



**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

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

**SELECT BOARD MEETING**  
**MONDAY, JANUARY 23, 2023**  
**AGENDA**  
**SELECT BOARD MEETING ROOM**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> FLOOR**  
**GROTON TOWN HALL**

7:00 P.M. Announcements and Review Agenda for the Public

7:05 P.M. Public Comment Period

**I. 7:06 P.M. Town Manager's Report**

1. Consider Accepting the Nomination of the Town Manager and Appointing Corey Magliozzi to the Trails Committee
2. Fiscal Year 2023 Second Quarter Financial Review
3. Update On Fiscal Year 2023 Goals and Objectives
4. Consider Approving Town Manager's Proposed DPW Director-In-Training Program
5. Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Development Update
6. Update on Select Board Meeting Schedule Through 2023 Spring Town Meeting

**II. 7:10 P.M. Items for Select Board Consideration and Action**

1. Consider Appointing Barbara Rich to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee
2. Consider Approving Political Activity by Town Employees Policy and the Political Activity by Elected and Appointed Officials (Non-Employees) Policy
3. Approve Letter to Division of Conservation and Recreation/Mass Trails Program in Support of Squannacook Greenways Grant Application
4. Consider Approving a One Day Beer and Wine Liquor License for the Friends of Prescott for a Prescott Open Mic Night on Friday, February 10, 2023 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

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

- A. Water Department – Manganese Issue
- B. PFAS Issue
- C. Green Communities Application and Implementation
- D. Florence Roche Elementary School Construction Project
- E. ARPA Funding

**SELECT BOARD LIAISON REPORTS**

**III. Minutes: Regularly Scheduled Meeting of January 9, 2023**

**ADJOURNMENT**

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



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**Town Manager**  
Mark W. Haddad

**To:** *Select Board*

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

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

**Date:** *January 23, 2023*

### TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Other than the Town Manager's Report, Items for Select Board Consideration and Action and a review of the On-going Issues List, there are no specific Agenda Items scheduled at Monday's meeting.

1. At the request of the Trails Committee, I am nominating Corey Magliozzi for appointment to the Trails Committee. I would respectfully request that the Board accept this nomination and appoint Mr. Magliozzi to the Committee.
2. Enclosed with this report is the Fiscal Year 2023 Second Quarter Financial Report as prepared by the Town Accountant. I would like to spend some time at Monday's meeting reviewing this Report with the Board.
3. As is our practice when reviewing the quarterly financials, I have set aside time for the Board to review the status of your FY 2023 Goals. Enclosed with this report is a status update on the goals. We can discuss this in more detail at Monday's meeting.
4. As part of my Proposed FY 2024 Proposed Budget, I proposed establishing a DPW Director-In-Training Program. As you know, Tom Delaney has informed me of his intention to retire in two years. Replacing a 38-year employee (40 years by the time he retires) will be a significant undertaking. It is never too early to start the process. In the past, we have instituted "In-Training" programs, whereby we train current employees to take over the Department Head Position when the current incumbent retires. We successfully used this program to appoint our current Town Accountant, Building Commissioner and Treasurer/Collector. I would like to continue this very successful program in replacing Tom Delaney. I would respectfully request that the Select Board authorize me to move forward with this proposed Program.

**Select Board**  
**Weekly Agenda Update/Report**  
**January 23, 2023**  
**page two**

5. With regard to the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Update, I spoke with the Dr. Chesson this past week and she should have her latest budget proposal by the first week of February. I eagerly await those numbers. In addition, I would like to spend a few minutes at Monday's meeting determining the meeting schedule to review potential Municipal Budget reductions. As stated during my Presentation last week, I would like to hold an Executive Session with the Finance Committee and Select Board to review how potential reductions impact Collective Bargaining in the event I need to schedule meetings with Unions before releasing proposed budget cuts to the public.

