



Town Manager
Mark W. Haddad

TOWN OF GROTON

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

Select Board

Peter S. Cunningham, *Chair*
Rebecca H. Pine, *Vice Chair*
Nicholas J. Degaitas, Jr., *Clerk*
John F. Reilly, *Member*
Matthew F. Pisani, *Member*

SELECT BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2026
AGENDA
SELECT BOARD MEETING ROOM
2nd FLOOR
GROTON TOWN HALL

5:15 p.m. Executive Session: "Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30A, Section 21(a), Purpose 7, to comply with or act under the authority of the Public Records Law and the holding in Suffolk Construction Co., Inc. v. Division of Capital Asset Management, 449 Mass. 444 (2007), to review a privileged attorney-client communication."

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

6:05 P.M. Public Comment Period – Zoom ID (Public Comment Only) – 823 4357 5731 Passcode - 417068

I. 6:06 P.M. Town Manager's Report

1. Fiscal Year 2026 Fourth Quarter Financial Update
2. Review and Consider Adopting a Policy Update for "Post-Closure Eligibility for Water Main Connection Assistance
3. Fiscal Year 2028 Budget Update
4. Update on Select Board Meeting Schedule through the End of the Year

II. 6:45 P.M. Items for Select Board Consideration and Action

1. Take Positions on the Various Articles Contained in the 2026 Fall Town Meeting Warrant
2. Approve and Issue the Warrant for the 2026 Fall Town Meeting

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

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

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

SELECT BOARD LIAISON REPORTS

III. Minutes: Regularly Scheduled Meeting of August 31, 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: *September 14, 2026*

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Please note that we will have an Executive Session prior to the regular meeting beginning at 5:15 p.m. Town Counsel will be joining the Meeting remotely. Other than the Town Manager's Report, Items for Select Board Consideration and Action and a review of the On-going Issues List, there is nothing specifically scheduled on Monday's Agenda.

1. Enclosed with this Report is the Fiscal Year 2026 Final Fourth Quarter Financial Report. I would like to spend a few minutes at Monday's meeting reviewing this with the Board. Assistant Finance Director/Town Accountant Patricia DuFresne will attend the meeting for this discussion as well.
2. As a follow-up to the community meeting held in August regarding the next phase of the PFAS Water Main Extension Project, I would like the Select Board to consider a Policy for the Town to address properties located within the contamination zone identified by the Licensed Site Professional (LSP) that may experience elevated PFAS levels after the LSP formally closes the site. Several residents raised a legitimate concern at the meeting. While their private wells are currently testing below the 4 parts per trillion standard, they are concerned that PFAS levels could increase in the future. Their primary question was what protection the Town would provide if that occurs after the project and environmental response have been completed. We have strongly encouraged residents within the affected area to connect to the new public water system now, particularly while the reduced connection fee is available. However, several residents expressed concern about the significant out-of-pocket expense associated with hiring a drainlayer and completing the connection when their wells are not currently testing above the applicable standard. That concern is completely understandable. At the same time, the Town needs to have a policy in place to address the possibility of elevated PFAS test results in the future. To that end, Water Superintendent Dan Stoneking has drafted a proposed policy (attached to this Report for your review and consideration) establishing how the Town would respond to these situations. Under the proposed policy, qualifying properties within the identified contamination zone that experience elevated PFAS levels in the future would be eligible for the Town to fund 85% of the cost of connecting the property to the public water system.

Continued on next page – Over >

Select Board
Weekly Agenda Update/Report
September 14, 2026
page two

2. **Continued:**

Should the Select Board adopt this proposed Policy, to ensure funding is available for this purpose, I am recommending that the Select Board reserve the remaining balance of the appropriation for the PFAS Water Main Extension Project to cover these potential future connection costs. Because the Town received a \$1 million federal subsidy for the project, we currently estimate that approximately \$500,000 to \$600,000 will remain available in the project budget upon completion. Setting aside these funds would provide an important level of protection for affected residents while recognizing that it may not be reasonable to expect homeowners whose wells currently meet the PFAS standard to incur substantial connection costs today. It would also allow the Town to establish a clear and consistent response should PFAS levels increase in the future. I have asked the Dunstable Select Board to consider adopting this Policy as well. I look forward to discussing this in more detail at Monday's Meeting.

3. I have no specific update on the Fiscal Year 2028 Budget. I will update the Board with any new information at the Meeting.

4. Please see the update to the Meeting Schedule that will take the Board through the end of the year:

Monday, September 21, 2026 -	No Meeting
Monday, September 28, 2028 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Saturday, October 3, 2028 -	2026 Fall Town Meeting
Monday, October 5, 2028 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, October 12, 2026 -	No Meeting (Indigenous People's Day Holiday)
Monday, October 19, 2026 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, October 26, 2026 -	Provide Budget Guidance to the Town Manager
Monday, November 2, 2026 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, November 9, 2026 -	No Meeting
Monday, November 16, 2026 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, November 23, 2026 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, November 30, 2026 -	No Meeting
Monday, December 7, 2026 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 14, 2026 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 21, 2026 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 28, 2026 -	No Meeting (Christmas Holiday)
Monday, January 4, 2027 -	No Meeting (New Years' Holiday)
Monday, January 11, 2027 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting

ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND ACTION

1. Enclosed with this Report is the Final Draft of the Warrant for the 2026 Fall Town Meeting for the Board's Review and Consideration. It has been updated to incorporate the Town Manager's Report to the Fall Town Meeting, along with the Finance Committee's Recommendations on the various Articles. I would ask the Select Board to consider taking positions on the various Articles.
2. I would respectfully request that the Board vote to approve and issue the Warrant for the 2026 Fall Town Meeting. It will be posted by the Constable this Friday and post cards with a QR Code that will take residents to the Warrant will also be mailed to all residences on Friday.

MWH/rjb
enclosures

Town of Groton
General Fund Statement of Revenues & Expenditures
June 30, 2026

	Current Budget FY26	July - Jun Actual FY26	Variance to FY26 Budget	4th Qtr % of Budget	Final FY25 Budget	July thru June Actual FY25	July - Jun Actual FY25	4th Qtr Variance to FY25 Budget	4th Qtr % of Budget	% of Budget Change
Revenue										
State Aid (Lottery/Exempts/Van)	1,182,722	1,148,750	(33,972)	97.13%	1,152,082	1,170,006	1,170,006	17,924	101.56%	95.64%
Motor Vehicle/Boat Excise	1,886,000	2,234,231	348,231	118.46%	1,820,583	2,188,732	2,188,732	368,149	120.22%	98.54%
Local Option Meals Tax	275,000	281,612	6,612	102.40%	250,000	273,544	273,544	23,544	109.42%	93.58%
Local Option Room Occupancy Tax	185,000	220,601	35,601	119.24%	150,000	223,079	223,079	73,079	148.72%	80.18%
Marijuana Revenue	15,000	40,305	25,305	268.70%	9,000	21,298	21,298	12,298	236.64%	113.55%
Penalties and Interest on Taxes	110,000	164,911	54,911	149.92%	110,000	125,734	125,734	15,734	114.30%	131.16%
Payments in Lieu of Taxes	355,443	410,455	55,012	115.48%	355,443	354,749	354,749	(694)	99.80%	115.71%
Groton Hill Music Ticket Fee	59,713	116,194	56,481	194.59%	59,713	88,880	88,880	48,880	222.20%	87.57%
Other Charges for Service (Dunst)	15,300	15,700	400	102.61%	15,000	15,750	15,750	750	105.00%	97.72%
Country Club Revenue	875,000	1,083,236	208,236	123.80%	750,000	1,007,314	1,007,314	257,314	134.31%	92.17%
Fees (incl Van rides)	400,000	457,894	57,894	114.47%	400,000	427,329	427,329	27,329	106.83%	107.15%
Rentals (Cell Towers)	58,000	78,175	20,175	134.78%	55,000	69,454	69,454	14,454	126.28%	106.73%
Other Departmental Revenue	582,372	588,838	6,466	101.11%	854,063	969,330	969,330	115,267	113.50%	89.08%
Licenses and Permits	450,000	843,988	393,988	187.55%	429,300	728,078	728,078	298,778	169.60%	110.58%
Fines and Forfeits	10,000	9,944	(56)	99.44%	10,000	10,238	10,238	238	102.38%	97.13%
Investment Income	258,499	290,674	32,175	112.45%	309,744	486,605	486,605	176,861	157.10%	71.58%
Misc Recurring (LRTA Van Reimb)	94,000	88,379	(5,621)	94.02%	94,000	95,801	95,801	1,801	101.92%	92.25%
Misc (WVC Reimb & Other)	0	5,927	5,927	#DIV/0!	0	346,995	346,995	346,995	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Enterprise Allocation for Indirects	214,002	213,736	(266)	99.88%	315,664	301,302	301,302	(14,362)	95.45%	104.64%
Real Estate and Personal Prop	44,683,019	44,517,869	(165,150)	99.63%	42,843,486	42,571,646	42,571,646	(271,840)	99.37%	100.26%
Total Revenue	51,709,070	52,811,419	1,102,349	102.13%	49,963,365	51,475,864	51,475,864	1,512,499	103.03%	99.13%
Expenditures (Operating Expenses)										
General Government	3,237,061	3,050,802	186,259	94.25%	3,097,521	2,889,435	2,889,435	208,086	93.28%	101.04%
Public Safety General Fund	4,848,176	4,750,958	97,218	97.99%	4,666,255	4,458,366	4,458,366	207,889	95.54%	102.56%
Department of Public Works	2,719,884	2,679,282	40,602	98.51%	2,566,229	2,477,598	2,477,598	88,631	96.55%	102.03%
Culture, Rec, & Citizen's Svcs	2,592,160	2,536,461	55,699	97.85%	2,452,323	2,343,232	2,343,232	109,091	95.55%	102.41%
Employee Benefits	4,523,845	4,500,572	23,273	99.49%	4,854,514	4,687,817	4,687,817	166,697	96.57%	103.02%
Total Operating Expenses	17,921,126	17,518,075	403,051	97.75%	17,636,842	16,856,448	16,856,448	780,394	95.58%	102.27%
Expenditures (Non -Operating Exp.)										
Special Articles Voted for Current Yr	869,885	558,764	311,121	64.23%	1,636,076	808,429	808,429	827,647	49.41%	129.99%
PY Articles/Enc(SeeUse of Enc Below)	1,197,005	814,443	382,562	68.04%	642,727	364,950	364,950	277,777	56.78%	119.83%
Education	29,545,154	29,545,154	0	100.00%	28,739,026	28,739,026	28,739,026	0	100.00%	100.00%
Debt Service	4,328,272	4,132,586	195,686	95.48%	4,684,920	4,684,911	4,684,911	9	100.00%	95.48%
Intergovernmental (State Offsets)	104,498	104,498	0	100.00%	101,926	101,926	101,926	0	100.00%	100.00%
Total Non - Operating Expenses	36,044,814	35,155,445	889,369	97.53%	35,804,675	34,699,242	34,699,242	1,105,433	96.91%	100.64%
Excess (Deficiency) Before OFS&U	(2,256,870)	137,899	2,394,769	-6.11%	(3,478,152)	(79,826)	(79,826)	3,398,326	2.30%	-265.65%
Other Financing Sources										
Transfers from Other Funds	1,380,183	1,381,782	(1,599)	100.12%	1,834,222	1,834,222	1,834,222	0	100.00%	100.12%
Use of Avail. Funds: Encumbrances	1,196,774	732,000	(464,774)	61.16%	642,586	364,950	364,950	(277,636)	56.79%	107.70%
Avail. Funds: F. C./Overlay Surplus	2,357,084	2,357,084	0	100.00%	1,669,777	1,669,777	1,669,777	0	100.00%	100.00%
Total OFS	4,934,041	4,470,866	(463,175)	90.61%	4,146,585	3,868,949	3,868,949	(277,636)	93.30%	97.12%
Other Financing Uses										
Overlay & Deficits to be Raised	184,419	184,419	0	100.00%	195,901	195,901	195,901	0	100.00%	100.00%
Transfers to Other Funds	2,484,785	2,484,785	0	100.00%	472,532	472,532	472,532	0	100.00%	100.00%
Total OFU	2,669,204	2,669,204	0	100.00%	668,433	668,433	668,433	0	100.00%	100.00%
Excess (Deficiency) Incl. OFS&U	7,967	1,939,561	1,928,396		0	3,120,690	3,120,690	3,120,690		

