





## 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

**To:** *Select Board*

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

**Subject:** *Weekly Agenda Update/Report*

**Date:** *March 30, 2026*

### TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

In addition to the Town Manager's Report, Items for Select Board Consideration and Action and a review of the Ongoing Issues List, there is one item scheduled on Monday's Agenda. The Sustainability Commission will be in to discuss the acceptance of the Specialized Stretch Energy Code at the 2026 Spring Town Meeting. They have been conducting their public outreach and gathering information that they would like to share with the Board in advance of Town Meeting.

1. As you are aware, I met with the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) last week to request the acceptance of an out-of-cycle application to pay for the repair of the Squannacook River Dam. While they did not make a final decision, my take is they will not support taking on the full Debt Service for the Dam Repair. That said, I have prepared a funding proposal that I will be presenting to the CPC at their meeting scheduled for Monday, March 30<sup>th</sup>. It is enclosed to this Report for your review and discussion. I would like to take a few minutes at Monday's meeting to review this proposal with the Board. Please note that the Historical Commission has voted that the Squannacook River Dam is historically significant for the purposes of potential CPA funding.
2. I do not have a specific update on the FY 2027 Budget. Should an update be required, I will make it at Monday's meeting
3. Please see an update to the meeting schedule that will get you through the Spring Town 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)
Monday, April 27, 2026 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Saturday, May 2, 2026 -	2026 Spring Town Meeting

### ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND ACTION

1. Enclosed with this Report is the latest draft of the 2026 Spring Town Meeting Warrant. It has been updated to reflect the positions taken by the Finance Committee on the various Articles. I would respectfully request that the Board consider taking positions at Monday's meeting.

MWH/rjb  
enclosure



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**Town Manager**  
Mark W. Haddad

**To:** *Community Preservation Committee*

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

**Subject:** *Follow-Up on Funding Options – Squannacook River Dam*

**Date:** *March 26, 2026*

I want to thank you again for the productive discussion at last Monday's meeting regarding the proposed repair of the Squannacook River Dam. As a follow-up, I am providing proposed funding scenarios for your consideration that are consistent with our discussion. To properly evaluate these options, it is important to first understand the full financial impact of the project's debt service.

Please note that the total estimated cost of the dam repair project is \$812,500, inclusive of construction, engineering, and contingency. The debt service on the full amount is as follows:

10-Year Borrowing: Annual debt service is approximately \$109,000 (first year interest payment in FY 2028 of \$28,438)

15-Year Borrowing: Annual debt service is approximately \$79,000

Based on our discussion at this past Monday's meeting, I respectfully propose that the Community Preservation Committee approves \$133,000 toward the project in Fiscal Year 2027, to be funded from the Historic Preservation Reserve (the Historical Commission deemed it a historic structure). The Town would then borrow the remaining \$679,500.

Under this approach, the Debt Service on the \$679,500 would be as follows:

First-year (FY 2028) interest-only payment is \$24,000

10-Year Borrowing: Annual debt service is approximately \$95,000

15-Year Borrowing: Approximately \$67,000 annually

I would further propose that the Community Preservation Committee consider an ongoing annual contribution. To further support this project and minimize the impact on the Town's operating budget, I propose that the Committee commit \$45,000 annually from the Historic Preservation Reserve toward the debt service. If financed over 15 years, the remaining annual debt service (approximately \$22,000) would be covered through the Town's Capital Budget (assuming a \$67,000 annual payment). If financed over 10 years, the Town would similarly contribute approximately \$50,000 annually from the Capital Budget.

This funding strategy enables the Town to move forward with a critical infrastructure repair, avoid placing additional pressure on the operating budget, eliminates the need for a Proposition 2½ debt exclusion and leverages CPA Historic Preservation funds in alignment with the project's eligibility.

I believe this represents a balanced and fiscally responsible approach to addressing the repair of the Squannacook River Dam while preserving the Town's financial stability.