6. Please see the update to the meeting schedule that will take the Board through the 2023 Spring Town Meeting:

Monday, January 30, 2023	-Destination Groton Committee Update -Consider Opt-Out of Mail in Voting for Annual Town Election -Discuss Whether or Not to Opt-In for Early Voting for Annual Town Election
Monday, February 6, 2023	-Affordable Housing Trust Update/Report
Monday, February 13, 2023	-Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, February 20, 2023	-No Meeting (President's Day Holiday)
Monday, February 27, 2023	-Review First Draft of 2023 Spring Town Meeting Warrant
Monday, March 6, 2023	-Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, March 13, 2023	-Public Hearing on 2023 Spring Town Meeting Warrant Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, March 20, 2023	-No Meeting
Monday, March 27, 2023	-Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, April 3, 2023	-Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, April 10, 2023	-Approve Warrant for Posting
Monday, April 17, 2023	-No Meeting (Patriot's Day)
Saturday, April 29, 2023	-2023 Spring Town Meeting

**ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND ACTION**

1. There is one vacancy on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. The Committee has requested that the Board appoint Barbara Rich to that vacancy. I would respectfully request that the Board make this appointment.
2. The Board had requested that Labor Counsel review the Political Activity Policies and make sure that they are in compliance with State Law. Based on this review, he is recommending that the Select Board adopt separate policies for elected/appointed officials and hired Town employees. To that end, attached to this report are two proposed policies (one for Town Employees and one for Elected and Appointed (Non-Employees) Officials. I would respectfully request that the Board consider adopting these two policies at Monday's meeting.
3. At your last meeting, the Board approved a letter to the Community Preservation Committee in support of the Squannacook Greenway's CPA Application. Select Board Member Cunningham is requesting that the Board approve a similar letter of support to the Division of Conservation and Recreation for their Mass Trails Grant application for State Funding to complete the Trail. The draft letter is attached to this Report for your review and approval.
4. The Friends of Prescott is requesting approval of a One Day Beer and Wine Liquor License for the Prescott Open Mic Night on Friday, February 10, 2023 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. I would respectfully request that the Board approve this license at Monday's meeting.