Town of Groton
General Fund Statement of Revenues & Expenditures
June 30, 2026

	Current Budget FY26	July - Jun Actual FY26	Variance to FY26 Budget	4th Qtr % of Budget	Final FY25 Budget	July thru June Actual FY25	July - Jun Actual FY25	4th Qtr Variance to FY25 Budget	4th Qtr % of Budget	% of Budget Change
Salaries/Wages Expenditures by Function of Government										
General Government:										
BOS/Town Manager	403,952	403,856	96	99.98%	391,700	377,164	377,164	14,536	96.29%	103.83%
Accountant	209,085	209,051	34	99.98%	193,266	193,264	193,264	2	100.00%	99.98%
Assessors	191,004	191,004	0	100.00%	174,067	174,067	174,067	0	100.00%	100.00%
Treasurer/Collector	305,556	298,977	6,579	97.85%	237,433	234,826	234,826	2,607	98.90%	98.94%
Personnel	102,549	102,549	0	100.00%	96,936	96,936	96,936	0	100.00%	100.00%
Information Technology	209,900	209,900	0	100.00%	198,357	197,606	197,606	751	99.62%	100.38%
Town Clerk/Elections	203,471	200,894	2,577	98.73%	214,520	200,952	200,952	13,568	93.68%	105.39%
Land Use Conservation Comm.	85,565	85,565	0	100.00%	79,070	79,070	79,070	0	100.00%	100.00%
Land Use Inspection Services	232,875	232,155	720	99.69%	220,535	220,432	220,432	103	99.95%	99.74%
Land Use Planning	125,030	124,350	29,310	99.46%	98,447	98,446	98,446	1	100.00%	99.46%
Total General Government	2,068,987	2,058,301	10,686	99.48%	1,904,331	1,872,763	1,872,763	31,568	98.34%	101.16%
Public Safety:										
Police Department/Civil Defense	2,651,823	2,616,329	35,494	98.66%	2,531,960	2,413,325	2,413,325	118,635	95.31%	103.51%
Fire Department/EMS	1,658,414	1,658,413	1	100.00%	1,590,204	1,513,866	1,513,866	76,338	95.20%	105.04%
Animal Cntrl/Dog Officer	24,593	24,593	0	100.00%	21,664	21,664	21,664	0	100.00%	100.00%
Total Public Safety	4,334,830	4,299,335	35,495	99.18%	4,143,828	3,948,855	3,948,855	194,973	95.29%	104.08%
Department of Public Works:										
Municipal Buildings	170,064	167,354	2,710	98.41%	162,845	158,908	158,908	3,937	97.58%	100.85%
Highway	883,543	870,528	13,015	98.53%	876,453	855,170	855,170	21,283	97.57%	100.98%
Snow & Ice	287,456	287,456	0	100.00%	184,740	184,740	184,740	0	100.00%	100.00%
Parks	0	0	0	0.00%	17,922	7,200	7,200	10,722	40.17%	0.00%
Solid Waste	164,820	156,750	8,070	95.10%	157,651	154,212	154,212	3,439	97.82%	97.22%
Total DPW	1,505,883	1,482,088	23,795	98.42%	1,399,611	1,360,230	1,360,230	39,381	97.19%	101.27%
Culture, Rec, & Citizen's Svcs:										
COA/COA Van	315,576	314,812	764	99.76%	295,581	280,122	280,122	15,459	94.77%	105.27%
Vets Svcs/Water Safety/Graves	11,679	8,145	3,534	69.74%	11,052	7,565	7,565	3,487	68.45%	101.88%
Library	846,541	846,536	5	100.00%	801,511	799,627	799,627	1,884	99.76%	100.24%
Country Club	535,385	533,958	1,427	99.73%	478,038	477,958	477,958	80	99.98%	99.75%
Cable Department	155,360	151,507	3,853	97.52%	132,270	132,216	132,216	54	99.96%	97.56%
Total Culture, Rec. & Citizen's Svcs	1,864,541	1,854,958	9,583	99.49%	1,718,452	1,697,488	1,697,488	20,964	98.78%	100.72%
Grand Total Salaries & Wages	9,774,241	9,694,682	79,559	99.19%	9,166,222	8,879,336	8,879,336	286,886	96.87%	102.39%
Benefits:										
County Retirement	2,640,116	2,640,116	0	100.00%	2,653,019	2,653,019	2,653,019	0	100.00%	100.00%
Health / Life Insurance *	1,686,208	1,671,411	14,797	99.12%	2,034,495	1,880,190	1,880,190	154,305	92.42%	107.25%
Other Benefits (Medicare/Unemplmt)	201,752	193,275	8,477	95.80%	167,000	154,609	154,609	12,391	92.58%	103.48%
Total Benefits	4,528,076	4,504,802	23,274	99.49%	4,854,514	4,687,818	4,687,818	166,696	96.57%	103.02%
Total Salaries/Wages/Benefits	14,302,317	14,199,484	102,833	99.28%	14,020,736	13,567,154	13,567,154	453,582	96.76%	102.60%



SELECT BOARD POLICY

Policy Category:	Public
Policy Number:	PUB – 2026 - 1
Latest Revision Date:	September 14, 2026

POLICY NAME: **Post-Closure Eligibility for Water Main Connection Assistance**

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this Policy is for the Select Board and Groton Water Department to establish a procedure, criteria and eligibility for financial and administrative assistance related to the Regional Water Main Extension Project undertaken to address PFAS contamination of private wells in reference to EEA RTN 2-0021961.

II. POLICY

For a period of five (5) years following the date the contamination site is formally closed out by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), any resident whose property is located in and within five hundred (500) feet of the edge of the defined PFAS plume (at the time of site closure) may qualify for the following assistance, provided all conditions below are met:

1. The resident must obtain third-party laboratory testing from a Massachusetts certified laboratory.
2. Testing results must be submitted to the Town of Groton Water Department accompanied by proper Chain of Custody forms.
3. Results must show a detection of PFAS exceeding the prevailing Federal or State drinking water standards at the time of the testing.

III. QUALIFIED ASSISTANCE

Residents meeting the above criteria will be eligible for:

- Eighty-five percent (85%) reimbursement of the reasonable and necessary costs of a licensed, approved, contractor to perform the work required to connect the property to the public water main;
- Waiver of all fees associated with permitting for the connection; and



SELECT BOARD POLICY

- Waiver of the Water Department's standard water main connection fee; and
- Waiver for the cost of residential and irrigation meter; and
- Waiver for inspection fees.

IV. LIMITATIONS ON ELIGIBLE COSTS AND RESTORATION

Eligible costs are strictly limited to the reasonable and necessary expenses of installing the service connection from the water main to the building foundation (or existing house connection), including excavation, piping, backfill, and restoration of surfaces disturbed solely for the purpose of making the connection. Restoration is limited to returning the disturbed area to its pre-existing condition.

The following are **not** eligible for reimbursement:

- Upgrades, aesthetic improvements, or betterments of any kind;
- Work that could have been avoided by selecting a more direct or standard connection route;
- Costs arising from decisions to pursue an unnecessarily complex or destructive path (for example, routing under a retaining wall, foundation, or other major structure when a simpler alternative exists);
- Replacement or reconstruction of structures, landscaping, hardscape, or features beyond the minimum required to restore the area directly disturbed by the approved connection method.
- Internal plumbing or other upgrades not directly related to the connection to the water system such as replacement fixtures or interior redesign.

V. PRE-APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS

Prior to any work commencing, the homeowner must submit to the Water Department the following:

- A detailed scope of work and proposed connection route;
- At least three written contractor estimates; and
- Supporting documentation (site plan or sketch showing the proposed path).
- Work must meet the minimum design standards for private water connections of the Groton Water Department.



SELECT BOARD POLICY

The Water Department will review the submission and approve only the least-cost, reasonable method of connection. Reimbursement will be capped at 85% of the pre-approved estimate (or the actual cost, whichever is lower). Work performed without prior written approval, or that deviates from the approved scope, is not eligible for reimbursement.

VI. POLICY INTENT

This policy is intended to provide continued protection and equitable access to public water for properties potentially impacted by the plume after formal site closure, while protecting public funds from unnecessary or inflated costs. Reimbursement will only occur after the work is completed and all permits have been received from the building department.

The Groton Select Board and Groton Water Department reserves the right to conduct a cross-connection survey of the property to ensure there are no illegal connections to the water system.

Subject: Post-Closure Eligibility for Water Main Connection Assistance

This memorandum documents the Town of Groton Water Department's policy regarding post site closure eligibility for financial and administrative assistance related to the ongoing water main extension project undertaken to address PFAS contamination of private wells in reference to EEA RTN 2-0021961.

Policy

For a period of five (5) years following the date the contamination site is formally closed out by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), any resident whose property is located within five hundred (500) feet of the edge of the defined PFAS plume (at the time of site closure) may qualify for the following assistance, provided all conditions below are met:

1. The resident must obtain third-party laboratory testing from a Massachusetts certified laboratory.
2. Testing results must be submitted to the Town of Groton Water Department accompanied by proper Chain of Custody forms.
3. Results must show a detection of PFAS exceeding the prevailing Federal or State drinking water standards at the time of the testing.

Qualified Assistance

Residents meeting the above criteria will be eligible for:

- Eighty-five percent (85%) reimbursement of the reasonable and necessary costs of a licensed, approved, contractor to perform the work required to connect the property to the public water main;
- Waiver of all fees associated with permitting for the connection; and
- Waiver of the Water Department's standard water main connection fee; and
- Waiver for the cost of residential and irrigation meter; and
- Waiver for inspection fees.

Limitations on Eligible Costs and Restoration

Eligible costs are strictly limited to the reasonable and necessary expenses of installing the service connection from the water main to the building foundation (or existing house connection), including excavation, piping, backfill, and restoration of surfaces disturbed solely for the purpose of making the connection. Restoration is limited to returning the disturbed area to its pre-existing condition.

The following are **not** eligible for reimbursement:

- Upgrades, aesthetic improvements, or betterments of any kind;
- Work that could have been avoided by selecting a more direct or standard connection route;

- Costs arising from decisions to pursue an unnecessarily complex or destructive path (for example, routing under a retaining wall, foundation, or other major structure when a simpler alternative exists);
- Replacement or reconstruction of structures, landscaping, hardscape, or features beyond the minimum required to restore the area directly disturbed by the approved connection method.
- Internal plumbing or other upgrades not directly related to the connection to the water system such as replacement fixtures or interior redesign.

Pre-Approval Requirement

Prior to any work commencing, the homeowner must submit to the Water Department:

- A detailed scope of work and proposed connection route;
- At least three written contractor estimates; and
- Supporting documentation (site plan or sketch showing the proposed path).
- Work must meet the minimum design standards for private water connections of the Groton Water Department, See sketch-001 attached.

The Water Department will review the submission and approve only the least-cost, reasonable method of connection. Reimbursement will be capped at 85% of the pre-approved estimate (or the actual cost, whichever is lower). Work performed without prior written approval, or that deviates from the approved scope, is not eligible for reimbursement.

This policy is intended to provide continued protection and equitable access to public water for properties potentially impacted by the plume after formal site closure, while protecting public funds from unnecessary or inflated costs.

Reimbursement will only occur after the work is completed and all permits have been received from the building department; the Water Department reserves the right to conduct a cross-connection survey of the property to ensure there are no illegal connections to the water system.

This memorandum is issued for the record to document the eligibility criteria and assistance provisions associated with the PFAS water main extension project.

Warrant, Summary, and Recommendations

TOWN OF GROTON



2026 FALL TOWN MEETING

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

Beginning Saturday, October 3, 2026 @ 9:00 AM

Attention Voters
Please bring this Document to Town Meeting

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 and mailed to each household 14 days in advance of Town Meeting. “The warrant must contain a sufficient description of what is proposed so as to constitute an adequate warning to all the inhabitants of the town.”¹ “Every action taken at the meeting must be pursuant to some article in the warrant and must be within the scope of such article.”²

How does Town Meeting proceed?

Voters attending Town Meeting must first check in with the clerks and receive an electronic voting handset which is required to vote. The meeting typically acts on the articles in the order 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.

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

² *Id.*

Who can attend?

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

How long is Town Meeting?

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

Explanation of a Consent Agenda

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

How Consent Agendas Work

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

Electronic Voting at Town Meeting

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



Voter Check-In

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

Test Vote

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

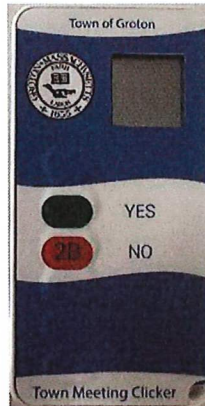
Proxy Voting Prohibited

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

Voting

When the Moderator announces it is time to vote:

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



Handset Display

The display on the handset:

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

Help Desk

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

Handset Return

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



Town Meeting Access for Voters with Disabilities

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**FALL TOWN MEETING WARRANT
OCTOBER 3, 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 third day of October, 2026 at Nine O'clock in the morning, to consider the following:

ARTICLE LISTINGS

Article 1*	Prior Year Bills	6
Article 2*	Amend the Fiscal Year 2027 Town Operating Budget	6
Article 3*	Transfer Money Into Capital Stabilization Fund	6
Article 4*	Transfer Money Into Stabilization Fund	7
Article 5*	Transfer Money Into the GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund	7
Article 6*	Transfer Within the Water Enterprise Fund	8
Article 7*	Transfer Within the Sewer Enterprise Fund	8
Article 8*	Transfer Within the Stormwater Enterprise Fund	8
Article 9*	Appropriation to Fund Town Forest Expenses	9
Article 10	CPA Project - Cow Pond Brook Fields Improvements	9
Article 11	Install Irrigation System/Course Improvements – Groton Country Club	10
Article 12	Establish Means-Tested Senior Citizen Property Tax Exemption	12
Article 13	Small Scale Clean Energy Infrastructure Facility Siting and Permitting	13
Article 14	Small Clean Energy Facilities Consolidated Permitting	14
Article 15	Small Scale Ground Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Facilities	23
Article 16	Citizens' Petition – Senior Property Tax Freeze Program	28
Article 17	Citizens' Petition – Study of Housing Opportunities and Municipal Finances	29
	Report of the Town Manager to the 2026 Fall Town Meeting	32

*Will be presented as one motion as a Consent Agenda

Article 1: *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. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 33 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 2: *Amend the Fiscal Year 2027 Town Operating Budget*

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budget as adopted under Article 5 of the May 2, 2026 Spring Town Meeting and vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds a sum or sums of money as may be necessary to defray the expenses of the Town for Fiscal Year 2027, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Finance Committee

Select Board

Town Manager

Select Board: *See Select Board's Recommendations Beginning on Page 33*

Finance Committee: *See Finance Committee's Recommendations Beginning on Page 33*

Summary: *The Fiscal Year 2027 Town Operating Budget was approved at the May 2, 2026 Town Meeting. Any changes to this Budget would have to be made prior to setting the tax rate. The purpose of this article is to make any necessary changes to balance the Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budget. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 33 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 3: *Transfer Money Into the Capital Stabilization 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 added to the sum already on deposit in the Capital Stabilization Fund, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Select Board

Select Board:

Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*

Summary: As of the printing of this Warrant, the Fund has a balance of \$144,028. The financial management goal is to achieve and maintain a balance in the Capital Stabilization Fund equal to 1.5% of the total annual budget. The target amount for the Capital Stabilization Fund will be provided at Town Meeting. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 33 for additional information related to this Article.

Article 4: Transfer Money into the Stabilization 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 added to the sum already on deposit in the Stabilization Fund, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Select Board

Select Board:

Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously

Summary: As of the printing of this Warrant, the balance in this fund is \$2,873,587. The financial management goal is to achieve and maintain a balance in the Fund equal to 5% of the total annual budget. The target amount for the Fund will be provided at Town Meeting. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 33 for additional information related to this Article.

Article 5: Transfer Money into the GDRSD Capital Stabilization 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 added to the sum already on deposit in the Town of Groton Capital Stabilization Fund for the Groton Dunstable Regional School District, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Manager

Select Board:

Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously

Summary: As of the printing of the Warrant, the balance in this fund is \$26,593. This fund covers the Town of Groton's share of the Groton Dunstable Regional School District Committee's long-range Capital Plan to address its capital needs. The target amount will be provided at Town Meeting. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 33 for additional information related to this Article.

