



TOWN OF GROTON

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

Select Board

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

Town Manager
Mark W. Haddad

SELECT BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2025
AGENDA
SELECT BOARD MEETING ROOM
2nd FLOOR
GROTON TOWN HALL

6:00 P.M. Announcements and Review Agenda for the Public

6:01 P.M. Public Comment Period

I. 6:05 P.M Town Manager's Report

- 1. Notification of Holiday Hours of the Town Hall**
- 2. FY 2027 Budget Update**
- 3. Select Board Meeting Schedule Through the End of the Year**

II. 6:10 P.M. Items for Select Board Consideration and Action

- 1. Review/Approve Board/Committee Annual Update Schedule**
- 2. Consider Approving a Fund Raising Letter**

OTHER BUSINESS -Authorize the Town Manager and One Member of the Select Board to Sign Warrants for the Next Thirty Days

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

III. Minutes: Regularly Scheduled Meeting of November 17, 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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Mark W. Haddad

To: *Select Board*

From: *Mark W. Haddad – Town Manager*

Subject: *Weekly Agenda Update/Report*

Date: *November 24, 2025*

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Other than the Town Manager's Report, Items for Select Board Consideration and Action and a review of the Ongoing Issues List, there is nothing specifically scheduled on Monday's Agenda.

1. With the Holiday Season upon us, I would like to let the Select Board and public now the hours we have set for Town Hall over the next month and one-half. Please note the following schedule:
 - Wednesday, November 26, 2025 – Town Hall will close at Noon.
 - Thursday, November 27, 2025 – Town Hall will be closed for the Thanksgiving Holiday.
 - Friday, November 28, 2025 – Town Hall will be closed – Employees can either work that day or take personal or vacation leave.
 - Wednesday, December 24, 2025 – Town Hall will close at Noon.
 - Thursday, December 25, 2025 – Town Hall will be closed for the Christmas Holiday.
 - Friday, December 26, 2025 – Town Hall will be closed.
 - Wednesday, December 31, 2025 – Town Hall will close at Noon.
 - Thursday, January 1, 2026 – Town Hall will be closed for the New Year's Day Holiday.
 - Friday, January 2, 2026 – Town Hall will be closed – Employees can either work that day or take personal or vacation leave.
2. I have no specific FY 2027 Budget Update as of the writing of this report. I will update the Board with any new information at Monday's meeting.
3. Please see the Select Board's Meeting Schedule that will take you through the end of the year:

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, 2026 -	No Meeting
Monday, January 12, 2026 -	Regular Scheduled Meeting

ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND ACTION

1. One of the Select Board's Annual Goals is to develop a meeting schedule for the Board to meet with Committees and Boards to receive updates. To that end, Kara and I have started to schedule these meetings. Thus far, we have the following schedule:

Monday, December 8, 2025 -	Commemorations and Celebrations Committee Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee
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Monday, December 15, 2025	Sustainability Commission
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Monday, December 22, 2025	TREAD Committee Trails Committee
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Monday, January 26, 2026	Conservation Commission Sargisson Beach Committee Williams Barn Committee
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Monday, February 2, 2026	Planning Board Complete Streets Committee
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I would ask the Board to let me know if there are any other Committees you would like us to schedule.

2. Following up on last week's meeting, Town Counsel has discussed the proposed Fundraising Letter with the Ethics Commission. According to Town Counsel and the Ethics Commission, the Board may approve and sign the letter and have it distributed generally in town, rather than targeting specific individuals and entities. No disclosures are necessary to do that. Enclosed with this Report is the proposed Fundraising letter for your review and approval. I would respectfully request that the Board consider approving and issuing the letter. We can discuss this in more detail at Monday's meeting.

MWH/rjb
enclosure



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Town Manager
Mark W. Haddad

November 25, 2025

To All Groton Residents and Organizations,

On behalf of Groton's appointed and elected officials, we wish you a happy holiday season and a prosperous New Year. We are all grateful for the ability to live and work with you in our beautiful community.

As we enter the season of giving, when we are asked to support the work of organizations we value, we want to make you aware of some local giving opportunities in Groton. If you are in a position to donate during this holiday season, we would welcome contributions toward paying off the loan for the Middle School Track, or paying down the mortgage for 6 Affordable Housing Units located in East Groton. A donation to the General Fund would go directly toward funding the Annual Town Budget, while a gift to the Community Children's Fund helps families in need provide holiday gifts and school supplies for their children.

