mention of any particular power shall not limit the general powers of the town under section 1.3.

## **Section 1.6: Intergovernmental Relations**

The town may enter into agreements with any other unit of government to perform jointly or in cooperation, by contract or otherwise, any of the town's powers or functions.

## **Section 1.7: Precedence of Charter Provisions**

All General Laws, special laws, by-laws, votes, rules and regulations of or pertaining to the town that are in force when the charter takes effect and that are not specifically or by implication repealed directly or indirectly hereby shall continue in full force and effect until amended or repealed or until they expire by their own terms.

## **Section 1.8: Ethical Standards and Conduct**

Elected officers, appointed officials, employees and volunteers of the town shall demonstrate by their example, with their general conduct and in the performance of their duties and responsibilities the highest ethical standards so that the public may justifiably have trust and confidence in the integrity of the town's government. Such individuals shall recognize that they act always as agents for the public, that they hold their office or position for the benefit of the public, that the public interest is their primary concern and that they faithfully discharge the duties of their office regardless of personal considerations. Such an individual shall not use the individual's official position to secure or grant special consideration, treatment, advantage, privilege or exemption to themselves or to any other person beyond that which is available to every other person.

## **Section 1.9: Definitions**

As used in this charter, the following words shall, unless the context clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:-

"Appointed official", an individual serving in appointed office who exercises the powers or duties of that office with authority derived from the General Laws, this charter, vote of town meeting or the town's by-laws.

"Charter", this charter and any amendments to it that may hereafter be adopted.

"Days", business days, not including Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays; provided, however, that when the time set is not less than 7 days, every day shall be included.

"Department head", an individual having administrative authority over a town department. "Elected officer", an individual serving in elected office who, in the exercise of the powers or duties of that office, exercises some portion of the sovereign power of the town.

"Emergency", a sudden, unexpected and unforeseen happening, occurrence, event or condition that necessitates immediate action.

"Local newspaper", a newspaper of general circulation in the town.

"Majority vote", a majority of those present and voting; provided, that a quorum is present when the vote is taken.

"Multiple-member body", a town body consisting of not less than 2 persons, whether called a board, commission, committee, subcommittee or otherwise and however elected, appointed or otherwise constituted.

"Publish", posting a document on the Town website and in a prominent and accessible location, with hard copies made available upon request.

"Quorum", except for a town meeting and unless otherwise required by law or this charter, a majority of the members of a multiple member body then in office, not including any vacancies that may then exist.

"Town", the town of Groton.

"Town agency", a board, commission, committee, department or office of the town government.

"Town bulletin board", a bulletin board in the town hall on which official notices are posted and boards at other town buildings or facilities that may be designated by the town clerk as town bulletin boards.

"Town meeting", the open town meeting established in article 2, whether annual or special.

"Voters", registered voters of the town.

"Warrant", a document required to warn and notify residents and inhabitants of the town, who are qualified to vote in town affairs, to meet at a specific place to act on published articles relating to the governance of the town.

## **ARTICLE 2: LEGISLATIVE BRANCH**

### **Section 2.1: Town Meeting**

The legislative powers of the town shall be exercised by a town meeting open to all voters. The annual town meeting shall meet in regular session twice in each calendar year. The first meeting, which shall be the spring town meeting, shall be held in March, April or May on a date fixed by by-law and shall be primarily concerned with the determination of matters involving the expenditure of town funds including, but not limited to, the adoption of an annual operating budget for all town agencies, electing officers and determining all other matters to be decided by ballot of the voters. The second meeting, which shall be the fall town meeting, shall be held in the last 4 months of the calendar year on a date fixed by by-law; provided, however, that the fall town meeting shall not include the election of officers.

## **Section 2.2: Presiding Officer**

2.2.1 The moderator elected pursuant to section 3.4 shall preside at all sessions of the annual and special town meetings. The moderator at all town meetings shall regulate the proceedings, decide all questions of order and make public declaration of all votes and may exercise such additional powers and duties as may be authorized by law, this charter, by-law or other vote of the town meeting.

2.2.2 The moderator shall appoint a deputy moderator at the spring town meeting, subject to ratification of the town meeting, to serve at any session of an annual or special town meeting in the event of the moderator's absence or disability. The deputy moderator may also temporarily serve when the moderator has a conflict of interest or when the appearance of a conflict of interest arises, as determined by the moderator, with regard to a particular article or matter under consideration.

2.2.3 In the absence of the moderator and the deputy moderator at any session of a town meeting, the town clerk shall open the meeting and preside over the election of an acting moderator; provided, however, that if the moderator, the deputy moderator and the town clerk are absent, the presiding officer shall be determined as provided for by law.

## **Section 2.3: The Town Report**

The select board shall publish an annual town report and make it available not less than 14 days before the spring town meeting; provided, however, that failure to comply with this section shall not prevent the town meeting from proceeding.

## **Section 2.4: Special Town Meetings**

A special town meeting shall be held at the call of a majority of the full select board in order to transact the legislative business of the town in an orderly manner. A special town meeting shall also be held on the petition of not less than 200 voters or 20 per cent of the total number of voters, whichever is less.

## **Section 2.5: Warrants**

Every town meeting shall be called by a warrant issued by the select board that shall state the time and place at which the meeting is to convene and, by separate articles, shall identify the subject matters to be acted upon. The publication of the warrant for every town meeting shall be in accordance with the General Laws and by-laws governing such matters.

## **Section 2.6: Initiation of Warrant Articles**

2.6.1 Initiation - Subject to section 2.6.3, the select board shall receive petitions addressed to it that request the submission of any matter to the town meeting and that are filed by: (i) a department head; (ii) a multiple-member body acting by a majority of its members then in office; (iii) any 10 voters for a session of the annual town meeting; or (iv) any 100 voters for a special town meeting.

2.6.2 Inclusion on the Warrant - Spring and Fall Session of the Town Meeting - When a spring or fall session of the town meeting is to be called, notice shall be given by posting attested copies of the warrant in not less than 2 public places in the town and by publishing notice of the meeting in a local newspaper not less than 14 days before the day appointed for the meeting. The select board shall include in the warrant the subject matter of all petitions received by the board not less than 60 days before the date fixed by by-law for the session of the spring or fall session of the town meeting to convene. Unless specified otherwise in this charter, the content, scheduling and notice requirements for a spring or fall session of the town meeting shall be the same as provided for an annual town meeting pursuant to section 10 of chapter 39 of the General Laws.

2.6.3 Inclusion on the Warrant - Special Town Meeting - If a special town meeting is to be called, notice shall be given by posting attested copies of the warrant in not less than 2 public places in the town and by publishing notice of the meeting in a local newspaper not less than 14 days before the day appointed for the meeting. The select board shall include in the warrant the subject matter of all petitions received by the board not less than 20 days before the day appointed for the meeting. Unless specified otherwise in this charter, the content, scheduling and notice requirements for a special town meeting shall be the same as provided for a special town meeting pursuant to section 10 of chapter 39 of the General Laws.

#### **Section 2.7: Availability of Town Officials at Town Meetings; Conflicting Meetings**

2.7.1 Every chairperson of each multiple-member body and every department head shall attend all sessions of town meetings. If a chairperson of a multiple-member body or department head shall be absent from a town meeting due to illness or other reasonable cause, that person shall designate a deputy to attend the meeting and represent the multiple-member body or department. If a person designated to attend a town meeting under this section is not a voter, the person may, notwithstanding the person's voter status, address the meeting to fulfill the objectives of this section.

2.7.2 A meeting of a multiple-member body or town agency shall not be convened or be in session during a session of any town meeting except as part of the town meeting.

#### **Section 2.8: Clerk of the Meeting**

The town clerk shall serve as clerk of the town meeting, give public notice of all adjourned sessions of the town meeting, record its proceedings and perform such additional duties in connection therewith as may be provided by law, this charter, by-law or town meeting vote.

#### **Section 2.9: Rules of Procedure**

The town meeting may, by by-law, establish, amend, revise or repeal rules to govern the conduct of all town meetings.

#### **Section 2.10: General Powers and Duties**



The town meeting shall provide for the exercise of all of the powers of the town and for the performance of all duties and obligations imposed upon the town that are not otherwise provided for by law, this charter or by-law.

### **Section 2.11: Report to the Voters**

There shall be published for every town meeting a copy of the warrant, together with its articles, and a report to the voters that shall contain the explanation and relevant data submitted by the proponents of each article; provided, however, that the town manager may direct that voluminous supporting material necessary for consideration of particular articles be made reasonably available for inspection at public locations before the town meeting in lieu of inclusion in the written report to the voters. The written report for each town meeting shall include: (i) the written report of the planning board setting forth its findings and recommendations as to all zoning articles; (ii) the written report of the finance committee, which shall set forth its findings, conclusions and recommendations and its reasons therefor regarding all of the monetary articles in the warrant; and (iii) with respect to each warrant article, in addition to the reports of the planning board and the finance committee, the written report of a proponent or sponsor of a warrant article and of a multiple-member body or town agency that is required to review, recommend or sponsor the warrant article by law, appointment or otherwise.