Article 6: *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 2027 Water Enterprise Budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Board of Water Commissioners

Select Board:

Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*

Summary: *This Article will seek a transfer from the Water Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2027 Water Department's General Expense Budget to cover unanticipated expenses. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 33 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 7: *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 2027 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 2027 Four Corners Sewer Budget. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 33 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 8: *Transfer Within the Stormwater Enterprise Fund*

To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum or sums of money from the Stormwater Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2027 Stormwater Enterprise Budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Manager

Select Board:

Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*

Summary: *This article allows the Stormwater Department to transfer money from its surplus account to cover any deficit in the Fiscal Year 2027 Stormwater Budget. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 33 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 9: *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 to transfer funds from Receipts Reserved for the Town Forest to cover the costs of removing a stand of dead Red Pines that are creating a hazard, and for future forest maintenance projects. The transfer amount requested is \$30,000, with \$12,238 coming from a reimbursement already received from the Division of Conservation and Recreation for a 2026 Forest Stewardship Plan.*

Article 10: *Cow Pond Brook Fields Improvements*

To see if the Town will vote to adopt and approve the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee for improvements to the Cow Pond Brook Fields as described in CPA Application 2027-11, on file in the Town Clerk's Office, 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/or borrow pursuant to any applicable statute a sum or sums of money, to be expensed by the Town Manager, for said purposes, and all costs associated and related thereto, and further to authorize the transfer of the real property identified as Assessor's Parcel 249-51 along Hoyts Warf Road, containing approximately 10.4 acres, from the Parks Commission to the Conservation Commission, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Community Preservation Committee
Parks Commission***

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Summary: *This article requests Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding for a revised improvement project at the Cow Pond Brook Fields recreational complex. A similar proposal considered at the 2026 Spring Town Meeting was not approved by the voters. Following Town Meeting, the Parks Commission and Town Manager worked with user groups, Town departments, project consultants, and other stakeholders to substantially revise the project in response to public feedback. The revised proposal reduces the overall project cost by an estimated \$800,000 to \$1 million from the original estimated budget of approximately \$4.8 million, while retaining the project's primary objectives. The revised project includes rehabilitation and modernization of one of the Town's most heavily used recreational facilities; improvements to comply with Natural Heritage requirements by addressing the existing access road; construction of ADA-compliant pathways and amenities to improve accessibility; upgrades to drainage, parking, traffic circulation, and supporting infrastructure; and improvements designed to provide a safe, functional, and sustainable recreational complex for residents, schools, youth organizations, and community*

groups. Approval of this article will also preserve the Town's eligibility to receive a \$1 million federal grant that has been awarded for the project. If the project does not proceed the Town will lose access to these federal funds. The grant would significantly reduce the amount of local funding required to complete the project. The Parks Commission believes the revised proposal reflects the concerns raised during the Spring Town Meeting by reducing costs, refining the project scope, and maintaining the long-term goal of preserving and improving an important community recreational asset. If approved, this article would authorize the use of CPA funds to support the project and leverage substantial outside funding for improvements intended to serve Groton residents for many decades.

Article 11: *Install Irrigation System/Course Improvements – Groton Country Club*

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 install an irrigation system and make various improvements to the Groton Country Club Golf Course, and all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Town Manager
Head Professional/General Manager***

Select Board:

Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*

Summary: *This article requests funding to construct a new irrigation system and complete targeted course improvements at the Groton Country Club. The Club's existing irrigation system provides only limited coverage and requires manual operation, making it difficult to maintain consistent playing conditions, particularly during dry weather. The proposed irrigation system would be fully automated, allowing watering during non-playing hours, and would provide comprehensive coverage of all greens, tee boxes, fairways, and selected in-play rough areas. The project is intended to improve turf health, course conditions, water management, and the overall quality of the golf course. In addition to the irrigation system, the project includes targeted improvements to enhance playability and course infrastructure. These include redesigning portions of Holes 1 through 3 to improve playability and installing a drainage system on Hole 7 to address persistent drainage issues. Based on bids received prior to Town Meeting, the cost for the project is \$1.7 million. If approved, the project would be financed through borrowing. Annual debt service would be appropriated through the Town's Capital Budget and funded from Free Cash. The project is intended to protect the Town's investment in the municipal golf course, enhance the experience for residents and visitors, and support the Club's long-term operational and financial sustainability.*

Article 12: *Establish Means-Tested Senior Citizen Property Tax Exemption*

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to petition the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the following Special Act, 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:

**AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE TOWN OF GROTON TO ESTABLISH A MEANS-TESTED SENIOR
CITIZEN PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION**

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. (a) With respect to each qualifying parcel of real property classified as residential in the town of Groton, and as established more specifically by the select board annually pursuant to section 2, there shall be an exemption from the property tax equal to the total amount of tax that would otherwise be assessed without this exemption plus 50 per cent of the annual water and sewer expense less the sum of: (i) 10 per cent of income or other such percentage of income as determined pursuant to section 3; (ii) the circuit breaker income tax credit pursuant to subsection (k) of section 6 of chapter 62 of the General Laws the applicant received for the year prior to the year for which the application is being filed; and (iii) any other statutory exemptions or other forms of property tax relief including the senior tax work off program.

(b) In no event shall this exemption be greater than the cap established on an annual basis by the select board pursuant to section 5. The exemption shall be applied to the domicile of the taxpayer only. For the purposes of this act, "parcel" shall mean a unit of real property as defined by the board of assessors under the deed for the property and shall include a condominium unit. The exemption provided for in this section shall be in addition to any other exemptions allowed pursuant to the General Laws, unless otherwise removed from the calculation in subsection (a).

SECTION 2. The board of assessors of the town of Groton may deny an application for exemption if the board finds that the applicant has excessive assets that place the applicant outside of the intended recipients of the senior exemption established pursuant to this act. For the purposes of this act, what constitutes excessive assets shall be determined by regulations set by the select board. Real property shall qualify for the exemption pursuant to section 1 if all of the following criteria are met:

- (i) the qualifying real property is owned and occupied by a person whose annual household income does not exceed limitations established by the select board pursuant to section 5;
- (ii) the qualifying real property is owned by a single applicant who was 65 years of age or older at the close of the previous year or jointly by persons who are 60 years of age or older; provided, that not less than 1 joint owner was 65 years of age or older at the close of the previous year;
- (iii) the qualifying real property is owned and occupied by the applicant or joint applicants as their domicile;
- (iv) the applicant, or at least 1 of the joint applicants, has been domiciled and owned a home in the town of Groton for not less than 10 consecutive years before filing an application for the exemption;
- (v) the maximum assessed value of the domicile is not greater than the prior year's average assessed value of a town of Groton single family residence;
- (vi) the applicant files for circuit breaker income tax credit pursuant to subsection (k) of chapter 62 of the General Laws, if eligible; and
- (vii) the board of assessors approves the application for the exemption.

SECTION 3. The exemption pursuant to section 1 shall be in addition to any other exemption allowable pursuant to the General Laws, except that there shall be a dollar cap for all real estate exemptions available pursuant to this act as set annually by the select board of the town of Groton pursuant to section 5. If benefits to the applicants are limited because the cap established annually by the select board would otherwise be exceeded, the benefits shall be decreased pro rata.

SECTION 4. A person who seeks to qualify for the exemption pursuant to section 1 shall, before the deadline established by the board of assessors of the town of Groton, file an application, on a form adopted by the board of assessors, with the supporting documentation as described in the application. The application shall be filed each year for which the applicant seeks the exemption.

SECTION 5. The select board may, after consultation with the board of assessors and after holding a public hearing for which notice of not less than 7 days provided, promulgate rules and regulations to implement this act.

SECTION 6. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

or to take any other action relative thereto.

Select Board

Select Board: Finance Committee:

Summary: *This article requests Town Meeting approval to petition the Massachusetts General Court for special legislation authorizing the Town of Groton to establish a local, means-tested property tax exemption for qualifying senior homeowners. If enacted by the Legislature, the program would provide an annual property tax exemption to eligible seniors who meet income, age, residency, ownership, occupancy, and property value requirements. To qualify, applicants generally must meet the income eligibility requirements for the Massachusetts Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit; own and occupy the property as their primary residence; be at least 65 years of age (or, in the case of jointly owned property, at least one owner must be 65 and all owners at least 60 years of age); have owned and resided in a home in Groton for at least ten consecutive years; own a home with an assessed value within the annual limits established for the state Circuit Breaker Tax Credit; and, submit an annual application and supporting documentation to the Board of Assessors. The Board of Assessors would administer the program and may deny an application if it determines the applicant possesses excessive assets inconsistent with the program's intended purpose. The Select Board would annually establish the amount of the exemption. The exemption must be between 50% and 200% of the applicant's prior year's Massachusetts Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit. The cost of the exemption would be funded through a proportional shift within the residential property tax levy, resulting in a minimal increase in the residential tax burden shared among all other residential taxpayers. The exemption would supplement, rather than replace, any other property tax exemptions for which an applicant may qualify. The special act would become effective only upon approval by the Massachusetts Legislature and the Governor. The authorization would remain in effect for three years, after which Town Meeting would need to vote to reauthorize the program for additional three-year periods.*

Article 13: *Small Scale Clean Energy Infrastructure Facility Siting and Permitting*

To see if the Town will vote to amend the General Bylaws of the Town of Groton by inserting a new Section 185 Small Scale Clean Energy Infrastructure Facility Consolidated Siting and Permitting as follows:

185-1 Purpose

The purpose of this bylaw, also referred to as Small Clean Energy Infrastructure Facility (“SCEIF”) Siting and Permitting Bylaw, is to incorporate the standard conditions, criteria, requirements, and procedures for the efficient and appropriate siting and permitting of SCIEFs by the Town of Groton under 225 CMR 29.00.

185-2 Definitions.

For the purposes of this bylaw, the terms defined in 225 CMR 29.02 shall have the same meaning in this bylaw.

185-3 Applicability

This bylaw applies to the local siting and permitting of a SCEIF when an Applicant requests a Consolidated Local Permit pursuant to 225 CMR 29.00.

185-4 Compliance with Laws, Ordinances, and Regulations

The siting and permitting of a SCIEF shall be consistent with all applicable local, state, and federal requirements.

185-5 Designated Local Government Representatives

For the purpose of this bylaw, the Land Use Director shall serve as the Local Government Representative.

185-6 Public Health, Safety, and Environmental Standards

The public health, safety, and environmental standards, as codified by 225 CMR 29.06, are herein incorporated by reference into the Town of Groton Zoning Bylaws, Chapter 218.

185-7 Pre-filing Requirements

The pre-filing requirements, as codified by 225 CMR 29.08, are herein acknowledged.

185-8 Consolidated Local Permit Application Fees

A schedule of all fees for a Consolidated Local Permit Application shall be set by and reviewed from time to time by the Planning Board. If the EFSB Director accepts the Consolidated Local Permit Application for De Novo Adjudication, any permit fees paid under this section shall be refunded in full to the Applicant within 30 days of the Director’s acceptance of the Consolidated Local Permit Application, or as soon as practicable.

185-9 Consolidated Local Permit Application Review

The Consolidated Local Permit Application review process, as codified by 225 CMR 29.10, is herein acknowledged. Notwithstanding, the review process shall not exceed 12 months from the date the application is deemed to be complete and no extension shall be granted by the Town of Groton pursuant to 225 CMR 29.10. Failure by the Town of Groton Representative to issue an approval or denial at the expiration of the 12 month review period the application is constructively approved by the operation of law.

185-10 Application of the Site Suitability Guidance

The Town of Groton shall implement and administer the Small Clean Energy Infrastructure Facilities in accordance with Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources Regulations CMR 29.00 or M.G.L. Chapter 25A Sections 2 and 25.

or to take any other action relative thereto.

Planning Board

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Planning Board:

Summary: *This article proposes the adoption of a new General Bylaw to establish local permitting that complies with the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) regulations found in 225 CMR 29.00. The proposed bylaw is intended to streamline and standardize the local review of qualifying small-scale clean energy infrastructure projects when an applicant seeks a Consolidated Local Permit under state regulations. The bylaw incorporates applicable state definitions, public health, safety, and environmental standards by reference, designates the Town's Land Use Director as the Local Government Representative, and establishes procedures for application fees and permit review.*

Article 14: Small Clean Energy Facilities Consolidated Permitting

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Bylaws of the Town of Groton as follows:

- 1. Amend Section 218-3 Definitions** by inserting the following definitions in alphabetical order:

Small Clean Energy Facility

Includes the following Clean Energy Uses as defined in State Regulations 225 CMR 29.02 governing the Small Clean Energy Infrastructure Facility Siting and Permitting. Generation facilities with a nameplate capacity of less than 25 kilowatts (kW) and storage facilities with a rated capacity of less than 100 kilowatt hours (kWh) shall be exempt from site plan review.

Small Clean Energy Infrastructure Facility

Energy generation infrastructure with a nameplate capacity of more than 25 kilowatts (kW) and less than 25 megawatts (MW) that is an Anaerobic Digestion Facility, Solar Photovoltaic Facility or Wind Facility, including any ancillary structure that is an integral part of the operation of the Small Clean Energy Infrastructure Facility.

Small Clean Energy Storage Facility

An energy storage system as defined in M.G.L. c. 164, § 1 and Section 218-10.4 with a rated capacity of more than 100 kilowatt hours (kWh) and less than 100 megawatt hours (MWh), including any ancillary structure that is an integral part of the operation of the Small Clean Energy Storage Facility.

Behind-the-Meter Clean Energy Infrastructure Facility

A Small Clean Energy Generation Facility or Small Clean Energy Storage Facility that serves On-site Load other than parasitic or station load utilized to operate the Small Clean Energy Generation Facility or Small Clean Energy Storage Facility. A Behind-the-Meter Small Clean Energy Infrastructure Facility with a rated capacity of less than or equal to 250 kW is exempt from 225 CMR 29.00.

Small Clean Transmission and Distribution Infrastructure Facility.

Electric transmission and distribution infrastructure and related ancillary infrastructure, including: (i) electric transmission line reconductoring or rebuilding projects; (ii) new or substantially altered electric transmission lines located in an existing transmission corridor that are not more than 10 miles long, including any ancillary structure that is an integral part of the operation of the transmission line; (iii) new or substantially altered electric transmission lines located in a new transmission corridor that are not more than 1 mile long, including any ancillary structure that is an integral part of the operation of the transmission line; (iv) any other electric transmission infrastructure, including standalone transmission substations and upgrades and any ancillary structure that is an integral part of the operation of the transmission line and that does not require zoning exemptions; and (v) electric distribution-level projects that meet a certain threshold, as determined by the Department; provided, however, that the Small Clean Transmission and Distribution Infrastructure Facility shall be: (A) designed, fully or in part, to directly interconnect or otherwise facilitate the interconnection of clean energy infrastructure to the electric grid; (B) designed to ensure electric grid reliability and stability; or (C) designed to help facilitate the electrification of the building and transportation sectors; and provided further, that a Small Clean Transmission and Distribution Infrastructure Facility shall not include new transmission and distribution infrastructure facilities that solely interconnect new or existing generation powered by fossil fuels to the electric grid on or after January 1, 2026.”