As a duly certified non-profit organization, donations to the Town are tax-deductible. We are grateful for any donations we receive; every dollar helps us provide the services you depend on. Donations can be sent to the Groton Select Board, Attention: Mark Haddad – Town Manager, 173 Main Street, Groton, MA 01450. Please include an email or return address so that we may send you an acknowledgement for tax deduction purposes.

We know these are uncertain times for many of our residents. If you are facing financial or other hardship, please do not hesitate to contact Karen Tuomi and the Commissioners of Trust Funds at ktuomi@verizon.net for assistance.

Throughout its history, the generosity of its residents has allowed Groton to build a solid reputation of taking care of its residents and its land and providing high quality public service. We thank you for considering a contribution to continue this tradition.

Most sincerely,

Matthew F. Pisani, Chair

Rebecca H. Pine, Vice Chair

Alison S. Manugian, Clerk

John F. Reilly, Member

Peter S. Cunningham, Member

Mark W. Haddad, Town Manager

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2025
UN-APPROVED**

Select Board Members Present: Matt Pisani, Chair; Becky Pine, Vice Chair; Alison Manugian, Clerk; Peter Cunningham; 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/Town Accountant; Bud Robertson, Finance Committee Chair; Jonathan Decker; Megan Foster, Principal Assessor; Tammi Mickel, Assistant Assessor; Takashi Tada, Town Planner/Land Use Director; Tom Orcutt, Groton Water Superintendent, Brian Callahan, Department of Public Works Director;

Board of Assessors Present: Don Black, Chair; Jennifer Moore;

Board of Water Commissioners: Jack McCaffrey, Chair; Jim Geminer.

Chair Pisani called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and reviewed the agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Pine took a moment to thank the Groton Public Library and the Fire Department for their participation in the Community Spelling Bee held on Friday, November 14th, at the Prescott Community Center. Mr. Cunningham also wanted to give kudos to the Friends of Prescott.

Ms. Pine announced that the Education Funding Forum, hosted by Representative Scarsdale, will take place on November 20th from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Marion Stoddart Performing Arts Center. She is hoping for a good turnout and explained that the forum's main focus will be on school funding.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Consider Ratifying the Town Manager's Appointment of Jonathan Decker as Groton Water Superintendent.

Water Superintendent candidate Jonathan Decker attended the meeting with Jack McCaffrey, Water Commission Chair; Jim Geminer, Water Commissioner; and Water Superintendent Tom Orcutt.

Mr. Haddad explained that after twenty-five years of dedicated service as Groton's Water Superintendent and six years on the Water Commission, Mr. Tom Orcutt will retire at the end of December 2025. In choosing his replacement, Mr. Haddad formed a Search Committee consisting of Water Commission Chair Jack McCaffrey, Select Board Member John Reilly, Human Resources Director Melisa Doig, DPW Director Brian Callahan, Water Department Business Manager Lauren Crory, and Executive Assistant Kara Cruikshank to review resumes and conduct interviews. Initial interviews were held, and one candidate rose to the top: Mr. Jonathan Decker. Mr. Haddad explained that the Water Commissioners and Department Heads interviewed Mr. Decker, and that

the Water Commissioners were unanimously in favor of him. Mr. Decker is a Tier 4 Operator and currently works in the water plant in Haverhill. He brings valuable expertise, and the Town is fortunate that there will be an overlap between his start date and Mr. Orcutt's last day. Mr. Haddad said that based on all of this, he believes Mr. Decker will be a great addition to the department.

Mr. Reilly noted that he participated in the interviews and praised the Water Commissioners for their expertise, stating that they are an excellent group. He also thanked Mr. Orcutt.

Ms. Pine asked about the article in the Groton Herald regarding manganese in Groton's water. Mr. Orcutt explained that the article contained many inaccuracies. He clarified that they are dealing with a chemistry issue, which is not a significant problem. Ms. Pine expressed relief upon hearing this and said that the quality of the water they use daily has been a major topic of discussion among the Board. She also noted that Mr. Decker seems like an excellent candidate.

Mr. Pisani thanked Mr. Decker for joining the team and expressed his gratitude. He also acknowledged Mr. Orcutt, stating that he would be missed.

Chair McCaffrey stated that Mr. Decker has big shoes to fill but is looking forward to helping him. Mr. Cunningham said he read Mr. Decker's background and believes he will be great.

