



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, DECEMBER 22, 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. Consider Ratifying the Appointments of W. David Nelson as a Per Diem Van Driver and Breccan R. Novak to the Groton Country Club Golf Staff
 2. FY 2027 Budget Update
 3. Proposed Select Board Schedule Through the 2026 Spring Town Meeting
- II. 6:10 P.M. Items for Select Board Consideration and Action
1. Consider Adopting a Policy to Address Penny Shortage
- III. 6:15 P.M. Trails Committee Update
- IV. 6:30 P.M. T.R.E.A.D. Committee Update
- V. 7:00 P.M. In Joint Session with the Finance Committee – Consider Amending Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Guidance
- 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

- VI. Minutes: Regularly Scheduled Meeting of December 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: *December 22, 2025*

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

In addition to the Town Manager's Report, Items for Select Board Consideration and Action and a review of the Ongoing Issues List, there are three items scheduled on Monday's Agenda. First, the Trails Committee will be in to provide their Annual Report to the Board. Enclosed with this Report is a summary of their activities. Second, the T.R.E.A.D. Committee will be in as well for their Annual Report to the Board. Finally, the Select Board will be meeting in joint session with the Finance Committee to review Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Guidance. I have enclosed a copy of the Memo I gave the Board last week explaining the current status of the Budget. Please see Item #2 below for a summary of what our current thinking is should the Board and Finance Committee decide to change the Guidance.

1. I have appointed W. David Nelson as a Per Diem Van Driver and Breacan Novak to the Country Club Golf Staff. I would respectfully request that you consider ratifying these appointments at Monday's meeting.
2. With regard to the FY 2027 Budget Update, please consider the following should there be a desire to modify the original FY 2027 Budget Guidance. As you know, the initial guidance assumed that forty (40%) percent of new revenues would be used to balance the municipal operating budget. If that approach is changed and replaced with a directive to achieve a budget reduction totaling \$539,000, I would recommend the following approach: As an initial step, all current vacant positions would remain unfilled. At present, this includes one patrol officer position in the Police Department, one equipment operator position in the Department of Public Works, and one library assistant position in the Library. For the record, this would represent the second staffing reduction in the DPW in less than one year.

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Select Board
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page two

2. Continued:

In combination with additional non-personnel expense reductions such as reductions in Municipal Facilities maintenance, Library Sunday hours, and similar operating adjustments, these actions would collectively achieve approximately one-half of the required \$539,000 reduction. To reach the full reduction target, however, it would be necessary to lay off three full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. At this time, I am not prepared to discuss specific positions under consideration. It is important to note, however, that any such layoffs would have a direct impact on the level and quality of services currently provided to residents. The Finance Team and I am continuing to evaluate several additional options that may help mitigate the extent of personnel reductions. I expect to have a further update and additional information to share at Monday's meeting.

3. I would propose the following meeting schedule that will get you through the Spring Town Meeting:

Monday, January 5, 2026 -	No Meeting
Monday, January 12, 2026 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, January 19, 2026	No Meeting (Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday)
Monday, January 26, 2026 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, February 2, 2026 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, February 9, 2026 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, February 16, 2026 -	No Meeting – (President's Day Holiday)
Monday, February 23, 2026 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, March 2, 2026 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, March 9, 2026 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, March 16, 2026 -	No Meeting
Monday, March 23, 2026 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, March 30, 2026	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, April 6, 2026 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, April 13, 2026 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, April 20, 2026 -	No Meeting – (Patriot's Day Holiday)
Mon, April 27, or Sat, May 2, 2026 -	2026 Spring Town Meeting

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

ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND ACTION

1. Town Treasurer/Tax Collector Katie Kazanjian is recommending that the Select Board consider adopting a formal "Penny Policy" due to the anticipated shortage of pennies following the U.S. Mint's decision to discontinue production of pennies. The proposed policy would establish clear guidance on rounding practices for cash transactions of all Town Departments. It is attached to this Report for your review and consideration. Should the Board be so inclined, I would respectfully request that you waive your policy to wait a week before adopting the policy, and if you do that, I would respectfully request that you adopt said Policy to be effective on January 1, 2026. We can discuss this in more detail at Monday's meeting.