Battery Energy Storage System (BESS).

One or more containers or cabinets on a lot containing batteries and related equipment, assembled together, capable of storing electrical energy in order to supply electrical energy to the power grid at a future time. This includes all accessory equipment on said lot necessary for energy storage including but not limited to inverters, transformers, cooling equipment, switching gear, metering equipment, transmission tie-lines, and other power interconnection facilities and/or a project substation, but does not include public utility owned and operated interconnection equipment, regardless of location, or other interconnection equipment to be located on the real property of the public utility or within its right of way, determined to be necessary by the public utility to facilitate the BESS interconnection with the power grid whether for bringing power to the

BESS or for returning it to the power grid, a stand-alone 12-volt vehicle battery, or an electric motor vehicle.

Consolidated Local Permit Application

Consolidated Local Permit Applications for Small Clean Facility shall be completed and submitted by the Applicant in accordance with the requirements of 225 CMR 29.09 and the requirements of all Local Boards, Commissions, Departments that have been identified as having jurisdiction for the proposed facility. It is strongly recommended the Applicant seek pre-submission meetings with the Land Use Committee to identify/confirm the applicable jurisdictional authorities that will be involved in the consolidated permitting process. For this purpose, the Town's Land Use Director shall serve as the Local Government Representative.

2. **Amend Section 218—5.2 Schedule of Use Regulations** by inserting the following entry in the Section titled “Industrial” after the last entry and renumbering subsequent entries accordingly:

	USE	R-A ¹⁰	R-B ¹⁰	NB	VCB ¹⁰	GB	I	P ¹⁰	O
(XX) Small Clean Energy Facility		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y”

3. Amend **Section 218-10 Special Regulations** by inserting a new Section 218-10.2 and renumbering subsequent sections accordingly to read as follows:

218-10.2

Small Scale Clean Energy Facility

An Applicant for a Small Scale Energy Facility shall complete all pre filing requirements specified in 225 CMR29.08 before submitting a Consolidated Local Permit Application to the Planning Board for Major Site Plan Review. A Consolidated Local Permit Application submitted before the completion of all pre-filing requirements shall automatically be denied without prejudice. Applicants are strongly encouraged to seek pre-submission meetings with the appropriate local authorities having jurisdiction in advance of filing the Consolidated Local Permit Application

4. Amend Section **218-2.5 Site Plan Review** under Section 518-2.5.C.(2) Threshold of Review/ Major by deleting section (c) and (d) in their entirety and inserting the following entry to read as follows and renumber subsequent sections accordingly:

“(c) Small Clean Energy Facility.”

5. **Amend Section 218-10 Special Regulations** by inserting a new Section 218-10.4 to read as follows and renumbering subsequent Sections accordingly:

218-10.5 Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)

- A. Applicability. The requirements of this bylaw shall apply to battery energy storage systems permitted, installed, decommissioned, or modified after the effective date of this bylaw, excluding general maintenance and repair. BESS subject to this bylaw are only those that exceed the following capacities:

- Lead-acid with a capacity of greater than 100 kWh

- Nickel with a capacity of greater than 100 kWh
- Lithium-ion with a capacity of greater than 100 kWh
- Sodium nickel chloride with a capacity of greater than 100 kWh
- Flow with a capacity of greater than 100 kWh

BESS with lower storage capacity are exempt from regulation under this bylaw. BESS with a storage capacity of 100 MWh or greater will be subject to review and approvals from the Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB) pursuant to 225 CMR 29.00.

B. General Requirements.

1. All permits required by state codes, including but not limited to building permit, an electrical permit, and a fire department permit shall be required for installation of all battery energy storage systems.
2. All battery energy storage systems, all dedicated use buildings, and all other buildings structures that contain or are otherwise associated with a battery energy storage and subject to the requirements of the State Building Code, shall be designed, erected, and installed in accordance with all applicable provisions of the State Building Code 780 CMR, State Fire Code 527 CMR 1.00, and State Electrical Code 527 CMR 12.00. All battery energy storage systems shall comply with NFPA 855, Standard for the Installation of Stationary Energy Storage Systems.
3. Energy storage system capacities, including array capacity and separation, are limited to the thresholds contained in NFPA 855.
4. Utility Lines and Electrical Circuitry. All on-site utility lines shall be placed underground to the extent feasible and as permitted by the serving utility, with the exception of the main service connection at the utility company right-of-way and any new interconnection equipment, including without limitation any poles.

C. Permitting Requirements for Small Scale BESS

Small Scale Battery Energy Storage Systems are allowed by right in all zoning districts, subject to applicable provisions of the State Building Code, Electrical Code, Fire Code, and other applicable codes, and are subject to major site plan review and such provisions of this bylaw as are applicable:

1. Small Scale BESS are allowed as of right in all zoning districts subject to applicable provisions of the State Building Code, Electrical Code, Fire Code, and other applicable codes, and are subject to Major Site Plan Review pursuant to section 218-2.5 of this bylaw as applicable.
2. Utility Lines and Electrical Circuitry. All on-site utility lines shall be placed underground to the extent feasible and as permitted by the serving utility, with the exception of the main service connection at the utility company right-of-way and any new interconnection equipment, including without limitation any poles.

3. Signage. Signage shall comply with the requirements Groton Signage Bylaw, Chapter 196 of the Groton General Bylaws and the following requirements: in the event of a conflict between the provisions of S and this section, the requirements of this Section shall prevail.
 - a. The signage shall be in compliance with ANSI Z535 and shall include the type of technology associated with the battery energy storage systems, any special hazards associated, the type of suppression system installed in the area of battery energy storage systems, and 24hour emergency contact information, including reach-back phone number.
 - b. As required by the state electrical code, disconnect and other emergency shutoff information shall be clearly displayed on a light reflective surface. A clearly visible warning sign concerning voltage shall be placed at the base of all pad-mounted transformers and substations.
 - c. Signage compliant with ANSI Z535 shall be provided on doors to rooms, entrances to BESS facilities, and on BESS outdoor containers
4. Lighting. Lighting of the battery energy storage systems shall be limited to that minimally required for safety, security and operational purposes and shall comply with Section 218-2.5.H.1.i of this Zoning Bylaw.
5. Setbacks. SmallScale Battery Energy Storage Systems shall be set back a minimum of 50 feet from all side, rear, and front lot lines. In addition, a minimum of 10 feet must be maintained between BESS components and all buildings, stored combustible materials, hazardous materials, high-piled storage, personnel means of egress, and other exposure hazards not associated with electrical grid infrastructure.
6. Dimensional. Battery Energy Storage Systems shall comply with the dimensional limitations or principal structures of the underlying zoning district as provided in Section218-6 of this Zoning Bylaw, unless otherwise provided in this bylaw.
7. Screening and Visibility. Small Scale Battery Energy Storage Systems shall have views minimized from adjacent properties to the extent reasonably practicable using architectural features, earth berms, landscaping, or other screening methods that will harmonize with the character of the property and surrounding area. Such features may not inhibit required air flow to or exhaust from the BESS and components and must comply with the setbacks established above,
8. Mitigation for Loss of Carbon Sequestration and Forest Habitat. If land that is Forestland or has been Forestland within one year immediately preceding the filing an application to install a BESS, the plans shall designate thereon an area of unprotected (meaning, not subject to G.L. c. 184, sections 31-33 at time of application) land on the same lot and of a size equal to two times the total area of Forestland that will be eliminated, cut, destroyed, or otherwise disturbed by such installation. Such designated land shall remain in substantially its natural condition without alteration, including prohibition of commercial forestry or tree cutting not related to the maintenance of the installation, until such time as the installation is

decommissioned; except in response to a natural occurrence, invasive species or disease that impacts the trees and requires cutting to preserve the health of the forest.

9. Fire Protection: Any such building, built or modified as a BESS shall have a full fire protection system, designed and engineered to meet the hazard regardless of building size. Any facility located in an area not served by a municipal water supply shall install a cistern of not less than 20,000 gallons for fire protection systems and firefighting operations. Cisterns shall be sized accordingly for fire protection based on the Large-scale-fire test data and modeling
10. Batteries. Failed battery cells and modules shall not be stored on the site and shall be removed no later than 30 days after deemed failed by the BESS operator or cell/module manufacturer. The operator shall notify the Groton Fire Department in advance if the type of battery or batteries used onsite is to be changed.
11. Decommissioning Plan. The applicant shall submit with its application a decommissioning plan for a BESS to be implemented upon abandonment and/or in conjunction with removal of the facility. The owner or operator of the BESS shall notify the Building Inspector in writing at least twenty days prior to when a Small Scale BESS will be decommissioned. Decommissioning of an abandoned or discontinued BESS shall be completed within six months after the facility ceases operation. The decommissioning plan shall include:
 - a. A narrative description of the activities to be accomplished, including who will perform that activity and at what point in time, for complete physical removal of all battery energy storage system components, structures, equipment, security barriers, and transmission lines from the site;
 - b. Disposal of all solid and hazardous waste in accordance with local, state, and federal waste disposal regulations; The anticipated life of the battery energy storage system;
 - c. The estimated decommissioning costs and how said estimate was determined;
 - d. The method of ensuring that funds will be available for decommissioning and restoration;
 - e. The method by which the decommissioning cost will be kept current;
 - f. The manner in which the site will be restored, including a description of how any changes to the surrounding areas and other systems adjacent to the battery energy storage system, such as, but not limited to, structural elements, building penetrations, means of egress, and required fire detection suppression systems, will be protected during decommissioning and confirmed as being acceptable after the system is removed; and
 - g. A listing of any contingencies for removing an intact operational energy storage system from service, and for removing an energy storage system from service that has been damaged by a fire or other event.

12. Decommissioning Fund. The owner and/or operator of the energy storage system shall continuously maintain a fund or other surety acceptable to the Town, in a form approved by the Planning Board and Town Counsel, for the removal of the battery energy storage system, in an amount to be determined by the Town, for the period of the life of the facility. All costs of the financial security shall be borne by the applicant.
 13. Proof of Liability Insurance. The applicant or property owner shall provide evidence of commercially liability insurance in an amount and type generally acceptable in the industry and approved by the Planning Board prior to the issuance of a building permit, and shall continue such insurance in effect until such facility has been decommissioned, removed, and the site restored in accordance with this bylaw.
- D. Site plan application. For a Small Scale Battery Energy Storage System, the site plan application shall include the following information, in addition to that required elsewhere in this Zoning Bylaw and the Planning Board Rules and Regulations:
1. A one or three-line electrical diagram detailing the battery energy storage system layout, associated components, and electrical interconnection methods, with all State Electrical Code compliant disconnects and over current devices.
 2. A preliminary equipment specification sheet that documents the proposed battery energy storage system components, inverters and associated electrical equipment that are to be installed. A final equipment specification sheet shall be submitted prior to the issuance of building permit.
 3. Name, address, and contact information of proposed or potential system installer and the owner and/or operator of the battery energy storage system. Such information of the final system installer shall be submitted prior to the issuance of building permit.
- E. Commissioning Plan. The system installer or commissioning agent shall prepare a commissioning plan prior to the start of commissioning. Such plan shall be compliant with NFPA 855 and document and verify that the system and its associated controls and safety systems are in proper working condition per requirements set forth in applicable state codes. Where commissioning is required by the Building Code, battery energy storage system commissioning shall be conducted by a Massachusetts Licensed Professional Engineer after the installation is complete but prior to final inspection and approval. A corrective action plan shall be developed for any open or continuing issues that are allowed to be continued after commissioning. A report describing the results of the system commissioning and including the results of the initial acceptance testing required by applicable state codes shall be provided to the Building Inspector prior to final inspection and approval and maintained at an approved on-site location.
- F. Fire Safety Compliance Plan. Such plan shall document and verify that the system and its associated controls and safety systems are in compliance with state codes, including documentation that BESS components comply with the safety standards set forth in subsection 218-10. L.
- G. Operation and Maintenance Manual. Such plan shall describe continuing battery energy storage system maintenance and property upkeep, as well as design, construction, installation, testing and commissioning information and shall meet all requirements set forth state codes and NFPA 855. Maintenance provisions will be driven by manufacturer requirements for the specific listed system

- H. Depending on the location of the BESS in relation to and its interaction with the electrical grid, interconnection will be completed per 527 CMR 12.00. System interconnections into utility grids shall be in accordance with NFPA 855. An accessible disconnect is required per 527 CMR 12.00.
- I. Prior to the issuance of the building permit, engineering documents must be signed and sealed by a Massachusetts Licensed Professional Engineer.
- J. Emergency Operations Plan. An Emergency Operations Plan compliant with NFPA 855 is required. A copy of the approved Emergency Operations Plan shall be given to the system owner, the local fire department, and local fire code official. For so long as the BESS is operational, the operator shall provide the Fire Department, Police Department, Building Inspector, and Town Manager's office with contact information for personnel that can be reached 24 hours per day every day, and this contact information shall be updated by the operator whenever there is a change in the information. The operator shall also be required to have an official representative be present onsite not later than two hours after notification by the Fire Chief, Police Chief, or their designee. A permanent copy shall also be placed in an approved location to be accessible to facility personnel, fire code officials, and emergency responders. The emergency operations plan shall include the following information:
 - 1. Procedures for safe shutdown, de-energizing, or isolation of equipment and systems under emergency conditions to reduce the risk of fire, electric shock, and personal injuries, and for safe start-up following cessation of emergency conditions.
 - 2. Procedures for inspection and testing of associated alarms, interlocks, and controls, including time intervals for inspection and testing.
 - 3. Procedures to be followed in response to notifications from the Battery Energy Storage Management System, when provided, that could signify potentially dangerous conditions, including shutting down equipment, summoning service and repair personnel, and providing agreed upon notification to fire department personnel for potentially hazardous conditions in the event of a system failure.
 - 4. Emergency procedures to be followed in case of fire, explosion, release of liquids or vapors, damage to critical moving parts, or other potentially dangerous conditions. Procedures can include sounding the alarm, notifying the fire department, evacuating personnel, de-energizing equipment, and controlling and extinguishing the fire.
 - 5. Response considerations similar to a safety data sheet (SDS) that will address response safety concerns and extinguishment when an SDS is not required.
 - 6. Procedures for safe disposal of battery energy storage system equipment damaged in a fire or other emergency event, including maintaining contact information for personnel qualified to safely remove damaged battery energy storage system equipment from the facility.
 - 7. Other procedures as determined necessary by the Town to provide for the safety of occupants, neighboring properties, and emergency responders.
 - 8. Procedures and schedules for conducting drills of these procedures and for training local first responders on the contents of the plan and appropriate response procedure.
- K. Ownership Changes. If the owner of the battery energy storage system changes or the owner of the property changes, the Site Plan Review approval conditions shall remain in effect,

provided that the successor owner or operator assumes in writing all of the obligations of the site plan approval conditions, and decommissioning plan. A new owner or operator of the battery energy storage system shall notify the Building Commissioner of such change in ownership or operator within 14 days of the ownership change. A new owner or operator must provide such notification to the Building Inspector in writing.