The report for the town meeting shall also include, as an appendix, the capital improvement plan defined in section 6.6 setting forth the proposed capital outlay program for the ensuing fiscal year for the information and guidance of town meeting. The select board shall have the opportunity to include in the report its conclusions and recommendations, including its reasons therefore, regarding articles in the warrant that relate to its general superintendence over the administration of town affairs.

~~There shall be published for every town meeting a copy of the warrant, together with its articles, and a report to the voters that shall contain the explanation and relevant data submitted by the proponents of each article; provided, however, that the town manager may direct that voluminous supporting material necessary for consideration of particular articles be made reasonably available for inspection at public locations before the town meeting in lieu of inclusion in the written report to the voters. The written report for each spring town meeting shall include: (i) the written report of the planning board setting forth its findings and recommendations as to all zoning articles; (ii) the written report of the finance committee, which shall set forth its findings, conclusions and recommendations and its reasons therefor regarding all of the monetary articles in the warrant; and (iii) with respect to each warrant article, in addition to the reports of the planning board and the finance committee, the written report of a proponent or sponsor of a warrant article and of a multiple-member body or town agency that is required to review, recommend or sponsor the warrant article by law, appointment or otherwise.~~

~~The report for the spring town meeting shall also include, as an appendix, the capital improvement plan defined in section 6.6 setting forth a five-year capital outlay program for the information and guidance of town meeting. The select board shall have the opportunity to include in the report its conclusions and recommendations, including its reasons therefor, regarding articles in the warrant that relate to its general superintendence over the administration of town affairs.~~

The report shall be made available to residents of the town by a method determined by the select board not later than 7 days before the date on which the opening session of the spring town



meeting is to be held; provided, however, that the failure to make the report available shall not prohibit a town meeting from acting upon any matters set forth in the warrant and shall not affect the validity of the proceedings at a town meeting.

### **ARTICLE 3: ELECTED OFFICERS**

#### **Section 3.1: General**

3.1.1 Elective Town Offices - The town offices that the voters shall fill by ballot shall be: (i) the town moderator; (ii) the members of the select board; (iii) the town's component of the Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee; (iv) the commissioners of trust funds; (v) the elected members of the Groton Housing Authority; (vi) the members of the planning board, public library board of trustees, Groton electric light commission, Groton water commission, Groton sewer commission, park commission, board of health and board of assessors; and (vii) other officers or representatives to regional authorities or districts as may be established by law or by interlocal agreement that shall also be filled by ballot at a town election.

3.1.2 Town Election - The annual election by ballot of elective town officers and voting on any questions required by law to be placed upon the official ballot shall be held on a date fixed by by-law.

3.1.3 Eligibility - A voter shall be eligible to hold an elective town office unless prohibited by law; provided, however, that a select board member shall not simultaneously hold another elected position.

3.1.4 Compensation - Elected officers shall receive the compensation for their services that may be appropriated at the spring town meeting for such purpose.

3.1.5 Availability - Notwithstanding a town officer's election by the voters, a town officer under this section shall be subject to the call of the select board or the town manager at all reasonable times for consultation, conference and discussion on any matter related to the officer's respective office. Similarly, multiple-member bodies or other appointees shall be subject to the call of the select board or the town manager at all reasonable times for discussion on any matter related to their respective offices.

#### **3.1.6 Filling of Vacancies**

3.1.6.1 Moderator - If there is a failure to elect a town moderator or if a vacancy occurs in the office of town moderator, the select board shall appoint a suitable person to serve until the next town election.

3.1.6.2 Elected Multiple-Member Body - If there is a failure to elect a member of a multiple-member body or if a vacancy occurs in the membership of an elected multiple-member body, the remaining members of the multiple-member body shall give notice of the vacancy to the select board and to the public. The select board and the remaining members of the multiple-member body shall, at least 1 week after notice of the date on which the vote is to be taken, fill the vacancy until the next town election by a joint vote. The affirmative votes of the majority of the persons entitled to vote on the vacancy shall be necessary for the election.

3.1.6.3 Select Board - If there is a failure to elect a select board member or if a vacancy occurs in the membership of the select board, the remaining select board members may call a special election to fill the vacancy or shall call the special election upon the written request of not less than 200 voters.

### 3.1.7 Recall Provision for Elected Officers

3.1.7.1 Application - An elected officer may be recalled if the recall election occurs more than 6 months before the end of the officer's elective term.

3.1.7.2 Recall Petition - Two per cent of the voters may file with the town clerk an affidavit containing the name of the officer sought to be recalled and a statement of the grounds for the recall. Upon receiving the affidavit, the town clerk shall deliver to the voters making the affidavit copies of petition blanks demanding the recall. The petition blanks shall contain the following heading: "Initiating a recall is a serious process and should not be undertaken lightly." The blanks shall be issued by the town clerk with an official signature and official seal. The blanks shall be dated, addressed to the select board, contain the names of the first 10 signers of the affidavit, the name of the person whose recall is sought and the grounds for recall as stated in the affidavit and demand the election of a successor to the office. A copy of the affidavit and recall petition shall be entered in a record book to be kept in the office of the town clerk. The recall petitions shall be returned and filed with the town clerk not more than 45 days after the date of the filing of the affidavit and shall be signed by not less than 20 per cent of the voters as of the date the affidavit was filed with the town clerk.

The town clerk shall, within 1 business day of receipt of the petitions, submit the petitions to the registrars of voters in the town. The registrars shall, within 5 business days of the submission of the petitions, certify thereon the number of signatures that are names of voters.

3.1.7.3 Recall Election - If the petitions are certified by the registrars of voters to be sufficient, the town clerk shall submit the petitions with the certificate to the select board. Upon receipt of the certificate, the select board shall immediately give written notice of the petition and certificate by certified mail to the officer whose recall is sought. If the officer does not resign the office within 5 days after delivery of the notice, the select board shall immediately order an election to be held on a date fixed by them not less than 64 days nor more than 90 days after the date that the election is called; provided, however, that if another town election is to occur no more than 100 days after the date the election is called, the select board shall postpone the holding of the recall election to the date of the other election. If the officer resigns after a recall election has been ordered, the election shall nevertheless proceed as provided in this section.

3.1.7.4 Nomination of Candidates - An officer whose recall is sought may be a candidate to succeed to the office if the vote on the recall is in the affirmative. The nomination of other candidates, the publication of the warrant for the recall election and the conduct of the recall election shall be in accordance with the laws relating to elections unless otherwise provided in this section.

3.1.7.5 Office Holder - The incumbent shall continue to perform the duties of the office during the recall procedure. If the incumbent is not removed, the incumbent shall continue in the office for

the remainder of the unexpired term, subject to recall as before. If recalled at the recall election, the incumbent shall be removed.

3.1.7.6 Ballot Proposition - Ballots used in a recall election shall contain the following propositions in the order indicated:

Shall the town of Groton recall (name of officer) Yes No

Below the propositions shall appear the word "Candidates", the directions to the voters required by section 42 of chapter 54 of the General Laws and, below the directions, the names of candidates nominated in accordance with the laws relating to elections. If a majority of the votes cast on the question of recall is in the affirmative, the candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. If a majority of the votes on the recall question is in the negative, the ballots for the candidates shall not be counted.

3.1.7.7 Repeat of Recall Election - A recall shall not be filed against an officer subjected to a recall election and not recalled thereby until not less than 6 months after the election at which the recall was submitted to the voters.

3.1.7.8 Office Holder Recalled - A person who has been recalled from an office or who has resigned from an office while recall proceedings were pending against the person shall not be appointed to a town office within 2 years after the date of the recall vote or resignation.

## Section 3.2: Select Board

3.2.1 Composition, Term of Office - There shall be a select board consisting of 5 members elected for terms of 3 years each, arranged so that the terms of office of as nearly an equal number of members as possible shall expire each year. A select board member shall not hold another position of the town that is compensated and eligible for medical benefits during the member's term of office.

3.2.2 Powers and Duties - The executive powers of the town shall be vested in the select board, which shall be the chief executive office of the town. The select board shall possess all of the executive powers that a select board may possess and exercise, except those powers and duties assigned by this charter, by-law or town meeting vote to the town manager. The select board shall:

- (i) serve as the principal goal-setting and policy-making town agency for matters within its statutory authority and for those matters for which the town meeting has directed the board to act;
- (ii) be responsible for the formulation and promulgation of policy to be followed by all town agencies serving under it;
- (iii) in conjunction with other elected officers and multiple-member bodies, develop and promulgate policy guidelines designed to bring all town agencies into harmony;
- (iv) award and execute all contracts for services and supplies for all departments and agencies of the town, other than the Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee; provided, however,

that the select board, at its sole discretion, may delegate this authority to any department head or agency by a vote of the board at a posted meeting; and

(v) One Member of the Select Board and the Town Manager shall sign all payroll and expense warrants.

~~sign all payroll and expense warrants; provided, however, that the select board, at its sole discretion, may delegate this authority for a period of not more than 30 days to a select board member and the town manager or a select board member and the acting town manager by a vote of the board at a posted meeting.~~

3.2.3 Licensing Authority - The select board shall be the licensing board of the town and may issue licenses, make reasonable rules and regulations regarding the issuance of licenses and attach to a license the conditions and restrictions that it deems to be in the public interest; provided, however, that such rules, regulations, conditions and restrictions shall not be incompatible with applicable law. The select board shall enforce the laws relating to all businesses for which it issues licenses. The select board may delegate its licensing authority unless specifically prohibited by law.