MWH/rjb
enclosure

Groton Trails Committee

Summary of Activities as of December 2025

Projects Completed in 2025

On-site trail work performed by the Trails Committee in 2025, both as individuals and in groups, is listed below. A total of roughly 453 person-hours were expended by committee members and 112 person-hours by other members of the community, for a total of 565 person-hours.

- 1) Individual Projects (Note: these are done, in many cases multiple times per year, by all members of the Trails Committee.)
 - a) Perform stewardship assessments (check for erosion, encroachments, dumping, littering, etc.)
 - b) Clear trails of forest debris
 - c) Chainsaw trees off trails (only by members with approved safety training)
 - d) Verify and/or edit and/or add to interactive map information
 - e) Verify and/or edit and/or add to parcel information on website
 - f) Add/replace trail markers
 - g) Mow grass/brush on trails
 - h) Trim (widen) trails
 - i) Organize tools, equipment, and construction material in the storage shed on Town Field behind GPL
 - j) Maintain tools and equipment
 - k) Provide content for social media site (Facebook)
- 2) Small Projects
 - a) Multiple locations – Replaced old and rotting trailhead posts (23) and added new ones (23). Requires notifications to DigSafe for new locations not on conservation parcels, digging post holes, installing posts, and nailing up trail markers.
 - b) Multiple locations – Installed new Groton Conservation Commission (GCC) parcel signs.
 - c) Multiple locations – Installed geotextile fabric on existing pressure-treated bridges (3) and covered with a layer of pea stone to eliminate risks of slipping on wet and slimy boards.
 - d) Carter's Folly (Groton Conservation Trust) - GPSed trails (to put on interactive map) and marked them (with GCT approval).
 - e) Marsh-Lewis Memorial Grove (GCC) - Marked trails, installed switchbacks to avoid erosion of trail, and installed trailhead posts and GCC parcel sign.
 - d) Wharton Plantation (New England Forestry Foundation) – Cleared and raked landing area off Old Dunstable Rd., improved drainage, and planted rhododendrons and many

other native wildflowers (with NEFF approval). Monitored growth and coverage.
Disposed of illegally dumped railroad ties at Transfer Station.

- e) Nashua River Rail Trail (MA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation) – Assisted Friends of the Nashua River Rail Trail with blowing leaves/branches off the asphalt trail and the adjacent equestrian trail three times in the spring and the fall. Trimmed back limbs and bushes impinging onto the equestrian trail.
 - f) Casella Preserve (GCC) – Re-routed trail to avoid steep slope and cleared and marked the new trail.
 - g) Shattuck Well Site (Groton Water Dept.) – Created new public trail access from Martins Pond Rd. (with Water Dept.'s approval), and marked the trail to Lowell Rd. Installed trailhead posts at both ends.
 - h) Paquawket Path Easement (Town of Groton) – Renewed efforts to establish a short public trail connection from the Longley I subdivision over an easement. Worked with Conservation Commission and Select Board to review previous legal opinions supporting this trail connection. A survey to establish the boundaries of the easement is currently being contracted by the town.
- 3) Larger Projects
- a) Wharton Plantation (NEFF) – Replaced 40-foot bridge over stream at southern end of beaver pond.
 - b) General Field (GCT) - Created new trail from Shirley Rd. to Mare Barn on General Field (with approval from Town of Groton). Extended existing trail through wooded area to connect to new trail. Marked new trails, installed trailhead posts on Shirley Rd., and added trail posts and signage to identify the trail along the edge of the field (with GCT approval).
 - c) Nashua Riverwalk (DCR) – Completed this 4-year-long project in December. Funded by five grants at a total cost of \$75,564. Built a 0.2-mile accessible trail along the Nashua River Ox Bow in J. Harry Rich State Forest that connects with the 0.2-mile John Tinker Accessible Trail. Designed (in coordination with DCR), purchased, and installed four accessible interpretive signs. Also built a granite curbing wall for safety and installed a handicap picnic table.

Committee Activities Other Than On-site Trail Work

- a) Supported a booth at Spring GrotonFest (May).
- b) Supported a booth at Groton Greenway's Nashua River Festival (June).
- c) Supported a booth at Fall GrotonFest (September).
- d) Supported the Groton Town Forest Trail Races (October).

