



TOWN OF GROTON

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

Select Board

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

Town Manager
Mark W. Haddad

**SELECT BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2026
AGENDA**

**SELECT BOARD MEETING ROOM, 2nd FLOOR, GROTON TOWN HALL
AND ZOOM, WEBINAR ID: 840 0338 1949, PASSCODE: 285909**

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

6:01 P.M. Public Comment Period

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

1. Jim Gareffi – Nashoba Associated Boards of Health Proposed FY 2027 Assessment
2. FY 2027 Budget Update
3. Update on Select Board Schedule Through the 2026 Spring Town Meeting

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

NONE

III. 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 Election

OTHER BUSINESS

ON-GOING ISSUES – Review and Informational Purposes – Brief Comments - Items May or May Not Be Discussed

- A. PFAS Issue
- B. UMass Satellite Emergency Facility
- C. Fire Department Staffing
- D. West Groton Dam
- E. Main Street Study

SELECT BOARD LIAISON REPORTS

IV. Minutes: Regularly Scheduled Meeting of February 23, 2026

ADJOURNMENT

Votes may be taken at any time during the meeting. The listing of topics that the Chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting is not intended as a guarantee of the topics that will be discussed. Not all topics listed may in fact be discussed, and other topics not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.



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Town Manager
Mark W. Haddad

To: *Select Board*

From: *Mark W. Haddad – Town Manager*

Subject: *Weekly Agenda Update/Report*

Date: *March 2, 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 an individual to fill the current vacancy on the Commission until the 2026 Annual Election. There is one applicant for this vacancy. Jack Petropolous has submitted an Interest Form and written summary expressing his interest in the vacancy. The Park Commission will join the Select Board to interview the candidate to make a final decision/appointment.

1. Jim Gareffi, Executive Director of the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health (NABH), will attend Monday's meeting to discuss the increase proposed in the FY 2027 NABH Assessment. Enclosed with this Report is a breakdown of the Town by Town Assessments and an FAQ explaining the reasons for the increase.
2. With regard to the FY 2027 Budget Update, please consider the following:
 - a. As discussed at last week's meeting, I have drafted a letter to send to the State Legislature urging them to increase Chapter 70 Aid in FY 2027. It is attached to this Report for your review. This letter was drafted based on the outstanding letter provided to the Town by the Groton Dunstable Regional School District. I would like to thank Chair Lacey McCabe for reviewing and editing the proposed letter. I would respectfully request that the Board approve and sign the letter.
 - b. I would like to use this time as well to discuss any issues/follow-up raised at Saturday's Joint Budget Hearing. We can discuss this in more detail at Monday's meeting.

Select Board
Weekly Agenda Update/Report
March 2, 2026
page two

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

NONE

MWH/rjb
enclosure

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.

From: Jack Petropoulos <jack.petropoulos@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 26, 2026 4:12 PM
To: Kara Cruikshank <kcruikshank@grotonma.gov>
Subject: Parks Committee Letter of Interest Petropoulos

Thank you for the opportunity to express my interest in an appointment to the Parks Commission to fill a vacant seat until such time as the seat can be filled through a Town Election. My interest in this appointment stems from the following:

Reason(s) for seeking appointment:

My primary reason for offering to fill this vacancy was my realization of the importance of the Commission's work on the Cow Pond project and the challenge of making this project ready for the Spring Town Meeting. This is a bad time for the Commission to be without a full roster and I believed my background in management and municipal Boards and Committees would be valuable in helping to take the project forward through town meeting.

I have been impressed by the quality of the members of the Commission and the accomplishments over the last few months. The Commission has changed significantly in both its approach and management and I would like to help to continue that trend.

The Commission's 3 major initiatives offer insight into its work, and highlight the importance of your choice for filling this vacancy. More to the point, this work tells me that the Commission is on the right track and leaves me feeling that an excellent structure and process is in place, one to which I believe I can make valuable contributions.