3.2.4 Appointing Authority - The select board shall appoint the town manager, town counsel, a zoning board of appeals, board of registrars, conservation commission, council on aging, housing partnership, local cultural council and other committees as required by law, by-law or town meeting vote.

~~The select board shall appoint the town manager, town counsel, a zoning board of appeals and a board of registrars. The select board shall appoint a police chief, fire chief and town clerk consistent with clause (v) of section 4.2; provided, however, that the police chief shall serve under section 97A of chapter 41 of the General Laws and the fire chief shall serve under section 42 of chapter 48 of the General Laws. The select board shall appoint a conservation commission, council on aging, housing partnership, local cultural council and other committees as required by law, by-law or town meeting vote. [Amended by Chapter 41 of the Acts of 2022]~~

3.2.5 Investigations - The select board may investigate the affairs of the town and the conduct of any town agency, including any doubtful claims against the town. Copies of the full text of the report on the results of any such investigation shall be placed on file in the office of the select board, the office of the town clerk and the public library and a report summarizing the results of the investigation shall be printed in the next annual town report.

3.2.6 Day to Day Business - Except in the case of an emergency, this section shall not authorize a select board member or a majority of its members to become involved in the day-to-day administration of a town board, department or agency.

### Section 3.3: Regional School Committee

3.3.1 Composition, Term of Office - The Groton-Dunstable Regional School District provides public education, pre- kindergarten to high school, inclusive, and related services to the towns of Groton and Dunstable under the terms of a regional agreement between the towns. Pursuant to the regional agreement, there is a Groton- Dunstable Regional School Committee consisting of 7 members elected for 3- year terms, the terms being arranged so that the terms of office of as nearly an equal number of members as possible shall expire each year. The number of members elected by each town is governed by the terms of the regional agreement, as it may be amended.



3.3.2 **Powers and Duties -** The Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee shall have all of the powers and duties that are given to regional school committees under the constitution, laws and regulations of the commonwealth and such additional powers and duties as may be authorized by the regional agreement, by-law or other vote of the town meetings of both the towns of Groton and Dunstable.

#### Section 3.4: Town Moderator

3.4.1 **Term of Office -** There shall be a moderator elected for a 3-year term.

3.4.2 **Powers and Duties -** The moderator shall be the presiding officer of the town meeting, pursuant to section 2.2, and regulate its proceeding and perform other duties as may be provided by law, this charter, by-law or town meeting vote.

3.4.3 **Appointments -** The moderator shall make appointments provided for by law, this charter or by-law.

3.4.4 **Deputy Moderator -** At the opening of the spring town meeting, the moderator shall appoint a voter to serve as deputy moderator pursuant to section 2.2.

#### Section 3.5: Groton Housing Authority

3.5.1 **Composition, Term of Office -** There shall be a Groton Housing Authority that shall have the membership and terms of office prescribed in the General Laws.

3.5.2 **Powers and Duties -** The Groton Housing Authority shall conduct studies of the housing needs of the community and shall provide programs to make available housing for low- income families and elderly persons. The Groton Housing Authority shall have such other powers and duties as are assigned to housing authorities by law.

#### Section 3.6: Planning Board

3.6.1 **Composition, Term of Office -** There shall be a planning board that shall consist of 7 members, each elected for a 3-year term. The terms shall be arranged so that the terms of as nearly an equal number of members as possible shall expire each year.

3.6.2 **Powers and Duties -** The planning board shall have the powers and duties given to planning boards under the constitution and laws of the commonwealth and such additional powers and duties as may be authorized by this charter, by-law or town meeting vote.

#### Section 3.7: Groton Electric Light Commission

3.7.1 **Composition, Term of Office -** There shall be a Groton electric light commission that shall consist of 3 members, each serving for a 3-year term. The terms shall be arranged that the term of 1 member shall expire each year.

3.7.2 Powers and Duties - The Groton electric light commission shall set the policy direction of the Groton electric light department, which provides electric power to the town, consistent with chapter 164 of the General Laws; provided, however, that if a provision of this charter shall conflict with said chapter 164, said chapter 164 shall govern.

#### Section 3.8: Library Board of Trustees

3.8.1 Composition, Term of Office - There shall be a board of trustees of the public library that shall consist of 6 members, each serving for a 3-year term. The terms shall be arranged so that the terms of 2 members shall expire each year.

3.8.2 Powers and Duties - The trustees of the public library shall establish written policies governing library activities and services, engage in ongoing planning that assesses the needs and the role of the library in the community, ensure that the library meets the community's needs, work on preparation of the annual library budget and its adoption by the town, monitor and oversee maintenance of the buildings and grounds and regularly review facility needs, hire and evaluate the library director and work with the human resources director on job classifications for all staff, promote the library and act as library advocates in the community, study and support legislation that will benefit the library and the larger community and have such other powers and duties as provided for by law, this charter and by-law.

3.8.3 Appointments - The trustees of the public library shall appoint the library director and such other appointments as provided for by law, this charter or by-law.

#### Section 3.9: Board of Assessors

**[Section 3.9 renumbered from Section 3.10 by Chapter 41 of the Acts of 2022]**

3.9.1 Composition, Term of Office and Eligibility for Office - There shall be a board of assessors that shall consist of 3 members elected for 3-year terms. An employee in the assessors' office shall not simultaneously hold an elected position as a member of the board of assessors.

3.9.2 Powers and Duties - The board of assessors shall have the powers and duties given to boards of assessors under the constitution and laws of the commonwealth and directives of the commissioner of revenue and such additional powers and duties as may be authorized by this charter, by-law or town meeting vote that are not in conflict with laws of the commonwealth and regulations and directives of the department of revenue except as otherwise provided in this charter.

#### Section 3.10: Other Elected Officers

**[Section 3.10 renumbered from Section 3.11 by Chapter 41 of the Acts of 2022]**

**3.10.1** Powers and Duties - All other elected officers shall have the powers and duties that have been conferred upon their offices by law, this charter, by-law or town meeting vote.

### ARTICLE 4: TOWN MANAGER



## Section 4.1: Appointment, Qualifications and Review Procedure

4.1.1 The select board shall, by an affirmative vote of the majority of the full board, appoint or reappoint a town manager for a term of not more than 3 years and fix the compensation of the town manager within the amount annually appropriated for that purpose. If a vacancy shall occur in the office of town manager, the select board shall appoint a town manager screening committee to identify qualified candidates for the position. The office of the town manager shall not be subject to the town's salary administration plan. The town manager shall be appointed solely on the basis of the town manager's executive and administrative qualifications. The town manager shall be a professionally qualified person of proven ability, especially fitted by education, training and previous experience to perform the duties of the office. The town manager shall not have served in an elective office in the town government for at least 1 year before being appointed. The town may establish additional qualifications for the town manager by by-law as necessary or appropriate.

4.1.2 The position of town manager shall be a full-time position. The town manager shall devote the town manager's best efforts to the office and shall not hold another public office, elective or appointive, or engage in any business or occupation during the town manager's term unless the action is fully disclosed and approved by the select board in advance and in writing.

4.1.3 The select board shall provide for an annual review of the job performance of the town manager that shall, at least in summary form, be a public record in accordance with the personnel by-laws or accepted evaluation process.

## Section 4.2: Powers and Duties

The town manager shall be the chief administrator of the town and shall be responsible to the select board for the proper administration of all town affairs placed in the town manager's charge by this charter. The powers and duties of the town manager shall include, but not be limited to:

(i) ~~(i) managing, supervising, and being responsible for the efficient and coordinated administration of all town functions as may be authorized by this Charter, by-law, town meeting vote or the select board, including all appointed officials, employees, department heads and their respective departments~~ managing, supervising and being responsible for the efficient and coordinated administration of all town functions under the town manager's control as may be authorized by this charter, by-law, town meeting vote or the select board, including all department heads and their respective departments;

(ii) unless otherwise required by law, this charter or by-law, managing and coordinating the administrative activities of all town agencies; provided, however, that elected officers or their representatives shall be required to meet with the town manager at reasonable times to effect coordination and cooperation among all town agencies;

(iii) appointing and removing a police chief, fire chief and town clerk pursuant to the policy established by the select board; provided, however, that the police chief shall serve under section 97A of chapter 41 of the General Laws and the fire chief shall serve under section 42 of chapter 48 of the General Laws; provided, however, that an appointment made by the town manager shall be



confirmed by the select board not more than 15 days after the date on which the town manager files notice of the action with the select board; and provided further, that failure by the select board to confirm an appointment in that 15-day period shall constitute rejection of the appointment.