Mr. Haddad respectfully requested that the Select Board ratify his appointment of Jonathan Decker as the new Groton Water Superintendent.

Mr. Reilly made a motion to ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Jonathan Decker as the Groton Water Superintendent, effective December 8th. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Consider Ratifying the Town Manager's Appointments of Brian Callahan to the Complete Streets Committee, Earth Removal Stormwater Committee, and the Recycling Committee.

Ms. Manugian made a motion to ratify the Town Manager's appointments of Brian Callahan to the Earth Removal Stormwater Committee and the Recycling Committee. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Pine made a motion to ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Brian Callahan to the Complete Streets Committee. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Consider Ratifying the Town Manager's Appointment of James Fitzgerald and Martin Wallace to the Traffic Details Team.

Ms. Pine made a motion to ratify the Town Manager's appointment of James Fitzgerald and Martin Wallace to the Traffic Detail Team. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Consider Approving Amendments to the Town's Financial Policies as Recommended and Approved by the Finance Committee.

Mr. Haddad explained that Groton Charter requires the Finance Committee and the Select Board to review its Financial Policies annually. This year, the Finance Committee has a few amendments to the policies, and Mr. Haddad reviewed and discussed the proposed changes with the Board (See the proposed changes in the included red-lined version of the Financial Policies).

After reviewing the amendments, Mr. Haddad said he believes that they are good changes by the Finance Committee. He respectfully requested that the Select Board adopt the Financial Policies as presented.

Ms. Manugian made a motion to adopt the amendments to the Town's Financial Policies as recommended and approved by the Finance Committee. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

5. Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Update.

Mr. Haddad reported that the annual kickoff meeting has taken place, and department heads are currently working on their Fiscal Year 2027 departmental budgets, which are due by December 1st. Review meetings are scheduled for December 8th, 9th, and 10th. He explained that a preliminary meeting was held with Town Administrator Jason Silva, Groton Dunstable Regional School District Superintendent Geoff Bruno, and Business Manager Sherry Kersey. Mr. Haddad said the first meeting was very productive, and they will continue meeting with them to develop a plan that aligns with the guidance voted by the Finance Committee and the Select Board.

Mr. Haddad reviewed an analysis of Chapter 70 State Aid and the Consumer Price Index (CPI) prepared by Mr. Robertson. Mr. Haddad thanked Mr. Robertson for his efforts. The analysis compares the actual aid received by the Groton Dunstable Regional School District from FY 2015 to FY 2026 versus with what it would have been if it had increased by 2 1/2 % each year, and with what it would have been if it had increased each year by the Consumer Price Index. Mr. Haddad emphasized that if the state had tied the CPI to local aid over the past 11 years, the average percentage increase would have been 3.62%, or approximately \$3 million. During Thursday's Funding Forum, he expressed his intention to inquire whether the state has ever considered changing the funding formula. Mr. Haddad thanked Mr. Robertson for his efforts and for providing the summary.

Ms. Pine noted that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is hosting a series of "Listening Sessions." These sessions will allow individuals to discuss the impact of the Chapter 70 funding formula on their towns and school districts. She explained that a virtual session is scheduled for November 18th, followed by an in-person session on Wednesday, December 3rd.

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

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, 2026	No Meeting
Monday, January 12, 2026	Regularly Scheduled Meeting

ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL

1. Consider Approving Stop Signs on Town Forest/Wharton Row and Whitman Road/Lovers Lane

Mr. Brian Callahan, DPW Director, was present. Mr. Callahan and Police Chief Luth requested that the Select Board amend the Traffic Rules and Orders to add stop signs, creating new four-way stops near 111 Wharton Row and 165 Wharton Row, as well as at the intersection with Town Forest Road. They also asked for a stop sign at the intersection of Whitman Road and Lovers Lane. Mr. Haddad mentioned that after paving Town Forest and Whitman Row, several residents requested the installation of four-way stop signs on Wharton Row. Police Chief Luth believes that because these roads provide access to Town Forest and many drivers are unfamiliar with the area, they create unsafe conditions. Mr. Haddad presented images of the proposed signage at the intersections to the Select Board and thought these signs would be a great addition for safety reasons.

Ms. Pine made a motion to amend the Traffic Rules and Orders and to approve the installation of these stop signs at the proposed locations. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Consider Approving a Fund-Raising Letter.