1) The determination to complete a Needs Assessment is an example of the direction and accomplishments that is demonstrating the thoughtful and productive leadership of the Commission. Absent a well executed prioritization of needs and cost, an organization tends to respond in a knee-jerk fashion to the latest / loudest demand that is put in front of it. Both the fact that this was determined to be necessary, and the fact that it has been completed, sets the Commission up to deliver maximum value using scarce resources. I will appreciate having this solid foundation of priorities to work with.

2) The selection of the Cow Pond initiative is an example of such prioritization. Determining to put all the recreational CPA "eggs" in one basket is a major decision. As a result of careful prioritization, the town can have confidence that this decision was not arrived at lightly. I believe that I can help to complete any remaining evaluation of the project's merits against this prioritization, and in communicating those merits to the community.

3) Lastly, the initiative to move to a fee based field use system is a significant and potentially politically charged decision. The careful planning and thought that went into advancing this direction will likewise go a long way toward preparing to adopt the initiative and explaining it to those who will be impacted. Assisting with the completion of this initiative and the communication of its genesis and objectives is an exciting prospect.

Having members that understand the dynamics of these initiatives and the challenge of communicating complex changes and the benefits of same, will be an important part of the value that the person filling this vacancy will contribute to the town. I believe that I have the background and the perspective to help in that regard.

On a more personal level, I played and officiated a lot of soccer as a student and an adult. I am acutely aware of the both importance of good fields for the safety of the players, and the reputational impact of field quality on the way recreational activities are viewed by users and the community at large.

In terms of specific field experience, I worked on the effort to bring an artificial turf field to the High School and led the initiative to move to a natural turf field when funding for artificial turf was unavailable.

Willingness to stand for election to continue to fill the seat. I firmly believe that incumbents enjoy an unfair advantage in an election and it was not my intention to fill this vacancy in order to enjoy that advantage. Rather I believe that I can help to encourage quality candidates as I have with the ZBA. If, by the end of the appropriate period, an insufficient number of candidates have pulled papers I will consider running for election.

Thank you for your consideration.

NASHOBA ASSOCIATED BOARDS OF HEA

2020 Population	
Ashburnham	6315
Ashby	3193
Ayer	8479
Berlin	3158
Bolton	5665
Boxborough	5506
Dunstable	3358
Groton	11315
Harvard	6081
Lancaster	7755
Lunenburg	11782
Pepperell	11604
Shirley	6221
Stow	7174
Townsend	9126
Total	106732
Devens	
Grand Total	
Assessment Per Capita	

	FY 2026	FY 2027	30%
	Total Assessment	Total Assessment	Increase
\$	37,375	\$ 48,587	\$ 11,212
\$	18,898	\$ 24,567	\$ 5,669
\$	50,182	\$ 65,237	\$ 15,055
\$	18,690	\$ 24,298	\$ 5,608
\$	33,527	\$ 43,586	\$ 10,059
\$	32,587	\$ 42,363	\$ 9,776
\$	19,874	\$ 25,836	\$ 5,962
\$	66,967	\$ 87,057	\$ 20,090
\$	35,990	\$ 46,787	\$ 10,797
\$	45,897	\$ 59,667	\$ 13,770
\$	69,731	\$ 90,650	\$ 20,919
\$	68,677	\$ 89,281	\$ 20,604
\$	36,818	\$ 47,864	\$ 11,046
\$	42,459	\$ 55,196	\$ 12,737
\$	54,011	\$ 70,215	\$ 16,204
\$	631,683	\$ 821,191	\$ 189,508
\$	4,532	\$ 5,892	\$ 1,360
\$	636,215	\$ 827,083	\$ 190,868
\$	5.92	\$ 7.69	\$ 1.78

History of NABH Assessment Increases

2027	30.00%
2026	10.00%
2025	10.00%
2024	7.50%
2023	5.50%
2022	5.50%
2021	5.50%
2020	5.50%
2019	5.50%
2018	5.50%
2017	3.60%
2016	4.00%
2015	0.00%
2014	0.00%
2013	0.00%

Nashoba Associated Boards of
Health FY27 BudgetFAQ

1.) What are the reasons for the large increase in the Nashoba assessment?