L. Safety

1. System Certification. Battery energy storage systems and equipment shall be listed by a Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory to UL 9540 (Standard for battery energy storage systems and equipment) or approved equivalent, with subcomponents meeting each of the following standards as applicable:
 - a. UL 1973 (Standard for Batteries for Use in Stationary, Vehicle Auxiliary Power and Light Electric Rail Applications),
 - b. UL 1642 (Standard for Lithium Batteries),
 - c. UL 1741 or UL 62109 (Inverters and Power Converters),
 - d. Certified under the applicable electrical, building, and fire prevention codes as required.
 - e. Alternatively, field evaluation by an approved testing laboratory for compliance with UL 9540 (or approved equivalent) and applicable codes, regulations and safety standards may be used to meet system certification requirements.
2. Site Access. Battery energy storage systems shall be maintained in good working order and in accordance with industry standards. Site access shall be maintained, including snow removal at a level acceptable to the local fire department.
3. Battery energy storage systems, components, and associated ancillary equipment shall have required working space clearances, and electrical circuitry shall be within weatherproof enclosures marked with the environmental rating suitable for the type of exposure in compliance with NFPA 70.

M. Abandonment.

The battery energy storage system shall be considered abandoned when it ceases to operate consistently for more than one year. If the owner and/or operator fails to comply with decommissioning upon any abandonment, the Town may, after compliance with any applicable state and federal constitutional requirements, enter the property and utilize the available bond and/or security for the removal of a BESS and restoration of the site in accordance with the decommissioning plan.

or to take any other action relative thereto.

Planning Board

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Planning Board:

Summary: This article proposes amendments to the Town's Zoning Bylaw to bring Groton's regulations into compliance with new Massachusetts requirements governing the siting and permitting of small clean energy facilities. The amendments establish definitions and local permitting procedures for small clean energy generation, energy storage, and certain transmission and distribution facilities, including a consolidated local permitting process and Major Site Plan Review by the Planning Board. The article also updates the Town's regulations for Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), including applicable size thresholds and requirements for setbacks, screening, fire protection, emergency response, safety, decommissioning, financial security, and other measures intended to protect neighboring properties and the community. The purpose of these amendments is to comply with the Commonwealth's new clean energy siting requirements while maintaining appropriate local review and reasonable protections for public safety, the environment, and surrounding properties.

Article 15: Small Scale Ground Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Facilities

To see if the Town will vote to amend Section 218-10.3 Large-Scale Ground Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Facilities as proposed with the tracked edits as follows:

§ 218-10.3 ~~Large~~Small-Scale Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Facilities.

A. Purpose. The purpose of this section is to ~~promote the creation of new large~~regulate small-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installations by providing standards for the placement, design, construction, operation, monitoring, modification and removal of such installations that address public safety, minimize impacts on scenic, natural and historic resources and to provide adequate financial assurance for the eventual decommissioning of such installations. The provisions set forth in this section shall apply to the construction, operation, and/or repair of ~~large~~small-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installations.

B. Applicability. This section applies to ~~small~~large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installations proposed to be constructed after the effective date of this section. This section also pertains to physical modifications that materially alter the type, configuration, or size of these installations or related equipment. Small scale solar ground mounted photovoltaic installations subject to this bylaw are only those that exceed a minimum nameplate capacity of 250 kw DC and do not exceed 25 MW. Ground mounted solar photo voltaic installations with a minimum nameplate capacity exceeding 25 MW shall be regulated by the Energy Facilities Siting Board.

1. General requirements for all ~~small~~large-scale solar power generation installations. The following requirements are common to all solar photovoltaic installations to be sited in designated locations.

1.1 Compliance with laws, ordinances and regulations. The construction and operation of all ~~large~~small-scale solar photovoltaic installations shall be consistent with all applicable local, state and federal requirements, including but not limited to all applicable safety, construction, electrical, and communications requirements. All buildings and fixtures forming part of a solar photovoltaic installation shall be constructed in accordance with the State Building Code.

1.2 Building permit and building inspection. No ~~large~~small-scale solar photovoltaic installation shall be constructed, installed or modified as provided in this section without first obtaining appropriate permits.

1.3 Fees. The application for a building permit for a ~~large~~small-scale solar photovoltaic installation must be accompanied by the fee required for a building permit.

1.4 Site plan review. Ground-mounted ~~large~~small-scale solar photovoltaic installations with 250 kW or larger of rated nameplate capacity shall undergo site plan review by the Planning Board prior to ~~construction, installation or issuance of a building permit or~~ modification as provided in this section.

1.4.1 General. All plans and maps shall be prepared, stamped and signed by a professional engineer licensed to practice in Massachusetts.

1.4.2 Required documents. Pursuant to the site plan review process, the project proponent shall provide the following documents:

- (a) A site plan showing:
 - i. Property lines and physical features, including roads, for the project site;
 - ii. Proposed changes to the landscape of the site, grading, vegetation clearing and planting, exterior lighting, screening vegetation or structures;
 - iii. Blueprints or drawings of the solar photovoltaic installation signed by a professional engineer licensed to practice in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts showing the proposed layout of the system and any potential shading from nearby structures
 - iv. One or three line electrical diagram detailing the solar photovoltaic installation, associated components, and electrical interconnection methods, with all National Electrical Code compliant disconnects and overcurrent devices;
 - v. Documentation of the major system components to be used, including the PV panels, mounting system, and inverter;
 - vi. Name, address, and contact information for proposed system installer;
 - vii. Name, address, phone number and signature of the project proponent, as well as all co-proponents or property owners, if any;
 - viii. The name, contact information and signature of any agents representing the project proponent; and
- (b) Documentation of actual or prospective access and control of the project site (see also Subsection 1.5);
- (c) An operation and maintenance plan (see also Subsection 1.6);
- (d) Zoning district designation for the parcel(s) of land comprising the project site [submission of a copy of a zoning map with the parcel(s) identified is suitable for this purpose];
- (e) Proof of liability insurance; and
- (f) Description of financial surety that satisfies Subsection 1.13.3.

1.5 The Planning Board may waive documentary requirements as it deems appropriate

- a) ~~1.5~~ Site control. The project proponent shall submit documentation of actual or prospective access and control of the project site sufficient to allow for construction and operation of the proposed solar photovoltaic installation. Fencing along the site's perimeter shall be provided to control access to a ~~large~~small-scale ground-mounted

solar photovoltaic facility in order to prevent access to the facility. The fencing shall be compatible with the scenic character of the Town and shall not consist of barbed wire or razor wire.

- b) ~~1.6~~ Operation and maintenance plan. The project proponent shall submit a plan for the operation and maintenance of the ~~largesmall~~-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installation, which shall include measures for maintaining safe access to the installation, stormwater controls, as well as general procedures for operational maintenance of the installation.
- c) ~~1.7~~ Utility notification. No ~~largesmall~~-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installation shall be constructed until evidence has been given to the Planning Board that the local electric utility has approved the solar photovoltaic installation owner or operator's intent to install an interconnected customer-owned generator. Off-grid systems less than 250 kW shall be exempt from this requirement. The Building Commissioner may issue a permit only if the ~~largesmall~~-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic device complies with this section.
- d) ~~1.8~~ Waivers. If the ~~proposed installation device~~ does not comply with one or more of the following ~~zoning~~ requirements, the applicant shall be required to obtain a special permit from the Planning Board waiving such requirement(s) after finding that such waiver(s) will not derogate from the intent of this chapter or be detrimental or injurious to the public.

~~1.69~~ Dimension and density requirements.

~~1.96.1~~ Setbacks. For ~~largesmall~~-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installations, front, side and rear setbacks shall be as follows:

- (a) Front yard: The front yard depth shall be at least 50 feet.
- (b) Side yard: Each side yard shall have a depth at least 50 feet.
- (c) Rear yard: The rear yard depth shall be at least 50 feet.

~~1.69.2~~ Appurtenant structures. All appurtenant structures to ~~largesmall~~-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installations shall be subject to reasonable regulations concerning the bulk and height of structures, lot area, setbacks, open space, parking and building coverage requirements. All such appurtenant structures, including, but not limited to, equipment shelters, storage facilities, transformers, and substations, shall be architecturally compatible with each other. Whenever reasonable, structures should be shaded from view by vegetation and/or joined or clustered to avoid adverse visual impacts.

~~1.710~~ Design standards.

~~1.710.1~~ Lighting. Lighting of solar photovoltaic installations shall be consistent with local, state and federal law. Lighting of other parts of the installation, such as appurtenant structures, shall be limited to that required for safety, security, and operational purposes, and shall be reasonably shielded from abutting properties. Where feasible, lighting of the solar photovoltaic installation shall be directed downward and shall incorporate full cut-off fixtures to reduce light pollution consistent with dark sky provisions.

~~1.710.2~~ Signage. Signs on ~~largesmall~~-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installations shall comply with the Town's sign bylaw. A sign consistent with the Town's sign bylaw shall be required to identify the owner and provide a twenty-four-hour emergency contact phone number. Solar

photovoltaic installations shall not be used for displaying any advertising except for reasonable identification of the manufacturer or operator of the solar photovoltaic installation.

1.710.3 Utility connections. Reasonable efforts, as determined by the Planning Board, shall be made to place all utility connections from the solar photovoltaic installation underground, depending on appropriate soil conditions, shape, and topography of the site and any requirements of the electric utility. If an existing aboveground connection solution already exists, however, this can be used if it meets the requirements of the electric utility. Electrical transformers for utility interconnections may be ~~aboveground~~above ground if required by the electric utility.

1.710.4 Stormwater management. Calculations of storm drainage to demonstrate and assure compliance with the requirements of all applicable federal, state and local regulations and guidelines including, but not limited to, the Department of Environmental Protection Stormwater Management Policy, as it may be amended, must be provided for any ~~largesmall~~-scale solar photovoltaic installation.

1.811 Safety and environmental standards.

1.811.1 Emergency services. The ~~largesmall~~-scale solar photovoltaic installation owner or operator shall provide a copy of the project summary, electrical schematic, and site plan to the local fire chief and electric utility. Upon request, the owner or operator shall cooperate with local emergency services in developing an emergency response plan. All means of shutting down the solar photovoltaic installation shall be clearly marked. The owner or operator shall identify a responsible person for public inquiries throughout the life of the installation.

1.811.2 Land clearing, soil erosion and habitat impacts. Clearing of natural vegetation shall be limited to what is necessary for the construction, operation and maintenance of the ~~largesmall~~-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installation or otherwise prescribed by applicable laws, regulations, and bylaws. Clearing to minimize shading is acceptable.

1.912 Monitoring and maintenance.

1.912.1 Solar photovoltaic installation conditions. The ~~largesmall~~-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installation owner or operator shall maintain the facility in good condition. Maintenance shall include, but not be limited to, painting, structural repairs, and integrity of security measures. Site access shall be maintained to a level acceptable to the local Fire Chief and emergency medical services. The owner or operator shall be responsible for the cost of maintaining the solar photovoltaic installation and any access road(s), unless accepted as a public way.

1.912.2 Modifications. All material modifications to a solar photovoltaic installation made after issuance of the required building permit shall require approval by the Planning Board and the electric utility.

1.1013 Abandonment or decommissioning.

1.1013.1 Removal requirements. Any ~~largesmall~~-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installation which has reached the end of its useful life or has been abandoned consistent with Subsection 1.13.2 of this section shall be removed. The owner or operator shall physically remove the installation no more than 150 days after the date of discontinued operations. The owner or

operator shall notify the Planning Board by certified mail of the proposed date of discontinued operations and plans for removal. Decommissioning shall consist of:

- (a) Physical removal of all ~~large~~small-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installations, structures, equipment, security barriers and transmission lines from the site.
- (b) Disposal of all solid and hazardous waste in accordance with local, state, and federal waste disposal regulations.
- (c) Stabilization or revegetation of the site as necessary to minimize erosion. The Planning Board may allow the owner or operator to leave landscaping or designated below-grade foundations in order to minimize erosion and disruption to vegetation.

~~1.10~~**13.2** Abandonment. Absent notice of a proposed date of decommissioning or written notice of extenuating circumstances, the solar photovoltaic installation shall be considered abandoned when it fails to operate for more than one year without the written consent of the Planning Board. If the owner or operator of the ~~large~~small-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installation fails to remove the installation in accordance with the requirements of this section within 150 days of abandonment or the proposed date of decommissioning, the Town may enter the property and physically remove the installation.

~~1.10~~**13.3** Financial surety. Proponents of ~~large~~small-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic projects shall provide a form of surety, either through escrow account, bond or otherwise in a form acceptable to Town Counsel, to cover the cost of removal in the event the Town must remove the installation and remediate the landscape, in an amount and form determined to be reasonable by the Planning Board, but in no event to exceed more than 125% of the cost of removal and compliance with the additional requirements set forth herein, as determined by the project proponent. Such surety will not be required for municipally or state-owned facilities. The project proponent shall submit a fully inclusive estimate of the costs associated with removal, prepared by a qualified engineer. The amount shall include a mechanism for calculating increased removal costs due to inflation.

or to take any other action relative thereto.