(iv) appointing and removing department heads, officers and subordinates and employees and other appointed members of town government for whom no other method of appointment or removal is provided in this charter or by-law; provided, however, that an appointment made by the town manager shall be confirmed by the select board not more than 15 days after the date on which the town manager files notice of the action with the select board; and provided further, that failure by the select board to confirm an appointment in that 15-day period shall constitute rejection of the appointment;

~~appointing and removing department heads, other employees and paid members of town government for whom another method of appointment or removal is not provided in this charter or by by-law; provided, however, that an appointment made by the town manager shall be confirmed by the select board not more than 15 days after the date on which the town manager files notice of the action with the select board; and provided further, that failure by the select board to confirm an appointment in that 15-day period shall constitute rejection of the appointment;~~

~~(iv) nominating for appointment or removal volunteer members of town government for whom another method of appointment or removal is not provided for in this charter or by by-law; provided, however, that a nomination for appointment or removal made by the town manager shall be confirmed by the select board not more than 15 days after the date on which the town manager files notice of the action with the select board; and provided further, that failure by the select board to confirm a nomination in not more than 15 days shall constitute rejection of the nomination;~~

~~(v) if a vacancy occurs in the office of police chief, fire chief or town clerk, selecting and presenting not less than 2 qualified candidates to the select board for appointment by the board to the office pursuant to section 3.2.4; [Amended by Chapter 41 of the Acts of 2022]~~

~~(vii) acting as a negotiator for all collective bargaining agreements to which the select board is a party, subject to ratification by the select board;~~

(vii) conducting or reviewing annual performance evaluations of all employees subject to the town manager's or the select board's appointment and consulting with elected and appointed boards to contribute to the preparation of the evaluations of department heads associated with the boards;

(viii) fixing the compensation of all employees appointed by the town manager within the limits established by the overall approved budget, the personnel by-laws, the town's wage and classification schedule and collective bargaining or other agreements;

(viii) attending all regular and special meetings of the select board unless excused at the town manager's request and having a voice, but not a vote, in all discussions;

(ix) attending all sessions of the town meeting and answering all questions directed to the town manager that are related to the office of the town manager or concerning which the town manager possesses the relevant information;

- (xi) assuring that all laws, this charter, by-laws, town meeting votes and directives of the select board that require enforcement by the town manager or employees subject to the town manager's direction and supervision are faithfully carried out;
- (xii) preparing and submitting annual operating budgets and capital improvement programs pursuant to article 6;
- (xiii) coordinating the preparation of the town's annual report;
- (xiv) overseeing the preservation, management and administration of all town records so as to facilitate access to them; and
- (xv) performing such duties as necessary or as may be assigned by this charter, by-law, town meeting vote or the select board.

#### Section 4.3: Removal and Suspension

4.3.1 The select board may, by the affirmative vote of 4 of its members, terminate and remove or suspend the town manager from office in accordance with the procedure under this section.

4.3.1.1 The select board shall adopt a preliminary resolution of removal which shall state the reason for removal, by the affirmative vote of 4 members. The preliminary resolution may provide for the suspension of the town manager for not more than 45 days. A copy of the preliminary resolution shall be delivered to the town manager not more than 48 hours after its adoption.

4.3.1.2 Not more than 7 days after receipt of the preliminary resolution, the town manager may request a public hearing by filing a written request for it with the select board. The hearing shall be held at a meeting of the select board not more than 20 days, but not less than 3 days, after the request has been filed. The town manager may file a written statement with the select board responding to the reason stated in the preliminary resolution of removal; provided, however, that the statement shall be received at the office of the select board more than 48 hours before the public hearing.

4.3.1.3 If the town manager has not requested a hearing pursuant to paragraph 4.3.1.2, the select board may, by the affirmative vote of 4 of its members, adopt a final resolution of removal not less than 10 days, but not more than 21 days, after the date of delivery of a copy of the preliminary resolution to the town manager. If the town manager has requested a public hearing pursuant to paragraph 4.3.1.2, the select board may, by the affirmative vote of 4 of its members, adopt a final resolution of removal not more than 21 days after the close of the hearing unless the parties agree to a longer period. Failure to adopt a final resolution of removal within the time allowed in this section shall nullify the preliminary resolution of removal and the town manager shall, at the expiration of the time, resume the duties of the office.

4.3.1.4 Any action by the select board to terminate and remove or suspend the town manager shall be conducted pursuant to sections 18 to 25, inclusive, of chapter 30A of the General Laws.

4.3.2 The action of the select board in terminating and removing or suspending the town manager shall be final.

#### Section 4.4: Vacancy in the Office of the Town Manager

4.4.1 Permanent Vacancy - The select board shall fill a permanent vacancy in the office of the town manager pursuant to section 4.1.1 as soon as possible after a vacancy occurs. Pending the appointment of a town manager or the filling of a vacancy in the office of the town manager, the select board shall, within 14 days, appoint a person capable of temporarily performing the duties of the town manager until a permanent replacement is appointed.

4.4.2 Temporary Absence or Disability - The town manager may designate, by letter filed with the town clerk and select board, a capable person to perform the duties of town manager during a temporary absence or disability for a period of not less than 7 days. If the town manager fails to make such a designation or if the person so designated is unable to serve, the select board may designate some other capable person to perform the duties of the town manager. If the absence or disability lasts more than 30 days, a designation by the town manager shall be subject to approval by the select board.

4.4.3 Powers and Duties - The powers and duties of the acting town manager under paragraphs 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 shall be limited to matters not permitting of delay and shall include authority to make temporary, emergency appointments or designations to town offices or employment; provided, however, that an acting town manager shall not make permanent appointments or designations unless authorized by the select board.

#### Section 4.5: Screening Committee

4.5.1 If a vacancy shall occur in the office of town manager, a screening committee shall be established to solicit, receive and evaluate applications for the position of town manager. The screening committee shall consist of 7 persons, 3 of whom shall be designated by the select board, of which only 1 may be a select board member, 2 of whom shall be designated by the finance committee, of which only 1 may be a member of the finance committee, and 2 of whom shall be designated by the town moderator. A person chosen by an appointing authority may be a member of the appointing authority's agency; provided, however, that there shall not be more than 1 select board member and not more than 1 member of the finance committee on the screening committee. **[Amended by Chapter 41 of the Acts of 2022]**

4.5.2 Not more than 21 days after the notice of the vacancy or pending vacancy in the office of town manager, the town clerk shall call and convene a meeting of the screening committee. The screening committee shall meet to organize and plan a process to advertise the vacancy or pending vacancy and to solicit by other means candidates for the office. The committee shall proceed to meet, notwithstanding the failure of any town appointing authority to designate a representative to it.



4.5.3 The screening committee shall review all applications that are received by it, screen all such applicants by checking and verifying work records and other credentials and provide for interviews to be conducted with the number of candidates as it deems necessary, desirable or expedient.

4.5.4 Not more than 90 days after the date on which the screening committee meets to organize, the committee shall submit to the select board the names of not less than 3 persons and not more than 5 persons that the screening committee believes to be best suited to perform the duties of the town manager. The select board shall, not more than 60 days after the date of receipt of the list of nominees, choose 1 candidate from the list to fill the position of town manager or reject the nominees and direct that the committee resume its search.

4.5.5 Upon the appointment of a town manager, the screening committee shall be discharged.

## **ARTICLE 5: ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION**

### Section 5.1: Organization of Town Agencies

The organization of the town into operating agencies for the provision of services and administration of government may be accomplished by any method consistent with law and this charter, including the adoption of by-laws, appropriation of funds or adoption of rules and regulations by appropriate entities. The town manager may, with the approval of the select board and consistent with law and this charter, establish, reorganize, consolidate or abolish any department or position under the town manager's direction and supervision.

### Section 5.2: Merit Principle

All appointments and promotions of employees shall be made solely on the basis of merit and fitness demonstrated by examination or other evidence of competency and suitability.

### Section 5.3: Department of Finance

5.3.1 There shall be a department of finance in the town that shall report to the town manager. There shall be within the department an appointed town accountant, an appointed treasurer-collector and an appointed principal—~~assistant~~—assessor. The department shall be responsible for the performance of all the fiscal and financial activities of the town. The town manager shall serve as the finance director; provided, however, that the town manager may, at the town manager's discretion, appoint another person to serve as the finance director. The appointment shall be subject to confirmation by the select board in accordance with ~~clause subsection~~ (iii) of section 4.2.

5.3.2 The town manager and the department of finance shall assume all of the powers, duties and responsibilities related to municipal finance activities and the coordination of those activities with the activities of all other town agencies. The department of finance shall have such additional powers, duties and responsibilities with respect to municipal finance as the town may provide by by-law.

5.3.3 The department of finance shall assure that complete and full records of the financial and administrative activities of the town are maintained and shall render written reports, which shall include a full accounting of all town administrative and financial operations, to the select board and the finance committee at least once each calendar quarter. The quarterly reports shall be rendered not more than 30 days after the end of the calendar quarter to which they apply and shall be made available to the public in accordance with the requirements of section 10 of chapter 66 of the General Laws. Additional reports shall be rendered to the select board at the board's request.

5.3.4 The town manager and the department of finance shall collaborate with the finance committee to prepare, maintain and present to the select board and the town meeting a 5- year financial plan for the town.

5.3.5 Town Accountant - The town accountant shall be appointed by the town manager for a term of not more than 3 years, subject to confirmation by the select board pursuant to [clause subsection](#) (iii) of section 4.2. The town accountant shall have all of the powers and duties vested in the office of town accountant by law, this charter, by-law or town meeting vote.