- a. Structural issue with funding model
 - i. Nursing program has been funded partially by excess revenues from the Environmental Division fees and Nashoba Nursing Service & Hospice (NNSH) excess revenue; NNSH closed 2023 and the Environmental Division fees, primarily related to land use activities, have fallen.
- b. End of grant funding (FY26 Covid – era grant to help with contact tracing funded a nurse)
- c. Right sizing the staff needed to operate the smaller Agency (since loss of NNSH) and the retirement of trained staff; we tried to change two full-time positions to part-time positions, given the reduction in the Agency size but replacing the positions required a full-time position (combine the duties) to attract talent and complete the work. Increase in the salary for the Director's position to make it competitive, in anticipation of his retirement by FY27.
- d. The budget calls for maintaining nursing staff to achieve current work for the Agency and fulfill new responsibilities under the Foundational Public Health Service.
- e. General increase in employee costs (salaries, benefits - particularly insurance).
- f. Provide an IT solution for the Agency (contract services as a full-time person is not required; the work is being done by a retiring staff member).

2.) Is the increase in assessments a result of Littleton leaving the Agency as a member community?

- a. The loss of a member community reduces the workload and revenues for the Agency but not in a direct 1 to 1 ratio. Because each Health Agent works for a group of towns, the loss of one town does not result in the reduction of an employee (the employee has other towns they service); we are working to adjust the Agency workload to ensure we can cover the services required by the Agency. Though it is hard to know for sure at this point, there might be a slight increase in staffing costs per member community because of the need to maintain the staff, with the revenue of one less community.

3.) Is the increase assessment due to our ongoing pension issue?

In 2014 the Agency learned we had pension liability that had not been known to us; no one currently at the Agency was aware of the employer contribution and the State

Retirement system had not billed us (or the other organizations involved).

There are two components of this employer's obligation: annual obligation for current retired staff and the accumulation of past obligations. Since that time, we have worked on numerous efforts to resolve the matter; the most recent is our efforts to advocate with the State Treasurer's office, and with Representative Margaret Scarsdale and Senator James Eldridge to have bills filed to resolve the matter, all parties know how important it is to get the legislation passed.

The current budget **does** include an estimate for the employer's contributions (5.7% of employee salaries based on what another non-commonwealth entity pays); this has been a part of the budget for many years as we set aside money to address the past obligations. This method of paying the employer portion of employees' pension is similar to how your communities pay their pension cost for their employees. We hope, with the passage of one of these bills, we will be able to address the past contributions in a sustainable manner.

4. The increase in the proposed assessments would provide a level service budget ensuring Nashoba can continue fulfilling its duties to maintain public health services for member communities by:

- 1.) Maintaining the second public health nurse position beyond FY2026 (salary and benefits)
- 2.) Maintaining the organizational support needed to operate the Agency (finance, payroll and HR) the monies needed for the full-time position with benefits, and contract IT services.
- 3.) Increasing the Director's salary (making it competitive) in anticipation of a retirement before the new fiscal year; this would allow for a full-time Director who can develop policy, support/train staff, provide staff backup, and institute FPHS.
- 4.) Supporting Nashoba's goal for a balanced budget while maintaining level services staffing framework.

5. What does Nashoba anticipate for future assessment increases; an attempt to quantify this answer had us consider the following.

First, we prepared and presented a level-service budget; this budget represents the minimum staffing levels needed to provide services to the Agency; this includes the final staff adjustments from the closure of NNSH.

Second, the major revenue sources for the Agency were reviewed: fees for services we provide to individuals in your communities and the assessments member communities pay. Part of the structural funding issue we continue to experience is the activities we perform which generate a fee can change dramatically; this makes it difficult to forecast an amount for the budget.

Anticipating future assessments (FY28 and beyond) is a challenge because of the unknown costs of benefits, our health insurance premium jumped nearly 20% for FY26 and in our initial conversation with our carrier, they indicate increases may be 20-23%; we hope to minimize increases to the assessments but given salary and benefits costs we may need to request an assessment increase in the 7-9% in FY28

I have provided a chart showing the community assessments approved for FY26 (included a 10% increase), and the community assessments proposed for FY27 (proposing a 30% increase); to maintain the staff and resources needed to complete the public health work for the district, **we are requesting a 30% increase in the assessments for FY27**. At the bottom of the chart, I have provided the breakdown on the revenue sources (per capita) and the total per capita cost for both years. I have also provided the per capita public health expense for adjacent communities for comparison purposes. I also included the past twelve years of assessment increases; increases were kept low (or no increase) for a few years because the Board counted on reserves, we thought we had but are now allocated for the pension issue we learned of in 2014.

The stressors on our budget are similar those experienced by your towns: increase in staff costs (salary and benefits - particularly health insurance) and availability.

I am still working as a Health Agent in three communities, so I am acutely aware of the budget challenges faced by our member communities. I understand the proposed requested increase is significant based on the percentage increase, but the district provides a cost-effective way to deliver robust public health services for your communities.

I look forward to comments and questions on this proposal; please let me know if there is anything else I can provide to help you with this request.

Enc(s).

FY27 budget projections, Past assessment increases, Draft FY27 budget, service memo, Power Point slide – level service



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Town Manager
Mark W. Haddad

March 3, 2026

The Honorable Aaron Michlewitz, Chair
House Committee on Ways and Means
Massachusetts State House, Room 243
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Michael Rodrigues, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Massachusetts State House, Room 212
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Urgent Need for Chapter 70 Reform and Increased State Assistance for Groton-Dunstable Regional School District

Dear Chair Michlewitz and Chair Rodrigues:

On behalf of the Groton Select Board and the Groton Town Manager, we write to urge the Legislature to provide immediate interim relief to the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District by increasing the per pupil minimum aid increase to \$500 per student and by increasing Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA) for the Towns of Groton and Dunstable to the 6.78% benchmark recommended by the Massachusetts Municipal Association. Additionally, we respectfully request that the Legislature establish a commission to study the impacts of the hold harmless designation and recommend equitable and meaningful reforms. The minimum aid (hold harmless) designation, originally intended to provide stability, has instead resulted in a prolonged pattern of flat funding that has failed to keep pace with the real and rising costs of providing a high-quality education to our students.

As a result of the District receiving only minimum aid increases, the Towns of Groton and Dunstable are repeatedly placed in the untenable position of pursuing Proposition 2½ overrides or reducing essential municipal services simply to meet their annual school assessments for a level service budget. When overrides fail, or when further municipal reductions are no longer feasible, the District is left with no alternative but to make significant cuts to school programs and staffing. This cycle is unsustainable and carries serious consequences for both the educational experience of our students and the long-term fiscal health of our communities.

The cumulative impact of this funding model is reflected in the District's long-term financial data. In FY09, the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District received \$11,080,035 in Chapter 70 funding. Eighteen years later, in FY26, that amount has increased to just \$11,663,603 which is an increase of only \$583,568, or an average annual increase of roughly \$32,000 per year. Over that same period, the District's operating budget grew by \$19,452,022. Because state aid has remained essentially flat while the cost of maintaining a level services budget has risen substantially, the burden of funding this growth has fallen overwhelmingly on local taxpayers. This structural imbalance is unsustainable and has already forced the District to make significant reductions simply so the towns can meet their required assessments.

The continued lack of adequate state aid for the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District has consequences that extend beyond the classroom and are now placing significant strain on municipal operations. As the District has relied more heavily on local funding to sustain core educational services,

Groton has experienced corresponding pressure on its municipal budget, resulting in difficult reductions including the loss of police staffing, reductions in Department of Public Works personnel, and cuts to library hours and other essential community services. These impacts demonstrate that insufficient state support not only affects educational outcomes but also undermines municipal fiscal stability and public safety capacity. It is neither sustainable nor reasonable to expect that structural budget gaps will continue to be absorbed entirely through local property taxes.

With an anticipated 4.5% increase in the Groton-Dunstable operating budget for FY27, the District faces a projected \$1.2 million deficit. Without additional revenue, both the School District and the Town's municipal departments will be forced to make further reductions, jeopardizing educational programming, municipal service delivery, and the overall quality of life in our community.

Accordingly, we respectfully urge the Legislature to:

- Increase minimum Chapter 70 aid to \$500 per student
- Increase Unrestricted General Government Aid to the 6.78% benchmark recommended by the Massachusetts Municipal Association
- Establish a commission to study the impacts of the hold harmless designation and develop equitable reform recommendations

The students of Groton and Dunstable deserve access to a high-quality education without the uncertainty of recurring budget shortfalls, and our municipalities deserve adequate resources to maintain essential public safety and community services. We respectfully request your leadership in addressing these critical issues in the FY27 budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Groton Select Board

Matthew F. Pisani, Chair,

Rebecca H. Pine, Vice Chair

Alison Manugian, Clerk

John F. Reilly, Member

Peter S. Cunningham, Member

Mark W. Haddad
Town Manager

SB/mwh

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
VIA ZOOM
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2026
UN-APPROVED**

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

Park Commissioners Virtually Present: Jeff Ohringer; Mark Presti; Mary Jennings; Anna Eliot;

Also Virtually 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; Megan Foster, Principal Assessor; Bud Robertson, Finance Committee Chair; Brian Callahan, DPW Director; Jack Petropoulos and Robert Hall, Park Commission Candidates; Grace Bannasch, Town Clerk; Melisa Doig, Human Resources Director.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Cunningham and Ms. Pine attended an event focused on the school funding crisis. Mr. Cunningham suggested that the Board formally send a letter to the Massachusetts Legislature, advocating for an increase in state funding for public education in the upcoming fiscal year and a revision of the Chapter 70 funding formula. Mr. Haddad said that he has posted a link on the Town's website to a draft letter that anyone can send to the Legislature. Ms. Manugian supports drafting a letter and emphasized the importance of the Board continuing to discuss their current efforts until the state takes action. Mr. Haddad will draft a letter on behalf of the Select Board and will include it in their packet for review at the March 2nd meeting.

DPW Director Mr. Callahan provided a report to the Board on the Blizzard conditions and said they will continue working hard to clear the roads. Mr. Haddad said the DPW was doing a great job and thanked Mr. Callahan.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. FY 2026 Second Quarter Financials Update.

Mr. Bud Robertson, the Finance Committee Chair, and Ms. Patricia DuFresne, the Assistant Finance Director/Town Accountant, attended the discussion virtually. Mr. Haddad took a few minutes to review the FY 2026 Second Quarter Financial Update with the Board. He reported that the Town is performing well on revenues, noting that both the local room occupancy tax and meals tax continue to exceed expectations. He explained that PILOT payments have increased this year compared with last year. The Groton School raised its payment by \$35,000, which is appreciated. Additionally, Mr. Haddad was very pleased with the revenue from the Groton Hill Music Center. The Country Club is performing well, with January revenues far exceeding last year's. Mr. Haddad noted that one area of concern is investment income, but he believes they will meet the year's

anticipated budget. Mr. Haddad said overall, revenues are on track, and the motor vehicle excise tax will be mailed on February 24th. Expense-wise, Mr. Haddad explained that they are slightly ahead in a few categories. In the general government, there were a couple of vacation payouts for employees who had left. Public safety is up due to the addition of the Deputy Fire Chief, and this was the first year that the new Quinn payments for the Police Department were included. Mr. Haddad believes they are tracking well year over year, and the Department Heads continue to manage their budgets. Ms. Patricia DuFresne explained that Snow and ice will be a cost driver this year. Ms. Pine asked whether the state might provide funding for the Snow and Ice budget. Mr. Haddad does not believe they would receive any relief from the state and shared ideas to help offset the deficit.

2. Update on the 2026 Select Board Annual Goals.

Mr. Haddad provided an update on the Select Board’s 2026 Goals and Objectives (see the attached Memo, “Goals of the Groton Select Board”).

3. FY 2027 Budget Update.

Mr. Haddad provided a few updates on the Budget to the Board: he explained that the Select Board will meet in joint session with the Finance Committee on Saturday, February 28th, at 8:30 a.m. to review the Proposed FY 2027 Operating Budget with the various Departments. The Select Board requested that Mr. Haddad schedule a meeting with the Executive Director of the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health (NABH), Mr. James Garreffo. Mr. Garreffo plans to attend the Select Board meeting on March 2, 2026, to discuss the proposed increase in the NABH Assessment for FY 2027. Lastly, Mr. Haddad stated that the Town has received its health insurance rates from MIIA for FY 2027 and said it was excellent news. The Town will receive only a 6.24% increase in FY 2027. The average increase was 8.39%. Mr. Haddad has 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. Mr. Haddad said that based on this information, the proposed budget is now approximately \$85,000 under the anticipated FY 2027 Levy Limit. Mr. Haddad recommended setting the funds aside and increasing the overlay for one year, or using them to offset the snow and ice deficit. He stated that he does not want to commit the \$85,000 to recurring operating expenses.

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

Saturday, February 28, 2026-	Joint Session with Finance Committee
Monday, March 2, 2026 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Tuesday, March 3, 2026-	Squannacook River Dam Public Hearing
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. Review of the First Draft of the 2026 Spring Town Meeting Warrant.

Mr. Haddad presented the Board with the first draft of the 2026 Spring Town Meeting Warrant. He noted that the warrant closed on Friday, February 20th, and includes twenty-two (22) articles. He also noted that this is the first time in many years that the Spring Town Meeting Warrant does not include any Citizens' Petitions. A public hearing on the warrant is scheduled for Monday, March 9th, at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Haddad briefly reviewed the articles with the Board:

Articles 1-4 will be presented as one Consent Motion.

Article 1: Hear Reports

Article 2: Elected Officials Compensation

Article 3: Wage and Classification Schedule

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

Mr. Haddad will propose presenting the FY 2027 Budget as a Single Consent Motion.

Article 5: Fiscal Year 2027 Annual Operating Budget

Article 6: Fiscal Year 2027 Capital Budget -

Mr. Haddad explained that irrigation for the Country Club is a major Capital Budget expenditure of \$1.4m. He said there are currently only sprinkler heads around the greens, with no irrigation on the fairways. This project will make a significant difference for the Country Club and will be fully funded by the Country Club's revenues. Mr. Cunningham questioned the water source, and Mr. Haddad explained that it would come from the well located on site. Ms. Pine was surprised and struggled when she saw this costly project. Mr. Haddad explained that it had been in the Capital Plan for four years and vetted by the Capital Planning Advisory Committee. Ms. Manugian expressed her desire to establish the Country Club as an Enterprise Fund. Mr. Haddad welcomed this discussion and will add it to a future Select Board agenda.

Article 7: Community Preservation Funding Accounts –

Mr. Haddad will obtain and add the allocation numbers for the sub-accounts from the Community Preservation Committee.

CPA Funding Recommendations will be presented as One Consent Motion

Article 8: Community Preservation Funding Recommendations-

Mr. Haddad provided a brief overview of the various projects and noted that the CPC Proposal C: FY 2027 Conservation Fund has been withdrawn. He also noted that the CPC canceled their meeting scheduled for that evening due to the snowstorm, but will meet on March 9th to make their recommendations.

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

When Mr. Haddad met with Senator Cronin, he expressed his hope that the legislature would exempt uncontrollable costs, such as health insurance and pension expenses, from the tax levy. Mr. Haddad believes that holding a Town Meeting vote to bring this issue before the legislature will be effective, so he is bringing this article forward. He is also reaching out to other communities in the Commonwealth to encourage them to do the same. Mr. Haddad hopes the Board will support his proposal. Ms. Manugian recommended specifically including the regional school districts' costs in the exemption.

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

Article 11: Squannacook River Dam Repair-

Mr. Haddad explained that his original proposal for the repair, costing \$812,500, would require either a Capital or a Debt Exclusion, which would need a 2/3rds vote at Town Meeting and a ballot question requiring a simple majority. Instead, Ms. Pine inquired whether the funds could be borrowed and included in the capital plan, with the debt repaid from the Capital Budget. This approach would eliminate the need for a Capital or Debt Exclusion vote. Mr. Haddad clarified that this funding is not currently included in the Capital Budget. If it were added, other items would need to be cut to accommodate it. He said this proposal could be discussed during the public hearing on March 9th.

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

Articles 13-22 are the Annual Consent Agenda and will be presented as One Motion.

Article 13: Funding for Destination Groton Committee

Article 14: Transfer Within the Water Sewer Enterprise

Article 15: Transfer Within the Sewer Enterprise Fund

Article 16: Transfer Within the Four Corner Sewer Enterprise Fund

Article 17: Prior Year Bills- This is a placeholder

Article 18: Appropriate Funding to Offset Snow and Ice Deficit

Article 19: Debt Service for the Middle School Track

Article 20: Funding on Main Street Traffic Study

Article 21: Appropriate to Fund Town Forest Expenses

Article 22: Establishing Limits for Various Revolving Funds

2. Consider Appointing Deanna DeVito Kass as the Select Board's Representative to the Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee.

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to appoint Deanna DeVito Kass as the Select Board's representative to the Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee, with a term expiring June 30, 2026. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine — aye; Reilly — aye; Manugian — aye; Cunningham — aye; Pisani — aye.

3. Consider Approving a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverage License for the Groton Historical Society for the Historical Society to host the Groton Business Association Monthly Meeting, to be held on Friday, March 18, 2026, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Ms. Manugian moved to approve the 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 on Friday, March 13, 2026, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine — aye; Reilly — aye; Manugian — aye; Cunningham — aye; Pisani — aye.

4 Consider Approving a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverage 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.

Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the 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. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine — aye; Reilly — aye; Manugian — aye; Cunningham — aye; Pisani — aye.

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.

Park Commissioners Ms. Anna Eliot, Mr. Mark Presti, Mr. Jeff O’Hringer, and Ms. Mary Jennings attended virtually. Ms. Mary Jennings called the Park Commission to order.

Candidates Mr. Robert Hall and Mr. Jack Petropolous were virtually in attendance to interview for the current Commissioner vacancy until the 2026 Annual Town Election. Ms. Jennings started by asking Mr. Hall to introduce himself, but he had difficulty with the Zoom audio and was unable to speak. Ms. Eliot asked to postpone this decision until March 9th so both candidates could participate. Mr. Pisani and Ms. Jennings agreed. Mr. Haddad proposed March 2nd as a meeting date, and the Park Commissioners agreed to meet on that day. Ms. Manugian suggested that the applicants provide a one-page statement detailing their background and interest in joining the Park Commission. Ms. Jennings supported this idea.

The Select Board and Park Commissioners agreed to continue this consideration at the March 2nd Select Board Meeting at 6:15 p.m.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Historic Districts Commission is considering expanding the Historic District. This informational session will be held at the Senior Center on February 24th, at 7:00 p.m.

On-Going Issues

- A. PFAS Issue – None
- B. UMass Satellite Emergency Facility – None
- C. Fire Department Staffing – None
- D. West Groton Dam- The public hearing on the Dam will be held on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at the Groton Center.
- E. Main Street Study – None

SELECT BOARD LIASON REPORTS

None

Approval of the Regularly Scheduled Meeting of February 9, 2026

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of February 9, 2026. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine — aye; Reilly — aye; Manugian — aye; Cunningham — aye; Pisani — aye.

Approval of the Special Joint Session Meeting of February 10, 2026

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the special joint session meeting minutes of February 10, 2026. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine — aye; Reilly — aye; Manugian — abstained; Cunningham — aye; Pisani — aye.

The Select Board adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

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