I look forward to discussing these options in greater detail at our upcoming meeting on Monday, March 30, 2026.

Thank you again for your continued partnership and thoughtful consideration of this important project.

MWH/rjb

cc: Select Board  
Finance Committee  
Katie Kazanjian – Treasurer/Tax Collector  
Patricia DuFresne – Assistant Finance Director/Town Accountant  
Megan Foster – Principal Assessor  
Melisa Doig – Human Resources Director  
Kara Cruikshank – Executive Assistant

## 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

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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.”<sup>1</sup> “Every action taken at the meeting must be pursuant to some article in the warrant and must be within the scope of such article.”<sup>2</sup>

## 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.

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

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

## **Who can attend?**

Town Meeting is open to the public. Only Groton voters are entitled to 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. 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 hold 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.

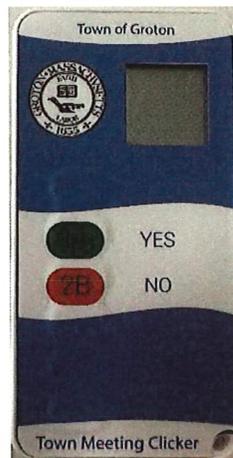
## Proxy Voting Prohibited

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 voter with a malfunctioning handset should exchange it for a new handset at the voter check-in table.

## 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

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**Article 1: Receive Reports**

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

**Select Board**

**Select Board: Recommended Unanimously**  
**Finance Committee: No Position**

**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.*

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**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: Recommended Unanimously**  
**Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**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.*

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**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: Recommended Unanimously**  
**Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**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.*

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**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: Recommended Unanimously  
Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**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.*

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**MOTIONS UNDER ARTICLE 5 WILL BE PRESENTED AS A CONSENT AGENDA. PLEASE SEE EXPLANATION PROVIDED ON PAGE 2 OF THIS WARRANT.**

**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 31<sup>st</sup>; 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.*

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**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 – 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: Recommended Unanimously**

**Item #2 – 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: Recommended Unanimously**

**Item #3 – 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: Recommended Unanimously**

**Item #4 – Brush Mower/Field Mower** **\$30,000** **Highway**

**Summary:** *In FY 2027, the Town will be rehabbing 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: Recommended Unanimously**

**Item #5– 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: Recommended Unanimously**

**Item #6 – 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: Recommended Unanimously****Item #7 – 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. In FY 2027 an additional \$30,000 is being added to this appropriation to pay for the repair of the Fire Alarm System at Legion Hall.*

**Select Board:****Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously****Item #8 – 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.*

**Select Board:****Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously****Item #9 – 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 less 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: Recommended Unanimously****Item #10 – 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: Recommended Unanimously**

**Item #11 – 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 3 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: Recommended Unanimously**

**Item #12 – 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 #13 – 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: Recommended Unanimously**

**Item #14 – 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 truck will replace the other utility truck 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: Recommended Unanimously**

**Item #15 – 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: Recommended Unanimously**

**Item #16 – 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: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Item #17 – 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: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Item #18 – Roof for the Pavilion                                      \$14,200                      Country Club**

**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: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Item #19 – Communication Improvements                      \$99,500                      Police/Fire/DPW**

**Summary:**        *This item seeks authorization to fund improvements to the Town's communications infrastructure to ensure reliable operation of public safety and municipal communication systems. The proposed work includes a structural analysis of the Gibbet Hill communications tower, replacement and upgrading of antennas, installation or enhancement of microwave communication links, and improvements to the HVAC system serving the equipment shelter to improve and maintain the integrity of the Town's communication systems. The total cost of the improvements is \$108,771. The Groton Electric Light Department is contributing \$9,313 towards these improvements, reducing the request to \$99,500.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Town Manager**

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**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:	\$ 34,000
Open Space and Recreation Reserve:	\$ 113,500
Historic Resource Reserve:	\$ 113,500
Community Housing Reserve:	\$ 113,500
Unallocated Reserve:	\$ 760,500
Total	\$1,135,000

or to take any other action relative thereto.