Ms. Pine drafted a proposed fundraising letter that she would like the Board to consider sending to various non-profit partners, as well as posting on the website and in other prominent places in Town. Mr. Haddad explained that whenever you fundraise, you need to review the ethics laws. Town Counsel does not believe this will be an issue since it would be distributed town-wide. Town Counsel is reaching out to the ethics commission and will provide an update on whether it is acceptable to proceed. Mr. Haddad would like to postpone this discussion until next week, when he expects to hear back from Town Counsel. He will also include a copy of the letter in the packet.

3. Consider Voting to Amend the Anticoagulant Home Rule Petition by Clarifying the Applicator Definition.

Mr. Haddad explained that the Home Rule Petition to ban Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides has been submitted to the Legislature. House Counsel reviewed the proposed Legislation and asked if it was intended to ban the use of these rodenticides on residential properties as well as commercial properties. Mr. Haddad explained that Town Counsel does not read the draft bill as not covering homeowners but stated that if the Board wants to take a clarifying vote, they could do so. Additionally, House Counsel asked if the Select Boards wanted to change

the definition of “licensed commercial application” to “certified applicator”. Mr. Haddad respectfully requested that the Select Board vote to make these changes and to authorize the Town Clerk to submit them to the Legislature.

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to clarify that this legislation will be for both residential and commercial properties. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Pine made a motion to change the term “licensed commercial applicator” to “certified applicator” as defined in 333 CMR 10. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Consider Approving a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverage License for Broken Creek Vineyard for Groton Winterfest to be held on Saturday, December 6, 2025, from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Mr. Reilly made a motion to approve a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for the Broken Creek Vineyard for Groton Winterfest to be held on Saturday, December 6, 2025, from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Consider Approving a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverage License for the Friends of Prescott for Open Mic Night to be held on Friday, December 12, 2025, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for the Friends of Prescott’s Open Mic Night to be held on Friday, December 12, 2025, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

6:15 P.M. Annual Tax Classification Hearing

Principal Assessor Megan Foster attended, along with Assistant Assessor Tammi Mickel and Board of Assessor Members Ms. Jennifer Moore and Mr. Don Black.

The Tax Classification Hearing was held to determine the annual tax levy percentage for Fiscal Year 2026.

Ms. Foster presented a PowerPoint to the public and the Select Board outlining the process for setting the tax rate and the factors that impact it. The average value of a Single-Family House in Groton for FY26 is \$761,387. Ms. Foster stated that it was a 7.55% increase from FY 25. New Growth was certified on October 29, 2025, at \$33,996,860 in assessed value, or \$518,452 in tax levy growth (based on the FY25 tax rate of \$15.25).

Ms. Foster reviewed how the tax rate is established and calculated and explained that it will be \$14.78 per thousand dollars of assessed value if a uniform rate is selected for FY 2026. She also provided a ten-year historical overview of the average tax bill for single-family homes. Ms. Foster explained that the value of single-family tax bills is increasing, which is why the tax rate is decreasing.

Classification Vote Summary

1. Vote for a single tax rate or consider a shift of the tax levy from the Residential class to the Commercial, Industrial, and Personal Property classes.

Ms. Pine moved that the Board use the factor of 1 and vote for a single tax rate in the Town of Groton at a tax rate of \$14.78 for FY 2026. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2 Vote on whether to adopt a residential exemption.

Ms. Pine moved that they not adopt a residential exemption. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Vote on whether to adopt a small commercial exemption.

Mr. Cunningham moved that they not adopt a small commercial exemption. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Haddad asked the board to sign a waiver.

On-Going Issues

- A. PFAS Issue- None
- B. UMass Satellite Emergency Facility – None
- C. Fire Department Staffing – Mr. Haddad has started the budget process and is looking into options to fund additional firefighters. He will keep the Board informed.
- D. West Groton Dam—Mr. Haddad said that both reports concerning the removal and repair of the dam have been received. He said that for the repair report, they need to solicit bids to determine the actual repair costs. Mr. Haddad explained that they will be going out to bid and plan to schedule a discussion on this matter for a Select Board agenda in late December or early January.

SELECT BOARD LIASON REPORTS

None

Approval of the Regularly Scheduled Meeting of November 3, 2025

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of November 3, 2025, with one correction. Ms. Manugian seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

The Select Board adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

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