Financial Status

- a) The Trails Committee Gift Fund accepts donations from individuals and organizations. We received one private donation for \$450.00 in 2025. We receive a donation from the Groton Town Forest Trail Races put on by the Squannacook River Runners each year. Last year's donation (in December 2024) from SqRR was \$1,250.00.
- b) Expenses for materials required for maintenance totaled \$5,591.09 in 2025.
- c) Current balance in the Gift Fund is \$6,300.92.
- d) An earmark grant for \$7,500.00 was received in July 2024 from the Massachusetts Legislature (via the Destination Groton Committee) for trail signage. The remaining balance is \$1,790.00, which is held in the Gift Fund.
- e) An FY25 CPA grant for \$12,195.00 for trail tools and equipment was obtained. The total expenditures made on this grant was \$11,626.00, ending in March 2025. The Town of Groton provided space for these tools and equipment in the "shed" on the Town Field behind the Groton Public Library and the shed was also electrified to support the battery-powered tools we purchased.
- f) The Trails Committee's interactive map and website was ported in 2025 to a commercial website support company (Lewis Studios, in Dunstable) for \$1,200.00. This was done to provide a more typical user interface (one used by many other non-profits) and to provide a simple WordPress interface to committee members for adding and modifying website content. This avoids the necessity of always having at least one Trails Committee member who has sufficient technical background to maintain our website. The yearly maintenance cost is \$950.00. To defray this ongoing yearly cost the Town of Groton, for the first time, budgeted \$950.00 for the Trails Committee.

Goals for 2026 (in addition to normal maintenance activities)

- a) Measure distances; design and order additional directional signs and install. Design and purchase other signs and install.
- b) Draft articles for local media and website.
- c) Jack and Mary Allen Conservation Area (GCC) – GPS trails and mark them (with GCC approval)
- d) C.L. Bennett Family Conservation Area (GCC) - GPS trails and mark them (with GCC approval)
- e) Priest Memorial Area and Sargisson Beach – Mark trails (with Sargisson Beach Committee approval)
- f) Wiewel (GCC) - Assess and clear existing trail; Create a high-level design for a bridge to connect to Forest Bells (GCT's Blackman Field and Woods) parcel; Explore options for obtaining public access to the bridge; Apply for a grant to fund the bridge.

- g) Groton Hills (GCC) near Baddacook Conservation Land (GCT) – Construct a pedestrian/bike bridge (~10') and two adjacent bog bridges (8' long, 15" wide) over an intermittently wet area.
- h) McLain's Woods and Walker CA (GCC) – Provide oversight for Boy Scout Eagle Project to construct two horse-capable bridges over two intermittent streams in the northeast corner of the Walker and McLain's Woods parcels.
- i) McLain's Woods (GCC) – Construct three or four bog bridges (~30') to cross an intermittent wet area on the western trail (Mahoney Lane) and/or use gravel and geo-grid to stabilize.
- j) Corwin Easement on Walker Parcel (GCC) – Construct three (or more) horse-capable bog bridges (8' long, 3' wide) and/or use gravel and geo-grid to stabilize.
- k) Near Angus Acre (GCT) (Scarlet easement) – Clear drainage stream and put bridge over it to avoid further erosion. Build steps up to Martins Pond Rd.
- l) Assess feasibility of constructing a more gradual ramp from Ice Line Trail up to Hill Rd. (GCC).
- m) Install new GCC parcel signs (St. Regis Paper Mill, C.L. Bennett Family, Jack & Mary Allen).
- n) Assess re-routing of trails around riverfront erosion (Surrenden Farm [GCC], Taisey Conservation Restriction [GCC]).



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Town Manager
Mark W. Haddad

To: **Select Board**
Finance Committee

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

Subject: **Fiscal Year 2027 Proposed Budget Update**

Date: **December 15, 2025**

The Finance Team and I have completed our initial review of the Proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budget. As you know, the Select Board and Finance Committee provided Budget Guidance that required the Municipal Budget to come in at or under 40% of anticipated new revenues, with the remaining funding set aside for the Groton Dunstable Regional School District.