**Community Preservation Committee**

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**Community Preservation Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**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.

**MOTIONS UNDER ARTICLE 8 WILL BE PRESENTED AS A CONSENT AGENDA. PLEASE SEE EXPLANATION PROVIDED ON PAGE 2 OF THIS WARRANT.**

**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 gift, purchase, 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 \$9,850**

**Summary:** The Town Manager’s Office and the Prescott Community Center request \$9,850 to replace existing halogen fixtures in the gymnasium with high-bay LED fixtures equipped with motion sensors, and to improve lighting at the rear and side accessible entrances by installing new LED wall-mounted lights. Funding for this project will come from the Historic Preservation Reserve in the amount of \$9,850.

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**Community Preservation Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**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. The project includes reconfiguring parking areas and constructing paved walking paths that comply with ADA and MAAB standards to provide accessible routes to all fields where such access is currently lacking. Parking capacity will also be expanded to better accommodate field users. In addition, the project includes environmental restoration through the removal of an existing road that separates two wetland areas with vernal pools, improving ecological connectivity and wetland function. The Town has been awarded a \$1,000,000 federal grant to help offset the project cost. Town Meeting will be asked to authorize borrowing \$4,284,000 for the project, with the net borrowing expected to be reduced to \$3,284,000 upon receipt of the grant funds.*

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee: Recommended (3 In Favor, 2 Against – Green, McDonald)**

**Community Preservation Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**CPC Proposal C: Housing Coordinator – FY 2027 \$72,829**

**Summary:** *This item requests \$72,829 in Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding from the Community Housing category to support the wages and benefits of the Town of Groton's Housing Coordinator position (25 hours per week). The full amount will be funded from the Community Housing Reserve.*

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**Community Preservation Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**CPC Proposal D: Pollinator Pathway Garden \$2,500**

**Summary:** *The Sustainability Commission is requesting \$2,500 to enhance the landscaped area by installing additional irrigation connected to the existing system to improve water coverage and plant health. The project also includes upgrading the current dirt pathway by constructing a stone dust walking path to provide a more durable and accessible surface for pedestrian use. The full amount will be funded from the Open Space and Recreation Reserve.*

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**Community Preservation Committee:**

**CPC Proposal E: FY 2027 Housing Request \$100,000**

**Summary:** *The Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) is requesting \$100,000 to continue its work to create, preserve, and support Affordable Housing in Groton. Funding is necessary for the AHT to act when an opportunity arises. Community Preservation Funds can be used for the acquisition, creation, preservation, and support of community housing and for the rehabilitation or restoration of community housing that is acquired or created with CPA funds. To Fund this Project, \$92,985 will come from the Community Housing Reserve and \$7,015 will come from the Unallocated Reserve.*

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**Community Preservation Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**CPC Proposal F:**

**Cutler Softball Field Establishment**

**\$99,000**

**Summary:** *The Groton-Dunstable Youth Softball League is requesting \$99,000 to improve player safety and field quality. The project includes installing protective sideline fencing, constructing dugouts with benches and roofs, and purchasing an infield groomer to support consistent field maintenance and safe playing conditions. The full amount will be funded from the Open Space and Recreation Reserve.*

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Community Preservation Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**CPC Proposal G:**

**Boutwell Playground Renovation**

**\$233,923**

**Summary:** *The Groton-Dunstable Regional School District is requesting \$233,923 to install new playground equipment, replace existing playground surfacing, and improve the adjacent parking area. These upgrades will provide a safe, accessible play space with inclusive features and improved access for users of all abilities. To fund this project, \$42,329 will come from the Open Space and Recreation Reserve and \$191,594 will come from the Unallocated Reserve.*

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Community Preservation Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