MWH/rjb

enclosures

**Town of Groton**  
**General Fund Statement of Revenues & Expenditures**  
**December 31, 2022**

	Current Budget FY23	July - Dec Actual FY23	Variance to FY23 Budget	1st Qtr % of Budget	Final FY22 Budget	July - June Actual FY22	July - Dec Actual FY22	2nd Qtr Variance to FY22 Budget	2nd Qtr % of Budget	% of Budget Change	Notes
Revenue											
State Aid (Lottery/Exempts/Van)	1,077,749	628,521	(449,228)	58.32%	1,014,099	1,039,205	529,078	(485,021)	52.17%	111.79%	LRTA Van reimb up \$79k
Motor Vehicle/Boat Excise	1,778,290	266,057	(1,512,233)	14.96%	1,738,094	1,844,521	270,344	(1,467,750)	15.55%	96.21%	Typically Collected 3rd/4th Qtr
Local Option Meals Tax	250,000	137,854	(112,146)	55.14%	175,000	215,759	116,974	(58,026)	66.84%	82.50%	
Local Option Room Occupancy Tax	100,000	111,947	11,947	111.95%	75,000	136,445	79,344	4,344	105.79%	105.82%	
Penalties and Interest on Taxes	110,000	66,087	(43,913)	60.08%	120,000	157,400	76,117	(43,883)	63.43%	94.72%	Budget adj for FY23 to reflect actual performance
Payments in Lieu of Taxes	300,000	2,119	(297,881)	0.71%	265,000	298,231	4,678	(260,322)	1.77%	40.11%	Collected in 4th Qtr
Other Charges for Service (Dunst)	90,000	93,123	3,123	103.47%	82,000	81,746	66,596	(15,404)	81.21%	127.41%	Dunstable paid in advance for FY23
Country Club Revenue	605,267	212,813	(392,454)	35.16%	600,000	739,701	184,401	(415,599)	30.73%	114.42%	
Fees (incl Van vouchers)	385,446	231,599	(153,847)	60.09%	340,000	428,207	236,096	(103,904)	69.44%	86.54%	
Rentals ( Cell Towers)	32,000	49,412	17,412	154.41%	28,000	47,304	23,116	(4,884)	82.56%	187.03%	Contract escalators boosting FY23
Library Fines	0	0	0	#DIV/0!	0	169	169	169	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	
Other Departmental Revenue	775,000	399,045	(375,955)	51.49%	775,000	780,772	208,008	(566,992)	26.84%	191.84%	Non-Enterprise reimb. posted late in FY22
Licenses and Permits	315,681	443,469	127,788	140.48%	300,000	537,500	262,377	(37,623)	87.46%	160.62%	Building Permits up in FY23 (Whitney Well \$70k)
Fines and Forfeits	10,000	7,051	(2,949)	70.51%	20,000	16,120	9,640	(10,360)	48.20%	146.29%	Budget adj for FY23 to reflect actual performance
Investment Income	50,000	111,528	61,528	223.06%	40,000	41,957	20,214	(19,786)	50.54%	441.35%	Project Funds on Deposit FY23
Misc Non-recurring (State Aid)	6,936	0	(6,936)	0.00%	0	0	0	0			
Misc (Bond Prem Amort & Other)	0	4,175	4,175	#DIV/0!	0	131,983	26,085	26,085	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	FY22:Easement Fee/Agency Closeout/Covid Sick Leave
Enterprise Allocation for Indirects	291,664	145,757	(145,907)	49.97%	271,148	273,790	143,766	(127,382)	53.02%	94.25%	
Real Estate and Personal Prop	39,160,747	18,007,044	(21,153,703)	45.98%	36,277,152	36,386,848	17,541,426	(18,735,726)	48.35%	95.10%	