5.3.6 Treasurer-Collector - The treasurer-collector shall be appointed by the town manager for a term of not more than 3 years, subject to confirmation by the select board pursuant to [clause subsection](#) (iii) of section 4.2. The treasurer- collector shall have all the powers and duties vested in the office of treasurer-collector by law, this charter, by-law or town meeting vote.

5.3.7 Principal ~~Assistant~~-Assessor - The principal ~~assistant~~-assessor shall be appointed by the town manager for a term of not more than 3 years, subject to confirmation by the select board pursuant to subsection (iii) of section 4.2. The principal assistant assessor shall have all of the powers and duties vested in the office of principal assistant assessor by this charter, by-law or town meeting vote and in the office of assistant assessor by law.

#### Section 5.4: Department of Public Works

5.4.1 There shall be a department of public works that shall be under the direction of a director. The director shall be appointed by the town manager, subject to confirmation by the select board pursuant to [clause subsection](#) (iii) of section 4.2. The director shall serve as and perform the duties of a highway surveyor as set forth in the General Laws.

5.4.2 The principal functions of the department of public works shall include:

- (i) construction, maintenance, repair and cleaning of town roads, sidewalks, storm drains, bridges, dikes and other public way related structures;
- (ii) maintenance, repair and cleaning of all buildings owned or leased by the town, except those of the regional school district;
- (iii) maintenance of the old cemetery, parks, parking areas and recreational and beach facilities, except those of the regional school district;



- (iv) snow removal, including the salting and sanding of roads, except those of the regional school district;
- (v) supervision of the collection and disposal of garbage and other refuse and the maintenance and operation of all facilities for the disposal of the same;
- (vi) supervision, care and replacement of trees;
- (vii) providing for, or causing to be provided for, the maintenance and repair of certain town-owned vehicles; and
- (viii) such other functions as may be prescribed by the town manager.

5.4.3 Powers and Duties - The department of public works shall work in close coordination with the necessary town boards and departments to enable the effective and efficient performance of its duties pursuant to the General Laws, this charter, the by-laws or by vote of the town meeting.

#### Section 5.5: Information Technology

There shall be a department of information technology that shall plan, coordinate and maintain the town's information assets.

#### ~~Section 5.6: Personnel Board~~

~~5.6.1 — Composition, Term of Office - There shall be a personnel board that shall consist of 3 members appointed by the select board. Members shall serve for 3-year terms; provided, however, that the terms shall be arranged in such a manner that the term of office of 1 member shall expire each year.~~

~~5.6.2 — Powers and Duties - The personnel board shall function as an advisory board to the human resources director, town manager and select board in the management of human resources for the town.~~

### **ARTICLE 6: FINANCE AND FISCAL PROCEDURES**

#### Section 6.1: Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the town shall begin on July 1 and shall end on June 30 unless another period is required by the General Laws.

#### Section 6.2: Finance Committee

6.2.1 Composition, Term of Office - There shall be a finance committee that shall consist of 7 voters appointed by a 3-person committee that shall consist of the chair of the select board, the chair of the finance committee and the town moderator; provided, however, that if the chair of the finance committee is being considered for reappointment, the finance committee shall select another member who is not being considered for reappointment. Members of the finance committee shall serve 3-year terms; provided, however, that the terms shall be so arranged that

the terms of office of as nearly an equal number of members as possible shall expire each year. The finance committee shall appoint a chair and a deputy chair to run meetings and present the finance committee's recommendations during the town budget process.

#### 6.2.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The finance committee shall:

- (i) serve as the advisors to the town meeting, the select board, the town manager and the department of finance on all matters pertaining to the budget, including budgeting strategy and goals and the balancing of revenues and expenditures;
- (ii) together with the select board, town manager and department of finance, develop a budget strategy and set financial goals for each fiscal year;
- (iii) present the finance committee's annual budget at the spring town meeting;
- (iv) consult with the select board and the town manager prior to collective bargaining to develop a strategy aligning with the town's long-term budgetary strategy and goals;
- (v) review the preliminary results of collective bargaining to ensure alignment with long-term budgetary strategy and goals; and
- (vi) perform any other duties as may be required by law.

#### Section 6.3: Annual Review of Financial Policies

Annually, the select board and the finance committee shall review and update the town's overall financial management policy. When reviewing and updating the policy, the select board and the finance committee shall seek input from the town manager, the department of finance and other advisors.

#### Section 6.4: The Budget

6.4.1 Budget Process - The select board, the town manager, the department of finance and the finance committee shall meet annually not later than ~~October 31~~November 30 to determine the budgetary goals for the subsequent fiscal year. The town manager shall, after that meeting but not later than January 31, submit to the finance committee and the select board a proposed budget for the next fiscal year that shall be accompanied by a budget message, a summary and supporting documents that follow the agreed-upon budget goals. The proposed budget shall be balanced.

6.4.2 Proposed Budget - The proposed budget shall provide a complete financial plan for all town funds and activities for the ensuing fiscal year. Unless otherwise required by the General Laws, the proposed budget shall be in the form that the town manager, the select board and the finance committee shall deem desirable. In the presentation of the proposed budget, the town manager shall furnish information in a complete, clear and concise manner and in accordance with best practices of financial reporting and control. The proposed budget shall



show, in detail, all estimated income from the proposed property tax levy and all other sources and all proposed expenditures, including debt service, for the following year. The proposed budget shall be arranged to show the actual and estimated income and expenditures for the previous, current and ensuing fiscal years and shall indicate in separate sections:

- (i) proposed expenditures for current operations during the ensuing fiscal year, detailed by town agency and position in terms of work programs, and the proposed method for financing each such expenditure; and
- (ii) proposed capital expenditures during the ensuing fiscal year, detailed by town agency, and the proposed method for financing each such capital expenditure.

6.4.3 Budget Summary - The summary of the proposed budget shall identify deviations from the current operating budget and outline the reasons for these changes. The town manager shall cause a summary of the operating budget to be published in a local newspaper and placed on the town's website contemporaneously with the submission to the finance committee. The publication shall indicate the times and places at which copies of the proposed budget with the accompanying documentation shall be available for examination by the public.

6.4.4 Budget Message - The budget message of the town manager shall: (i) explain the budget for all town agencies, both in fiscal terms and in terms of work programs; (ii) outline proposed financial policies of the town for the ensuing fiscal year; (iii) describe important features of the budget; (iv) indicate any major variations from the current year in financial policies, expenditures and revenues, together with the reasons for such changes; (v) summarize the town's debt position; and (vi) include any other material that the town manager deems desirable or that the select board may reasonably require.

#### Section 6.5: Action on the Budget

6.5.1 The finance committee shall, upon receipt of the proposed budget from the town manager, consider in public meetings detailed expenditures for each town department and agency and may confer with representatives of each town agency in connection with the committee's review and consideration. The finance committee may require the town manager or any town agency to furnish the committee with such additional information as the committee may deem necessary to assist the committee in its review and consideration of the proposed budget.

Not less than 14 days before the opening of the spring town meeting, the finance committee shall file with the town clerk a report containing the committee's proposed budget and comments or recommendations regarding differences between the committee's proposed budget and the proposed budget submitted by the town manager. Not less than 14 days before the opening of the spring town meeting the report shall be made available to voters of the town by publication on the town's website and by leaving copies of the report in not less than 2 public places in the town. Copies of the report shall be made available to voters at the opening of the spring town meeting. The failure to file the report with the town clerk in a timely manner or to publicize the report by posting on the town's website or in 2 public places in the town shall not prohibit the town meeting from voting on the budget and shall not affect the validity of any vote taken on the budget at town meeting.

The finance committee shall, upon receipt of the proposed budget from the town manager, consider in public meetings detailed expenditures for each town department and agency and may



~~confer with representatives of each town agency in connection with the committee's review and consideration. The finance committee may require the town manager or any town agency to furnish the committee with such additional information as the committee may deem necessary to assist the committee in its review and consideration of the proposed budget.~~

~~Not less than 14 days before the opening of the spring town meeting, the finance committee shall file with the town clerk a report containing the committee's proposed budget and comments or recommendations regarding differences between the committee's proposed budget and the proposed budget submitted by the town manager. Not less than 14 days before the opening of the spring town meeting the report shall be made available to voters of the town by publication on the town's website and by leaving copies of the report in not less than 3 public places in the town. Copies of the report shall be made available to voters at the opening of the spring town meeting. The failure to file the report with the town clerk in a timely manner or to publicize the report by posting on the town's website or in 3 public places in the town shall not prohibit the town meeting from voting on the budget and shall not affect the validity of any vote taken on the budget at town meeting.~~

6.5.2 The finance committee's proposed budget shall be presented to the town meeting by motion made by the committee; provided, however, the committee shall also present its comments and recommendations with respect to the budget. The town manager or the select board, or both, shall present their comments and recommendations with respect to the budget, if any, at the town meeting. The budget shall be voted upon in accordance with the by-laws.

#### Section 6.6: Capital Improvement Plan

The town manager shall annually submit a capital improvement plan to the select board and the finance committee not later than ~~December 31~~January 31. The plan shall include: (i) a clear, concise and general summary of its contents; (ii) a list of all capital improvements proposed to be undertaken during the ensuing 5 years along with supporting information as to the need for each capital improvement; (iii) cost estimates, methods of financing and recommended time schedules for each improvement; and (iv) the estimated annual cost of operating and maintaining each facility and piece of major equipment involved.