***Community Preservation Committee***

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**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, and 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, and 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: *No Position***

**Summary:** *The proposed act would allow the Town of Groton to exclude certain 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 to cover these mandated expenses without requiring a separate voter override each time. The following mandatory expenses would be exempt from the levy limit: a) Health Insurance: Subscriber premiums, employer contributions, and retiree health obligations, including Medicare Part B reimbursements; b) Pension Obligations: Required annual contributions to retirement systems and payments toward unfunded actuarial liabilities. Any amount excluded under this act would apply only to the fiscal year in which it occurs and would not permanently increase the Town's base levy limit. The legislation also specifies that these adjustments would not require the voter approval typically required under Proposition 2½ for levy increases. The Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) would oversee implementation and issue regulations to ensure the Town properly certifies and reports the 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: *No Position***

**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.*

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**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.*

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**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: *No Position***

**Planning Board:**

**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.*

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**ARTICLES 13 THROUGH 22 WILL BE PART OF THE CONSENT AGENDA. PLEASE SEE EXPLANATION PROVIDED ON PAGE 2 OF THIS WARRANT.**  
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**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 2027, 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.*

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**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: Recommended Unanimously**

**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. This Article should be considered a placeholder at this time as the Water Commission does not anticipate needing a transfer at this time. Any adjustment/request will be provided to the Town Meeting.*

**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: *Recommended Unanimously***

**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. This Article should be considered a placeholder at this time as the Sewer Commission does not anticipate needing a transfer at this time. Any adjustment/request will be provided to the Town Meeting.*

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**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: *Recommended Unanimously***

**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. This Article should be considered a placeholder at this time as the Sewer Commission does not anticipate needing a transfer at this time. Any adjustment/request will be provided to the Town Meeting.*

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**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: *Recommended Unanimously***

**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.*

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**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: *Recommended Unanimously***

**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 \$300,000.*

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**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: *Recommended Unanimously***

**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. This payment is the final payment on the project.*

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**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: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Summary:**      *This Article seeks funding to supplement funding received from the State to hire MDM Transportation Consultants to conduct an in depth traffic study, including parking spaces, pedestrian safety and intersection improvements 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.*

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**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: Recommended Unanimously**

**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.*

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**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:

<b>Program or Purpose</b>	<b>FY 2027 Spending Limit</b>
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	\$20,000
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	\$20,000

or to take any other action relative thereto.

**Town Manager**

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**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.*

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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 17<sup>th</sup> 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

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
VIA ZOOM  
MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2026  
UN-APPROVED**

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

**Select Board Members Absent:** Peter Cunningham;

**Also Virtually Present:** Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; Bud Robertson, Finance Committee Chair; Brian Callahan, DPW Director; Megan Foster, Principal Assessor; Bruce Easom, Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Treasurer; Patricia DuFresne, Assistant Finance Director/Town Accountant; Grace Bannasch, Town Clerk; Tom Delaney, Squannacook River Dam Consultant; Micaela Moore, CPC Administrator.

Chair Pisani called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and reviewed the agenda.

**Discussion/Vote- Squannacook River Dam- Consider Submitting an Out-of-Cycle CPA Application to Repair the Squannacook River Dam- Consider Adding a Ballot Question to the 2026 Annual Town Election Seeking a Debt Exclusion of Proposition 2 ½ for the Repair of the Squannacook River Dam.**