Total Revenue	45,338,780	20,917,601	(24,421,179)	46.14%	42,120,493	43,157,658	19,798,429	(22,322,064)	47.00%	98.17%	
Expenditures (Operating Expenses)											
General Government	2,735,455	1,437,761	1,297,694	52.56%	2,583,655	2,372,609	1,306,300	1,277,355	50.56%	103.96%	
Public Safety General Fund**	4,840,213	2,313,116	2,527,097	47.79%	4,461,664	4,378,645	2,191,353	2,270,311	49.12%	97.29%	
Department of Public Works	2,345,816	974,461	1,371,355	41.54%	2,256,398	2,360,432	892,604	1,363,794	39.56%	105.01%	
Culture, Rec, & Citizen's Svcs	1,892,083	1,037,770	854,313	54.85%	1,705,507	1,668,759	827,689	877,818	48.53%	113.02%	COA-Van LRTA/Country Club Programming
Employee Benefits and Other*	4,635,006	3,703,093	931,913	79.89%	4,310,992	4,290,300	3,497,986	813,006	81.14%	98.46%	
Total Operating Expenses	16,448,573	9,466,201	6,982,372	57.55%	15,318,216	15,070,745	8,715,932	6,602,284	56.90%	101.14%	
Expenditures (Non -Operating Exp.)											
Special Articles Voted for Current Yr	711,700	181,090	530,610	25.44%	761,900	453,548	113,776	648,124	14.93%	170.40%	
PY Articles/Enc(SeeUse of Enc Below)	652,820	111,093	541,727	17.02%	560,887	227,289	137,587	423,300	24.53%	69.38%	
Education	26,189,285	13,297,152	12,892,133	50.77%	25,047,906	25,047,906	12,725,822	12,322,084	50.81%	99.92%	
Debt Service	3,615,194	1,414,689	2,200,505	39.13%	1,912,869	1,907,807	870,031	1,042,838	45.48%	86.04%	FloRo Debt \$592k 1st Qtr FY23
Intergovernmental (State Offsets)	95,249	47,625	47,624	50.00%	97,077	97,077	48,539	48,538	50.00%	100.00%	
Total Non - Operating Expenses	31,264,248	15,051,649	16,212,599	48.14%	28,380,639	27,733,627	13,895,755	14,484,884	48.96%	98.33%	
Excess (Deficiency) Before OFS&U	(2,374,041)	(3,600,249)	(1,226,208)	151.65%	(1,578,362)	353,286	(2,813,258)	(1,234,896)	178.24%	85.08%	
Other Financing Sources											
Transfers from Other Funds	1,474,250	1,474,250	0	100.00%	1,145,298	1,207,287	1,089,223	56,075	95.10%	105.15%	
Use of Avail. Funds: Encumbrances	652,820	652,820	0	100.00%	549,285	549,285	549,285	0	100.00%	100.00%	
Avail. Funds: F. C./Overlay Surplus	804,705	724,048	(80,657)	89.98%	595,001	595,001	595,001	0	100.00%	89.98%	
Total OFS	2,931,775	2,851,118	(80,657)	97.25%	2,289,584	2,351,573	2,233,509	56,075	97.55%	99.69%	
Other Financing Uses											
Overlay & Deficits to be Raised	229,560	229,560	0	100.00%	370,954	370,954	370,954	0	100.00%	100.00%	Snow & Ice/Library Offset/Overlay Raised
Transfers to Other Funds	328,174	181,000	147,174	55.15%	340,268	340,268	340,268	0	100.00%	55.15%	OPEB Funding/BAN Paydowns
Total OFU	557,734	410,560	147,174	73.61%	711,222	711,222	711,222	0	100.00%	73.61%	
Excess (Deficiency) Incl. OFS&U	0	(1,159,691)	(1,159,691)		0	1,993,637	(1,290,971)	(1,290,971)			