Planning Board

Select Board:

Finance Committee:

Planning Board:

Summary: *This Article proposes amendments to Section 218-10.3 of the Zoning Bylaw governing ground-mounted solar photovoltaic facilities to ensure consistency with recent changes in Massachusetts law regulating small-scale clean energy infrastructure. The proposed amendments revise the bylaw to apply to ground-mounted solar photovoltaic facilities with a nameplate capacity greater than 250 kW DC and up to 25 MW, which are now subject to review under the Commonwealth's Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB) regulations. Approval of this article will update the Town's existing solar bylaw to reflect current Massachusetts law while maintaining local oversight of project design, construction, operation, and eventual site restoration.*

Article 16: *Citizens' Petition – Senior Property Tax Freeze Program*

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to petition the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the following Special Act, 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:

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A SENIOR PROPERTY TAX FREEZE PROGRAM IN THE TOWN OF GROTON

Section 1. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the town of Groton is authorized to establish a senior property tax freeze program for qualifying residential property owners.

Section 2. A qualifying property owner shall be seventy (70) years of age or older, have owned and occupied the property as his or her principal residence, have resided in the town of Groton for at least thirty-five (35) consecutive years immediately preceding the application, and shall meet any additional eligibility requirements that the town may establish by bylaw, including income or asset limits if deemed appropriate.

Section 3. The real property taxes assessed on the parcel or parcels containing the qualifying property owner's principal residence shall be frozen at the amount due for the fiscal year in which the property owner first becomes eligible for the program. The property owner shall remain responsible for paying the frozen amount each year, but no future increases in the tax assessment shall apply while the property owner remains eligible for the program.

Section 4. Eligibility shall continue only while the parcel remains the property owner's principal residence and all eligibility requirements continue to be met.

Section 5. The town's Select Board may adopt rules and regulations necessary to administer the program.

Section 6. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

Citizens' Petition

NAME	ADDRESS	NAME	ADDRESS
Samuel A. Palmer	12 Skinners Lane	Shelley Ann Bickford	127 Lost Lake Drive
Marilyn Palmer	12 Skinners Lane	Lois H. Young	28 Champney Street
W. David Nelson	282 Farmers Row	Brett E. Stevens	186 Lost Lake Drive
Violetta O'Donnell	555 Boston Road	Steven Sinatra	32 Indian Road
Cynthia Thompson	7 Castle Drive	Ryan Stevens	21 A Hazel Road

Select Board:

Finance Committee: *Not Recommended Unanimously*

Summary: The following summary was prepared by the petitioners and represents their view on the Article: This article requests that Town Meeting authorize the Select Board to petition the Massachusetts General Court for special legislation to establish a Senior Property Tax Freeze Program for the Town of Groton. If enacted, the proposed legislation would permit Groton to freeze the annual real estate tax on the principal residence of eligible senior homeowners. To qualify, a homeowner would be required to be at least 70 years of age, have owned and occupied the property as a principal residence, have resided in the Town of Groton for at least 35 consecutive years immediately preceding application, and satisfy any additional eligibility requirements established by the Town, including any income or asset limitations that may be adopted. Under the proposed program, eligible homeowners would continue to pay their annual property taxes, but the amount would remain at the level in effect when they first qualified for the program. The tax would not be eliminated, and the freeze would remain in effect only while the homeowner continues to meet all eligibility requirements and occupies the property as a principal residence.

Article 17: Citizens' Petition – Study Housing Opportunities and Municipal Finance

WHEREAS, the Town faces a serious and continuing fiscal imbalance that threatens its ability to meet its financial obligations to the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District and to provide adequate staffing and resources for police, fire, and other essential public services; THEREFORE, to see if the Town will vote to request that the Select Board, Planning Board, Finance Committee, Town Manager, Board of Assessors, Affordable Housing Trust, School Committee, and other appropriate town boards, committees, departments, and officials undertake a coordinated study of a range of realistic opportunities to increase and diversify Groton's housing stock for the purpose of expanding the property-tax base, strengthening and stabilizing the Town's finances, and helping provide the revenue necessary to meet Groton's financial obligations to the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District and its essential public services. The study shall evaluate potential housing approaches in terms of their likely property-tax revenue, their expected effects on school and municipal services, their likely net fiscal benefit to the Town, and their consistency with the goals and policies expressed in Groton's adopted plans and other official town documents. The study shall consider a range of options rather than a single predetermined proposal. The participating boards, committees, departments, and officials shall present a written report of their findings, options, and recommendations to the 2027 Spring Annual Town Meeting, including any recommendation for additional study or professional assistance; or to take any other action relative thereto.

Citizens' Petition

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>
Russell Harris	25 Longley Road	Effie Stewart	20 Old Orchard Street
Deborah Johnson	25 Longley Road	M. Constance Sartini	38 Mill Street
Virginia Wood	293 Old Dunstable Road	Eric Fisher	7B Lilac Circle
Jamie Christerson	189 Forge Village Road	Marc Broussard	19 Lowell Road
Robert Stewart	20 Old Orchard Street	Nancy Fleischer	119 Nashua Road

Select Board:

Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously

Summary: The following summary was prepared by the petitioners and represents their view on the Article: *This citizens' petition asks Groton officials to study whether adding and diversifying housing could strengthen the town's property-tax base and help address ongoing financial pressures, including school funding and essential municipal services. The study would compare a range of housing approaches, weighing tax revenue, service costs, net fiscal impact and consistency with town plans, and report its findings and recommendations to the 2027 Spring Annual Town Meeting.*

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 14th Day of September in the year of our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six.

Peter S. Cunningham

Peter S. Cunningham, Chair

Rebecca H. Pine

Rebecca H. Pine, Vice Chair

Nicholas J. Degaitas, Jr.

Nicholas J. Degaitas, Jr., Clerk

John F. Reilly

John F. Reilly, Member

Matthew F. Pisani

Matthew F. Pisani, 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

REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER TO THE 2026 FALL TOWN MEETING

The 2026 Fall Town Meeting Warrant contains several warrant articles that seek appropriations, some of which will affect the Tax Rate and some of which will have no further impact on taxes. The purpose of this report is to provide the residents and taxpayers with a summary of these articles and what impact they will have on the Fiscal Year 2027 Tax Rate. In preparing for the Fall Town Meeting, the Select Board and Finance Committee reviewed the balances in the various reserve accounts. These accounts will either be used to fund the various articles, or money will be added to them to comply with the Town's Financial Policies. The balances as of September, 2026, are as follows:

FY 2026 Levy Capacity:	\$37,714
Anticipated Free Cash:	\$2,000,000
Stabilization Fund:	\$2,873,587
Capital Stabilization Fund:	\$144,028
GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund:	\$26,593
Winter Recovery Assistance Program (WRAP) Funds*	\$275,893

**The Town of Groton has received \$275,893 from the Commonwealth through the Winter Recovery Assistance Program (WRAP) to assist with the extraordinary snow and ice costs incurred during Fiscal Year 2026. The Town's FY 2026 Snow and Ice Deficit was funded using a combination of \$180,000 from the Capital Stabilization Fund and \$165,000 from Free Cash. In accordance with guidance issued by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, the Town will use \$180,000 of the WRAP reimbursement to restore the amount previously withdrawn from the Capital Stabilization Fund. The remaining \$95,893 will be deposited into a Special Revenue Fund and will be available to help fund the FY 2027 appropriation for the Groton Dunstable Regional School District Capital Stabilization Fund. Please see the further explanation in Articles 3 (page 37) and 5 (page 37) of this Report.*

The following is a summary of Warrant Articles requesting funding:

Article 1: Unpaid Bills Requested Amount: \$430

Currently, we have one unpaid bill from Service Tire Truck Centers in the amount of \$430. The bill came in after the Fiscal Year was closed. I recommend that this bill be paid from Free Cash as it is a one-time expenditure.

Article 2: Amend Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Requested Amount: \$134,071

This Article will request the following adjustments in the Operating Budget:

Line Item 1022 – Select Board Expenses Request: \$25,000

The Town is seeking a one-time appropriation of \$25,000 in Fiscal Year 2027 to hire a part-time Economic Development Director/Media Consultant to assist the Select Board and Town Manager in identifying opportunities to generate additional revenue and strengthen Groton's economic

future. One of the Select Board's goals for Fiscal Year 2027 is to work collaboratively with Town boards, committees, property owners, businesses, developers, and community stakeholders to strengthen Groton's economic future. The consultant will play a key role in advancing this goal by promoting economic development opportunities, improving outreach and communication, supporting existing businesses, and identifying opportunities to expand and diversify the Town's revenue base. This appropriation is intended as a pilot program. Over the next nine months, the Select Board and Town Manager will evaluate the effectiveness of the position, the results achieved, and its potential financial and community benefits. Based on that evaluation, the Town will determine whether this position warrants continued or permanent funding in future fiscal years. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).

Select Board:

Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*

Line Item 1031 – Town Manager Expenses

Request: \$20,500

When the Cow Pond Brook Field Project was defeated at the Spring Town Meeting, the Park Commission and Town Manager made the decision to reevaluate the project, with the goal of bringing a revised proposal back before voters at the Fall Town Meeting. At that time, no budget was available to compensate Activitas, the Town's consulting firm, for the additional work required to make the necessary adjustments to the Plan. Recognizing the project's importance, the consultant graciously agreed to move forward with the work and accept payment after Town Meeting, rather than delay progress. This work included redesigning key elements of the project, updating the necessary permitting, and rebidding the revised project. Without the consultant's willingness to proceed under these terms, the Town would not have been able to complete this work in time for the Fall Town Meeting. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).

Select Board:

Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*

Line Item 1062 – Board of Assessors Expenses

Request: \$10,000

This request is to fund the cost of the personal property valuation work required for the Town's Fiscal Year 2027 State mandated certification. The additional funding will allow the Town's Personal Property Consultant, RRC, to complete the required valuation and review of personal property accurately and in accordance with Massachusetts Department of Revenue requirements. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).

Select Board:

Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*

Line Item 1080 – Town Counsel Expenses

Request \$20,000

The Town is seeking additional legal funding for Fiscal Year 2027 to ensure that sufficient funds are available to address two specific matters that are expected to require significant legal representation. The first matter involves the Zoning Board of Appeals' recent denial of a variance

associated with the proposed installation of a cell tower on the Groton-Dunstable Regional High School property. The Town has been advised that the applicant intends to appeal the ZBA's decision. Defending the Board's decision through the appeals process could require substantial legal work and result in costs well beyond those anticipated in the Town's Fiscal Year 2027 Town Counsel Budget. The second matter involves an easement/right-of-way previously granted to the Town on Paquawket Path to provide access to the rail trail. Certain neighboring property owners are contesting the Town's interpretation of the easement and dispute whether it provides the Town and the general public with the right to cross the property to access the rail trail. Because the parties have differing interpretations of the rights granted by the easement, it may be necessary for a court to determine the respective legal rights of the Town and the affected property owners. Both matters have the potential to require significant legal expense. The FY 2027 Budget did not expect, nor contemplate these two issues. Absorbing these costs within the current appropriation could leave insufficient funding to address the Town's routine legal needs throughout the remainder of the fiscal year. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).

Select Board:

Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*

Line Item 1541 – Municipal Building Expenses

Request: \$25,000

The Town is requesting a one-time appropriation of \$25,000 to fund unanticipated repairs to the HVAC system at the Fire Station. The system, which is approximately 12 years old, was not operating properly and required immediate attention. Due to the complexity of the system, the Town needed to engage the manufacturer's recommended consultant to diagnose the problems and perform the necessary repairs. This is an unanticipated expense that was not included in the Fiscal Year 2027 Budget. While this expense could be covered by a Reserve Fund Transfer, the Town Manager and Town Accountant were concerned about taking such a significant amount from the Reserve Fund this early in the Fiscal Year. Based on this, it was determined that seeking a Town Meeting appropriation was the better choice. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).

Select Board:

Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*

Line Item 1620 – Veteran's Service Officer Salary

Request: \$33,571

The Town is seeking additional funding to support the regionalization of the Veterans' Services Officer (VSO) position with the Towns of Pepperell and Littleton. The proposed regional model is intended to provide Groton's veterans with a higher and more consistent level of service while addressing the Town's long-term staffing obligations in a fiscally responsible manner. The Town Manager had previously recommended increasing the number of hours allocated to Groton's VSO position in recognition of the workload and level of service required. The Select Board did not support that request. As a result, the Town Manager explored alternative approaches that would improve veterans' services without requiring Groton to assume the cost of a full-time position on its own. Regionalization provides such an opportunity. Under Massachusetts Law, when a community with a population greater than 12,000 appoints a new Veterans' Services Officer, the position is required to be full-time unless veterans' services are provided through an approved regional arrangement. With Groton's population approaching 12,000, it is prudent to address this

issue now rather than wait until a future vacancy or population threshold requires the Town to hire a full-time position on its own. The proposed regional arrangement with Pepperell and Littleton would establish a full-time regional VSO operation with the required administrative support, with the participating communities sharing the cost of providing these services. The following chart shows the anticipated cost for FY 2027:

	Regional Budget	Pepperell	Groton	Littleton
Population	32448	11695	10733	10020
	100.00%	33.30%	33.30%	33.40%
Salary of Director	\$ 62,786.16	\$ 20,907.79	\$ 20,907.79	\$ 20,970.58
Salary of admin	\$ 53,724.24	\$ 17,890.17	\$ 17,890.17	\$ 17,943.90
Empl. Benefits	\$ 30,926.40	\$ 10,298.49	\$ 10,298.49	\$ 10,329.42
Indirect costs	\$ 5,100.00	\$ 1,698.30	\$ 1,698.30	\$ 1,703.40
Expenses	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 1,498.50	\$ 1,498.50	\$ 1,503.00
Total Administrative	\$ 157,036.80	\$ 52,293.25	\$ 52,293.25	\$ 52,450.29
Vet. Benefits / Service	\$ 189,000.00	\$ 65,000.00	\$ 14,000.00	\$ 110,000.00
Total	\$ 346,036.80	\$ 117,293.25	\$ 66,293.25	\$ 162,450.29
FY2027 Budget		\$ 100,152.00	\$ 32,722.00	\$ 153,652.00
Net need		\$ 17,141.25	\$ 33,571.25	\$ 8,798.29

For Groton, the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 cost is approximately \$33,571. Regionalizing at this time makes good fiscal and operational sense. It allows Groton to obtain the benefits of a full-time veterans' services operation while sharing personnel and administrative costs. It also provides greater staffing capacity, improved continuity of service, broader office coverage, and greater flexibility in responding to veterans and their families. Most importantly, it allows the Town to proactively establish a sustainable service model before Groton's population growth or a future vacancy potentially requires a more costly solution. Because Groton's \$33,571 share represents an ongoing annual obligation rather than a one-time expense will be funded through the Town's unexpended tax capacity.