The Finance Team and I did a thorough review of revenues. We are recommending that we go higher than we have ever gone before to meet the needs of the Municipal Budget and School District's Operating Assessment. During our review, we increased New Growth from \$15 million to \$21.5 million (adding \$96,070 to the anticipated FY 2027 Levy Limit) and stretched Estimated Receipts as high as possible, by increasing them by \$253,742. The following is the new breakdown of Estimated Revenues for FY 2027, with the percentage set aside to the Town and School District:

<u>Category</u>	<u>FY 2027</u>
Unexpended Levy Capacity	\$ 39,273
Anticipated FY 2027 Levy Increase (\$21.5 Million in New Growth)	\$ 1,307,950
Anticipated FY 2027 Local Receipts Increase (3.5% Estimated Increase)	\$ 253,742
Anticipated FY 2027 State Aid Increase (2% Estimated Increase)	\$ 23,654
Available New Revenue for Fiscal Year 2026	\$ 1,624,619
Initial Set Aside for Municipal Budget (40%)	\$ 649,848
Initial Set Aside for GDRSD Operational Assessment (60%)	\$ 974,771

The preliminary Municipal Budget has come in at an increase of \$589,781. This increase is within the Guidance and allows the Town to maintain services at current levels without making any significant reductions. While we had hoped to restore the DPW position and look at ways to increase the number of Firefighters and Police Officers, there is no way to do that within the Guidance. In addition, we have set aside \$1,000,000 for the Operating Assessment of the Groton Dunstable Regional School District and \$22,712 for the anticipated Operating Assessment of Nashoba Tech, leaving approximately \$12,000 for an increase in Debt Service within the Levy.

Today, I met with Dunstable Town Administrator Jason Silva, GDRSD Superintendent Dr. Geoff Bruno, GDRSD Assistant Superintendent Marian Dyer, GDRSD Director of Business Sherry Kersey, GDRSD Committee Chair Lacey McCable and Patricia DuFresne, Katie Kazanjian and Kara Cruikshank from my Finance Team to review these numbers and where both Dunstable and the School District stand with their budgets.

For your information, the School District has the following anticipated cost increases in FY 2027:

Wages	Up 5.54%
Benefits (Middlesex County & Health Insurance)	Up 7.92%
Mandated Phonics Program	\$70k in consumable materials
Student Services (Special Ed)	
Therapeutic Contractors	Up \$180k or 82%
Medical Contractors	Up \$50k or 42%
Transportation	Up 5% (no revolving fund offset)

It is important to note that the District has not filled two vacancies this year and will not fill them in next year's budget. There are no new services anticipated and no restoration of any position eliminated over the last two years. They are doing their best to maintain the reduced level of services they have been forced to provide over the last two years.

Given all of this, the District would need an increase in the Groton Assessment of \$2.3 million and \$771k from Dunstable. Should Groton only be able to provide an increase of \$1 million, the Dunstable match would be \$354k, requiring a reduction of \$1,788,205 in their anticipated FY 2027 Budget Request. This would require the elimination of at least 15 FTEs.

Currently Dunstable is carrying an assessment increase in their budget of \$518,507 (which would cause a deficit of \$640,000 for Dunstable in FY 2027). This would require an increase in the Groton Assessment of \$1,539,278, or \$539,278 more than currently set aside for the District pursuant to the Guidance. Even at this level it would require a reduction in their anticipated budget of \$942,466, or approximately 9 FTEs.

The purpose of this memorandum is to ask the Select Board and Finance Committee if they want to revisit the Guidance. To meet the Dunstable set aside would require Groton to essentially level fund the Municipal Budget at FY 2026 levels, requiring significant reductions in Public Safety, Town Hall, Library and DPW.

We should schedule a meeting as soon as possible with the Finance Committee and Select Board. I look forward to discussing this in more detail with both the Select Board and Finance Committee.

MWH/rjb

cc: Jason Silva, Dunstable Town Administrator
Dr. Geoff Bruno, Superintendent, Groton Dunstable Regional School District
Marian Dyer – Assistant Superintendent, Groton Dunstable Regional School District
Lacey McCabe – Chair, Groton Dunstable Regional School District
Patricia DuFresne – Assistant Director of Finance/Town Accountant
Katie Kazanjian – Treasurer/Tax Collector
Kara Cruikshank – Executive Assistant

10/10/2024
10/10/2024
10/10/2024



SELECT BOARD POLICY

Policy Category:	Board
Policy Number:	BOA – 2025-1
Latest Revision Date:	December 22, 2025

POLICY NAME: PENNY POLICY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish uniform procedures for the handling of cash transactions in the Town of Groton following the discontinuation of the issuance and circulation of one-cent coins (“pennies”). This policy ensures accuracy, transparency, and the ability to provide exact change using the nickel as the smallest coin denomination.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all municipal departments, agencies, boards, and staff members responsible for cash transactions on behalf of the Town of Groton.

3. Background

With the elimination of pennies from circulation, cash transactions can no longer be completed to the exact cent. To maintain financial integrity and streamline operations, the Town of Groton will adopt a standardized rounding system for all “cash” disbursements.

4. Policy Statement

The Town of Groton will no longer distribute pennies in any municipal “cash” transaction. All cash totals ending in amounts not representable by available coin denominations will be rounded according to the rounding rules set forth below.

This policy does not affect non-cash transactions. Online payments, checks, credit/debit card payments, and electronic transfers will continue to be processed at their exact amount.



SELECT BOARD POLICY

5. Rounding Rules for Cash Transactions

Cash disbursement totals will be rounded as follows:

- \$0.01 or \$0.02 → rounded **down** to \$0.00
- \$0.03 or \$0.04 → rounded **up** to \$0.05
- \$0.06 or \$0.07 → rounded **down** to \$0.05
- \$0.08 or \$0.09 → rounded **up** to \$0.10

Example:

- \$12.02 becomes \$12.00
- \$18.04 becomes \$18.05
- \$7.06 becomes \$7.05
- \$3.09 becomes \$3.10

The rounding occurs only on the total amount due, after tax and fees are applied.

6. Communication to the Public

All municipal departments shall post notices informing the public of the rounding policy. Notices must be displayed:

- At all cashier points and service counters
- On the Town's website
- In applicable invoices, bills, and payment instructions
- In digital communication regarding municipal fees

A standard information poster and digital notice will be provided by the Town Manager's Office.

7. Compliance and Training

Department heads are responsible for ensuring staff are trained in the rounding procedures. Training must include:

- Proper rounding methods
- Explanation of the policy for customer interactions
- Documentation requirements
- Use of cash registers or software configured to apply rounding consistently

Any department using manual cash boxes must maintain a written log showing correct application of rounding.



SELECT BOARD POLICY

8. Accounting and Auditing

The rounding of cash transactions shall be recorded in accordance with the Town's established accounting practices. Departments must ensure:

- All rounding adjustments are automatically or manually documented
- Cash drawer reconciliations consider rounding adjustments
- Annual audits review compliance with this policy

Rounding differences shall be immaterial and are expected to be balanced over time.

9. Review and Amendments

This policy shall be reviewed by the Town Manager annually, or sooner if needed based on state or federal legislation, operational experience, or public feedback. Proposed amendments shall be submitted to the Select Board for approval.

10. Effective Date

This policy becomes effective on January 1, 2026, after which no pennies will be issued from Town of Groton municipal transactions.

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

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

Also Present: Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; Patricia DuFresne, Assistant Finance Director/Town Accountant.

Others Present: Charlotte Weigel and Ken Horton of the Sustainability Commission; Andrea Correa, Energy Manager; Kelly Brown, Department of Energy Resources, Green Communities Program, and Michael Rossi, Energy Code Specialist, on behalf of Mass Save.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Haddad informed the Board that the Department of Public Health (DPH) has released \$5 million in supplemental funding to reimburse municipalities in the Nashoba Valley area for EMS costs following the closure of Nashoba Valley Medical Center (NVMC). Groton will receive a final funding amount of \$999,051. Mr. Haddad said this was great news.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None

6:00 P.M. Sustainability Commission Update

Ms. Charlotte Weigel and Mr. Ken Horton of the Sustainability Commission attended to provide an update on their efforts. Ms. Kelly Brown from the Department of Energy Resources, Green Communities Program, and Mr. Michael Rossi, Energy Code Specialist representing Mass Save, joined virtually to share information about the specialized stretch energy code (see the attached PowerPoint in these minutes).

Mr. Haddad suggested that the Select Board schedule another meeting with the Sustainability Commission to discuss the specialized stretch energy code before supporting it as an article on the Spring Town Meeting warrant. Mr. Cunningham recommended holding a public hearing to gather public input on the Code. Ms. Pine and the Board thanked the Committee for their efforts and the incredible amount of work they have done over the past few years.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Approve Letter in Support of increasing Chapter 70 Funding.

As discussed at the last meeting, Mr. Haddad drafted a letter to the Governor and the Legislature urging them to increase Chapter 70 Aid to Hold-Harmless Districts. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to review and approve this letter. He explained that there was one change to the proposed letter: increasing the requested amount to \$500 per student from \$300.

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to approve sending a letter in support of an increase in Chapter 70 Funding. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Consider Approving an Increase to the Plumbing, Gas, and Electrical Fees.

Mr. Haddad and the Finance Team have been meeting with various departments and reviewing their FY 2027 budgets. As part of the review, revenue generation was discussed. During a meeting with Building Commissioner Bob Garside, the issue of raising building, electrical, gas, and plumbing fees was addressed. He explained that building fees were increased two years ago, but electrical, gas, and plumbing fees have not been raised in five years. Based on this, Mr. Haddad is recommending that the Select Board immediately raise the gas, plumbing, and electrical fees to generate more revenue for the Town. The Board received a copy of the proposed fee increases. Based on last year's income, this could raise over \$25,000 in FY 2027.

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to approve an increase in the plumbing, gas, and electrical fees. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Haddad explained that he may propose increasing sticker fees at the transfer station. He would return to the Board with a proposal.

3. FY 2027 Budget Update.

Mr. Haddad provided a memo to the Board regarding an update of the Fiscal Year 2027 Proposed Budget for their review. He explained that the initial review of the various Department Budgets is complete. He further said that the Select Board and Finance Committee provided Budget Guidance requiring the Municipal Budget to come in at or below 40% of anticipated new revenues, with the remaining funding set aside for the Groton Dunstable Regional School District.

The Finance Team and Mr. Haddad did a thorough review of the revenues. They recommended an increase to meet the needs of both the Municipal Budget and the School District's Operating Assessment. During this review, they raised the New Growth estimate from \$15 million to \$21.5 million, which adds \$96,070 to the anticipated FY 2027 Levy Limit. They also stretched Estimated Receipts by \$253,742. Mr. Haddad then provided a breakdown of the Estimated Revenues for FY 2027, including the percentage allocated to both the Town and the School District.

Mr. Haddad explained that the preliminary Municipal Budget has increased by \$589,781. This increase remains within the Budget Guidance and allows the Town to maintain current service levels without significant cuts. However, he said the Department of Public Works position could not be restored, nor are there any plans to increase the number of Firefighters and Police Officers within the Guidance.

Earlier today, Mr. Haddad held a meeting with Dunstable Town Administrator Jason Silva, Groton Dunstable Regional School District Superintendent Dr. Geoff Bruno, Groton Dunstable Regional School District (GDRSD) Assistant Superintendent Marian Dyer, GDRSD Director of Business Sherry Kersey, GDRSD Committee Chair Lacey McCabe, Patricia DuFresne, Katie Kazanjian, and Kara Cruikshank from the Finance Team to review these numbers and discuss the current status of both

Dunstable and the School District's budgets. He then reviewed the School District's anticipated cost increases for FY 2027. Mr. Haddad emphasized that the School District has not filled two vacancies this year and will not include these positions in next year's budget either. No new services are expected, and no positions eliminated over the past two years will be restored. He noted that they are doing their best to maintain the reduced level of services they have been compelled to provide during this time.

The District would need an increase of \$2.3 million in the Groton Assessment and \$771,000 from Dunstable to maintain services at current levels. If Groton provides a \$1 million increase, the Dunstable match would be \$354,000, requiring a reduction of \$1,788,205 from the District's anticipated FY 2027 Budget Request. Mr. Haddad said this would require eliminating at least 15 FTEs. This is based on the \$150 per pupil allocation for Chapter 70. Mr. Haddad clarified that every \$50 increase per student in state aid results in an additional \$150,000 in total aid for the district.

Mr. Haddad stated that Dunstable is currently carrying a set aside for the District in the amount of \$518,507, even though this would cause a \$640,000 deficit for FY 27. Should this amount stay in the Dunstable budget, it would require an increase in the Groton assessment of \$539,278, bringing the total to \$1,539,278, which is more than the current allocation for the district in the balanced budget and in compliance with the guidance.

Mr. Haddad asked whether the Select Board and Finance Committee want to revisit the Guidance. To meet a \$1.5 million increase for the School District, the Municipal Budget would need to be level-funded at the FY 26 appropriation. This would mean a reduction of at least 6 FTEs. Mr. Haddad wanted to make it clear that he met the Guidance, stayed within it, and funded the union contracts. Ms. Manugian wanted to clarify that boosting revenues involves gambling with figures. Mr. Haddad emphasized the cooperation and collaboration between the school district and the towns, and that they want to find a solution. Ms. Manugian encouraged residents to inform the Board about where they would prefer to see reductions on both the school and town sides. Mr. Cunningham pointed out that Groton isn't the only community facing these challenges.

Mr. Haddad would like to meet in joint session with the Finance Committee and the Select Board on Monday, December 22nd, to revisit the Guidance. He then announced the following schedule the School District plans to follow for their budget review: on Tuesday, January 13th, there would be a meeting with the Select Board, Finance Committee and School District Administration; the School Superintendent would release his budget book on January 28th; and on February 25th, the School District Committee its Budget Public Hearing.

4. Select Board Meeting Schedule through the End of the Year.

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. Annual License Renewals.

Mr. Haddad provided the Board with a Memo from Executive Assistant Kara Cruikshank listing the various license renewals for 2026. The Memo included the names, hours, and managers of all establishments. (The memo is attached to these minutes.) Mr. Haddad read each page into the record and asked the Board to approve it.

He first read page one of the Memo and asked the Board to approve it as presented.

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the licenses as presented on page one. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Haddad read page two of the Memo and asked the Board to approve it as presented.

Ms Manugian made a motion to approve the licenses as presented on page two. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Haddad read page three of the Memo and asked the Board to approve it as presented.

Ms. Manugian made a motion to approve the licenses, as amended, on page three. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Haddad read page four of the Memo and asked the Board to approve it as presented.

Ms. Manugian made a motion to approve the licenses as presented on page four. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Haddad read page five of the Memo and asked the Board to approve it as presented, except for the last license (a Class II license for Beverly Auto Sales).

Ms. Manugian made a motion to approve the licenses as presented on page four. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Beverly Auto Sales- Class II license

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the Class II License for Beverly Auto Sales, contingent upon approval of a special permit by the Zoning Board of Appeals. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Consider Appointing Veronica O'Donnell as a Full Member of the Zoning Board of Appeals with a Term to Expire on June 30, 2026.

Mr. Haddad respectfully requested that the Select Board promote Associate Member Veronica O'Donnell to Full Member to fill the vacancy left by Tom Piesel.

Mr. Reilly made a motion to appoint Veronica O'Donnell as a full member of the Zoning Board of Appeals, with a term to expire on June 30, 2028. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Consider Appointing Alfred Von Campe and Tim Synan as Associate Members to the Zoning Board of Appeals with Terms to Expire on June 30, 2026.

Ms. Manugian made a motion to appoint Alfred Von Campe and Tim Synan as Associate Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals, with terms expiring on June 30, 2026. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

On-Going Issues

- A. PFAS Issue - The project's substantial completion date is set for March 31, 2026. Water will be connected to the high school by December 29.
- B. UMass Satellite Emergency Facility – The facility is progressing well and is expected to be ready by December 2026.
- C. Fire Department Staffing –None

West Groton Dam—Mr. Haddad explained that the Horsley Witten Group's report on the dam removal process is complete, totaling 300 pages with exhibits. The IT Department can provide a link to the exhibits if desired, given their size. He would like to schedule a meeting with the Board to discuss both the repair and removal. They plan to solicit bids for the repair so they will be available during the discussion. The bids are expected by the end of January. He will schedule a meeting for Board review in early February.

SELECT BOARD LIASON REPORTS

None

Approval of the Regularly Scheduled Meeting of December 8, 2025

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of December 8, 2025. Mr. Cunningham seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

The Select Board adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

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