**Town of Groton**  
**General Fund Statement of Revenues & Expenditures**  
**December 31, 2022**

	<b>Current Budget FY23</b>	<b>July - Dec Actual FY23</b>	<b>Variance to FY23 Budget</b>	<b>1st Qtr % of Budget</b>	<b>Final FY22 Budget</b>	<b>July - June Actual FY22</b>	<b>July - Dec Actual FY22</b>	<b>2nd Qtr Variance to FY22 Budget</b>	<b>2nd Qtr % of Budget</b>	<b>% of Budget Change</b>
<b>Salaries/Wages Expenditures by Function of Government</b>										
<b>General Government:</b>										
BOS/Town Manager	359,619	180,446	179,173	50.18%	347,495	346,701	173,700	173,795	49.99%	100.38%
Accountant	154,031	79,560	74,471	51.65%	147,273	147,273	74,376	72,897	50.50%	102.28%
Assessors	150,831	75,913	74,918	50.33%	142,963	141,149	69,981	72,982	48.95%	102.82% Personnel Transfer from Treasury
Treasurer/Collector	218,497	108,582	109,915	49.69%	215,457	213,870	109,626	105,831	50.88%	97.66% Personnel Transfer to Assessors
Personnel	87,984	46,164	41,820	52.47%	82,822	82,822	42,023	40,799	50.74%	103.41%
Information Technology	183,250	92,632	90,618	50.55%	174,801	173,924	86,277	88,524	49.36%	102.41%
Town Clerk/Elections	202,273	117,756	84,517	58.22%	162,394	160,650	76,604	85,790	47.17%	123.43% Retirement VBB Pay/Consulting Wages
Land Use Conservation Comm.	73,971	38,889	35,082	52.57%	69,481	69,481	35,254	34,227	50.74%	103.61%
Land Use Inspection Services	208,229	98,107	110,122	47.11%	198,438	196,327	92,293	106,145	46.51%	101.29%
Land Use (Planning/ZBA)	89,236	46,815	42,421	52.46%	84,016	84,016	42,629	41,387	50.74%	103.39%
<b>Total General Government</b>	<b>1,727,921</b>	<b>884,864</b>	<b>843,057</b>	<b>51.21%</b>	<b>1,625,140</b>	<b>1,616,213</b>	<b>802,763</b>	<b>822,377</b>	<b>49.40%</b>	<b>103.66%</b>
<b>Public Safety:</b>										
Police Department	2,371,593	1,156,246	1,215,347	48.75%	2,251,172	2,247,609	1,139,856	1,111,316	50.63%	96.29%
Fire Department/EMS	1,485,370	681,127	804,243	45.86%	1,278,821	1,274,806	613,618	665,203	47.98%	95.58%
Dispatch (paid from Gen Fund) **	500,359	272,689	227,670	54.50%	453,497	453,495	278,130	175,367	61.33%	88.86%
Animal Cntrl/Dog Officer	19,164	9,582	9,582	50.00%	19,164	19,164	9,582	9,582	50.00%	100.00%
<b>Total Public Safety</b>	<b>4,376,486</b>	<b>2,119,644</b>	<b>2,256,842</b>	<b>48.43%</b>	<b>4,002,654</b>	<b>3,995,074</b>	<b>2,041,186</b>	<b>1,961,468</b>	<b>51.00%</b>	<b>94.96%</b>
<b>Department of Public Works:</b>										
Municipal Buildings	159,057	76,512	82,545	48.10%	150,672	150,671	72,832	77,840	48.34%	99.50%
Highway	863,638	414,088	449,550	47.95%	799,241	798,836	376,841	422,400	47.15%	101.70%
Snow & Ice	140,000	23,979	116,021	17.13%	140,000	154,236	18,181	121,819	12.99%	131.87%
Parks	17,481	7,143	10,338	40.86%	21,017	15,817	6,964	14,053	33.14%	123.30% Employee eligible for bonus in FY23
Solid Waste	150,995	70,119	80,876	46.44%	142,722	140,322	67,597	75,125	47.36%	98.06%
<b>Total DPW</b>	<b>1,331,171</b>	<b>591,841</b>	<b>739,330</b>	<b>44.46%</b>	<b>1,253,652</b>	<b>1,259,882</b>	<b>542,415</b>	<b>711,237</b>	<b>43.27%</b>	<b>102.75%</b>
<b>Culture, Rec, &amp; Citizen's Svcs:</b>										
COA/COA Van	261,776	122,828	138,948	46.92%	175,706	174,524	73,035	102,671	41.57%	112.87% COA fully staffed FY23
Vets Svcs/Water Safety/Graves	10,668	4,830	5,838	45.28%	10,650	9,369	5,014	5,636	47.08%	96.18%
Library	770,599	377,337	393,262	48.97%	702,982	701,936	339,743	363,239	48.33%	101.32%
Country Club	363,414	241,179	122,235	66.36%	338,961	338,869	184,486	154,475	54.43%	121.92% Reclass of Aquatics Dir & Add'l Pool/Greens Staff
<b>Total Culture, Rec. &amp; Citizen's Svcs</b>	<b>1,406,457</b>	<b>746,174</b>	<b>660,283</b>	<b>53.05%</b>	<b>1,228,299</b>	<b>1,224,698</b>	<b>602,278</b>	<b>626,021</b>	<b>49.03%</b>	<b>108.20%</b>
<b>Grand Total Salaries &amp; Wages</b>	<b>8,842,035</b>	<b>4,342,523</b>	<b>4,499,512</b>	<b>49.11%</b>	<b>8,109,745</b>	<b>8,095,867</b>	<b>3,988,642</b>	<b>4,121,103</b>	<b>49.18%</b>	<b>99.86%</b>
<b>Benefits:</b>										
County Retirement	2,538,910	2,538,910	0	100.00%	2,385,255	2,385,255	2,385,255	0	100.00%	100.00%
Health / Life Insurance *	1,929,396	1,065,959	863,437	55.25%	1,773,437	1,752,862	1,034,392	739,045	58.33%	94.72%
Other Benefits (Medicare/Unemplmt)	166,700	98,224	68,476	58.92%	152,300	152,182	78,339	73,961	51.44%	114.54% S18k Unemployment Bill FY23 in litigation
<b>Total Benefits</b>	<b>4,635,006</b>	<b>3,703,093</b>	<b>931,913</b>	<b>79.89%</b>	<b>4,310,992</b>	<b>4,290,299</b>	<b>3,497,986</b>	<b>813,006</b>	<b>81.14%</b>	<b>98.46%</b>
<b>Total Salaries/Wages/Benefits</b>	<b>13,477,041</b>	<b>8,045,616</b>	<b>5,431,425</b>	<b>59.70%</b>	<b>12,420,737</b>	<b>12,386,166</b>	<b>7,486,628</b>	<b>4,934,109</b>	<b>60.28%</b>	<b>99.04%</b>