The information in the plan shall be revised annually by the town manager with regard to the capital improvements still pending or in the process of being acquired, improved or constructed.

#### Section 6.7: Audits

The select board shall provide annually for an independent audit of all financial books and records of the town and whenever it deems an audit of the whole town or of any particular town agency to be necessary. An audit of the town's financial books and records shall be conducted by a certified public accountant or a firm of certified public accountants; provided, however, that the accountant or firm shall not have a direct or indirect interest in the affairs of the town.

#### Section 6.8: Transparency of Financial Holdings

Not later than 90 days after the end of each fiscal year, the town accountant shall prepare a summary of all town funds in accordance with customary financial reporting. The summary shall include a snapshot balance as of the first day of the fiscal year, a summary of additions and deletions during the preceding 12 months and a final year-end balance. The information in the summary shall be provided to the town manager and the town manager shall disseminate the information to the finance committee and the select board. The information shall be made available to members of the public upon request and on the town's website.

## **ARTICLE 7: GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **Section 7.1: Charter Changes**

This charter may be replaced, revised or amended in accordance with any procedures made available under the constitution and laws of the commonwealth.

### **Section 7.2: Severability**

The provisions of this charter shall be severable. If a provision of this charter is held to be invalid, the other provisions shall remain in full force and effect and shall not be affected by the invalidity. If the application of any provision of this charter to a person or circumstance is held to be invalid, the application of any such provision to any other person or circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

### **Section 7.3: Specific Provisions to Prevail**

To the extent that a specific provision of this charter shall conflict with a provision expressed in general terms, the specific provision shall prevail.

### **Section 7.4: Number and Gender**

Words importing the singular number may extend and be applied to several persons or things. Words importing the plural number may include the singular. Words importing the feminine or masculine gender shall include any gender.

### **Section 7.5: Rules and Regulations**

A copy of all rules and regulations adopted by a town agency shall be filed in the office of the town clerk and the rule or regulation shall become effective on the date of such filing unless otherwise provided for by law or by-law. Copies of all such rules and regulations shall be made available for review by any person upon request pursuant to chapter 66 of the General Laws.

### **Section 7.6: Periodic Charter Review**



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

#### Section 7.7: Removals

7.7.1 Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, an appointed official, appointed member of a multiple-member body or employee of the town not covered by the terms of a collective bargaining or other agreement addressing removal and, whether appointed for a fixed or an indefinite term, may be removed from office by the appointing authority.

7.7.2 When removing any such official, appointed member of a multiple-member body or employee of the town, the appointing authority shall act in accordance with the town's personnel by-laws or rules and regulations.

#### Section 7.8: Loss of Office

A person appointed to serve as a member of a multiple-member body may be removed from office by the appointing authority if the person does not take the person's oath of office at the beginning of the current appointment or if the person exhibits excessive absences from the properly-scheduled meetings of the multiple-member body.

#### Section 7.9: Notice of Vacancies

If a vacancy occurs in a town office, position or position of employment or, whenever by reason of a pending retirement or expiration of a fixed term, a vacancy can be anticipated, the appointing authority shall cause public notice of the vacancy to be posted on the town bulletin board for not less than 10 days. The notice shall contain a description of the duties of the office, position or position of employment and a listing of the necessary or desirable qualifications to fill the office, position or position of employment. A permanent appointment to fill the office, position or position of employment shall not be effective until 14 days after the date the notice was posted to permit reasonable consideration of all applicants. This section shall not apply to positions governed by a collective bargaining or other agreement.

#### Section 7.10: Waiver of Administrative Fees

Administrative fees, fines and penalties that may be charged by a town department shall not be waived unless the waiver is authorized by a written policy that is available to the public and adopted by that town department, official or board. A policy may be made on an individual basis or as part of a policy decision of uniform applicability.

## **ARTICLE 8: TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS**

### **Section 8.1: Continuation of Government**

All persons appointed or elected to positions at town agencies shall continue to perform their duties until they are reappointed or reelected, successors to their respective positions are duly appointed or elected or their duties have been transferred and assumed by another town agency in accordance with this charter.

### **Section 8.2: Continuation of Administrative Personnel**

A person holding a town office or a position in the administrative service of the town or a person holding full-time employment under the town shall retain that person's office, position or position of employment and shall continue to perform the duties of that person's office, position or position of employment until provision shall have been made for the performance of those duties by another person or agency; provided, however, that a person in the permanent full-time service of the town shall not forfeit their pay grade or time in the service of the town as a result of the adoption of this charter; provided further, that this section shall not provide a person holding an administrative office or position or a person serving in the employment of the town on the effective date of this charter with any greater rights or privileges with regard to that person's continued service or employment with the town than that person had before the effective date of this charter. Nothing in this paragraph shall impair the rights of any person under an individual employment contract or collective bargaining agreement.

### **Section 8.3: Transfer of Records and Property**

All records, property and equipment of an office, department or agency or part thereof, the powers and duties of which are assigned in whole or in part to another office or agency, shall be transferred immediately to the office, department or agency to which the powers and duties are assigned.

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2025  
UN-APPROVED**

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

**Also Present:** Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; Melisa Doig, Human Resource Director; Patricia DuFresne, Assistant Finance Director; Grace Bannasch, Town Clerk; Bud Robertson, Finance Committee Chair; Tom Delaney, Department of Public Works Director; Brian Callahan, Department of Public Works Director in Training; Olin Lathrop, Conservation Commission; Takashi Tada; Land Use Director/Town Planner; Andres Correa, Energy Manager; Megan Foster, Principal Assessor; Roger Kanniard, Developer of Bluebird Lane; Frank McPartlan, Engineer from Dillis and Roy; Arthur Cheeks, Groton Fire Chief; Shawn Campbell, General Manager/Golf Pro of the Groton Country Club; Steve Lane, Bruce Easom, and Jack Petropoulos, Citizens Petitioners; Jim Geminer, Groton Sewer Commissioner; Tom Orcutt, Groton Water Superintendent; Michael Luth, Groton Police Chief.

Chair Pisani called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and reviewed the agenda.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Cunningham announced that the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) will hold a meeting on Tuesday, October 7th, at 6:00 P.M. at the Groton Center. Representatives from the DCR, along with a consulting firm responsible for permitting and engineering the Squannacook Rail Trail, will discuss and present an overview of their plans for reconstructing the trail.

Mr. Haddad introduced the Town of Groton's newest hire, Regional Energy Manager Andres Correa, to the Select Board. He said that Mr. Correa was doing an excellent job for the four Towns and welcomed him.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

None

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

**1. Update from the Town Manager on the Capital Planning Advisory Committee.**

Mr. Haddad explained that on Monday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, he met with the Capital Planning Advisory Committee to discuss their Charge and to develop a recommendation for the Select Board on whether to amend their Charge or disband. After a lengthy discussion, the Committee recommended to the Select Board that they continue "as is" for at least one more year and then revisit the issue. Mr. Haddad stated that, to that end, the Committee will continue to assist him, as it has for the last several years, in developing the proposed FY 2027 Capital Plan/Budget.

*Mr. Reilly made a motion to accept the recommendation from the Capital Planning Advisory Committee. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion.*

#### Discussion

Ms. Pine asked if the Committee should add a fifth member since there are currently only four. Mr. Haddad said they are actively searching for one.

*The motion carried unanimously.*

#### **2. Authorize the Town Manager to Sign a Grant Agreement Between the Historical Commission, Community Preservation Committee, and the Webber Family for the Bancroft Castle Project.**

Mr. Haddad explained that, similar to the Grant Agreement approved by the Select Board for the Affordable Housing Trust's FY 2026 Community Preservation Funding, the Historical Commission received a CPA Grant for the stabilization and restoration of the masonry remnants of Bancroft Castle on Gibbet Hill Farm, and they have drafted a Grant Agreement for this project. Mr. Haddad provided a copy of the Grant Agreement to the Board for review and respectfully requested that the Select Board authorize the Town Manager to sign the Grant Agreement on behalf of the Board.

*Ms. Pine made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to sign a grant agreement on behalf of the Select Board, between the Historical Commission, Community Preservation Committee, and the Webber Family for the Bancroft Castle Project. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion.*

#### Discussion

Ms. Pine asked whether the Webbers were signing the Grant Agreement because they own the property. Mr. Haddad confirmed that it was true.

*The motion carried unanimously.*

#### **3. Consider Ratifying the Town Manager's Appointment of Ashley Wickfield as the Production Assistant to the Cable Department.**

Mr. Haddad explained that David Germaine was an outstanding Groton Cable Production Assistant whose goal was to become a reporter. He worked for the Town for four years and was loved by everyone. Mr. Haddad said that David has left the Town and accepted a position as a news reporter and editor at a television station in Springfield, MA.

The position was advertised, interviews were conducted, and Ms. Ashley Wickfield was selected as the chosen candidate. Mr. Haddad respectfully requested that the Select Board consider ratifying the appointment of Ms. Wickfield as the Production Assistant in the Cable Department.