Select Board:

Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*

The Total Amounts Requested By Category:	Free Cash:	\$100,500
	Tax Levy:	\$ 33,571
	Total	\$134,071

Article 3: Capital Stabilization Fund**Requested Amount: \$691,000**

The current balance in the Capital Stabilization Fund is \$144,028. The Town's financial policies call for maintaining a balance in the fund equal to 1.5% of the total Operating Budget. If Article 2 passes as presented, the total Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budget will be \$55,994,017, resulting in a target Capital Stabilization Fund balance of \$839,910. Meeting this target would require an appropriation of \$695,882. However, to provide sufficient funding for the anticipated FY 2028 Capital Budget, an additional \$175,118 would be required, bringing the total recommended appropriation to \$871,000. As explained previously in this memorandum, \$180,000 of this appropriation would be funded from the Town's WRAP proceeds, restoring the amount previously withdrawn from the Capital Stabilization Fund to address the FY 2026 snow and ice deficit. The remaining \$691,000 would be appropriated from the Free Cash.

Article 4: Stabilization Fund**Requested Amount: \$0**

The current balance in the Stabilization Fund is \$2,873,587. The Town's financial policies call for a balance in this fund of 5% of the total Operating Budget. Should Article 2 pass as presented, the total FY 2026 Operating Budget will be \$55,994,017, requiring a Stabilization Fund Balance of \$2,799,700. At this time, we do not need to add money to the Fund.

Article 5: GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund**Requested Amount: \$377,514**

The anticipated Fiscal Year 2028 Capital Budget for the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District is \$500,000. The current balance in the GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund is \$26,593, leaving a funding requirement of \$473,407. To fund this, I recommend that \$95,893 be provided from the Town's FY 2027 Winter Recovery Assistance Program (WRAP) funds as explained previously in this memorandum, and the remaining \$377,514 funded from Free Cash.

Article 6: Water Enterprise Fund**Requested Amount: \$0**

At this time, it is anticipated that this Article will be withdrawn from consideration at Town Meeting as the Water Department is not expecting any unforeseen expenses at this time. This Article is being left on the Warrant in the event a need arises. Should a need arise, an update will be provided at Town Meeting.

Article 7: Four Corner Sewer Enterprise Fund**Requested Amount: \$0**

At this time, it is anticipated that this Article will be withdrawn from consideration at Town Meeting as the Sewer Department is not expecting any unforeseen expenses at this time. This Article is being left on the Warrant in the event a need arises. Should a need arise, an update will be provided at Town Meeting.

Article 8: Stormwater Enterprise**Requested Amount: \$0**

At this time, it is anticipated that this Article will be withdrawn from consideration at Town Meeting as the Department of Public Works is not expecting any unforeseen expenses at this time. This Article is being left on the Warrant in the event a need arises. Should a need arise, an update will be provided at Town Meeting.

Article 9: Town Forest Expenses**Requested Amount: \$30,000**

From the Summary in the Warrant: The Town Forest Committee is seeking to transfer funds from Receipts Reserved for the Town Forest to cover the costs of removing a stand of dead Red Pines that are creating a hazard, and for future forest maintenance projects. The transfer amount requested is \$30,000, with \$12,238 coming from a reimbursement already received from the Division of Conservation and Recreation for a 2026 Forest Stewardship Plan.

Article 10: Cow Pond Brook Fields Improvements**Requested Amount: \$4,200,000**

From the Summary in the Warrant: This article requests Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding for a revised improvement project at the Cow Pond Brook Fields recreational complex. A similar proposal considered at the 2026 Spring Town Meeting was not approved by the voters. Following Town Meeting, the Parks Commission and Town Manager collaborated with user groups, Town departments, project consultants, and other stakeholders to revise the project in response to public feedback. The revised proposal reduces the overall project cost by an estimated \$800,000 to \$1 million from the original estimated budget of approximately \$4.8 million, while retaining the project's primary objectives. The revised project includes rehabilitation and modernization of one of the Town's most heavily used recreational facilities; improvements to comply with Natural Heritage requirements by addressing the existing access road; construction of ADA-compliant pathways and amenities to improve accessibility; upgrades to drainage, parking, traffic circulation, and supporting infrastructure; and improvements designed to provide a safe, functional, and sustainable recreational complex for residents, schools, youth organizations, and community groups. Approval of this article will also preserve the Town's eligibility to receive a \$1 million federal grant that has been awarded for the project. If the project does not proceed, the Town will lose access to these federal funds. The grant would significantly reduce the amount of local funding required to complete the project. The Parks Commission believes the revised proposal reflects the concerns raised during the Spring Town Meeting by reducing costs, refining the project scope, and maintaining the long-term goal of preserving and improving an important community recreational asset. If approved, this article would authorize the use of CPA funds to support the project and leverage substantial outside funding for improvements intended to serve Groton residents for many decades.

Article 12: Irrigation/Course Improvements**Requested Amount: \$1,700,000**

From the Summary in the Warrant: This article requests funding to construct a new irrigation system and complete targeted course improvements at the Groton Country Club. The Club's existing irrigation system provides only limited coverage and requires manual operation, making it difficult to maintain consistent playing conditions, particularly during dry weather. The proposed irrigation system would be fully automated, allowing watering during non-playing hours, and would provide comprehensive coverage of all greens, tee boxes, fairways, and selected in-play rough areas. The project is intended to improve turf health, course conditions, water management, and the overall quality of the golf course. In addition to the irrigation system, the project includes targeted improvements to enhance playability and course infrastructure. These include redesigning portions of Holes 1 through 3 to improve playability and installing a drainage system on Hole 7 to address persistent drainage issues. Based on bids received prior to Town Meeting, the cost for the project is \$1.7 million. If approved, the project would be financed through borrowing.

Annual debt service would be appropriated through the Town's Capital Budget and funded from Free Cash. The project is intended to protect the Town's investment in the municipal golf course, enhance the experience for residents and visitors, and support the Club's long-term operational and financial sustainability.

If all Articles are approved as presented to the 2026 Fall Town Meeting, each account will have the following balances:

<u>Account</u>	<u>Beginning Balance</u>	<u>Requested Amount</u>	<u>Final Balance</u>
Levy Capacity	\$ 37,714	\$ 33,571	\$ 4,143
Anticipated Free Cash	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 1,169,014	\$ 830,986
Stabilization Fund	\$ 2,873,587	\$ -	\$ 2,873,587
Capital Stabilization Fund*	\$ 324,028	\$ 691,000	\$ 1,015,028
GORSD Capital Stabilization Fund**	\$ 122,486	\$ 377,514	\$ 500,000

* Beginning Balance Includes \$180,000 from WRAP Funds

** Beginning Balance Includes \$95,893 from WRAP Funds

As stated above, should the Town Meeting agree with these appropriations, \$1,169,014 will come from the Town's Free Cash Account, leaving a Free Cash balance of \$830,986. In the Spring of 2027, it is expected that \$400,000 in Free Cash will be required to cover Debt Service, OPEB Trust Fund and Department Head Performance Incentives, leaving a balance of \$430,986 in Free Cash. Based on final anticipated new Growth for FY 2027 and the Final Cherry Sheet Estimates received from the State, the Budget approved at the 2026 Spring Town Meeting is currently \$33,571 under the anticipated FY 2027 Levy Limit. For the line items that are reoccurring and will be funded through taxation, it is requested that \$33,571 come from this amount, which will leave the Town \$4,143 under the anticipated Levy Limit for Fiscal Year 2027. The following chart is a breakdown of the anticipated rate:

	<u>Actual FY 2026</u>	<u>Proposed FY 2027</u>	<u>Dollar Change</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Levy Capacity Used	\$ 35,100,029	\$ 36,260,538	\$ 1,160,509	3.31%
Tax Rate on Levy Capacity Used	\$ 11.62	\$ 11.91	\$ 0.29	2.50%
Average Tax Bill	\$ 8,847	\$ 9,068	\$ 221	2.50%
Health and Pension Excluded	\$ 4,457,823	\$ 4,654,611	\$ 196,788	4.41%
Tax Rate on Health and Pension	\$ 1.47	\$ 1.53	\$ 0.06	4.08%
Average Tax Bill	\$ 1,119	\$ 1,165	\$ 46	4.08%
Excluded Debt	\$ 5,115,092	\$ 6,166,244	\$ 1,051,152	20.55%
Tax Rate on Excluded Debt	\$ 1.69	\$ 2.02	\$ 0.33	19.53%
Average Tax Bill	\$ 1,287	\$ 1,538	\$ 251	19.53%
Final Levy Used	\$ 44,672,944	\$ 47,081,393	\$ 2,408,449	5.39%
Final Tax Rate	\$ 14.78	\$ 15.46	\$ 0.68	4.60%
Average Tax Bill	\$ 11,253	\$ 11,771	\$ 518	4.60%

Respectfully submitted,

Mark W. Haddad

Mark W. Haddad
Town Manager

Town of Groton
Select Board
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Groton, MA 01450

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RESIDENTIAL POSTAL PATRON GROTON, MA

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, AUGUST 31, 2026
UN-APPROVED

Select Board Members Present: Becky Pine, Vice Chair; Nick Degaitas Jr., Clerk; John Reilly; Matt Pisani;

Select Board Members Absent: Peter Cunningham, Chair;

Finance Committee Members Present: Bud Robertson, Finance Committee Chair; Gary Green; Scott Whitefield; Nancy Muller; David Manugian;

Finance Committee Members Absent: Kristina Legyel; Jamie McDonald;

Also Present: Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; Patricia DuFresne, Assistant Director of Finance/Town Accountant; Deputy Police Chief Rachael Mead; Takashi Tada, Town Planner/ Land Use Director; Shawn Campbell; Groton Country Club General Manager; Andres Correa, Energy Manager; Charlotte Weigel, Sustainability Commission; Tammi Mickel, Principal Assessor; Katie Kazanjian, Treasurer/Tax Collector; Mark Presti and Mary Jennings of the Park Commission; Megan Buczynski, Activitas Consultant; Russ Harris; Jennifer Moore; Leslie Row; Sam Palmer and John Bellessa.

Vice Chair Pine called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and reviewed the agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Haddad made an announcement regarding the Town's use of Flock Safety. He informed the Board and the community that they are aware of the Town's use of Flock Safety and the automated license plate reader cameras utilized by the Groton Police Department. After several weeks of reviewing the cameras and discussing their use with Chief Luth and Deputy Chief Mead, they decided to terminate the contract with Flock Safety, effective immediately. The Town Manager and Police Chief issued a Press Release earlier today, and Mr. Haddad read a statement into the record concerning this decision. (Please see the Press Release included with these minutes.)

Ms. Pine reminded everyone that the Massachusetts State Primary is on Tuesday, September 1st, and urged residents to vote.

Mr. Haddad announced an Employee Appreciation Cookout, weather permitting, hosted by the Town Manager's Office, Human Resources, and Information Technology Departments, from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 3rd, at Town Hall.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD - Zoom

None

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Update from Deputy Chief Mead on the Police Camera Working Group.

Deputy Police Chief Mead provided an update on the Police Camera Working Group, which met on August 18th to establish its mission statement. The group's goal is to make informed recommendations, address community concerns, and support technology decisions that enhance public safety and accountability in the Groton Police Department.

A Public Forum is scheduled for Thursday, September 24th at 6:00 p.m. at the Groton Center. While Deputy Mead was disappointed that the contract was canceled, she was relieved and felt it would allow for more thorough discussions about camera technology. Ms. Pine thanked Deputy Mead and Mr. Haddad for their efforts in finding the best solution for the Town, and Deputy Mead noted that the Flock cameras were placed in response to traffic complaints. (The Report from the Working Group is attached to these minutes)

2. Regional Energy Manager- First Year Update.

Andres Correa, the Energy Manager, and Charlotte Weigel, the Chair of Sustainability, attended the meeting to provide a summary of Mr. Correa's work over the past year as the Municipal Energy Manager (MEM) for the towns of Groton, Harvard, Ayer, and Shirley. The presentation reviewed various projects and outlined the total Green Communities Grant funding awarded to each community, totaling \$734,851. Mr. Correa discussed challenges he encountered and lessons he learned this year as MEM. He explained that the Town of Groton's next steps include completing the municipal decarbonization roadmap and continuing to submit Green Community reporting in January 2027. He also outlined the upcoming Green Community grant application projects for the Spring of 2027.

Mr. Correa asked the Select Board to help publicize the MEM work, encourage ongoing collaboration with the Groton Dunstable Regional School District (GDRSD), and address any potential bottlenecks. He also asked the Board to advise on making the case for funding beyond the Grant, which would end mid-2028. Mr. Haddad explained that during the meeting with the Managers discussing Mr. Correa's work, they believed the position was valuable and would like to see it continue. They are willing to keep the position funded and enter into an Inter-Municipal Agreement (IMA) with the other towns after 2028. Mr. Haddad and the Board emphasized that Mr. Correa has done a great job in his first year and thanked him for his efforts.

3. Presentation from the Town Manager on Creating a Regional Veterans' Service Officer with Pepperell and Littleton.

Mr. Haddad provided a recommendation that the Town regionalize the Veterans Services Officer (VSO) position with the Towns of Littleton and Pepperell. He explained that this proposed regional model aims to provide Groton's veterans with a higher, more consistent level of service while addressing the Town's long-term staffing commitments in a fiscally responsible manner. Mr. Haddad noted that he had previously suggested increasing the hours for the Town's VSO position, acknowledging the workload and level of service required. He then explained that the Select Board did not support that request. As a result, Mr. Haddad explored other approaches to improve veterans' services without placing the financial burden of a full-time position on Groton alone. Regionalization provided such an opportunity.

Mr. Haddad explained that under Massachusetts law, if a community has a population greater than 12,000 and appoints a new Veterans Services Officer (VSO), the position must be full-time unless veteran services are provided through an approved regional agreement. With Groton's population nearing 12,000, he emphasized presenting this proposal now rather than waiting for a future

vacancy or for the population to exceed the threshold, which would require the town to hire a full-time VSO. The proposed regional agreement with Pepperell and Littleton would establish full-time regional VSO operations with the necessary administrative support and allow the participating communities to share the costs. Mr. Haddad provided a chart showing the anticipated FY 2027 cost of \$33,571.25 for the Town of Groton. He believes this makes good fiscal and operational sense, and Meg Murphy, Groton's interim VSO, is off to a great start. Ms. Murphy also serves as the VSO for the towns of Pepperell and Littleton, positioning her to become the permanent VSO for the Town of Groton. The Board discussed the proposal, and Mr. Haddad explained that it would be discussed further with the Finance Committee during the public hearing on the warrant.

