



TOWN OF GROTON

173 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450-1237
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Select Board

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

Town Manager

Mark W. Haddad

To: *Select Board*

From: *Mark W. Haddad – Town Manager*

Subject: *Weekly Agenda Update/Report*

Date: *February 23, 2026*

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Please note that Monday's meeting has been posted as a Hybrid Meeting to accommodate the joint meeting with the Park Commission. In addition to the Town Manager's Report, Items for Select Board Consideration and Action and a review of the Ongoing Issues List, there is one item scheduled on Monday's Agenda. The Select Board will be meeting in joint session with the Park Commission to appoint someone to fill the current vacancy on the Commission until the 2026 Annual Election. There are two applicants for this vacancy. Robert Hall and Jack Petropolous have submitted Interest Forms for the vacancy. The Park Commission will join the Select Board to interview the two candidates to make a final decision/appointment.

1. Enclosed with this Report is the Fiscal Year 2026 Second Quarter Financial Report. I would like to spend some time at Monday's meeting reviewing this with the Board. Assistant Director of Finance/Town Accountant Patricia DuFresne will attend the meeting to answer any questions you may have.
2. As is our practice when reviewing the Financial Report, the Board reviews the status of the current year's Goals and Objectives. Enclosed with this Report is a copy of the goals with the most recent update. I would like to take a few moments at Monday's meeting reviewing the status with the Board.
3. With regard to the FY 2027 Budget Update, I would like to update the Board with the following:
 - a. Please note that the Select Board will be meeting in joint session with the Finance Committee on Saturday, February 28th to review the Proposed FY 2027 Operating Budget with the various Departments.
 - b. As requested by the Select Board, I have scheduled Jim Garrefffi, the Executive Director of the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health, on the Select Board Meeting of March 2, 2026 to discuss the proposed increase in the NABH Assessment for FY 2027.

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Select Board
Weekly Agenda Update/Report
February 23, 2026
page two

3. **Continued:**

c. We have received our health insurance rates from MIIA for FY 2027. Excellent news. The Town will receive only a 6.24% increase in FY 2027. I have updated the Budget to reflect this change, as well as the proposed increase in State Aid contained in the Governor's Budget and the final assessment from Nashoba Tech. Based on all of this, the proposed Budget is now approximately \$85,000 under the anticipated FY 2027 Levy Limit. I will discuss this in more detail with the Board at Monday's meeting.

4. Please see an update to the meeting schedule that will get you through the Spring Town Meeting:

Saturday, February 28, 2026 -	Joint Meeting with FinCom – Budget Review
Monday, March 2, 2026 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Tuesday, March 3, 2026 -	Public Hearing on Squannacook River Dam (Groton Center)
Monday, March 9, 2026 -	2026 Town Meeting Warrant Public Hearing
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)
Saturday, May 2, 2026 -	2026 Spring Town Meeting

ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND ACTION

1. Attached to this Report is the first Draft of the 2026 Spring Town Meeting Warrant. I would like to take a few minutes reviewing this with the Board at Monday's meeting.
2. The Select Board has yet to appoint a Representative to the Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee. Russ Burke is the Planning Board representative. Deanna Kass, a member of the Complete Streets Committee, has volunteered to serve as the Select Board's Representative. I would respectfully request that the Select Board make this appointment at Monday's meeting. The term would expire on June 30, 2026.
3. I would respectfully request that the Select Board consider approving a One Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for the Groton Historical Society for the Historical Society to host the Groton Business Association Monthly meeting, to be held at the Boutwell House, on Wednesday, March 18, 2026, from 5:00 pm- 8:00 p.m.
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 Open Mic Night, to be held on Friday, March 13, 2026, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

MWH/rjb
enclosure

TOWN OF GROTON
COMMITTEE INTEREST FORM

Town Government needs citizens who are willing to give time in the service of their community. If you are interested in serving, on a voluntary basis, on boards and committees within the Town, please complete this form and return to:

TOWN OF GROTON
Board of Selectmen
173 MAIN STREET
GROTON, MA 01450-1237

Date: 2-5-26

Name Robert S. Hall
First M.I. Last

Address 222 COMMON ST

Mailing Address (if different) _____

Circle One GROTON, 01450 WEST GROTON, 01472

Telephone No. (daytime) 978-877-9514 (evening) SAME

Preferred e-mail Address N/A

Occupation Retired

Background _____

Town activities/issues, which interest you:

PARKS

Specific committees or positions in which you are interested:

PARKS

Mark Haddad

From: Town of Groton <mchiasson@grotonma.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, February 4, 2026 3:47 PM
To: Select Board
Subject: New Committee Interest Form Entry

Name

Jack Petropoulos

Phone Number

5082597151

Email

jack.petropoulos@gmail.com

What Committee are you Joining?

Parks

Please give us a brief explanation of why you are interested.

I understand that there is a need for someone to fill a vacated position. I can bring considerable municipal committee / board experience to the role. I have no preconceived positions on the major initiative(s) in front of Parks right now and would be glad to lend my experience to figuring out how to move the project(s) forward, at least until someone can be elected to the role.

Town of Groton
General Fund Statement of Revenues & Expenditures
 December 31, 2025

	<i>Current</i>	<i>July - Dec</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>2nd Qtr</i>	<i>Final FY25</i>	<i>July thru June</i>	<i>July - Dec</i>	<i>2nd Qtr</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>2nd Qtr</i>	<i>% of Budget</i>
<i>Revenue</i>	<i>Budget FY26</i>	<i>Actual FY26</i>	<i>to FY26 Budget</i>	<i>% of Budget</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Actual FY25</i>	<i>Actual FY25</i>	<i>to FY25 Budget</i>	<i>% of Budget</i>	<i>Change</i>	
State Aid (Lottery/Exempts/Van)	1,182,722	576,078	(606,644)	48.71%	1,152,082	1,170,006	558,894	(593,188)	48.51%	100.41%	
Motor Vehicle/Boat Excise	1,886,000	307,432	(1,578,568)	16.30%	1,820,583	2,188,732	303,153	(1,517,430)	16.65%	97.90%	
Local Option Meals Tax	275,000	151,578	(123,422)	55.12%	250,000	273,544	147,930	(102,070)	59.17%	93.16%	
Local Option Room Occupancy Tax	185,000	123,476	(61,524)	66.74%	150,000	223,079	134,835	(15,165)	89.89%	74.25%	
Marijuana Revenue	15,000	22,811	7,811	152.07%	9,000	21,298	5,840	(3,160)	64.89%	234.35%	
Penalties and Interest on Taxes	110,000	59,266	(50,734)	53.88%	110,000	125,734	50,111	(59,889)	45.56%	118.26%	
Payments in Lieu of Taxes	355,443	259,179	(96,264)	72.92%	355,443	354,749	205,000	(150,443)	57.67%	126.44%	
Groton Hill Music Ticket Fee	59,713	45,534	(14,179)	76.25%	40,000	88,880	30,826	(9,174)	77.07%	98.94%	
Other Charges for Service (Dunst)	15,300	15,300	0	100.00%	15,000	15,750	15,500	500	103.33%	96.78%	
Country Club Revenue	875,000	258,504	(616,496)	29.54%	750,000	1,007,314	261,396	(488,604)	34.85%	84.76%	
Fees (incl Van rides)	400,000	222,649	(177,351)	55.66%	400,000	427,329	206,516	(193,484)	51.63%	107.81%	
Rentals (Cell Towers)	58,000	37,495	(20,505)	64.65%	55,000	69,454	35,514	(19,486)	64.57%	100.12%	
Other Departmental Revenue	582,372	158,976	(423,396)	27.30%	854,063	969,330	483,842	(370,221)	56.65%	48.19%	
Licenses and Permits	450,000	575,029	125,029	127.78%	429,300	728,078	341,858	(87,442)	79.63%	160.47%	
Fines and Forfeits	10,000	5,230	(4,770)	52.30%	10,000	10,238	5,683	(4,317)	56.83%	92.03%	
Investment Income	258,499	127,933	(130,566)	49.49%	309,744	486,605	350,436	40,692	113.14%	43.74%	
Misc Recurring (LRTA Van Reimb)	94,000	16,861	(77,139)	17.94%	94,000	95,801	38,970	(55,030)	41.46%	43.27%	
Misc (WC Reimb & Other)	0	4,822	4,822	#DIV/0!	0	346,995	34,461	34,461	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	
Enterprise Allocation for Indirects	214,002	108,996	(105,006)	50.93%	315,664	301,302	154,130	(161,534)	48.83%	104.30%	
Real Estate and Personal Prop	44,683,019	21,488,031	(23,194,988)	48.09%	42,843,486	42,571,646	20,608,277	(22,235,209)	48.10%	99.98%	
Total Revenue	51,709,070	24,565,180	(27,143,890)	47.51%	49,963,365	51,475,864	23,973,172	(25,990,193)	47.98%	99.02%	
Expenditures (Operating Expenses)											
General Government	3,244,264	1,788,299	1,455,965	55.12%	3,097,521	2,889,435	1,596,860	1,500,661	51.55%	106.93%	
Public Safety General Fund	4,843,747	2,547,353	2,296,394	52.59%	4,666,255	4,458,366	2,113,176	2,553,079	45.29%	116.12%	
Department of Public Works	2,400,572	1,169,710	1,230,862	48.73%	2,566,229	2,477,598	1,049,857	1,516,372	40.91%	119.12%	
Culture, Rec, & Citizen's Svcs	2,453,900	1,394,297	1,059,603	56.82%	2,452,323	2,343,232	1,148,388	1,303,935	46.83%	121.33%	
Employee Benefits	4,633,643	3,566,027	1,067,616	76.96%	4,854,514	4,687,817	3,694,935	1,159,579	76.11%	101.12%	
Total Operating Expenses	17,576,126	10,465,686	7,110,440	59.54%	17,636,842	16,856,448	9,603,216	8,033,626	54.45%	109.35%	
Expenditures (Non -Operating Exp.)											
Special Articles Voted for Current Yr	857,885	245,226	612,659	28.58%	1,636,076	808,429	525,651	1,110,425	32.13%	88.95%	
PY Articles/Enc(See Use of Enc Below)	1,197,005	701,148	495,857	58.58%	642,727	364,950	269,218	373,509	41.89%	139.84%	
Education	29,545,154	14,999,700	14,545,454	50.77%	28,739,026	28,739,026	14,611,193	14,127,833	50.84%	99.86%	
Debt Service	5,294,372	1,427,085	3,867,287	26.95%	4,684,920	4,684,911	1,469,090	3,215,830	31.36%	85.94%	
Intergovernmental (State Offsets)	104,498	52,249	52,249	50.00%	101,926	101,926	50,963	50,963	50.00%	100.00%	
Total Non - Operating Expenses	36,998,914	17,425,408	19,573,506	47.10%	35,804,675	34,699,242	16,926,115	18,878,560	47.27%	99.64%	
Excess (Deficiency) Before OFS&U	(2,865,970)	(3,325,914)	(459,944)	116.05%	(3,478,152)	(79,826)	(2,556,159)	921,993	73.49%	157.91%	
Other Financing Sources											
Transfers from Other Funds	1,180,216	1,188,183	(7,967)	100.68%	1,834,222	1,834,222	1,434,222	400,000	78.19%	128.76%	
Use of Avail. Funds: Encumbrances	1,196,774	700,918	(495,856)	58.57%	642,586	364,950	642,587	1	100.00%	58.57%	
Avail. Funds: F. C./Overlay Surplus	2,192,084	2,192,084	0	100.00%	1,669,777	1,669,777	1,374,637	295,140	82.32%	121.48%	
Total OFS	4,569,074	4,081,185	(503,823)	89.32%	4,146,585	3,868,949	3,451,446	695,141	83.24%	107.30%	
Other Financing Uses											
Overlay & Deficits to be Raised	184,419	184,419	0	100.00%	195,901	195,901	195,901	0	100.00%	100.00%	
Transfers to Other Funds	1,518,685	1,366,000	152,685	89.95%	472,532	472,532	190,000	282,532	40.21%	223.70%	
Total OFU	1,703,104	1,550,419	152,685	91.03%	668,433	668,433	385,901	282,532	57.73%	157.68%	
Excess (Deficiency) Incl. OFS&U	0	(795,148)	(1,116,452)		0	3,120,690	509,386	1,334,602			

Town of Groton
General Fund Statement of Revenues & Expenditures
 December 31, 2025

	Current Budget FY26	July - Dec Actual FY26	Variance to FY26 Budget	2nd Qtr % of Budget	Final FY25 Budget	July thru June Actual FY25	July - Dec Actual FY25	2nd Qtr Variance to FY25 Budget	2nd Qtr % of Budget	% of Budget Change
Salaries/Wages Expenditures by Function of Government										
General Government:										
BOS/Town Manager	403,952	219,846	184,106	54.42%	391,700	377,164	188,916	202,784	48.23%	112.83%
Accountant	205,229	113,519	91,710	55.31%	193,266	193,264	88,149	105,117	45.61%	121.27%
Assessors	185,960	99,202	86,758	53.35%	174,067	174,067	85,201	88,866	48.95%	108.99%
Treasurer/Collector	320,556	159,867	160,689	49.87%	237,433	234,826	117,324	120,109	49.41%	100.93%
Personnel	102,549	55,823	46,726	54.44%	96,936	96,936	49,266	47,670	50.82%	107.12%
Information Technology	209,900	110,993	98,907	52.88%	198,357	197,606	97,511	100,846	49.16%	107.57%
Town Clerk/Elections	211,471	109,225	102,246	51.65%	214,520	200,952	109,197	105,323	50.90%	101.47%
Land Use Conservation Comm.	85,565	47,037	38,528	54.97%	79,070	79,070	39,535	39,535	50.00%	109.94%
Land Use Inspection Services	222,370	117,739	104,631	52.95%	220,535	220,432	104,455	116,080	47.36%	111.80%
Land Use Planning	125,030	68,033	29,310	54.41%	98,447	98,446	51,077	47,370	51.88%	104.88%
Total General Government	2,072,582	1,101,284	971,298	53.14%	1,904,331	1,872,763	930,631	973,700	48.87%	108.74%
Public Safety:										
Police Department/Civil Defense	2,651,823	1,385,249	1,266,574	52.24%	2,531,960	2,413,325	1,163,197	1,368,763	45.94%	113.71%
Fire Department/EMS	1,658,414	936,296	722,118	56.46%	1,590,204	1,513,866	727,134	863,070	45.73%	123.46%
Animal Cntrl/Dog Officer	24,164	13,228	10,936	54.74%	21,664	21,664	10,832	10,832	50.00%	109.48%
Total Public Safety	4,334,401	2,334,773	1,999,628	53.87%	4,143,828	3,948,855	1,901,163	2,242,665	45.88%	117.41%
Department of Public Works:										
Municipal Buildings	170,064	83,362	86,702	49.02%	162,845	158,908	73,487	89,358	45.13%	108.62%
Highway	913,043	501,638	411,405	54.94%	876,453	855,170	422,542	453,911	48.21%	113.96%
Snow & Ice	140,000	66,848	73,152	47.75%	184,740	184,740	24,831	159,909	13.44%	355.28%
Parks	0	0	0	0.00%	17,922	7,200	4,800	13,122	26.78%	0.00%
Solid Waste	164,820	83,106	81,714	50.42%	157,651	154,212	71,604	86,047	45.42%	111.01%
Total DPW	1,387,927	734,954	652,973	52.95%	1,399,611	1,360,230	597,264	802,347	42.67%	124.09%
Culture, Rec, & Citizen's Svcs:										
COA/COA Van	311,776	164,204	147,572	52.67%	295,581	280,122	137,001	158,580	46.35%	113.64%
Vets Svcs/Water Safety/Graves	11,679	4,691	6,988	40.17%	11,052	7,565	3,824	7,228	34.60%	116.10%
Library	846,581	447,395	399,186	52.85%	801,511	799,627	389,819	411,692	48.64%	108.66%
Country Club	500,885	317,862	183,023	63.46%	478,038	477,958	262,306	215,732	54.87%	115.66%
Cable Department	155,360	79,499	75,861	51.17%	132,270	132,216	64,700	67,570	48.92%	104.60%
Total Culture, Rec. & Citizen's Svcs	1,826,281	1,013,651	812,630	55.50%	1,718,452	1,697,488	857,650	860,802	49.91%	111.20%
Grand Total Salaries & Wages	9,621,191	5,184,662	4,436,529	53.89%	9,166,222	8,879,336	4,286,708	4,879,514	46.77%	115.22%
Benefits:										
County Retirement	2,640,116	2,640,116	0	100.00%	2,653,019	2,653,019	2,653,019	0	100.00%	100.00%
Health / Life Insurance *	1,821,527	837,613	983,914	45.98%	2,034,495	1,880,190	887,994	1,146,501	43.65%	105.34%
Other Benefits (Medicare/Unemplmt)	172,000	88,298	83,702	51.34%	167,000	154,609	78,027	88,973	46.72%	109.89%
Total Benefits	4,633,643	3,566,027	1,067,616	76.96%	4,854,514	4,687,818	3,619,040	1,235,474	74.55%	103.23%
Total Salaries/Wages/Benefits	14,254,834	8,750,689	5,504,145	61.39%	14,020,736	13,567,154	7,905,748	6,114,988	56.39%	108.87%

FISCAL YEAR 2026

GOALS OF THE GROTON SELECT BOARD

Category - Public Safety

Select Board Member Assigned – Peter Cunningham

In consultation with Police, Fire, and DPW Departments, establish a prioritized list of sidewalks, bicycle and roadway concerns and timelines for addressing them. Tasks to be considered:

- Striping Parking Spots on Main Street
- Narrowing Roads and/or other ways to create more pedestrian/bike access
- Paving section of roadway between Station Avenue and Broadmeadow Road
- Setting a Town wide speed limit

November 3, 2025 Update – The Town Manager has applied for a State Grant to hire an engineer to conduct a full study of Main Street. The purpose of the study would be to review the speed limit, crosswalks, parking spaces, bike lanes, etc. Grant award decision is expected in mid- November.

February 23, 2026 Update – While we have not yet received the State Grant to pay for the study of Main Street, the DPW Director received approval to utilize \$50,000 from the Town's Chapter 90 allocation to pay for the study. The Town has hired MDM Transportation Consultants to conduct the Study. The estimated cost of the Study is between \$75,000 and \$100,000. A placeholder article has been included on the 2026 Spring Town Meeting Warrant for the remaining funds should the Town not receive the Grant.

Budget Priorities – Funding

Select Board Member Assigned – Alison Manugian

Operating Budget

- Establish the process to determine the minimal staffing needed in all departments to continue functioning without an override.
- Beginning with the Groton Fire Department, establish process and requirements for, and conduct an in-depth cost benefit analysis of any proposed increase in staffing

November 3, 2025 Update – The Select Board and Finance Committee provided FY 27 Budget Development Guidance to the Town Manager. Now that Guidance has been provided, the Town Manager will begin developing the budget, including determining minimal staffing in all departments and staffing levels at the Fire Department.

February 23, 2026 Update – The Town Manager submitted a balanced budget (currently under review) that did not seek an override of Proposition 2½. As part of this budget, the Town Manager, in conjunction with the Finance Team, conducted a study (previously submitted to the Select Board and Finance Committee) comparing staffing levels to Towns with similar populations. The study showed that Groton is in line with other communities. In addition, the Select Board and Finance Committee voted unanimously to authorize a study of staffing the Fire Department with four Firefighter/EMTs on every shift over a six month period to determine if this is the proper staffing. A consultant will be hired to review/analyze the findings and submit a final report to the Select Board and Finance Committee in September, 2026 with the possible intent of seeking funding/override in the Fall of 2026 to permanently staff the Fire Department at this level.

Capital Budget

- Considering input from the Town Manager and the Capital Planning Advisory Committee, review all town property and capital spending priorities for coming years

November 3, 2025 Update – The Capital Budget is under way. A five year spending plan will be developed that will include a review of priorities and town property.

February 23, 2026 Update – The Town Manager submitted the Five Year Capital Budget on December 31, 2025 that reviewed Town property improvements and the capital spending priorities over the next five years. This portion of the Goal is Complete.

Grant Funding

- Conduct in-depth analysis of available grants to help offset operating budget pressures

November 3, 2025 Update – As part of the Budget Development, grants will be examined as well.

February 23, 2026 – The Town Manager provided the Select Board with an analysis of Grants received over the last two fiscal years that showed the Town has received over \$5.8 million in Grant Funding to offset budget pressures. This portion of the Goal is complete.

Structure of Government

Select Board Member Assigned – Becky Pine

- Review and determine action to be taken by the Select Board and staff on items identified in the Master Plan
- Develop a 3-year schedule to meet with all committees under the Select Board's purview. Consider combining or eliminating committees with similar or overlapping roles

November 3, 2025 Update – No action taken as of yet on this goal.

February 23, 2026 Update – The Town Manager is working with the Land Use Director/Town Planner to establish an action plan on items identified in the Master Plan. In addition, the Town Manager and Executive Assistant has established a schedule for the Select Board to meet with committees under the Select Board's purview. These meetings have already begun taking place.

Economic Development

Select Board Members Assigned – John Reilly and Matt Pisani

- Work with Groton Business Association and Destination Groton Committee to develop new sources of revenue.
- Encourage efforts to establish more restaurants in Groton, specifically in the former Station House property and available commercial sites in the Four Corners area

November 3, 2025 Update – The Town has been working with a prospective new buyer of the former Station Houe Restaurant. It is expected that a liquor license hearing will be held in early December.

February 23, 2026 Update – The potential sale of the Station House fell through, however, a new prospective buyer has come forward. There may be a liquor license hearing in the coming months. In addition, the Town Manager has been notified of a potential development in the Four Corners area. While it is in the beginning stages of investigation, there is some movement.

Ongoing Goals

All Members

- Continue advocating for a predictable increase in State support for education and municipal functions
- Present a FY 2027 Budget in conjunction with Peer Boards that meets the Town of Groton and GDRSD needs
- Continue support of DEI Committee and Affordable Housing Trust

November 3, 2025 Update – Budget development is underway.

February 23, 2026 Update – As stated above, the Proposed FY 2027 Budget has been submitted to the Select Board and Finance Committee. Boards, Committees and Staff have been advocating for additional state funding.

Warrant, Summary, and Recommendations

TOWN OF GROTON



2026 SPRING TOWN MEETING

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

Beginning Saturday, May 2, 2026 @ 9:00 AM

Attention – Voters and Taxpayers

**THE BUDGET HANDOUT FOR ARTICLE 5 IS AVAILABLE
IN THE BACK OF THE WARRANT**

Introduction to Groton Town Meeting

Voters are familiar with casting ballots in local and state elections, but they have another important civic duty in towns, the Town Meeting.

What is Town Meeting?

The Town Meeting is the legislative body in the town form of government in Massachusetts. Town Meeting is a formal gathering of registered voters who propose, debate and vote on measures. Groton holds at least two Town Meetings per year.

What is a warrant?

The warrant is the official notice to voters that a Town Meeting is scheduled. The warrant includes the date, time, location and a description of each subject to be acted on at Town Meeting. In Groton, the warrant must be posted in two public places 14 days in advance of Town Meeting. In Groton, every household is also notified of the meeting by postcard with a link to the Warrant. “The warrant must contain a sufficient description of what is proposed so as to constitute an adequate warning to all the inhabitants of the town.”¹ “Every action taken at the meeting must be pursuant to some article in the warrant and must be within the scope of such article.”²

How does Town Meeting proceed?

Voters attending Town Meeting must first check in with the clerks and receive an electronic voting handset which is required to vote. The meeting typically acts on the articles in the order that they are printed in the warrant. For each article, a main motion is made and seconded by voters and placed by the moderator on the floor for debate. Permission of the moderator is required to speak. The moderator presides and regulates the proceedings, decides all questions of order, and calls and declares all votes. After debate has ended, the moderator will call for a vote by use of the electronic voting handset. Please see page 3 of this Warrant for a full explanation of how Electronic Voting will work at Town Meeting.

¹ *Town Meeting Time: A Handbook of Parliamentary Law* (page 19) Massachusetts Moderators Association, 4th Edition, 2024

² Id.

Who can attend?

Town Meeting is open to the public. Only Groton voters are entitled to attend, speak and vote. Non-voters may be required to sit in a separate section. Non-voters may ask the moderator to speak on the topic of the debate.

How long is town meeting?

Town Meeting concludes when all articles on the warrant have been acted upon. Town Meeting may conclude in one session or adjourn for subsequent sessions.

Explanation of a Consent Agenda

A consent agenda is a procedure to group multiple main motions into a single motion for voting. A consent agenda saves time by eliminating the reading of multiple motions and explanations when there are no objections or questions. In Groton, a consent agenda generally consists of articles unanimously supported by the Select Board and Finance Committee. Articles that change by-laws or introduce new spending are typically not included. In this warrant, the Select Board has grouped articles in consent agendas and labeled them for easy reference.

How Consent Agendas Work

As the first step to act on a consent agenda, the moderator will read the titles of the included articles. A voter who wishes to remove an article from the consent agenda for separate debate and vote should state "hold." The held article will be set aside and acted on after the vote on the consent agenda. After the meeting agrees on the contents of the consent agenda, there will be no debate and the moderator will immediately call for a vote. Every motion included in the consent agenda will either pass or fail as a group. Voters should read the warrant and review the proposed consent agendas to identify articles they wish to remove for separate consideration.

Electronic Voting at Town Meeting



Voting at Town Meeting will be conducted using an electronic voting system purchased by the Town of Groton as authorized by Town Meeting in October, 2022. Instead of using placards to be raised and counted, voters will use wireless handsets to cast their vote quickly, accurately and privately.

Voter Check-In

At check-in, voters will be given a handset. No record is made of which voter receives which handset. All handsets will be tested prior to the meeting. Voters physically unable to use a handset, will be seated in a manual-count section and their votes will be counted by tellers. For those with visual impairments, large handsets with braille are available.

Test Vote

At the beginning of the meeting, the Moderator will conduct a test vote to get everyone comfortable with the voting procedures.

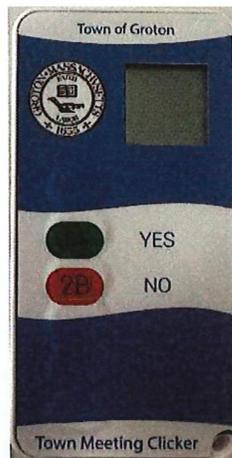
Proxy Voting Prohibited

The handset given to a voter at check-in is for the exclusive use of that voter. Voting with a handset that has been issued to another individual is strictly forbidden.

Voting

When the Moderator announces it is time to vote:

- Press 1A (green button) for YES →
- Press 2B (red button) for No →
- If you wish not to vote, press no buttons



Handset Display

The display on the handset:

- OK means the system receiver has received your vote
- A "1" for Yes or "2" for No shows the vote the system received.
- The small "R" at the top of the screen indicates the handset is communicating with the receiver
- The icons in the top left indicate the WiFi signal strength.

Help Desk

A Help Desk will be able to assist voters who have trouble with using the handset. If a handset malfunctions, a voter will receive a new handset.

Handset Return

If you leave the meeting temporarily, please keep the handset with you. If the meeting ends or you leave, return the handset to the check-in table.



Town Meeting Access for Voters with Disabilities

Parking – Universally accessible parking spaces are available in the parking lot in front of the Groton Dunstable Marion Stoddart Building. There is a ramp providing access from the parking lot to the front door of the Building.

Wheelchair Accessible & Companion Seating – Wheelchair spaces, seating for people with mobility issues and companion seats are available in the center aisle on both sides of the auditorium.

Sign Language – A Sign Language Interpreter will be provided for the hearing impaired, upon request, at least one week prior to the meeting.

Speaking at Town Meeting – There will be volunteers available to bring hand-held microphones to voters who have mobility issues or cannot stand in line and wait at the microphones.

Restrooms – Accessible restrooms are available near the entrance to the auditorium.

Transportation to Town Meeting - The Council on Aging van will be available to Groton residents attending Town Meetings at no charge. All riders will be at the meeting prior to the start. The van is wheelchair accessible. Your reservation can be made by calling the Senior Center at 978-448-1170. Seats will be filled on a first come, first serve basis.

Questions or concerns - If you or a member of your household has questions or would like to request a sign language interpreter, please contact the Select Board's Office at Town Hall at 978 448-1111 at least one week before the Town Meeting.

**SPRING TOWN MEETING WARRANT
MAY 2, 2026**

Middlesex, ss.
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
To any Constable in the Town of Groton

Greetings:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby required to notify and warn said inhabitants of the Town of Groton qualified to vote on Town affairs to assemble in the Marion Stoddart Building Auditorium, 344 Main Street, Groton, Massachusetts in said Town on Saturday, the second day of May, 2026 at Nine O'clock in the morning, to consider all business other than the election of Town Officers and on the nineteenth day of May, 2026, between the hours of 7:00 A.M. and 8:00 P.M., at an adjourned session thereof at the following locations:

Precinct 1	The Groton Center 163 West Main Street	Precincts 2 & 3 Marion Stoddart Bldg. Gymnasium 344 Main Street
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to give their ballots for:

Vote for One	Board of Assessors	3 Years
Vote for One	Board of Health	3 Years
Vote for Two	Select Board	3 Years
Vote for One	Commissioner of Trust Funds	3 Years
Vote for One	Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee	3 Years
Vote for One	Groton Electric Light Commission	3 Years
Vote for Two	Park Commission	3 Years
Vote for One	Park Commission	2 Years
Vote for Two	Planning Board	3 Years
Vote for One	Sewer Commission	3 Years
Vote for Two	Trustee of the Groton Public Library	3 Years
Vote for One	Water Commission	3 Years
Vote for One	Groton Housing Authority	5 Years

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*Will be presented as one Consent Motion

**FY 2027 Budget will be presented as One Consent Motion

***CPA Funding Recommendations will be presented as One Consent Motion

***Annual Consent Agenda. To be presented as one Motion

Article 1: Hear Reports

To see if the Town will vote to hear and act on the report of the Select Board and other Town Officers and Committees, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Select Board

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Summary: *To hear reports of Town Boards, Committees and Commissions and to accept the annual report and other reports that may be presented to Town Meeting.*

Article 2: Elected Officials Compensation

To see if the Town will vote to set the compensation for the elected officials of the Town for the ensuing year, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Manager

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Summary: *To provide compensation for elected officials as proposed by the Town Manager. The Town Moderator is proposed to receive a salary of \$1,000 in FY 2027.*

Article 3: Wage and Classification Schedule

To see if the Town will vote to amend and adopt for Fiscal Year 2027 the Town of Groton Wage and Classification schedule as shown in Appendix B of this Warrant, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Select Board
Town Manager

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Summary: *The purpose of this Article is to set the wage and classification schedule for the three (3) employees (Executive Assistant to the Town Manager, Human Resources Director and IT Director) covered by the Personnel Bylaw. Under the policy of the Select Board, these employees receive the same benefits as contained in the Town Supervisors' Union Contract. These employees will receive a three (3%) percent cost-of-living adjustment in Fiscal Year 2027.*

Article 4: Appropriate FY 2027 Contribution to the OPEB Trust Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow pursuant to any applicable statute, a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager, to be added to the Other Post-Employment Benefits Liability Trust Fund as authorized by Chapter 32B, Section 20, of the Massachusetts General Laws, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**Select Board
Town Manager**

**Select Board:
Finance Committee:**

Summary: *The purpose of this article is to fund the Town's OPEB Liability. The Select Board and Finance Committee have adopted a funding policy for this purpose. One of the funding goals is to commit to an annual appropriation to the Trust that would keep the Net Present Value Liability from growing until such time as the Town can begin to pay down the liability. In Fiscal Year 2027, the anticipated amount necessary for this purpose is estimated to be \$200,000. This Article will seek an appropriation of \$200,000 from Free Cash to add to the OPEB Liability Trust Fund.*

Article 5: Fiscal Year 2027 Annual Operating Budget

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow pursuant to any applicable statute, a sum or sums of money as may be necessary to defray the expenses of the Town for the next Fiscal Year (2027), and act upon the budget of the Finance Committee, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**Finance Committee
Select Board
Town Manager**

**Select Board:
Finance Committee:**

Summary: *In accordance with Section 6 of the Town Charter, the Finance Committee conducts its annual budget process by receiving the Town Manager's proposed balanced budget on or before January 31st; meeting with department heads and boards; holding public budget hearings in preparation for issuing its recommendations to Town Meeting; and presenting its budget recommendations at the Spring Town Meeting. The budget handout for this Article is contained in Appendix A of this Warrant. Please also see the Finance Committee's and Town Manager's Report which includes the Finance Committee's and Select Board's recommendations.*

Article 6: Fiscal Year 2027 Capital Budget

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow pursuant to any applicable statute, a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager in Fiscal Year 2026 and thereafter, for the purpose of funding the Fiscal Year 2027 Capital Budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Manager

Summary: *The following is the proposed Town Manager's Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2027:*

Item #1 – Portable Radio Replacement **\$195,000** **Fire and EMS**

Summary: *Portable radios are a critical piece of equipment in order for personnel to communicate with dispatch and other personnel. Portable radios just like protective equipment, need to be replaced as they wear. This is a scheduled replacement.*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Item #2 – Ambulance 2 Replacement **\$500,000** **Fire and EMS**

Summary: *This is a scheduled replacement of Ambulance 2. The Fire Department maintains two ambulances and schedules replacement of each ambulance every five (5) years. The intention of the Town is to borrow the cost of the ambulance (estimated to be \$500,000) and pay it back over five years from ambulance receipts.*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Item #3 – PFAS Free Structural FF Gear **\$50,000** **Fire and EMS**

Summary: *PFAS has been used in firefighting gear for a long time due to its ability to withstand high temperatures and repel water and oils. Firefighters have long been known to suffer from a highly increased rate of cancers that are caused by the use of PFAS. These chemicals are shown to contribute to or are responsible for cases of breast, kidney, and testicular cancers within the fire service. Effective January 1, 2027, manufacturers and sellers of personal protective equipment for firefighters will be prohibited from knowingly selling gear containing “intentionally added PFAS” chemicals, meaning PFAS chemicals or products that break down into PFAS chemicals that are intentionally added to the product during manufacturing. Last year, the Town appropriated \$80,000 and in FY 2027, the Town is requesting \$50,000 to complete the purchase.*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Item #4 – Pick-Up Truck **\$75,000** **Highway**

Summary: *This is a scheduled replacement. The average life of a pick-up truck is approximately 7 years. By replacing one vehicle every couple of years, this will allow the fleet to stay in good shape. They are front line pick-ups used for day-to-day operations as well as snow plowing.*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Item #5 – Brush Mower/Field Mower **\$30,000** **Highway**

Summary: *In FY 2027, the Town will be rehauling one of the Brush Mowers to extend its life. This is a cost effective request to save purchasing a brand new Mower. In FY 2031, the Town will replace the second mower (purchased in 2019) as part of normal replacement of equipment.*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Item #6 – Truck Painting **\$25,000** **Highway**

Summary: *The plan is to paint truck beds every four years. Salt is the largest issue the DPW deals with in maintaining its fleet. While the DPW washes the trucks after every storm, salt still has a negative impact on the truck beds. Spending the funds to paint the beds will extend the life of the fleet.*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Item #7 – IT Infrastructure **\$40,000** **Town Facilities**

Summary: *This item in the Capital Budget was established over eleven years ago and has been very successful. In Fiscal Year 2027, the following items will be purchased/upgraded with this allocation: 10 replacement computers; Replace aging servers and storage arrays; Investment to expand the network and keep equipment and maintenance costs current; Network switch upgrades and increased wireless coverage; and Improve door lock and security system maintenance.*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Item #8 – Municipal Building Minor Capital **\$120,000** **Town Facilities**

Summary: *This appropriation will be used to continue to maintain all municipal buildings by performing various maintenance activities to prevent major breakdowns in our municipal building infrastructure. Priorities continue to change when it comes to the minor repairs and upgrades in our municipal buildings. In Fiscal Year 2027, Minor Capital Items have been added to this request as well. This was done due to the fact that all Minor Capital Items were removed from the FY 2026 Operating Budget to balance the budget.*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Item #9 – Property Improvements **\$25,000** **Park Department**

Summary: *The Park Commission has been working over the past several years developing a strategy to address deficiencies in the various Park Department Properties located throughout Groton. Since FY 2015, the Town has appropriated \$25,000 each year so that the Park Commission can develop a capital improvement program that will allow them to keep our various park locations in good shape and avoid a major construction project to much success.*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Item #10 – Police Cruisers **\$147,010** **Police Department**

Summary: *Purchase of two police cruisers and related equipment for replacement of cruisers that are no longer cost effective to maintain. This allows for lesser mileage per year, better maintenance scheduling, assignment of cars to officers and for a programmed replacement schedule that ensures line cars are rotated out at reasonable mileage and wear. Un-marked cars are rotated in the same fashion.*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Item #11 – Police Minor Capital **\$34,750** **Police Department**

Summary: *This is a new Capital Item each year to provide funds for various minor capital needs of the Police Department. In FY 2027, this funding will be used to purchase soft armor, heavy vests, pay for the traffic camera system, repair the Gibbet Hill Radio Room Interior Ceiling and purchase new helmets for the ATV and Bicycle teams.*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Item #12 – Electronic Control Devices - Tasers **\$10,500** **Police Department**

Summary: *Current Electronic Control Device (ECD, Taser) is at end-of-life and not serviceable. Axon products provide integrated data storage for both the ECD and future acquired Body-Worn-Cameras (BWC) . The total cost of the ECD replacement is \$97,796. We applied for and anticipate receiving a JAG grant in the amount of \$50,000. The Town is responsible for 1 payment of \$12,500 and 4 annual installments of \$10,500 for a total cost to the town of \$49,000. This is the second of the final four installments.*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Item #13 – Golf Carts **\$27,000** **Country Club**

Summary: *In FY 2027, the Town will replace all Golf Carts with 27 new Carts on a five year lease/purchase. This is the first of five payments.*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Item #14 – Ventrac Attachments **\$10,918** **Country Club**

Summary: *In FY 2023, the Town purchased a Ventrac unit using a five year lease-to-purchase agreement at an annual cost of \$10,918. This is the final payment. The Ventrac unit is a most versatile piece of equipment. The attachments already in use include units for plowing, aeration, seeding, landscaping and mowing difficult terrain. This vehicle is used on a daily basis.*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Item #15 – Greens Equipment – Truckster XD **\$14,736** **Country Club**

Summary: *This is a heavy payload 4x4 utility truck that will allow the transfer of up to 3,500 lbs. of debris, sand and loam to and from areas of the Course. This utility cart will replace the other utility cart in the Club's fleet that is over a decade old and is becoming unreliable. This vehicle will be used on a daily basis in the Spring and Fall when course cleanup is a daily occurrence. During the Summer months, it will be used for various Course projects. This vehicle will be paid for over five years. This is the third of five payments.*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Item #16 – Greens Equipment – Greens Mower \$12,067 Country Club

Summary: *This item replaced a greens mower. The old mower will be converted to a tee & collar unit, and the old tee & collar unit will be converted to a greens roller unit. Ideally, the Club will purchase a new mower every five years. This is the third of four payments for this equipment.*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Item #17 – Greens Equipment – Fairway Mower \$20,000 Country Club

Summary: *This is a request to replace the Club's current Fairway Mower. This mower will be purchased on a five year lease purchase arrangement. This will be the first of five payments.*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Item #18 – Greens Equipment – Rough Mower \$20,000 Country Club

Summary: *Similar to the Fairway Mower, this is a request to replace the Club's current Rough Mower. This mower will be purchased on a five year lease purchase arrangement. This is the first of five payments.*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Item #19 – Irrigation and Course Improvements \$1,400,000 Country Club

Summary: *The current irrigation system is limited to manual operation to a limited area of the golf course. It is believed that a new irrigation system would significantly improve the condition of the golf course particularly in dryer seasons. The new system would have greater coverage which would include all fairways, greens and tee boxes. Selected areas of rough that are considered in play would also be included. The new system would also be automated so watering could be accomplished during non-playing hours. In addition to the new irrigation system, the Country Club is looking into a redesign of the greenside area of the 3rd hole to improve playability as well as a drainage system for hole 7. Preliminary estimates for this project would be roughly \$1,400,000. In addition to the new irrigation system the Club will look into a redesign of Holes 1-3 to improve playability as well as drainage system for Hole 7. These funds will be borrowed and paid back over ten to fifteen years. The amount requested here is to cover the first year cost.*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Item #20 – Roof for the Pavilion \$14,200 Fire and EMS

Summary: *The pavilion at the Groton Country Club is used by the Club for its summer camp operations, as well as, storing equipment in the winter months. The roof is in need of replacement.*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Town Manager

Article 7: Community Preservation Funding Accounts

To see if the Town will vote to make the following appropriations from the Community Preservation Fund: Allocation of Community Preservation Funds to the following sub accounts:

CPC Operating Expenses:	\$
Open Space Reserve:	\$
Historic Resource Reserve:	\$
Community Housing Reserve:	\$
Unallocated Reserve:	\$

or to take any other action relative thereto.

Community Preservation Committee

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Community Preservation Committee:

Summary: *This is an accounting procedure that is necessary so that the Community Preservation Committee will have access to the funds raised during Fiscal Year 2027. Except for the CPC Operating Expenses, none of these funds will be spent without additional approval at Town Meeting.*

Article 8: Community Preservation Funding Recommendations

To see if the Town will vote to adopt and approve the recommendations of the Community Preservation Committee for Fiscal Year 2027, and vote to implement such recommendations by appropriating a sum or sums of money from the Community Preservation Fund established pursuant to Chapter 44B of the Massachusetts General Laws, and by authorizing the Select Board, with the approval of the Community Preservation Committee, to acquire, by purchase, gift or eminent domain, such real property interests in the name of the Town, or enforceable by the Town, including real property interests in the form of permanent affordable housing restrictions and historical preservation restrictions that will meet the requirements of Chapter 184 of the Massachusetts General Laws, as may be necessary or proper to carry out the foregoing, or to take any other action relative thereto.

CPC Proposal A: Lighting Improvements – Prescott \$9,750

Summary: *The Town Manager’s Office and Prescott Community Center are requesting \$9,750 to replace halogen fixtures with high bay LED fixtures with motion sensors in the gym and increase lighting at the back and side accessible entrances to the building by adding new LED wall lights. To Fund this Project, \$9,750 will come from the*

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Community Preservation Committee:

CPC Proposal B: Cow Pond Brook Fields Improvements \$4,284,000

Summary: *The Town Manager’s Office and Park Commission are requesting \$4,284,000 to improve site accessibility and safety by reconfiguring parking and constructing paved, ADA- and MAAB-compliant walking paths to all fields where accessible routes are currently lacking. Parking capacity will be expanded to better serve users, and environmental restoration will be achieved through the removal of an existing road that separates two wetland areas with vernal pools, improving ecological connectivity and wetland function. The Town has received a \$1,000,000*

Federal Grant to offset the requested amount. To Fund this Project, Town Meeting will be asked to authorize the borrowing of \$4,284,000, which will ultimately be reduced to \$3,284,000 after receiving the Grant proceeds.

Select Board:
Finance Committee:
Community Preservation Committee:

CPC Proposal C: FY 2027 Conservation Fund \$300,000

Summary: *The Conservation Commission is requesting \$300,000 to be added to Groton's Conservation Fund to help preserve land for open space, agricultural recreation, and forestry activities, as well as to protect water resources and wildlife habitat. The Conservation Fund allows the Town to act swiftly when a priority parcel becomes available. In the past, the Conservation Fund has been used to purchase conservation restrictions, agricultural preservation restrictions, and fee ownership of conservation land within Groton. To fund this project,*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:
Community Preservation Committee:

CPC Proposal D: Housing Coordinator – FY 2027 \$72,830

Summary: *This application is requesting \$72,830 in CPA funding from the Community Housing category to fund the wages and benefits of the Housing Coordinator position for the Town of Groton (25-hours/week). The full amount to be paid from the Community Housing Reserve.*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:
Community Preservation Committee:

CPC Proposal E: Pollinator Pathway Garden \$2,200

Summary: *This application is requesting \$63,402 in CPA funding from the Community Housing category to fund the wages and benefits of the Housing Coordinator position for the Town of Groton (25-hours/week). The full amount to be paid from the Community Housing Reserve.*

Select Board: d
Finance Committee:
Community Preservation Committee:

CPC Proposal F: FY 2027 Housing Request \$300,000

Summary: *The Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) is requesting \$300,000 from the Community Housing Reserve in order to continue its work of creating and supporting Affordable Housing in Groton. This money will allow the AHT to respond swiftly if suitable property for Affordable Housing becomes available on the market. Community Housing Funds can be used to acquire, create, support, rehabilitate and/or restore affordable housing if acquired or created with CPA funds. The full amount to be paid from the Community Housing Reserve.*

Select Board:
Finance Committee:
Community Preservation Committee:

CPC Proposal G:

Cutler Softball Field Establishment

\$99,000

Summary: *The Groton Dunstable Youth Softball League is requesting \$99,000 to improve player safety and field quality by installing protective sideline fencing and constructing dugouts with benches and roofs. It also includes the purchase of an infield groomer to support consistent field maintenance and safe playing conditions. To fund this project, _____.*

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Community Preservation Committee:

CPC Proposal H:

Boutwell Playground Renovation

\$675,000

Summary: *The Groton Dunstable Regional School District is requesting \$675,000 to install new playground equipment, replace existing playground surfacing, and improve the adjacent parking area. The upgrades will provide a safe, accessible play space with inclusive features and improved access for users of all abilities. To fund this project, _____.*

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Community Preservation Committee:

Community Preservation Committee

Article 9: *Special Act to Exempt Certain Uncontrollable Costs from the Tax Levy*

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to petition the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for a special act entitled "An Act Relative to Adjusting the Municipal Tax Levy Limit for the Town of Groton to Exempt Certain Uncontrollable Costs" as follows:

An Act Relative to Adjusting the Municipal Tax Levy Limit for the Town of Groton to Exempt Certain Uncontrollable Costs

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

SECTION 1.

Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, for the Town of Groton, the calculation of the municipal levy limit and levy ceiling pursuant to section 21C of chapter 59 of the General Laws shall exclude certain uncontrollable costs as set forth in this act.

SECTION 2.

For the purposes of this act, the following costs incurred by the Town of Groton shall be excluded from the annual calculation of the levy limit and levy ceiling under section 21C of chapter 59 of the General Laws:

- (a) Group health insurance costs incurred pursuant to chapter 32B of the General Laws, including but not limited to:
 - subscriber premiums;
 - employer contributions;
 - retiree health insurance obligations;
 - reimbursements for Medicare Part B or related plans.

- (b) Pension appropriations required pursuant to chapter 32 of the General Laws, including but not limited to:
- annual required contributions to the local or regional retirement system;
 - pension funding schedules approved by the Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission;
 - payments toward unfunded actuarial accrued liabilities.

SECTION 3.

Amounts excluded under this act:

- (a) shall not be considered an increase in the levy limit under subsection (f) of said section 21C;
(b) shall not require voter approval pursuant to subsections (g) or (h) of said section 21C; and
(c) shall not be considered a permanent increase to the base levy limit of the Town of Groton.

SECTION 4.

The commissioner of revenue shall promulgate regulations or issue guidance establishing the method by which the Town of Groton shall certify eligible costs and report such exclusions in the annual Tax Rate Recapitulation.

SECTION 5.

Not later than 180 days after the passage of this act, the Department of Revenue shall issue any guidelines, regulations, or forms necessary to implement the provisions of this act as they apply to the Town of Groton.

SECTION 6.

This act shall take effect on July 1 following its passage and shall apply to all fiscal years beginning on or after that date.

provided, however, that the General Court may make clerical or editorial changes of form only to the bill, unless the Select Board approves amendments thereto before enactment by the General Court, which amendments shall be within the public purposes of said petition, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Manager

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *The proposed Act allows the Town of Groton to exclude specific "uncontrollable" costs from its annual municipal levy limit and levy ceiling calculation. If approved by the General Court and Governor, the Town could raise taxes above the standard 2.5% limit specifically to cover these mandated expenses without requiring a separate voter override for each instance. The following mandatory expenses would be exempt from the Levy Limit: Health Insurance: All subscriber premiums, employer contributions, and retiree health obligations (including Medicare Part B reimbursements); and Pension Obligations: Required annual contributions to retirement systems and payments toward unfunded actuarial liabilities. Any amount excluded under this act is considered temporary for that fiscal year. This does not permanently increase the town's base levy limit. In addition, the legislation specifically states that these adjustments do not require the usual voter approval typically mandated by Proposition 2 ½ for levy increases. The Department of Revenue (DOR) will oversee the process, issuing regulations and guidelines to ensure the Town correctly certifies and reports these excluded costs.*

Article 10: Amend Chapter 168 of the General Bylaws – Stretch Energy Code

To see if the Town will vote to adopt the Municipal Opt-in Specialized Stretch Energy Code, specifically 225 CMR 22 and 225 CMR 23, including Appendices RC and CC, and including future editions, amendments, or modifications thereto, to regulate the design and construction of buildings for the effective use of energy and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and to amend the Code of the Town of Groton by deleting Chapter 168, Stretch Energy Code, in its entirety, and inserting in its place the text set forth below, provided that said adoption of the Specialized Stretch Energy Code and this amendment of the Code of the Town of Groton shall be effective as of January 1, 2027, and further, to authorize the Town Clerk to make any numbering or formatting edits necessary to conform to the publication conventions of the Code of the Town of Groton, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Select Board

Chapter 168 Specialized Stretch Energy Code

§ 168-1 Definitions.

As used in this Chapter 168, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

International Energy Conservation Code (IECC)

The International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) is a building energy code created by the International Code Council. It is a model code adopted by many state and municipal governments in the United States for the establishment of minimum design and construction requirements for energy efficiency. and is updated on a three-year cycle. The baseline energy conservation requirements of the MA State Building Code are the IECC with Massachusetts amendments, as approved by the Board of Building Regulations and Standards and published in state regulations as part of 780 CMR.

Stretch Energy Code

Codified by the combination of 225 CMR 22 and 23, not including Appendices RC and CC, the Stretch Energy Code is a comprehensive set of amendments to the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) seeking to achieve all lifecycle cost-effective energy efficiency in accordance with the Green Communities Act of 2008, as well as to reduce the climate impacts of buildings built to this code. Specialized Energy Code Codified by the entirety of 225 CMR 22 and 23 including Appendices RC and CC, the Specialized Energy Code adds residential and commercial appendices to the Massachusetts Stretch Energy Code, based on amendments to the respective net-zero appendices of the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) to incorporate the energy efficiency of the Stretch energy code and further reduce the climate impacts of buildings built to this code, with the goal of achieving netzero greenhouse gas emissions from the buildings sector no later than 2050.

§ 168-2 Purpose.

The purpose of 225 CMR 22 and 23 including Appendices RC and CC, also referred to as the Specialized Energy Code, is to provide a more energy efficient and low greenhouse gas emissions alternative to the Stretch Energy Code or the baseline Massachusetts Energy Code, applicable to the relevant sections of the State Building Code for both new construction and existing buildings.

§ 168-3 Applicability.

This Specialized Energy Code shall apply to residential and commercial buildings.

§ 168-4 Adoption.

The Specialized Code, including any future editions, amendments, or modifications is herein incorporated by reference into this Chapter 168.

§ 168-5 Enforcement.

The Specialized Energy Code shall be enforceable by the Building Commissioner.

§ 168-6 Effective Date.

The effective date of this Chapter 168 shall be January 1, 2027.

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *This article proposes to update the Town of Groton’s local energy regulations by repealing the current Stretch Energy Code and adopting the Commonwealth’s most recent Stretch Energy Code, known as the Specialized Energy Code (225 CMR 22 and 225 CMR 23, including applicable appendices). The Specialized Energy Code establishes enhanced energy-efficiency and emissions standards for certain new construction and major renovations, with the goal of reducing energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. If approved, the new code would take effect on January 1, 2027.*



Article 11: Squannacook River Dam Repair

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow pursuant to any applicable statute, a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager, for the repair of the Squannacook River Dam, including all incidental and related costs, and further, to authorize the Select Board to acquire, by gift, purchase, or eminent domain such land and easements that may be necessary to complete said project on such terms and conditions as the Select Board deems to be in the best interest of the Town, provided, however, that no funds may be expended hereunder for this purpose unless and until the Town approves a Proposition 2½ Debt or Capital Exclusion pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 59, Section 21C, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Select Board

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *This article seeks authorization for the Town to fund repairs to the Squannacook River Dam at an estimated cost of \$812,500, including all related and incidental expenses. Funding may be appropriated from the tax rate, subject to a Proposition 2½ Capital Exclusion, or borrowed, subject to a Proposition 2½ Debt Exclusion in accordance with applicable law. The article also authorizes the Select Board to acquire any necessary land or easements, by gift, purchase, or eminent domain, to complete the project. Additional information relative to funding will be provided at Town Meeting.*



Article 12: Amend Zoning Bylaw – Clarify Appeal Process in Site Plan Review

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Code of the Town of Groton, Chapter 218 Zoning, by adding the following in Section 218-2.5.D(2):

(d) Within 90 days of the close of the public hearing, the Planning Board shall vote on a decision and authorize the filing of a written decision with the Town Clerk within 14 days.

(e) Any person aggrieved by a decision of the Planning Board as site plan approval authority may appeal such decision as provided in MGL c. 40A, Section 17, within 20 days after such decision has been filed with the Town Clerk.

or to take any other action relative thereto.

Planning Board

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *This technical amendment to the Zoning Bylaw clarifies the process for appeal of site plan decisions. The Planning Board's standard practice for site plan decisions has been to follow the same appeal procedures utilized for special permits, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 40A, Section 17. However, this process is not specifically laid out in the site plan review section of the Zoning Bylaw. Town Counsel recommends that the Zoning Bylaw be amended to specify that site plan decisions must be appealed pursuant to M.G.L. c. 40A, Section 17.*

ARTICLES 13 THROUGH 22 WILL BE PART OF THE CONSENT AGENDA. PLEASE SEE EXPLANATION PROVIDED ON PAGE 2 OF THIS WARRANT.

Article 13: Funding for the Destination Groton Committee

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow pursuant to any applicable statute, a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager in Fiscal Year 2026 and thereafter, for the purpose of providing funding for the Destination Groton Committee to carry out the Charge of the Committee, and all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Destination Groton Committee

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *The purpose of this Article is to provide \$15,000 in funding for the Destination Groton Committee to carry out its charge, which is to pursue a course of action intended to engage all Town stakeholders, including the business and non-profit communities, Town leaders, Federal and State elected officials and Town residents in a series of public information forums, economic research and data analysis, in order to, through a ten-year Town Center Strategic Vision Plan, prepare for an increase in visitors to town while at the same time work to preserve its rural small-town charm. The purpose of this request is to meet a state required minimum local Town expenditure of \$15,000 in a prior fiscal year in order to qualify for major matching grants in Destination Development, Historic Preservation, Infrastructure, and Cultural programs that promote Groton to meet the needs of increased visitors. A portion of this funding will be used to set aside local match opportunities and to produce a Groton Public Engagement Vision Forum and the second Regional Tourism Conference to promote Groton as a gateway for the region.*

Article 14: Transfer within the Water Enterprise Fund

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

Board of Water Commissioners

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *This article allows the Water Department to transfer money from its surplus account to cover any deficit in the Fiscal Year 2026 Water Department Budget. As of the printing of the Warrant, it is anticipated that \$ __, __ will need to be transferred for this purpose.*

Article 15: *Transfer Within the Center Sewer Enterprise Fund*

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

Board of Sewer Commissioners

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Summary: *This article allows the Sewer Department to transfer money from its surplus account to cover any deficit in the Fiscal Year 2026 Center Sewer Budget. As of the printing of the Warrant, it is anticipated that \$____ will need to be transferred for this purpose.*

Article 16: *Transfer Within the Four Corners Sewer Enterprise Fund*

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

Board of Sewer Commissioners

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Summary: *This article allows the Sewer Department to transfer money from its surplus account to cover any deficit in the Fiscal Year 2026 Four Corners Sewer Budget. As of the printing of the Warrant, it is anticipated that \$____ will need to be transferred for this purpose.*

Article 17: *Prior Year Bills*

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds a sum or sums of money for the payment of unpaid bills from prior fiscal years, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Select Board

Select Board:
Finance Committee:

Summary: *Town Meeting approval is required to pay bills from a prior fiscal year. A list of unpaid bills will be provided at Town Meeting.*

Article 18: Appropriate Money to Offset the Snow and Ice Deficit

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager, to reduce the deficit in the Fiscal Year 2026 Snow and Ice Budget, as approved under Article 5 of the April 26, 2025 Spring Town Meeting, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Manager

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *This article will allow the Town to fund any deficit in the Snow and Ice Account in FY 26. The current deficit is projected to be approximately \$____,____.*

Article 19: Debt Service for Middle School Track

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds, a sum or sums of money, pursuant to Chapter 44B, Section 5, of the Massachusetts General Laws, for debt service for Fiscal Year 2027 for the Middle School Track Project, as authorized under Article 7 of the May 1, 2021 Spring Town Meeting, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Community Preservation Committee

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *This Article appropriates the debt service payment for the Middle School Track Project. Article 7 of the May 21, 2021 Spring Town Meeting appropriated \$1,405,374 for the project. In FY 2027, the Community Preservation Committee will pay \$648,945 in debt service (\$627,000 in principal payment and \$21,945 in interest payment) for this appropriation that will pay off the Debt. To fund this appropriation the entire amount will come from the Unallocated Reserve.*

Article 20: Funding for Main Street Traffic Study

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds, a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager in Fiscal Year 2026 and thereafter, to hire an engineering consultant to conduct a traffic study of the portion of Main Street under the control of the Town, and all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Manager

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *This Article seeks funding to supplement funding received from the State to hire MDM Transportation Consultants to conduct an in depth traffic study of the portion of Main Street under the control of the Town. The purpose of this duty is to improve the overall safety (vehicular and pedestrian) of this roadway.*

Article 21: *Appropriation to Fund Town Forest Expenses*

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum or sums of money from Receipts Reserved for the Town Forest to Town Forest Expenses, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Manager

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *The Town Forest Committee is seeking funds to cover the cost of removing a dead stand of Red Pines that are creating a hazard in the Town Forest. The amount needed is estimated to be \$12,000 based on an estimate from the Committee's consulting Forester.*

Article 22: *Establishing Limits for the Various Revolving Funds*

To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 44 sec 53E½ and the Revolving Fund Bylaw, to amend the Revolving Fund Bylaw to add or delete any revolving account and/or to set the FY 2027 spending limits for the various revolving funds as follows:

Program or Purpose	FY 2027 Spending Limit
Stormwater Management	\$20,000
Conservation Commission	\$50,000
Park Commission	\$100,000
Building Rental Fund	\$50,000
Affordable Housing Marketing	\$20,000
Home Recycling Equipment	\$10,000
Access for Persons with Disabilities	\$10,000
Council on Aging Program Fund	\$40,000
Boat Excise Tax Fund	\$ 5,000
Transfer Station Glass	\$20,000
Senior Center Fitness Equipment	\$10,000

or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Manager

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *This Article sets the limit of annual spending for the various revolving funds authorized by previous Town Meeting votes and is currently set forth in the Town's Bylaw for said purpose.*

Hereof fail not and make return of your doings to the Town Clerk on or before time of said meeting.

Given under our hands this 17th Day of April in the year of our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six.

Matthew F. Pisani

Matthew F. Pisani, Chair

Rebecca H. Pine

Rebecca H. Pine, Vice-Chair

Alison S. Manugian

Alison S. Manugian, Clerk

John F. Reilly

John F. Reilly, Member

Peter S. Cunningham

Peter S. Cunningham, Member

OFFICERS RETURN

Groton, Middlesex

Pursuant to the within Warrant, I have this day notified the Inhabitants to assemble at the time, place, and for the purpose mentioned as within directed. Personally posted by Constable.

Constable

Date Duly Posted

Mark Haddad

From: Deanna DeVito <devito.deanna@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2026 10:46 AM
To: Select Board
Subject: MJTC nomination
Attachments: MJTC Appointment Form 2025 2026.pdf

Hello-

From Sheri at MRPC, I was informed that the Planning board has appointed Russell Burke but there is a vacancy open for the Selectboard to nominate. I have attached this form I completed and was hoping to see if the vacancy was still available, as I have interest in joining this.

Thank you!

Deanna DeVito Kass
973-495-6928

**MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (MJTC)
APPOINTMENT 2025 - 2026**

The on
COMMUNITY DATE

has officially appointed:

NAME: Deanna Kass

ADDRESS: 35 boston road groton ma 01450

TELEPHONE #: +19734956928

EMAIL ADDRESS: Devito.deanna@gmail.com

to represent us on the Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee for the year beginning July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026.

Signed By:

NAME

TITLE

YOUR CURRENT REPRESENTATIVE TO
THE MJTC IS:

CHECK THIS BOX TO RE-NOMINATE
THE CURRENT REPRESENTATIVE

PLEASE MAIL, EMAIL OR FAX THIS FORM TO:

MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
464 ABBOTT AVENUE
LEOMINSTER, MA 01453
ATTENTION: Brian Doherty
bdoherty@mrpc.org
(978) 348-2490 (FAX)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PROMPT ATTENTION TO THIS MATTER.

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2026
UN-APPROVED**

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

Select Board Members Virtually Absent: John Reilly

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; Tom Delaney, Squannacook River Dam Consultant; and Brian Callahan, DPW Director.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Pine announced the third Annual Town Report Art Contest for the Town of Groton. Submissions must be sent to the Town Manager's Office by February 18th. She also announced that the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, in collaboration with Lawrence Academy, will sponsor an event featuring a speaker from the Nipmuc Tribe on Wednesday, April 8, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. The event will take place at the Groton Center.

Mr. Haddad announced that the town received a record-breaking check from the Groton Hill Music Center in the amount of \$39,226 for the 2025 Fourth Quarter proceeds from the Groton Community Fund. He emphasized that this payment was a 10% increase compared to the donation received for the corresponding quarter in 2024. Mr. Haddad thanked Groton Hill Music Center for its continued collaboration with the Town of Groton.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- 1. Consider Ratifying the Town Manager's Appointment of Lois Young to the Commission on Accessibility.**

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to ratify the Town Manager's Appointment of Lois Young to the Commission on Accessibility. Ms. Pine seconded the motion.

Discussion

Ms. Pine stated that Ms. Young would be an excellent candidate for the Commission on Accessibility.

The motion carried unanimously.

2. FY 2027 Budget Update.

Mr. Haddad updated the Board on issues raised during the Budget Presentation. He explained that Member Manugian had requested a summary of Capital Items that have already been procured and are being paid off over several years. He provided the Board with a memo under separate cover containing that information.

Mr. Haddad also addressed another issue raised: the percentage of full-time equivalents (FTEs) reduced at the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District over the past three years. He is currently working with the School District to obtain that information and will discuss it further as he receives more details.

There were several questions about per-pupil costs at Nashoba Tech vs the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District. Mr. Haddad provided this information to the Select Board and Finance Committee under separate cover.

Town Accountant/Assistant Finance Director Ms. Patricia DuFresne attended the Town Official Breakfast at Nashoba Tech and reported a preliminary \$30,000 budget increase, which is about \$9,000 more than Mr. Haddad set aside in his proposed budget. He believes that the increase in State aid contained in the Governor's budget will cover that increase.

Mr. Haddad stated that he would invite the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health to a future Select Board meeting, as requested by Member Manugian, to discuss their 30% Assessment increase for FY 2027.

Member Manugian inquired about the impact of the School District's funding cuts on the delivery of education. Superintendent Dr. Geoff Bruno provided a summary detailing how these cuts have affected educational services. This summary is contained in the Town Manager's Report.

3. Select Board Meeting Schedule through the 2026 Spring Town Meeting.

Tuesday, February 10, 2026-	Meet in Joint Session with the Finance Committee
Monday, February 16, 2026 -	No Meeting – (President's Day Holiday)
Monday, February 23, 2026 -	First Review of 2026 Town Meeting Warrant
Saturday, February 28, 2026-	Joint Session with Finance Committee
Monday, March 2, 2026 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, March 9, 2026 -	2026 Town Meeting Warrant Public Hearing
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 – (Patriots' Day Holiday)
Saturday, May 2, 2026 -	2026 Spring Town Meeting

ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL

1. Approve Letter of Support to the CPA for Affordable Housing Trust Application.

Mr. Haddad provided a draft letter of support to the Select Board for their review. He explained that the letter is intended to support the Affordable Housing Trust's Application before the Community Preservation Committee. Mr. Haddad respectfully requested that the Board authorize the Town Manager to sign the letter on behalf of the Select Board.

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to sign the letter of support to the CPA for the Affordable Housing Trust application, on behalf of the Select Board. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion.

Discussion

Mr. Haddad stated that the request is for \$300,000. Ms. Pine believes they currently have approximately \$800,000 in the Affordable Housing Trust account at this time.

The motion carried 3 in Favor, 1 Against-Manugian.

2. Discussion on Vote on Deed to Bluebird Lane for Public Way Acceptance.

Mr. Haddad explained that there was an issue with the acceptance of Bluebird Lane. Bluebird Lane was accepted as a Town Way at the 2025 Fall Town Meeting. He said the conveyance of the real estate for the way is the final step in the street acceptance process. The deed from R.D. Kanniard Homes, Inc., conveys the developer's retained interest in Bluebird Lane and "Parcel B". Mr. Haddad provided a copy of the Street Acceptance Plan to the Board for their review. He said the deed from James N. Tedesco conveys the abutting lot owner's interest in Bluebird Lane, which the developer inadvertently failed to retain when that parcel was sold. Mr. Haddad said this deed cures that issue for purposes of street acceptance, and the Select Board would need to sign off on both deeds.

Ms. Pine moved to approve the deeds for Bluebird Lane for public way acceptance, as outlined in the packet. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Consider Approving a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverage License for Karen Lilgegren for Jackson and Annika's Barn Dance to be held on Friday, August 21, 2026, from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Ms. Manugian moved to approve the One-Day wine and Malt Beverages License for Karen Lilgegren for Jackson and Annika's Barn Dance to be held on Friday, August 21, 2026, from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

6:15 P.M.-In Joint Session with the Park Commission- Consider Appointing an Individual to Fill a Vacancy on the Park Commission until the 2026 Annual Town Election.

Due to a scheduling conflict, this discussion has been postponed until the February 23rd Select Board meeting.

6:20 P.M.- Squannacook River Dam Discussion- Review Study to remove the Dam and Bids to Consider the Repair of the Dam.

Mr. Tom Delaney, Consultant, and Mr. Brian Callahan, DPW Director, attended the discussion.

Mr. Haddad explained that the 2024 Fall Town Meeting allocated funds to hire two consultants: one to conduct a study on the removal of the Squannacook River Dam (Horsley Witten) and another to hire an engineer to prepare bid specifications for the dam's repair (Haley & Aldrich). Mr. Haddad was pleased with the reports provided for both the removal and repair, and they are posted on the Town's website.

Mr. Haddad stated that state grant funding might be available for the Dam's removal, which would cost approximately \$2 million to \$2.5 million. He also explained that Haley & Aldrich did a great job preparing the bid specifications for the dam repair. He emphasized that 24 firms obtained the specifications, and 8 submitted bids. When the bids were opened, they ranged from \$502,500 to \$1,421,000. The primary concern in the bids was controlling water during construction. The lowest bid included \$150,000 for water control, while the average cost was \$310,000. All the bid specs were sent to the engineer from Haley & Aldrich for review. The engineer was concerned that the low bid didn't include enough to cover the cost of controlling water during the repair work. He suggested carrying \$150,000 as a contingency for this purpose; in addition, Mr. Haddad and Mr. Delaney would prefer \$250,000, as the Shirley side of the Dam has never been addressed, which makes them nervous. He proposed the following budget for the repair of the Dam based on the Bids:

Low Bid (R. Bates & Sons, Inc)	\$502,550
Contingency	\$250,000
Engineering/Construction Administration	\$ 60,000
Total	\$812,000

Mr. Haddad was pleased with the results of the dam repair bids. He stated that the low bidder, R. Bates & Sons, Inc., must hold the \$502,550 appropriation until the May Town Meeting. Mr. Haddad recommended that the Board present Town Meeting with one option on the Dam, and that it would be to repair the Dam. To pay for this, he recommended either a debt exclusion or a capital exclusion. Mr. Haddad recommended including an Article for the dam repair at the 2026 Spring Town Meeting, seeking \$812,500. He said an override would be necessary to fund this project. Should this Article fail, the Select Board can consider moving forward with the removal.

With regards to funding the repair, he explained two Options for funding:

Option #1 would be to borrow the funds, ask voters at Town Meeting and the Annual Election in May for a Debt Exclusion, and pay off the loan over eleven years. Option #2 would be a Capital Exclusion in which the Town Meeting would raise and appropriate the entire amount and pay it off in Fiscal Year 2027 by placing a Capital Exclusion (authorizing a one-time increase in the levy Limit to raise the full amount) on the ballot at the Annual Election in May. (See the attached memo: Proposal to Pay for the Cost of Repairing the Squannacook River Dam.)

During the discussion, there was a public comment period when members of the public could state their comments and concerns.

Ms. Pine stated that she was a strong environmentalist, and restoring the river to its natural state is not possible by removing the Dam. She thinks it will become a swamp with mosquitoes and be the center of a neighborhood in town. She is not in favor of removing the Dam, is in favor of holding a public hearing, and bringing this Article to the Spring Town Meeting. Ms. Manugian disagreed with Ms. Pine. She said, from an investment and liability perspective, taking the Dam down is the way to go. Mr. Cunningham said he was in favor of putting this Article on the warrant. Mr. Haddad will schedule the public hearing on the Dam for Tuesday, March 3rd, at 7:00 p.m., at the Groton Center.

OTHER BUSINESS

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

Ms. Pine made a motion to authorize the town manager and one member of the select board to sign warrants for the next thirty days. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

On-Going Issues

- A. PFAS Issue – None
- B. UMass Satellite Emergency Facility – None
- C. Fire Department Staffing – The Select Board will hold a joint meeting with the Finance Committee on Tuesday, February 10th, to discuss staffing.
- D. West Groton Dam- None
- E. Main Street Study – None

SELECT BOARD LIASON REPORTS

Ms. Pine said the Non-Profit Council is meeting on February 10, 2026, at 9:00 am at the Groton Hill Music Center.

Approval of the Regularly Scheduled Meeting of February 2, 2026

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of February 2, 2026. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The Select Board adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

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

**SELECT BOARD SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2026
UN- APPROVED**

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

Select Board Members Absent: Alison Manugian, Clerk

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

Finance Committee Members Absent: Jamie McDonald; Scott Whitefield;

Also Present: Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; Patricia DuFresne, Assistant Finance Director/Town Accountant; Megan Foster, Principal Assessor; Katie Kazanjian, Treasurer/Tax Collector; Melisa Doig, Human Resources Director; Fire Chief Arthur Cheeks; and Members of the Fire Union.

Chair Pisani called the Select Board meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and reviewed the agenda.

Chair Robertson called the Finance Committee Meeting to order.

Meeting in Joint Session with the Finance Committee to Discuss/Approve a Plan to Study/Improve the Fire Department Staffing

Mr. Haddad thanked the Boards, Fire Chief Arthur Cheeks, and members of the Fire Department for attending that evening to discuss his concerns about staffing within the Fire Department. He sent a memorandum to the Select Board and Finance Committee outlining his concerns about addressing staffing levels and the increasing number of calls the department is receiving. He also had asked them to consider placing an override on the ballot to address these issues. Mr. Haddad said that he met with Finance Committee Chair Bud Robertson, Select Board Chair Matt Pisani, and Fire Chief Cheeks to discuss possible options. He explained that the Town of Groton has received a \$1 million state grant for communities impacted by the closure of the Nashoba Valley Medical Center. During their meeting, they discussed establishing a trial by staffing the Fire Department with overtime and scheduling as many shifts as possible so there are four (4) firefighters on every shift. This will allow the Town to evaluate the impact of full staffing. However, there are concerns about burnout. Mr. Haddad held a meeting with the Firefighters' Union, which committed to the plan and will try to fill as many shifts as possible. Mr. Haddad outlined the staffing needs for each shift and explained that the Fire Chief has a rule prohibiting firefighters from working more than 48 hours in a row.

The proposed plan runs from March 1, 2026, to September 1, 2026. During this period, they will work with call firefighters and use per diem staffing to cover as many shifts as possible, while closely tracking data. Mr. Haddad said the Finance Committee wants evidence supporting the need for additional staffing. He believes conducting a six-month experiment and collecting data over that period will help demonstrate that need. Mr. Haddad emphasized the importance of prioritizing firefighters' safety. He wanted to discuss the proposed plan that evening, have it approved by the Select Board and Finance Committee, and confirm their commitment to review the numbers after six months to determine whether to return to the 2026 Fall Town Meeting to request funding for six additional firefighters. Mr. Haddad explained that there is

currently a vacancy in the Fire Department and that they have received over 100 resumes. He believes it will not be difficult to find six firefighters.

Finance Committee Member Mary Linskey asked whether the \$1 million grant is a one-time or recurring revenue. Mr. Haddad said the funds are one-time revenue, and Mr. Pisani stated that those funds must be spent by June 30, 2027. Chief Cheeks said that since 2019, they have been trumping the issue of staffing and that there is no way they could be successful without the call department. He said the department's safety is the most important part of this. The Chief stated that the new Satellite Emergency Facility (SEF) will not be the solution and is not a place of definitive care.

Lieutenant James Crocker, Union President of Local 4879, was in attendance for the discussion. Lt. Crocker said the Chief has laid out the data well. In 2024, the Chief himself worked 641 extra hours (80 extra days). He stated that if this doesn't prove they need additional staffing, he wasn't sure what would. Lt. Crocker discussed the overlapping calls they received and reviewed the department's staffing needs. He said burnout is real and that they are losing people and institutional knowledge. Mr. Reilly said you never see the union president pump up the Fire Chief, and you don't see the Chief pumping up the Union President. Mr. Reilly hopes the message is that there has to be a plan moving forward to make the community and its staff safer. Lieutenant Chase Lundgren stated that they need a plan moving forward. He said everyone has families to go home to, and there is burnout. Mr. Robertson agrees with the Fire Department and believes the study will prove the need (response times should come down). Mr. Haddad said that one thing about overlapping calls is that response time to the second call will drop dramatically, as employees will be at the station. Mr. Haddad stated that employee safety is the most important aspect. Ms. Linskey said this six-month period is about getting the townspeople's buy-in. Finance Committee Member Gary Green stated that they need a strong, provable case to bring to the townspeople. Mr. Green said he supports this, but it's important to set success measures. He suggested forming a Working Group. Mr. Haddad said he wants to sell this to the town and wants to move forward. Ms. Pine spoke with Finance Committee Member Scott Whitefield, since he couldn't attend that evening, and agrees that an analysis is needed. She said they may ask for some slightly different data or recorded in a different way. Ms. Linskey said it's more about strategy and when to get the buy-in from the town.

Mr. Chris Braun, a full-time member and a previous call member, said they have a marketing problem, not a data problem. He said marketing is about telling stories and told the Boards that the Fire Department needs their help telling those stories. He said there are only so many hours you can work without compromising safety. Mr. Cunningham asked how many call members do per diem shifts. The Chief explained that a solid five are per diem. Lt. Crocker said that, in addition to calls, each member has a different role that has taken a back seat due to increased call volume.

After a spirited discussion, Mr. Haddad stated that he would like to put together a marketing plan to reach the public and a statistical plan to present the data. He wants to start on March 1st. Mr. Robertson told the Chief that he has the data; it's just the marketing piece that supports it.

Select Board

Mr. Cunningham moved to proceed with the plan, using the \$1 million state grant to fund overtime for fire department shifts from March 1st through September 1, 2026. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Finance Committee

Mr. Green moved to proceed with the plan, using the \$1 million state grant to fund overtime for fire department shifts from March 1st through September 1, 2026. Mr. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Haddad thanked everyone for their time that evening.

The Select Board and Finance Committee adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

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