*Ms. Manugian made a motion to ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Ashley Wickfield as the Production Assistant to the Cable Department, effective immediately. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

#### **4. Proposed Select Board Meeting Schedule through the End of the Year.**

Monday, September 22, 2025 No Meeting (Rosh Hashana Holiday)

Monday, September 29, 2025 Regularly Scheduled Meeting (Approve Warrant)

Monday, October 6, 2025 Regularly Scheduled Meeting

Monday, October 13, 2025	No Meeting (Indigenous Peoples' Day)
Saturday, October 18, 2025	2025 Fall Town Meeting
Monday, October 20, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting (Possibly No Meeting)
Tuesday, October 28, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting (Budget Guidance)
Monday, November 3, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, November 10, 2025	No Meeting
Monday, November 17, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, November 24, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 1, 2025	No Meeting
Monday, December 8, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 15, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 22, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 29, 2025	No Meeting
Monday, January 5, 2025	No Meeting
Monday, January 12, 2026	Regularly Scheduled Meeting

#### **ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL**

##### **1. Consider Reducing the Number of Members on the Sustainability Commission from 12 to 7.**

Mr. Haddad explained that the Sustainability Commission voted to reduce the number of members on the Commission from twelve (12) to seven (7). Over the past year, they have lost some members, but currently have a solid working committee of seven (7). He stated that the Committee believes seven (7) members are enough for them to complete their work. Mr. Haddad respectfully requested that the Select Board amend the Sustainability Commission's Charge to reflect this reduction.

*Ms. Pine made a motion to amend the Sustainability Commission's Charge from twelve (12) members to seven (7) members. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion.*

#### Discussion

Ms. Pine thought the committee had taken steps a few years ago to make its process more flexible, allowing it to bypass the Board. Mr. Haddad explained that, due to their Charge, they are required to go through the Select Board. Ms. Manugian asked if they were at large; Mr. Haddad confirmed that they were.

*The motion carried unanimously.*

##### **2. Consider Appointing Ben Wolfe to the Conservation Commission.**

Mr. Haddad explained that there is a vacancy on the Conservation Commission due to Alison Hamilton's recent resignation. The vacancy was advertised, and the Conservation Commission held interviews and are unanimously recommending that Mr. Ben Wolfe be appointed by the Select Board to fill the vacancy. Mr. Haddad respectfully requested that the Board make this appointment.



*Ms. Pine made a motion to appoint Ben Wolfe to the Conservation Commission, with a term to expire on June 30, 2027. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**6:45 P.M. Public Hearing- Road Layout Hearing- Bluebird Lane.**

Mr. Haddad read the Public Hearing notice into the record.

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to open the public hearing.

*Ms. Pine made a motion to open the public hearing for Bluebird Lane. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Mr. Roger Kanniard, developer of Bluebird Lane, Mr. Takashi Tada, Town Planner, Tom Delaney, DPW Director, Brian Callahan, DPW in Training, and Frank McPartlan, Engineer from Dillis and Roy, were all in attendance for the public hearing. Mr. Haddad explained that this was the first time in his career that a road layout had met all the requirements by the Planning Board and Department of Public Works (DPW) without any contingencies at the public hearing stage. He stated that this was built to Road Layout standards. Ms. Manugian explained that she was a bit surprised by the limited frontage of some of the lots and asked if it was typical. Mr. Tada explained that it was a flexible development of a subdivision that allows for little frontage. Bluebird Lane Engineer, Mr. McPartlan, explained that there is a significant amount of backland. Mr. Delaney had no comments.

**Public Comment**

None

**Close the Public Hearing on the Road Layout for Bluebird Lane**

*Mr. Cunningham made a motion to close the public hearing on the road layout for Bluebird Lane. Ms. seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**Adopt the Layout of Bluebird Lane and recommend that the October 18, 2025, Fall Town Meeting accept it as a Town Way at the October 18, 2025, Fall Town Meeting.**

*Ms. Manugian moved to approve the Road Layout for Bluebird Lane and to recommend that the October 18th Fall Town Meeting accept it as a Town Way. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Ms. Pine wanted to share that eight years ago, Mr. Kinniard planned to build affordable housing on the land. However, during a review with Natural Heritage, they identified turtles on the property, which significantly reduced the amount of land available for development. After changing his plan, Mr. Kinniard built market-rate housing using flexible development provisions and created nine homes in this subdivision. Ms. Pine said under flexible development rules, lot sizes do not have to meet the standard of two acres. She also mentioned that this development took longer than eight years, which is not unusual in Groton due to endangered species and wetlands. Ms. Pine wanted to make the point that it is very difficult to build affordable housing in Groton, given the restrictions on the land.

## **7:00 P.M. Public Hearing on the Warrant for the 2025 Fall Town Meeting.**

Mr. Haddad read the Public Hearing notice into the record.

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to open the public hearing.

*Ms. Manugian made a motion to open the public hearing for the October 18, 2025, Fall Town Meeting Warrant. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Mr. Haddad explained that there are twenty-three (23) Articles on the Fall Town Meeting Warrant. He recommends that the first sixteen (16) Articles could be a consent agenda, but he stated that it is ultimately up to the Board.

### **Article 1: Prior Year Bills- UMASS Memorial Health- Requested Amount: \$85.00**

The Board was unanimously in favor to support.

**Article 2: Amend the Fiscal Year 2026 Town Operating Budget**—Mr. Haddad provided information and recommendations regarding the Articles seeking funding in the 2025 Fall Town Meeting Warrant. He reviewed the proposed amendments to the Operating Budget and explained the summary of available funds. He stated that Free Cash was expected to be certified within the next week. The memorandum provided to the Board included the balances of the Town's available funds, which he listed as follows:

FY 2026 Levy Capacity:	\$89,142
Local Cable Receipts Reserved for Appropriations:	\$41,020
Anticipated Free Cash:	\$2,500,000
Stabilization Fund:	\$2,728,838
Capital Stabilization Fund:	\$109,199
GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund:	\$22,868
Stormwater Excess and Deficiency:	\$142,245

Mr. Haddad explained that the Board of Assessors estimates New Growth will come in at \$31.5 million, which will add an additional \$99,125 to the FY 2026 Anticipated Levy Limit. He said, unfortunately, the Final State Aid allocation for Groton was reduced by \$9,982 from the last estimate, leaving \$89,1542 in available Levy Capacity.

Mr. Haddad summarized the Line-Item Transfers with the Board (please refer to the attached memorandum). He then explained the total amounts requested by category:

Free Cash:	\$122,098
Tax Levy:	\$ 77,872
Cable Receipts:	<u>\$ 11,617</u>
Total:	\$211,587

Ms. Manugian stated that she was struggling with adding the hours for new positions in the Fall and believed this should be addressed in the context of the Annual Budget discussion. Mr. Haddad said if the position of Treasurer/Collector remained unchanged after the start of the fiscal year and the same person continued in that role, as well as the fact that the part-time Assistant Treasurer Collector notified him after the start of the Fiscal Year that he was retiring in December he would not have proposed adjusting the hours. He explained that given these facts, he was presented with a unique opportunity to do a top to bottom review of the Department and that is why is recommending the additional hours mid-year. Ms. Pine added that the Board has just set the Annual Select Board Goals, with one being to discuss the number of employees needed to live within the budget without requiring an override. She recognizes that the timing of the uninitiated changes would put them in a position where it would make sense to make these changes, as some of them are small. She hopes they can take a comprehensive look at all Departments. Mr. Haddad wanted to clarify that funding this would be offset by reducing another line item, making this change budget neutral. Mr. Manugian stated that the reduction is due to employees who did not take insurance. Mr. Haddad mentioned that two of the three new hires opted out of the Town's insurance, which was already accounted for in the budget. Mr. Reilly stated that the employees who have left Groton have done so for better pay and emphasized the need to pay employees a competitive wage.

**Article 3: Transfer Money into Capital Stabilization Fund** - Requested Amount: \$900,000 from Free Cash to fund the anticipated Capital Budget.

Mr. Haddad explained that if all the line-item transfers in Article Two are approved, the total FY 2026 Operating Budget will be approximately \$52,730,000. He stated this would require a Capital Stabilization Fund balance of about \$681,000. He is requesting an additional \$215,889, bringing the total transfer to \$900,000 from Free Cash to fund the Capital Budget. Ms. Manugian asked Mr. Haddad if he could resend last year's Capital Plan to the Board.

**Article 4: Transfer Money into the Stabilization Fund**—Requested Amount: \$0

**Article 5: Transfer Money into the GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund**- Requested Amount: \$250,000 from Free Cash.

Mr. Haddad explained that Senators Cronin and Kennedy were able to provide earmarks in the FY 2026 State Budget for capital projects at the schools: \$250,000 from Senator Cronin and \$150,000 from Senator Kennedy. He said those funds are being used to address some of their capital needs. Additionally, if they receive the Green Communities grants, these would help further meet their school capital requirements.

**Article 6: Transfer Within the Water Enterprise Fund**- Requested Amount: \$70,000

Mr. Tom Orcutt, Groton Water Superintendent, stated that one of their department's pickup trucks has a rotting utility body that needs significant repairs. This transfer request would come from Water Surplus.