4. Fiscal Year 2028 Budget Update.

The Town Manager/Town Administrator Working Group meeting was productive. Mr. Haddad said the Group shared experiences from successful override campaigns in Grafton, Melrose, and Marblehead and took a closer look at long-term financial projections. He explained that current projections indicate an override will likely be necessary for FY 2028, but he still believes it is too early to discuss a definitive number. He said the Group aims to bring forward a more concrete proposal later this fall. Mr. Haddad and Dunstable Town Administrator Jason Silva prepared a three-year projection based on school impacts and projected town costs. Mr. Degaitas added that the Group is collaborating well. Mr. Robertson added that FY 2028 will be challenging.

5. Update on Select Board Schedule through Labor Day.

Monday, September 7, 2026-	No Meeting (Labor Day)
Monday, September 14, 2026-	Issue the Warrant for the Fall Town Meeting
Monday, September 21, 2026-	No Meeting
Monday, September 28, 2026-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Saturday, October 3, 2026-	2026 Fall Town Meeting
Monday, October 5, 2026-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, October 12, 2026-	No Meeting (Indigenous Peoples' Day Holiday)
Monday, October 19, 2026-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, October 26, 2026-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, November 2, 2026-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, November 9, 2026-	No Meeting
Monday, November 16, 2026-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, November 23, 2026-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, November 30, 2026-	No Meeting
Monday, December 7, 2026-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 14, 2026-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 21, 2026-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 28, 2026-	No Meeting (Christmas Holiday)
Monday, January 4, 2027-	No Meeting (New Year's Holiday)
Monday, January 22, 2027-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting

ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL

Jennifer Moore, representing the Groton Business Association, attended the meeting to review plans for the Annual GrotonFest Fall festival and to discuss two special one-day licenses for wine and malt beverages. Ms. Moore provided the Board with a map showing vendor setup locations and the designated beer garden area. She explained that all beer and wine will be restricted to a specific area and that the Police Department has approved the locations where alcohol will be served. The Board was satisfied with Ms. Moore's explanation and plans, found her input very helpful, and thanked her for her efforts.

- 1. Consider Approving a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for Broken Creek Vineyard at Legion Common for GrotonFest on Saturday, September 26, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**
- 2. Consider Approving a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for Mass Brewing LLC d/b/a Sterling Street Brewery at Legion Common for GrotonFest on Saturday, September 26, 2026.**

Mr. Pisani moved to approve a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for both Broken Creek Vineyard and Mass Brewing LLC, d/b/a Sterling Street Brewery, for GrotonFest at Legion Common on Saturday, September 26, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mr. Degaitas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- 3. Consider Approving a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for the Friends of Prescott for Open Mic Night on Friday, September 11, 2026, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.**

Mr. Reilly moved to approve a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for the Friends of Prescott for Open Mic Night on Friday, September 11, 2026, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Mr. Degaitas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

On-Going Issues

- A. PFAS Issue – A kickoff meeting was held with the contractor, DeFelice, to initiate the next phase of the PFAS waterline project, now underway. The team is working on Reedy Meadow Road, and individual connections to the homes will begin soon. During the kickoff meeting, the team discussed a process in which the contractor, the engineer, and the water superintendent will meet with each homeowner before making the connections. This meeting will provide an opportunity to discuss the connections, and homeowners will sign off on the process. A total of 78 individual connections are planned. A formal proposal to address properties that test higher than 4 parts per trillion after the project is closed will be presented at the September 14th Select Board meeting.
- B. UMass Satellite Emergency Facility – None.
- C. Fire Department Staffing – None.
- D. West Groton Dam Removal- None.
- E. Main Street Study – Mr. Haddad apologized to the Board for the release of the Main Street Study Report before the Select Board had the opportunity to review it. The Working Group met to review the report, and the Complete Streets Committee met the following day.

Unfortunately, the report was made public, and an article appeared in the Groton Herald about it before the Select Board could review it. The Working Group has reviewed the plans, and Mr. Haddad is currently waiting to receive the final designs from MDM Transportation Consultants. MDM has completed its preliminary designs for improvements to the Main Street Corridor. Mr. Haddad explained that they are focusing on the four major intersections along Route 119. One proposal includes installing a traffic light at Broadmeadow and Lowell Road. The Complete Streets Committee will hold a public hearing and lead the public engagement for the community.

F. Flock Cameras- None.

SELECT BOARD LIAISON REPORTS

None

Approval of the Regularly Scheduled Meeting of August 17, 2027.

Mr. Pisani made a motion to approve the minutes from the regularly scheduled meeting on August 17, 2026. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

7:00 P.M. In Joint Session with the Finance Committee- Public Hearing on the Various Warrant Articles Contained in the Warrant for the 2026 Fall Town Meeting.

Mr. Haddad read the public hearing notice into the record and asked the Board to open the public hearing.

Mr. Reilly made a motion to open the public hearing for the October 3, 2026, Fall Town Meeting Warrant. Mr. Degaitas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Robertson called the Finance Committee to order.

Mr. Haddad explained that the warrant includes nineteen (19) articles and wanted to review them. He began by reviewing a summary of the proposed Fall Town Meeting expenditures based on the Warrant Articles, along with a summary of available funds:

FY 2027 Levy Capacity:	\$37,714
Anticipated Free Cash:	\$2,000,000
Stabilization Fund:	\$2,873,587
Capital Stabilization Fund:	\$144,028
GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund:	\$26,593
Winter Recovery Assistance Program (WRAP) Funds:	\$275,893

The Town of Groton received \$275,893 from the Commonwealth through the Winter Recovery Assistance Program (WRAP) to help cover extraordinary snow and ice costs incurred during Fiscal Year 2026. Mr. Haddad explained that the Town's FY 2026 Snow and Ice Deficit was funded by \$180,000 from the Capital Stabilization Fund and \$165,000 in free Cash. With guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services, the Town will use \$180,000 of the WRAP reimbursement to restore the amount previously withdrawn from the Capital Stabilization Fund.

Article 1: Prior Year Bills- Service Tire Truck Centers- Requested Amount: \$430

Article 2: Amend the Fiscal Year 2027 Town Operating Budget.

Mr. Haddad reviewed the proposed amendments to the Operating Budget with the Board (see the attached memorandum).

He then explained the total amounts requested by category:

Free Cash:	\$100,500
Tax Levy:	<u>\$ 33,571</u>
Total:	\$ 134,071

Article 3: Transfer Money into Capital Stabilization Fund- Requested Amount- \$691,000

The current balance is \$144,028. The town's financial policies require maintaining a fund balance equal to 1.5% of the total Operating Budget. If Article 2 passes as presented, the total Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budget will be \$55,994,017, resulting in a target Capital Stabilization Fund balance of \$839,910. This would require an appropriation of \$695,882. Mr. Haddad explained that funding the anticipated FY 2028 Capital Budget would require an additional \$175,118, bringing the total recommended appropriation to \$871,000. As previously explained, \$180,000 of this appropriation would be funded from the town's WRAP proceeds, restoring the amount previously withdrawn from the Capital Stabilization Fund to address the FY 2026 snow and ice deficit. The remaining \$691,000 would come from Free Cash.

Article 4: Transfer Money into the Stabilization Fund— Requested Amount- \$0

With a current balance of \$2,873,587, we do not need to add money to the Stabilization Fund at this time.

Article 5: Transfer Money into the GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund- Requested Amount: \$377,514

The anticipated capital budget for the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District in Fiscal Year 2028 is \$500,000. The current balance is \$26,593, leaving a funding requirement of \$473,407. To address this need, Mr. Haddad recommends allocating \$95,893 from the Town's FY 2027 WRAP funds, as previously explained, and funding the remaining \$377,514 from Free Cash.

Article 6: Transfer Within the Water Enterprise Fund- This is a placeholder.

Article 7: Transfer Within the Four Center Sewer Enterprise Fund- This is a placeholder.

Article 8: Transfer Within the Stormwater Enterprise Fund- This is a placeholder.

Article 9: Appropriations to Fund Town Forest Expenses- Requested Amount- \$30,000.

Leslie Row from the Town Forest Committee attended the meeting to discuss funding for the removal of a dead stand of Red Pines that poses a safety hazard in the Forest. The total cost of the removal is \$30,000, of which \$12,238 will be covered by a reimbursement from the Division of Conservation and Recreation.

Articles 1 through 9 will be part of a consent agenda.

Article 10: Cow Pond Brook Fields Improvements- Requested Amount-\$4,200,000

Consultant Megan Buczynski, along with Park Commissioners Mark Presti and Mary Jennings, attended the meeting. Ms. Buczynski outlined the objective of using the \$1 million grant. She discussed modifications to reduce the project's overall cost, which she will present at the Spring Town Meeting. The focus was on materials, utilities, and stormwater management. Mr. Haddad emphasized that these changes will keep the project eligible for the grant and ensure funding is accessible. The revised proposal reduces the overall project cost by an estimated \$600,000 to \$800,000 from the original estimated budget of approximately \$4.8 million while retaining the project's primary objectives. Mr. Haddad clarified that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts currently holds the grant funds and that the federal government cannot reclaim them. If Town Meeting approves this article, the project will remain eligible for the grant.

Article 11: Citizens' Petition- Termination of Automated License Plate Reader Camera Program- Proponent John Bellessa was in attendance.

Mr. Haddad explained that the Flock Contract was canceled and that, moving forward, any new camera will need to be appropriated at a future Town Meeting. He stated that all requests outlined in the Citizens Petition have been addressed. Mr. Bellessa thanked Mr. Haddad and Chief Luth for canceling the contract and said they look forward to the Working Group's findings. Mr. Haddad noted that if 10 of the 25 individuals who signed the original petition wish to withdraw it before the warrant is posted, they should submit a letter with the necessary signatures requesting removal of the article. He also assured Mr. Bellessa that no future action could take place without returning to a Town Meeting.

Article 12: Install Irrigation System/Course Improvements- Groton Country Club-Requested Amount- \$1,700,000.

Groton Country Club General Manager Shawn Campbell attended to review the article. The article requests funding to construct a new irrigation system and complete targeted course improvements at the Groton Country Club. Mr. Campbell explained that the preliminary planning estimate for the project is approximately \$1.7 million. He noted that the current irrigation system is entirely manual and that the new equipment would improve the greens. He also explained that the current irrigation water comes from the pond, as there is no well. Mr. Haddad explained that the funding does not impact the operating budget because funding for the debt service would come from the Capital Budget. In addition, he noted that the country club generated over \$1 million in revenue this past year. He stated that it is treated as an enterprise fund; however, he clarified that

it is not actually considered one. Mr. Campbell's capital budget is based on income from expenses, and he incorporated this into this year's budget. The capital budget is funded through free cash, which he has contributed to since the country club returns money each year. This project will be funded by a BAN (Bond Anticipation Note) with a mandatory principal paydown after year two. If the capital budget has extra funds each year, additional payments toward debt service will be made to pay it off more quickly. Mr. Haddad believes this will be a good thing for the Country Club. Mr. Reilly stated that the Country Club attracts the entire town, emphasizing that it is not just about the golf course: it's about the pool, camps, and the pickleball court, too.

Article 13: Transfer of Land from the DPW to the Electric Light Department - This article authorizes the transfer of a portion of the DPW property at 600 Cow Pond Brook Road to the Groton Electric Light Department for the construction, installation, and use of a battery energy storage system. A meeting will be held with Town Counsel and the Attorney for Groton Electric Light Department on September 1st to discuss whether there is a benefit to the DPW Building located at 600 Cow Pond Brook Road. This is a placeholder that Town Counsel requested be included on the Warrant.

Article 14: Establish Means-Tested Senior Citizen Property Tax Exemption.

Mr. Degaitas introduced this article and explained that it proposes an income-based exemption for seniors who have claimed the Massachusetts tax circuit breaker credit, which can be up to \$2,800. Approximately fifty seniors in Groton meet this requirement. To qualify, they must also have filed their state income taxes. This exemption would provide additional relief from the Board of Assessors if seniors apply annually and meet the other necessary requirements. The town could match up to 200% of the circuit breaker credit. Funding for this initiative would come from the overlay. Mr. Degaitas also clarified that this program is not solely based on income. This language has already passed the legislature and been adopted in the towns of Marblehead and Grafton. Mr. Whitefield asked whether the program could be adjusted annually, and Principal Assessor Tammi Mickel confirmed that it could.

Takashi Tada, Town Planner/Lans Use Director, was in attendance for the discussion of Articles 15 through 17, submitted by the Planning Board.

Article 15: Small Scale Clean Energy Infrastructure Facility Siting and Permitting-

This article proposes a new general bylaw to adopt state-mandated requirements, which will take effect statewide on October 1, 2026. Mr. Tada further explained that all towns will be required to implement small-scale clean energy infrastructure facilities.

Article 16: Small Clean Energy Facilities Consolidating Permitting-

Mr. Tada explained that this article amends the current zoning bylaw to clarify the definition of a small clean energy infrastructure facility. He provided examples such as a solar panel array or a battery energy storage system.

Article 17: Scale Ground Mounting Solar Photovoltaic Facilities-

Mr. Tada explained that this article would introduce a new category to the town's zoning regulations, which does not currently exist: battery energy storage systems.

Article 18: Citizens Petition-Senior Property Tax Freeze Program- Proponent Sam Palmer submitted a citizens' petition stating that if you are 70 years old or older and have owned and occupied the property as your principal residence for 35 years or longer, your taxes would be frozen at that amount permanently after you apply. Tammi Mickel, the Principal Assessor, conducted a study based on the current census and indicated that approximately 433 residents could potentially qualify for this program if it is approved. If this article passes, the Select Board would need to establish specific criteria. Mr. Haddad explained that the Legislature has not considered this proposal in any town. Ms. Pine expressed uncertainty about whether the two proposed articles regarding Senior Citizen taxes should be presented together, as it could backfire.

Article 19: Citizens Petition- Study Housing Opportunities and Municipal Finance-

Proponent Russ Harris was in attendance to discuss this article. The article examines potential ways to adopt different zoning regulations and reviews the budget. Mr. Harris believes property tax is the primary source of revenue in Groton. One way to improve it is to increase the number of taxpayers and add more housing in Groton to help improve the budget situation.

Mr. Pisani made a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The Select Board adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

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