Mr. Haddad requested this meeting after the Monday, March 9th, Select Board Meeting, when Finance Committee Member Mr. Gary Green asked about applying for funding to repair the dam through an Open Space and Recreation application by the Community Preservation Committee (CPC). Mr. Haddad thought it wouldn't qualify, but he discussed this proposal the following day with Dunstable Town Administrator Jason Silva. Mr. Silva explained that a dam in the Town of Dunstable was funded with CPA funds as an Open Space and Recreation project to repair the dam. Mr. Haddad stated that it preserved a pond used for recreation. Mr. Bruce Easom, CPC Treasurer, researched this and provided him with information on how other communities successfully obtained CPA funds for both dam repair and removal. Mr. Haddad explained that the CPC out-of-cycle applications have strict rules, but he believes this constitutes an emergency, as the contractor (R. Bates and Sons) will hold the bid price only until the Spring Town Meeting. He is wary of releasing these bids and going back out to bid next year, believing they would come in significantly higher. Some community members are questioning the \$250,000 contingency. Mr. Haddad explained that the \$250,000 is due to the engineer's suggestion that at least a \$150,000 contingency be included; they are concerned about the control of water during construction. Mr. Haddad is recommending an additional \$100,000 to ensure the project can be completed without having to return to a town meeting should an unforeseen matter come to rise. Mr. Haddad asked whether the Board wanted him to pursue an out-of-cycle application to the CPC to repair the Squannacook River Dam to make funds available for the Spring Town Meeting. He explained that there is \$133,000 in the historic bucket and \$9,000 in the unallocated bucket. He said that if this project is done, it would be financed with a bond, and he would request borrowing authorization, with the first payment due in FY 2028. The CPC historic bucket would help pay off the debt service. The maximum amount they could borrow is \$812,500. Mr. Haddad clarified that the CPC's internal policy allows bonding for only one project at a time. He also mentioned that if the Cow Pond Brook Project is approved during the Spring Town Meeting, the CPC might hesitate to undertake another debt-funded project. Mr. Bruce Easom said into the record that he was speaking based

on his personal views and was not speaking for the Community Preservation Committee. He mentioned they would need four votes from the CPC in support of this and believed submitting an application was worth trying. He said the worst they could say was no. Ms. Pine asked if the Open Space and Recreation bucket was a viable option. Mr. Easom said the balance was low because CPC took as much money as they could from there to pay for the Middle School Track. Ms. Manugian stated that there was currently \$0.72 cents left in the Open Space and Recreation bucket. Ms. Pine asked whether it would be possible to take money out of both the Historic and Open Space buckets over the payoff period. Mr. Easom replies that, yes, if there were money available, but the CPC was not in favor of issuing a second bond. He said if four members of the CPC could be convinced, it would be a one-time exception to the policy, and it might be possible. Mr. Haddad said they would need a Town Meeting appropriation to sign any contract for the project. Ms. Manugian does not support submitting an out-of-cycle application at this time for the reasons Mr. Easom highlighted. She believes they need to move forward with the proposed Article to repair the Dam at the Spring Town Meeting. She believes this would complicate the project going to CPC so late in the process. Mr. Reilly agreed with Ms. Manugian and doesn't want to halt the process. If this is a CPC project, it would need a 2/3rds majority vote, which would be challenging. Mr. Haddad explained there were three options for the Select Board:

Option 1: Request the Town Manager to submit an out-of-cycle application to the Community Preservation Committee.

Option 2: Move forward with Article 11 at the 2026 Spring Town Meeting.

Option 3: Remove the Dam article, wait until the fall, go through the CPA process, and return with a proposal at the 2027 Spring Town Meeting.

Ms. Pine sees no downside to inquiring about an out-of-cycle application because it is better for the taxpayers. Mr. Pisani agreed with Ms. Pine that there is no harm in asking the CPC. Mr. Haddad stated that if the Select Board decides to place a question on the ballot, he would need to submit it to the Town Clerk at least 35 days before May 19th. Mr. Easom said the CPC is meeting on March 23<sup>rd</sup> and explained the out-of-cycle application process. Ms. Manugian was uncomfortable with the position they are putting the CPC in and was concerned that this would endanger the Cow Pond Brook Project at the Spring Town Meeting. Mr. Robertson explained that the simplest option is to use CPC funds, which will result in debt regardless of the funding source. The most cost-effective choice is CPA funds; if they are not approved, they will need to use excluded debt. Mr. Haddad stressed the importance of submitting the out-of-cycle application and, if the request is denied, proceeding with debt exclusion, allowing enough time to place a debt exclusion question on the Annual Town Election Ballot. He requested that the Board authorize the submission of an out-of-cycle application and for consideration by the CPC at their March 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. He will attend the CPC meeting to seek their approval for the out-of-cycle application and the project. If they decline, he will return to the Select Board and request that a ballot question be placed on the May 19th election.