The Board was unanimously in favor to support.

**Article 7: Transfer Within the Center Sewer Enterprise Fund-** Requested Amount: \$30,000

This Article seeks a transfer of \$30,000 from the Four Corners Sewer Enterprise and Deficiency Fund to balance the FY 2025 budget. Mr. Haddad explained that \$10,000 is allocated for budget adjustments based on usage. The remaining \$20,000 is to go out to bid for a company to perform emergency repairs.

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.

**Article 8: Transfer Within the Stormwater Enterprise Fund-** Requested Amount: \$50,000

Mr. Brian Callahan, DPW Director in Training, stated that the detention basins require maintenance, and this funding will help support the necessary work to ensure compliance with the federal grant.

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.

**Article 9: Cable Department Equipment Grant-** Requested Amount: \$16,000

Mr. Haddad explained that when the Town closed the Cable Enterprise last year, funding designated for this equipment grant was returned to the General Fund and certified as Free Cash. The funding needs to be returned to the Cable Department for equipment only. This Article will transfer \$16,000 from Free Cash to the Equipment Grant Fund.

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.

**Article 10: Assessors Quinquennial Certification-** Requested Amount: \$34,900 from Free Cash.

Ms. Megan Foster, the Principal Assessor, attended the meeting. Ms. Foster stated she is requesting funding for their five-year certification for the fiscal year 2027. She wants to secure the funds so she can begin working on their certification with Vision. Every fifth year, the Massachusetts Department of Revenue requires a full re-certification of values.

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.

**Article 11: Repair to Fitch's Bridge Headwall-** Requested Amount: \$60,000 from Free Cash.

Mr. Tom Delaney, DPW Director, and Mr. Brian Callahan, DPW Director in training, attended the meeting. This Article will authorize funding to repair Fitch's Bridge Headwall. Mr. Haddad said this is the second time the Headwall has needed repairs.

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.

**Article 12: Provide Funding to Maintain the Former Nod Road Landfill-** \$100,000 from Free Cash.

Mr. Delaney stated that the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is requesting the Town to conduct a third-party inspection to verify that the former Nod Road Landfill was "capped" properly, along with other monitoring efforts. The DPW estimates that this work will cost about \$100,000 over the next couple of years. Mr. Haddad explained that, under current DEP standards, capping the landfill would cost approximately \$1 million.

The Board was unanimously in favor to support.

**Article 13: Repair Fire Alarm-** Function Hall and Restaurant at the Country Club-\$60,000 from Free Cash.

Mr. Shawn Campbell, the General Manager and Golf Pro of the Groton Country Club, was present. He explained that the Fire Alarm system in the Function Hall and Restaurant is in need of repair. There have been several false alarms and this upgrade is necessary. It is in the current capital plan for FY 2027, but should be done earlier than next year.

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.

**Article 14: Engineering Funds for Complete Streets Grant Work – Mr. Takashi Tada, the Town Planner, attended the meeting.** If the Complete Streets Grant is received, the Town will need funding (\$30,000 from Free Cash) for engineering purposes. Mr. Tada explained that if the grant is awarded, two projects will be carried out: a sidewalk/multi-use path from Boston Road to the Country Club on Lovers Lane, and improvements on Sandy Pond Road. Mr. Haddad stated that the funds would be used to design these two projects.

The Select Board unanimously supported the article if the Complete Streets Grant is received, or will withdraw it if the town does not get the grant.

**Article 15: Debt Service for Middle School Track-** Requested Amount: \$33,000

Mr. Haddad stated that the Community Preservation Committee will pay an additional \$33,000 in debt service and apply it to the principal.

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.

**Article 16: Establishing Limits for Various Revolving Funds -** Mr. Haddad explained that this article is to increase the spending limit of the Home Recycling Equipment Revolving Fund and the Senior Center Fitness Equipment Revolving Fund from \$10,000 to \$25,000.

Vote to increase the Limit.

*Mr. Cunningham moved to raise the limit of the Home Recycling Equipment Revolving Fund and the Senior Center Fitness Equipment Revolving Fund from \$10,000 to \$25,000 and to remove this article from the Warrant. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**Article 17: Proposed Amendments to the Groton Charter -**Mr. Haddad explained that the Charter Review Committee held a public hearing on the Proposed Amendments to the Charter on Thursday, September 4th. The Committee will present the same amendments proposed at the 2025 Spring Town Meeting, with one exception: they will not request the removal of the provision that prohibits Select Board members from serving on other elected boards. That provision will remain unchanged. Mr. Haddad then explained that the Charter Review Committee will propose two motions under this Article: one regarding the Town Manager's Appointing Authority of the Police Chief, Fire Chief, and Town Clerk, and a second covering all other non-controversial items in the Charter.



The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.

**Article 18: Replace Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) for the Fire Department—**

Requested Amount: \$500,000.

Mr. Haddad recommends borrowing these funds and repaying them over five years if the Town does not receive the grant. Chief Cheeks attended the discussion and stated that the apparatus is currently being used and is a critical part of their jobs and life safety. Mr. Cunningham asked if all of them needed to be replaced, and Mr. Haddad confirmed they were all purchased at the same time.

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.

**Article 19: Chapter 202 of the General Bylaws—"Transient Merchants"**—Police Chief Michael Luth attended to discuss Articles 19 and 20. Mr. Haddad explained that these two articles cover door-to-door solicitation and allow the Police Department to manage organizations that want to conduct door-to-door solicitations. He said that Chief Luth and Kara Cruikshank, the Executive Assistant, conducted numerous surveys of various towns' bylaws, selected their preferred options, and then had Town Counsel make significant refinements. Chief Luth said the Police Department has received numerous complaints about solicitors, and the current application process is very basic. This will provide applicants with a set of rules to follow and will require a background check. He explained that he likes the part of the bylaw that includes a do-not-solicit list, which residents can sign up for, preventing solicitors from visiting their homes. Mr. Haddad and the Chief reviewed the bylaws. Chief Luth stated that if this bylaw is passed, they can always revisit the hours in the future. Mr. Haddad stated that Article 20 is the Article that allows the Police Department to conduct a background check.

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.

**Article 20: Amend Chapter 161- Licenses and Permits of the Groton Code-**

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.

**Article 21: Special Legislation- Prohibit the Use of Second-Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides-**

Mr. Haddad said the Select Board approved a local policy to ban the use of Second-Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides on municipal property. This article asks whether the town will vote to authorize the Select Board to petition the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for a special act to prohibit the use of Second-Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides throughout the town on both public and private property.

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.

**Article 22: Accept Bluebird Lane as a Town Way** – The Select Board held a public hearing earlier in the meeting, voted to approve the Road Layout for Bluebird Lane, and recommended that the October 18th Fall Town Meeting accept it as a Town Way.

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.

**Article 23: Citizens' Petition - Authorization to Create an Advisory Committee-**

Mr. Jack Petropoulos, Mr. Steve Lane, and Mr. Bruce Easom, the petitioners, were in attendance. This article proposes whether the Town should vote to establish an Advisory Committee tasked with developing and recommending a process for delivering Major Initiative Cost-Benefit Reports to the Town Meeting. Mr. Petropoulos explained that this enhancement would be implemented in two phases. He stated that the first step would be to ask if the Town Meeting is interested in an unbiased approach to the process. Mr. Petropoulos proposed that the first five individuals who signed the petition would serve on this Committee and report back to a future Town Meeting.

Mr. Easom stated that this is an opportunity for the Town Meeting to receive advice from residents. Mr. Lane pointed out that several capital items could have been analyzed, and he said that the Town is being asked to consider whether this approach would be beneficial. Ms. Manugian questioned why go through this process of forming a new committee. Mr. Lane responded that if townspeople say no, then they will drop it. Mr. Cunningham noted that much of the activity listed in the Article is already happening. Mr. Petropoulos said this effort would provide more in-depth, enhanced information to Town Meeting. Ms. Pine believes this is a good opportunity for people to step up and sees a benefit in doing so. Mr. Robertson, the Finance Committee Chair, thinks the Finance Committee does a good job at what they do. He was unclear on what this meant and could not form an opinion at this time whether he agreed or disagreed with the Citizens' Petition. Mr. Lane clarified that it is an exploratory committee. Mr. Pisani said it would make more sense if they served as advisors to the Finance Committee. Mr. Reilly stated that the biggest problem at Town Meeting is that some attendees are unaware of what's happening. Mr. Delaney mentioned that they struggle to fill committees, which could lead to confusion in the end.

Mr. Pisani would like to discuss this Article further with the Finance Committee.

Close the Public Hearing on the October 18, 2025, Fall Town Meeting Warrant

*Mr. Reilly made a motion to close the public on the October 18, 2025, Fall Town Meeting Warrant.*

*Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**On-Going Issues**

- A. PFAS Issue- None
- B. UMass Satellite Emergency Facility –None
- C. Fire Department Staffing – None
- D. West Groton Dam-None

## **SELECT BOARD LIASON REPORTS**

None

### **Approval of the Regularly Scheduled Meeting of September 8, 2025**

*Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of September 8, 2025, as presented. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried 4 in favor and 1 abstained-Reilly.*

The Select Board adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Respectively submitted by Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager.