



**Town Manager**  
Mark W. Haddad

## TOWN OF GROTON

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

## Select Board

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, JANUARY 12, 2026**  
**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 Appointment of Robert Maloney as the Acting Water Superintendent
  2. FY 2027 Budget Update
  3. Update on Select Board Schedule Through the 2026 Spring Town Meeting
- II.                      6:40 P.M.                      Items for Select Board Consideration and Action
1. Consider Appointing Gregg Baker as a Full Member on the Zoning Board of Appeals
  2. Consider Appointing Robert Mullins as an Associate Member of the Zoning Board of Appeals
  3. Call for and Open the Warrant for the 2026 Spring Town Meeting
  4. Consider Approving a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for the Friends of Prescott, for a Cheese and Wine Tasting: A Taste of Spain, to be held on Thursday, January 22, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.- 8:30 p.m.
  5. Consider Approving a One Day All Alcoholic Beverages License for the Squannacook River Runners, for a Holiday Social, to be held on Sunday, January 18, 2026, from 3:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
  6. Consider Approving a One Day All Alcoholic Beverages License for the Friends of Prescott, for GIN-uary: A Gin and Tonic Mixology Experience to be held on Friday, January 30, 2026 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
  7. Consider Approving a One Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for the Friends of Prescott's Open Mic Night to be held on Friday, February 13, 2026 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
- III.                      6:45 P.M.                      Council on Aging – Committee Update
- IV.                      7:00 P.M.                      In Joint Session with the Finance Committee – Continue Review of FY 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

- V.                      Minutes:                      Regularly Scheduled Meeting of December 22, 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:** *January 12, 2026*

### 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 are two items scheduled on Monday's Agenda. First, the Council on Aging will be in to provide their Annual Report to the Board. Enclosed with this Report is a summary of their activities. Second, we will be continuing our review/discussion with the Finance Committee on the Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Guidance. I have also invited Groton Dunstable Regional School District Superintendent Dr. Geoff Bruno, GDRSD Director of Business Sherry Kersey and GDRSD Committee Chair Lacey McCabe to the meeting for the discussion as well. Under Item #2 of my Report is a summary of the current status of the Municipal Budget based on the discussion at your December 22, 2025 Meeting. In addition, Sherry Kersey has prepared a summary of the status of the School District's Budget. It is attached for your review and consideration.

1. Jonathan Decker is no longer the Groton Water Superintendent. I am planning on advertising the vacancy later this Spring. In the interim, I have appointed Robert Maloney as Acting Water Superintendent. I would respectfully request that the Board ratify this appointment at Monday's meeting.
2. With regard to the FY 2027 Budget Update, I have made changes to the current status of the Municipal Budget based on the Joint Meeting with the Finance Committee on December 22<sup>nd</sup>. Specifically, I have adjusted the Police Department and Highway Department Budgets by eliminating funding for the current vacancies in each Department (one patrol officer position and one equipment operator/laborer). In addition, I have eliminated funding in the Library Budget for Sunday Hours and the Summer Reading program. Finally, we have increased the subsidy from the Stormwater Utility for the DPW Administrative Assistant (located in the Town Manager's Budget) from 4 hours to 20 hours.

***Continued on Next Page – Over >***

**Select Board**  
**Weekly Agenda Update/Report**  
**January 12, 2026**  
**page two**

**2. Continued:**

The following Chart shows the summary status of the budget, comparing the original guidance with what the Finance Team and I originally prepared to where it stands now:

<u>Category</u>	<u>FY 2027</u>
Anticipated Increase in Other FY2027 Funds	\$ 10,199
Anticipated FY2027 Levy Increase (\$21.5 Million in New Growth)	\$ 1,307,950
Anticipated FY2027 Local Receipts Increase (3.5% Estimated Increase)	\$ 255,875
Anticipated FY2027 State Aid Increase (2% Estimated Increase)	\$ 23,654
<b>Available New Revenue for Fiscal Year 2026</b>	<b>\$ 1,597,678</b>
<b>Initial Set Aside for Municipal Budget (40%)</b>	<b>\$ 639,071</b>
<b>Initial Set Aside for GDRSD Operational Assessment (60%)</b>	<b>\$ 958,607</b>
Initial Proposed Municipal Budget Increase (36.8%)	\$ 588,156
Initial Proposed GDRSD Operational Assessment Increase (61.8%)	\$ 986,810
Initial Proposed Set Aside for Nashoba Tech (1.4%)	\$ 22,712
<b>Initial Proposed Budget Increase</b>	<b>\$ 1,597,678</b>
Current Proposed Budget Increase (22.2%)	\$ 353,782
Current Proposed GDRSD Operational Assessment Increase (76.4%)	\$ 1,221,184
Current Set Aside for Nashoba Tech (1.4%)	\$ 22,712
<b>Current Proposed Budget Increase</b>	<b>\$ 1,597,678</b>

In addition, as stated above, attached is a summary of the status of the District's Budget. GDRSD Director of Business Sherry Kersey will go over this in more detail at Monday's meeting. I look forward to discussing this in more detail with the Select Board and Finance Committee at Monday's meeting.

**3. Please see the Select Board's Meeting Schedule that will take you through the 2026 Spring Town 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

**Continued on Next Page – Over >**

**Select Board**  
**Weekly Agenda Update/Report**  
**January 12, 2026**  
**page three**

**3. Continued:**

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

**ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND ACTION**

1. Dan McLaughlin has resigned his position as a full Member of the Zoning Board of Appeals. The ZBA is recommending that the Select Board appoint Associate Member Gregg Baker as a full member to fill this vacancy. I would respectfully request that the Select Board make this appointment at Monday’s meeting. The term would expire on June 30, 2026.
2. Leonard Green has resigned as an Associate Member of the Zoning Board of Appeals. The ZBA is recommending that the Select Board Appoint Robert Mullins an Associate Member of the ZBA to fill this vacancy. I would respectfully request that the Select Board make this appointment at Monday’s meeting. The term would expire on June 30, 2026.
3. It is that time of year for the Select Board to call for the 2026 Spring Town Meeting. The default date for the meeting is the last Monday in April, unless the Select Board determines a different date in March, April or May, with formal public notice at least six weeks prior to the date. The default date would be April 27, 2026. As we have been very successful holding the Town Meeting on a Saturday, I would recommend that the Select Board consider holding the Meeting on Saturday, May 2, 2026. Enclosed with this report are the proposed timelines for both dates for your review and consideration. We can discuss this in more detail at Monday’s meeting.

**Select Board**  
**Weekly Agenda Update/Report**  
**January 12, 2026**  
**page four**

4. I would respectfully request that the Select Board consider approving a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for the Friends of Prescott, for a Cheese and Wine Tasting: A Taste of Spain, to be held on Thursday, January 22, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.- 8:30 p.m.
5. I would respectfully request that the Select Board consider approving a One Day All Alcoholic Beverages License for the Squannacook River Runners, for a Holiday Social, to be held on Sunday, January 18, 2026, from 3:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
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7. I would respectfully request that the Select Board consider approving a One Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for the Friends of Prescott's Open Mic Night to be held on Friday, February 13, 2026 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

MWH/rjb  
enclosure





**Groton Council on Aging**  
 163 West Main Street  
 Groton, MA 01450  
 Tel (978) 448-1170  
 Council on Aging Director Nicole Sarvela

FY24	<u>JUL</u>	<u>AUG</u>	<u>SEP</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>	<u>JAN</u>	<u>FEB</u>	<u>MAR</u>	<u>APR</u>	<u>MAY</u>	<u>JUN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Event Sign Ins	1137	1389	1416	1663	1715	1464	1470	1444	1611	1449	1535	1388	17681
Transportation	11	396	355	389	336	343	306	305	328	392	381	340	3882
Outreach	40	66	45	56	85	82	257	308	143	40	50	48	1220

FY 24	<u>JUL</u>	<u>AUG</u>	<u>SEP</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>	<u>JAN</u>	<u>FEB</u>	<u>MAR</u>	<u>APR</u>	<u>MAY</u>	<u>JUN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Unduplicated													
Event Sign In's	261	250	295	317	473	337	274	295	317	295	298	273	3685
Transportation	4	60	51	53	41	53	39	43	41	47	60	40	532
Outreach	27	38	25	35	40	42	222	277	110	30	36	38	920

FY25	<u>JUL</u>	<u>AUG</u>	<u>SEP</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>	<u>JAN</u>	<u>FEB</u>	<u>MAR</u>	<u>APR</u>	<u>MAY</u>	<u>JUN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Event Sign Ins	1645	1484	1424	1751	1439	1399	1603	1525	2103	1950	1698	1663	19684
Transportation	408	408	349	391	331	350	379	343	453	400	356	370	4538
Outreach	78	32	57	64	89	128	293	342	156	75	31	40	1385

FY 24	<u>JUL</u>	<u>AUG</u>	<u>SEP</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>	<u>JAN</u>	<u>FEB</u>	<u>MAR</u>	<u>APR</u>	<u>MAY</u>	<u>JUN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Unduplicated													
Event Sign In's	270	272	278	337	365	273	286	323	353	320	329	298	3704
Transportation	48	47	43	43	46	50	37	37	48	47	39	33	518
Outreach	55	19	35	41	47	55	206	219	105	54	25	30	891

FY26	<u>JUL</u>	<u>AUG</u>	<u>SEPT</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Event Sign Ins	1744	1551	1770	1888	1647	1457	10057
Transportation	435	445	421	449	289	298	2337
Outreach	33	23	67	34	41	16	214
FY 26 Unduplicated	<u>JUL</u>	<u>AUG</u>	<u>SEPT</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Event Sign In's	258	248	288	297	406	263	1760
Transportation	38	36	44	53	36	35	242
Outreach	25	21	38	18	31	17	150

# Groton-Dunstable Regional School District

## Memorandum

To: FY27 Budget Financial Working Group  
From: Sherry Kersey  
RE: Update on Preliminary FY27 Budget & Assessments  
Date: January 6, 2026

The School District's initial budget represented all department requests increased the operating budget by just over \$4 million, or an 8% increase.

Since our last meeting, we have reduced the preliminary operating budget:

November 6, 2025	\$54,672,144
December 15, 2025	\$54,080,238
January 6, 2026	\$54,045,663

Preliminary Operating budget as of today is 6.46% higher than FY26

Groton's Assessment is 8.0% higher than FY26

Dunstable's Assessment is 8.5% higher than FY26

Groton Assessment Comparison	FY 2026	FY 2027	\$ Difference	% Difference
Operating Assessment (includes transportation)	\$28,247,632	\$30,506,160	\$2,258,528	8.00%
Operating Grant (one time FY25)	\$0	\$0	\$0	100.0%
Capital Assessment	\$278,643	\$500,000	\$221,357	79.4%
Debt Assessment	\$110,389	\$108,143	-\$2,246	-2.0%
Total Assessment	\$28,636,664	\$31,114,303	\$2,477,639	8.7%

Dunstable Assessment Comparison	FY 2026	FY 2027	\$ Difference	% Difference
Operating Assessment (includes transportation)	\$8,641,782	\$9,379,518	\$737,736	8.5%
Capital Assessment	\$83,607	\$125,000	\$41,393	49.5%
Debt Assessment	\$36,424	\$33,945	-\$2,479	-6.8%
Total Assessment	\$8,761,813	\$9,538,463	\$776,650	8.9%

These assessments cannot be fully funded with preliminary town revenues.

Groton stated that they may be able to fund up to an increase of \$1.2M (4.32%) increase. Dunstable would have sufficient funding in their budget to meet Groton's proportionate share. The school district would have a deficit of **\$1,353,528**.



<b>Groton Assessment Comparison</b>	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>FY 2027</b>	<b>\$ Difference</b>	<b>% Difference</b>
Operating Assessment (includes transportation)	\$28,247,632	\$29,468,816	\$1,221,184	4.32%
Operating Grant (one time FY25)	\$0	\$0	\$0	100.0%
Capital Assessment	\$278,643	\$500,000	\$221,357	79.4%
Debt Assessment	\$110,389	\$108,143	-\$2,246	-2.0%
Total Assessment	<b>\$28,636,664</b>	<b>\$30,076,959</b>	<b>\$1,440,295</b>	<b>5.0%</b>

<b>Dunstable Assessment Comparison</b>	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>FY 2027</b>	<b>\$ Difference</b>	<b>% Difference</b>
Operating Assessment (includes transportation)	\$8,641,782	\$9,063,334	\$421,552	4.9%
Capital Assessment	\$83,607	\$125,000	\$41,393	49.5%
Debt Assessment	\$36,424	\$33,945	-\$2,479	-6.8%
Total Assessment	<b>\$8,761,813</b>	<b>\$9,222,279</b>	<b>\$460,466</b>	<b>5.3%</b>

Dunstable stated that they have \$518,507 (6.0%) increase in their preliminary budget. Groton would need to increase their funding to \$1,539,278 (5.45%) to match the proportionate share to Dunstable. The school district would have a deficit of **\$907,891**.

<b>Groton Assessment Comparison</b>	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>FY 2027</b>	<b>\$ Difference</b>	<b>% Difference</b>
Operating Assessment (includes transportation)	\$28,247,632	\$29,786,910	\$1,539,278	5.45%
Operating Grant (one time FY25)	\$0	\$0	\$0	100.0%
Capital Assessment	\$278,643	\$500,000	\$221,357	79.4%
Debt Assessment	\$110,389	\$108,143	-\$2,246	-2.0%
Total Assessment	<b>\$28,636,664</b>	<b>\$30,395,053</b>	<b>\$1,758,389</b>	<b>6.1%</b>

<b>Dunstable Assessment Comparison</b>	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>FY 2027</b>	<b>\$ Difference</b>	<b>% Difference</b>
Operating Assessment (includes transportation)	\$8,641,782	\$9,160,289	\$518,507	6.0%
Capital Assessment	\$83,607	\$125,000	\$41,393	49.5%
Debt Assessment	\$36,424	\$33,945	-\$2,479	-6.8%
Total Assessment	<b>\$8,761,813</b>	<b>\$9,319,234</b>	<b>\$557,421</b>	<b>6.4%</b>

Groton and Dunstable both have a deficit in their preliminary budgets with the placeholders outlined above.

### What are the major cost drivers?

Wages Up 5.42%  
Benefits Up 7.92%



Middlesex County Retirement	Up 9.15%
Health Insurance (active & ret.)	Up 8.9%
Mandated Phonics Program	\$70K in consumable materials
Student Services	
Therapeutic Contractors	Up \$180K or 82% (fed funding worry)
Medical Contractors	Up \$50K or 42% (student need)
Athletic Program Support	Up \$150K (working on this)
Substitutes	Up \$200K (working on this)
Transportation	Up 5% (no revolving fund offset)
Maintenance Expenses	Up \$145K or 15% (playing catch-up)
Out of District Placements	Up 11% (many move-ins)

#### **What have we done to reduce budget?**

- We have reduced two (2) 1.0 FTE student service positions this year (unfilled vacancies) that will carry into FY27. We have also not filled a few paraprofessional positions when possible. This fluctuates greatly throughout the year.
- We have reduced our regular transportation fleet from 18 buses to 17 in FY26. This reduction saved the district \$86,000 and will continue into FY27.
- Negotiated in FY 25 to shift and additional 3% of health insurance premiums to employees in FY26 and an additional 2% in FY27.
- We have contracted with a consultant to review the school district's scheduling to improve the efficiency of delivery of our student services. This was a long-term recommendation of the operational audit. Any changes that are ultimately suggested will most likely not be implemented in FY27.
- Filled a maintenance vacancy with a licensed electrician. This is reducing our outside contracted services. We plan to do a HVAC technician hire when another vacancy becomes available.
- At this time, there are no known professional position retirements. When/if we become aware of retirement, we will assess whether or not to fill the vacancy or fill with a newer professional.

#### **Will there be more revenue to offset the deficit?**

- Currently, the budget contains minimum per pupil aid at \$150 per student. For every \$50 added to that amount, the district will receive an additional \$110,000.

- Circuit Breaker Reimbursement Fund is offsetting \$2million of OOD expenses. In the event projected FY26 reimbursement is higher than anticipated, we reduce additional expenses in the general fund.
- Regional Transportation Reimbursement is estimated using an 80% reimbursement rate. FY25 ended up around 85%. For every 1% additional reimbursement, that will add \$13,000 of revenue.
- School Committee could revisit reducing E & D by another \$100K to meet the FY26 usage.

**What are possible operating expense reductions?**

- Health Insurance is budgeted for a 12% increase. We are currently trending below the benchmark for FY26. As our renewal gets closer (Feb/Mar) in the event we have a lower than 12% renewal, for every 1% we can reduce our budget it will reduce our expenses by \$50,000.
- Move a student services position to be funded from the non-resident tuition revolving account. This is risky. Although we have had at least 1 student from another community attend our specialized programs, this is not guaranteed to be replenished in future years.
- The school district is currently reviewing athletic fee revenue and the costs of operating the athletic program. Any increases in revenue projection or efficiencies in programs will reduce the operating deficit. It is difficult to estimate what that amount will be at this time.
- Substitute costs have been underbudgeted in the past as they are difficult to predict. With a younger teaching staff and more maternity/parental/FMLA time lawful availability, utilization has increased. Thus, the projection is up \$200K or 64% from FY26 budget. We are working on trying to lower this number to close the deficit.
- The reductions above would happen prior to any positions being reduced or eliminated. Based on a current deficit range of \$908K-\$1.354M, it is estimated that perhaps 7-10 positions throughout the district will be vulnerable to budget reductions using some combination of the non-salary reductions previously noted.



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**Town Manager**  
Mark W. Haddad

**To:** *All Departments, Boards, Committees and Commissions*

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

**Subject:** *Spring Town Meeting – Monday, April 27, 2026*

**Date:** *January 13, 2026*

Please be advised that at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Select Board held on Monday, January 12, 2026, the Board voted to open the Warrant for the 2026 Spring Town Meeting. Please note that the Town Meeting will be held on Monday, April 27, 2026. The Warrant will close at the close of business on Friday, February 20, 2026.

All articles should be submitted in writing to the Select Board as soon as possible to allow for as much time as possible for legal and financial review. All articles should be submitted with a written summary. These summaries will be included in the Spring Town Meeting Warrant so they must be submitted with the proposed Article. The following is the timeline for the Town Meeting:

Tuesday, January 13, 2026 -	Warrant for 2026 Spring Town Meeting Opens
Friday, February 20, 2026 -	Warrant for 2026 Spring Town Meeting Closes
Monday, February 23, 2026 -	Select Board conduct first review of Articles
Monday, March 9, 2026 -	SB – FinCom Public Hearing on Articles
Monday, April 6, 2026 -	Select Board Finalizes Warrant
Friday, April 10, 2026 -	Post Warrant
Monday, April 27, 2026 -	Spring Town Meeting

As has been the case in the past, please plan on attending any meeting of the Select Board in which they review an article you have submitted. I will provide all Departments, Boards, Committees and Commissions with a schedule of additional meetings once it is developed.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please feel free to contact me with any additional questions or concerns.

MWH/rjb

cc: Select Board  
Finance Committee  
Grace Bannasch – Town Clerk  
Jason Kauppi – Town Moderator  
Brian Falk – Town Counsel



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**Town Manager**  
Mark W. Haddad

**To:** *All Departments, Boards, Committees and Commissions*

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

**Subject:** *Spring Town Meeting – Saturday, May 2, 2026*

**Date:** *January 13, 2026*

Please be advised that at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Select Board held on Monday, January 12, 2026, the Board voted to open the Warrant for the 2026 Spring Town Meeting. Please note that the Town Meeting will be held on Saturday, May 2, 2026. The Warrant will close at the close of business on Friday, February 20, 2026.

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Monday, April 13, 2026 -	Select Board Finalizes Warrant
Friday, April 17, 2026 -	Post Warrant
Saturday, May 2, 2026 -	Spring Town Meeting

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Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please feel free to contact me with any additional questions or concerns.

MWH/rjb

cc: Select Board  
Finance Committee  
Grace Bannasch – Town Clerk  
Jason Kauppi – Town Moderator  
Brian Falk – Town Counsel



**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**MONDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2025**  
**UN-APPROVED**

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

**Finance Committee Members Present:** Bud Robertson, Chair; Mary Linskey, Vice Chair; Gary Green; David Manugian; Scott Whitefield; Kristina Lengyel

**Also Present:** Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; Patricia DuFresne, Assistant Finance Director/Town Accountant; Katie Kazanjian, Treasurer/Tax Collector; Melisa Doig, Human Resources Director; Britt McKinley and Thomas Guilick, Trails Committee

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Haddad announced the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust has informed the Town that it will be eligible for 5% loan forgiveness for the High School Water Main project. This is very good news for the taxpayers as it will reduce the amount of debt to be repaid. Mr. Haddad read a public service announcement into the record to inform residents that the Town only removes snow from sidewalks in the Town Center and the West Groton village. Sidewalks on all other road, including the various subdivisions in Town are the responsibility of the property owners. He requested that residents be vigilant. Mr. Haddad announced that during the week between Christmas and New Years the Town Hall will be closed to the public based on the number of employees on vacation during this period. Employees who are not on vacation will be working either remotely or at Town Hall and will respond to email and phone messages.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

None

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

**1. Appointments**

Mr. Haddad has appointed W. David Nelson as a Per Diem Van Driver and Brecan Novak to the Country Club Golf Staff and asked that the Select Board consider ratifying those appointments.

*Ms. Pine made a motion to ratify the Town Manager's appointments of W. David Nelson and Brecan Novak. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**2. FY 2027 Budget Update**

Mr. Haddad stated that he would discuss the Budget update during the joint meeting with the Finance Committee later in the meeting. However, the Board has received an email from resident Janet Landry Shea making various suggestions to assist in managing the Town Budget. Mr. Haddad

appreciated her suggestions and wanted to review them in some detail with the Board. Her first suggestion was to sell the Prescott Building to the Friends of Prescott. Mr. Haddad stated that the Board could consider this, however at this time there is no taxpayer subsidy to operate the Building and that the Friends rent covered the insurance on the building. The Friends paid for all other expenses. The Town would be responsible for any major issue, but at this time, the Building was operating at no taxpayer expense. Ms. Manugian wondered if it made sense to explore the sale before the Town needed to expend funds on major repairs. Her second suggestion was to operate the Country Club as an enterprise fund. Mr. Haddad stated that the Town does treat it that way without making it formal and it has returned a profit to the Town for the last several years but was not in favor of making it an enterprise fund. He wanted the Club to continue to repay the General Fund and help bolster the Town's Free Cash position. Her third suggestion was to lower the CPA Assessment to allow for taxpayer support of other budget items. Mr. Haddad stated this was an interesting idea that warrants further consideration. Mr. Cunningham stated that the Town has made great use of CPA funds for various projects and would like to see it continue. Her fourth suggestion was to consider job sharing and reducing the work week. Mr. Haddad was not in favor of this as it would impact the Town's lowest paid employees and there is currently job sharing among many positions and departments. Her final suggestion was to work with the legislature to reform PILOT payment regulations. Mr. Haddad stated that this is currently happening.

### **3. Select Board Meeting Schedule through the Spring Town Meeting**

Mr. Haddad proposed the following meeting schedule (subject to change as necessary) through the 2026 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

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

### **1. Adopt Penny Policy**

Town Treasurer/Tax Collector Katie Kazanjian was present at the meeting and 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 (copy attached to these minutes for reference) would establish clear guidance on rounding practices for cash transactions of all Town Departments.

Mr. Haddad asked the Select Board to consider waving the Select Board's Policy requiring that the Board wait a week before approving a new policy due to the fact that the Select Board does not meet again until January 12, 2026 and that residents will start paying third quarter tax bills on January 5, 2026. Ms. Pine agreed that this should be done as she does not believe this policy will impact anyone negatively and does anticipate receiving any recommended changes to the Policy.

*Mr. Cunningham moved that the Select Board waive its Policy requiring a waiting period before adopting a new policy. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

*Ms. Pine moved that the Select Board adopt the Penny Policy as submitted by Treasurer Kazanjian. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

### **6:15 p.m. Trails Committee Update**

Mr. Haddad stated that Paul Funch was unable to attend the meeting this evening, but Vice Chair Britt McKinely and Thomas Guilick were present to update the Board on their work over the last year. Mr. McKinely presented the Board with a summary of all their work over the last year. (Copy of summary attached to these minutes for reference). Mr. Reilly thanked the Committee for their efforts. Mr. Haddad stated that Paul Funch really does a great job of overseeing the Committee and all the work they do maintaining the trails. The Board thanked the Committee for their hard work.

### **6:30 p.m. T.R.E.A.D. Committee Update**

Treasurer/Tax Collector Katie Kazanjian was present to update the Board on the T.R.E.A.D. Committee (Tax Relieve for the Elderly and Disabled). She stated that the Committee currently has three members, herself, Don Black and Pascal Miller. They are looking for two more members. They are in the process of raising fund to support elderly and disabled residents in need. Currently they have \$17,000 in the fund and they have received some applications thus far. They are in the process of public outreach, and the Committee is operating well. She thanked Lowell Five for their recent \$5,000 donation to the Committee.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

*Mr. Cunningham moved to authorize the Town Manager and One Member of the Select Board to sign warrants for the next thirty days. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Mr. Haddad updated the Board on the status of the amended Groton Charter now before the Legislature for approval. The Charter has received a favorable recommendation from the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government. The next step is for the both Houses and the Governor to approve. Mr. Haddad thanked Representative Margaret Scarsdale for her outstanding efforts shepherding the Charter through the legislative process.

## **On-Going Issues**

- A. PFAS Issue – The Chlorine Booster Station has been approved by DEP, signifying a major milestone in the project. Potable drinking water should be delivered to the High School on December 29<sup>th</sup> and ready for the students when they return from the Holiday break.
- B. UMass Satellite Emergency Facility – The facility continues to progress well.
- C. Fire Department Staffing –None
- D. West Groton Dam—Mr. Haddad stated that the IT Department has provided a link to all exhibits and the final report by the Horsley Witten Group's report on the dam removal process. He is still planning on bring this issue back before the Board in early February, 2026.

## **SELECT BOARD LIASON REPORTS**

None

## **Approval of the Regularly Scheduled Meeting of December 15, 2025**

*Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of December 15, 2025. Ms. Manugian seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

At 6:50 p.m., the Board took a brief recess with the intention to reconvene at 7:00 p.m. with the Finance Committee.

## **7:00 p.m. - Joint Session with the Finance Committee**

Chair Pisani reconvened the meeting and called the meeting back to order at 7:00 p.m. Finance Chair Bud Robertson called the Finance Committee to order. Mr. Haddad updated the Finance Committee and Select Board on the current status of the development of the Budget. The initial budget guidance assumed that up to forty (40%) percent of new revenues would be used to balance the municipal operating budget. Currently, the draft budget has set aside \$585,000 in new revenues to balance the Municipal Budget, with \$1 million set aside for the School District and is in conformance with the Guidance. Setting this amount aside for the School District would leave them with a \$1.7 million deficit in FY 2027. The Town of Dunstable has set aside a 6% increase for the District, which would require Groton to appropriate \$1.539 million for the District in FY 2027. To meet this amount, the Town would need to essentially level fund the Budget in FY 2027 requiring a reduction of \$539,000 from the current balanced budget. Mr. Haddad stated that the Select Board and Finance Committee could leave the Guidance as is and keep the budget as currently constituted or direct the Town



Manager to meet the Dunstable set aside by increasing Groton's set aside to \$1.539 million. If this were the case, Mr. Haddad stated that he would not fill any current vacancies and would need to eliminate three currently filled positions. Mr. Green stated that the Town Manager is required to submit a balanced budget and that he does not want to see the Town lock the School District into an amount this early in the process. Mr. Robertson liked what the Town Manager outlined and would like to see the District funded with an increase of \$1.5 million. Ms. Pine stated that the public needs to understand that there will be no override in FY 2027 and that both the Municipal side and the School side would see significant reductions with layoffs. After a spirited debate, Mr. Haddad stated that upon further thinking, no change in the guidance is necessary. The original Guidance of setting aside not more than 40% of new revenues for the municipal budget and the rest going to the School District is still proper. Mr. Haddad will need to continue to work with the Town of Dunstable and the School District to balance the budget. At this time, Mr. Haddad stated that he would like to rework the proposed budget by not filling any current vacant positions and increase the initial set aside for the School District to \$1.2 million. Over the months of January, February and March, more information will become available including initial state aid and actual health insurance rates. This will allow for a better budget. The consensus of the meeting was to follow this course of action. In addition, Mr. Haddad stated that one of the Select Board's Goals was to determine adequate staffing of the various Departments. Mr. Haddad provided the Board with the Study (copy attached to these minutes for reference) that compared Groton to the Towns of Lunenburg, Littleton, Tyngsborough, Maynard and Bedford. Mr. Haddad stated that the study showed that the various Town Hall Departments were at or below the average of the other communities and that the Police Department and Fire Department were understaffed according to the Study. Ms. Manugian asked that Bedford be removed from the Study and recalculated. With regard to the finalization of the proposed FY 2027 Proposed Operating Budget, Mr. Haddad stated that he would like to have one more meeting with the Select Board and Finance Committee prior to submitting the proposed budget on January 31, 2026.

Chair Pisani adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark W. Haddad  
Town Manager