*Ms. Pine made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to submit the out-of-cycle CPC application for the repair of the dam. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine – aye; Manugian – nay; Reilly – aye; Pisani – aye.*

The Select Board adjourned at 10:43 a.m.

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

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2026  
UN-APPROVED**

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

**Select Board Members Absent:** Becky Pine, Vice Chair;

**Destination Groton Committee:** Greg Sheldon; Jeff Gordon; Brian Bolton; Joni Parker- Roach; Heather Pushta; Karen Barisano

**Also Present:** Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; Bud Robertson, Finance Committee Chair; Grace Bannasch, Town Clerk; Tom Delaney; Brian Callahan.

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Cunningham announced that the Groton Conservation Forum will take place on March 26th at the Groton Center, at 7:00 p.m.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

None

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

**1. Review Proposed Squannacook River Dam Town Meeting PowerPoint Presentation-**

Mr. Haddad stated that he submitted an out-of-cycle application to the Community Preservation Committee for the repair of the Squannacook River Dam. He will attend the CPC meeting that evening at 7:00 p.m. to request approval of the application. He also wanted to review the proposed Town Meeting PowerPoint Presentation for the Dam that evening. He indicated that, depending on the outcome of the CPC meeting, he would revise the three final slides if necessary. The proposed PowerPoint presentation would be made available on the Town of Groton website. Mr. Haddad reviewed the proposed PowerPoint Presentation with the Board.

**2. FY 2027 Budget Update.**

On Tuesday, March 24th, Mr. Haddad will meet with the Finance Committee to finalize the Budget (excluding the Groton Dunstable Regional School District Operating Assessment). He explained that the School Committee certified the budget, which they set at the Superintendent's level on March 11th. The School District's budget indicates an increased assessment of \$2.2 million. The School Committee is holding off on final decisions as long as possible to see how the state handles Chapter 70 funding. Mr. Haddad announced that he will testify before the Ways and Means Committee at the State House during the public hearing on Chapter 70 Funding on Tuesday, March 31st, along with Superintendent Geoff Bruno and School Committee Chair Lacey McCabe. He further explained that, as the Board was aware, the FY 2027 Capital Plan requests an appropriation of \$1.4 million to install an irrigation system at the Groton Country Club, along with improvements to holes 1, 2, and 7. Mr. Haddad emphasized that a hallmark of successfully delivering these projects on time and within budget is to go out to bid before Town Meeting and present Town Meeting with "Bids in Hand." This strategy has been proven effective throughout the

Town Manager's 17½ years managing the Town of Groton. Unfortunately, the Consultant/Contractor on this project failed to prepare the bid specifications in time to bring this bid to the 2026 Spring Town Meeting. Therefore, Mr. Haddad will remove this request from the Capital Budget for the Spring Town Meeting and bring it back at the Fall 2026 Town Meeting. The plan is to bid it over the summer, contingent on approval at the Fall Town Meeting, with work starting in November 2026. This timing is the same as if they had received approval at the Spring Town Meeting. Mr. Haddad stated that delaying until Fall is in the best interests of Groton's residents and taxpayers, and that since everyone is now alerted, there should be no issue seeking Town Meeting approval.

**3. Update on Select Board Schedule Through the 2026 Spring Town 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)
Monday, April 27, 2026-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Saturday, May 2, 2026 -	2026 Spring Town Meeting

**ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL**

**1. Consider Opting Into In-Person Early Voting for the May 19, 2026, Annual Town Election**

Ms. Grace Bannasch, the Town Clerk, was present for the discussion. The Board of Registrars voted unanimously on March 11, 2026, to opt into In-Person Early Voting for the May 19, 2026, Town Election. Mr. Haddad said if the Select Board agreed, they would need to vote to opt into In-Person Early Voting for the May 19, 2026, Town Election and vote to include the following hours during the early voting Period:

<i>Monday, May 11:</i>	<i>8 am-7 pm</i>
<i>Tuesday, May 12:</i>	<i>8 am-4 pm</i>
<i>Wednesday, May 13:</i>	<i>8 am-4 pm</i>
<i>Thursday, May 14:</i>	<i>8 am-4 pm</i>
<i>Friday, May 15:</i>	<i>8 am-1 pm</i>

*Mr. Cunningham made a motion to opt into In-Person Early Voting for the May 19, 2026, Town Election. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**2. Consider Approving a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverage License for the Friends of Prescott for Open Mic Night to be held on Friday, April 10, 2026, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.**

*Mr. Reilly made a motion to approve a one-day wine and malt beverages license for the Friends of Prescott for open mic night to be held on Friday, April 10, 2026, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

### **6:15 p.m. Destination Groton Committee Report**

The Destination Groton Committee Members, Mr. Greg Sheldon, Mr. Jeff Gordon, Mr. Brian Bolton, Ms. Joni Parker- Roach, Ms. Heather Puskta, and Ms. Karen Barisano were in attendance to present their Groton 2036 Ten-Year Vision Plan to the Board. Mr. Haddad provided the Plan for their review in advance of the meeting, and Chair Greg Sheldon shared an overview of the Report (see attached Report).

Mr. Pisani expressed appreciation for everyone's efforts toward improving the Town. Mr. Haddad said that they dedicated many hours to this report. Mr. Gordon explained and recommended small, incremental steps over a ten-year period for developing Main Street, and proposed forming an implementation Commission. Mr. Pisani explained that he would like to review the Report more thoroughly and has asked the Committee to return at a later date to discuss questions. The Board thanked the Destination Groton Committee for their time.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

None

### **On-Going Issues**

- A. PFAS Issue – Mr. Haddad said they are in the process of obtaining the permit for the extended work of the PFAS Project. The Conservation Commission conducted a site walk over the weekend and will meet with Apex, the Town Engineers, on March 24th to secure the permit for the work. The Conservation Administrator explained that there were no major issues. Also, on April 4<sup>th</sup> Apex is scheduled to go to the Town of Dunstable's Conservation Commission. A Change order for \$2.2 million was submitted to SRF, and they are awaiting a response from the state. Mr. Haddad sadly shared that Apex Engineer Hanna Shankel was leaving Apex and moving away. Mr. Haddad wishes her the best of luck and said she will be missed and was a tremendous asset to the town.
- B. UMass Satellite Emergency Facility – None
- C. Fire Department Staffing- An example of a Staffing Study with the Town of Norwood was shared with the Working Group.
- D. West Groton Dam- None
- E. Main Street Study – Mr. Haddad wanted to thank Representative Scarsdale, as the Town has received a \$25,000 earmark for this study, while still awaiting news on the LEAP grant Mr. Haddad applied for.

### **SELECT BOARD LIASON REPORTS**

None

#### **Approval of the Joint Meeting with the Finance Committee Meeting of February 28, 2026**

*Ms. Manugian made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of February 28, 2026. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

#### **Approval of the Squannacook River Dam Public Hearing of March 3, 2026**

*Ms. Manugian made a motion to approve the Squannacook River Dam Public Hearing of March 3, 2026. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried 3 in favor, 1 abstained- Cunningham.*

**Approval of the Regularly Scheduled Meeting of March 9, 2026**

*Ms. Manugian made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of March 9, 2026. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

The Select Board adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

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