## FISCAL YEAR 2023

### GOALS OF THE GROTON SELECT BOARD

#### 1. Environmental Contamination Issues

Select Board Member Assigned: Peter Cunningham

Goal:

1. Monitor/Manage efforts to mitigate contamination and protect public health. Become better informed as a Board to the emerging environmental issues that are/will confront Groton.
2. Monitor PFAS issues already identified, and work to reduce further PFAS contamination
3. Monitor and address Nod Road Landfill site to the extent necessary

Measurable Benchmark:

Develop monitoring plan by December 31, 2022 to keep Board apprised of steps taken to address said issues.

11-7-22 Update

A meeting was held with representatives from DEP, Groton, Groton Water, Dunstable, Groton Dunstable Regional School District, Pepperell DPW and Consulting Engineers to review the PFAS Issue at the High School. The Consulting Engineers will develop various plans to bring municipal water to the High School as well as surrounding homes. It is anticipated that a draft of options will be available in mid-December.

The Select Board held two meetings to review the Nod Road Landfill and decided to do no further testing and to post the property as No Trespassing. DEP was informed of the Draft Initial Site Assessment by members of the Greenway Committee and will conduct an inspection of the Former Landfill. What further action needs to be taken will be discussed at a future meeting.

1-23-23 Update

At the November 21, 2022 Meeting, the Select Board discussed various options on how to address the PFAS Issue at the Groton Dunstable Regional High School. Options include tying the High School into the Pepperell Water System, the Dunstable Water System or the Groton Water System. The Select Board, while not making a final decision, would prefer a Groton Water option. The Town Manager and Water Superintendent have asked the Town's

consulting engineer to determine what is the best short-term solution while a permanent solution is developed in conjunction with DEP, the School District and the Towns of Pepperell and Dunstable.

## **2. Climate Change**

**Select Board Member Assigned: Alison Manugian**

### Goal:

Explore opportunities to address climate change and reduce the use of fossil fuels in town-owned buildings. Support efforts to inform and educate Town residents about opportunities to reduce energy use and costs.

### Measurable Benchmark:

Schedule workshop with the Sustainability Commission by December 31, 2022 to discuss developing policies and processes to address this goal.

### 11-7-22 Update

The Sustainability Commission is scheduled to come to either the December 5<sup>th</sup> or December 12<sup>th</sup> Select Board Meeting for this workshop.

### 1-23-23 Update

The Sustainability Commission and the Select Board held a workshop on December 12, 2022 in which the Sustainability Commission updated the Board on their efforts. The Sustainability Commission requested that the Select Board support providing funding for educational tools and the pollinator garden at the Center in West Groton.

## **3. Reducing Costs of Government**

**Select Board Member Assigned: Matt Pisani and John Reilly**

### Goal:

Explore ways to reduce costs of Government. Continue to review and explore ways to expand PILOTS. Seek Federal and State Grants for town projects whenever possible.

1. Work with Capital Planning Advisory Committee to understand long term capital needs of all Town Buildings and Facilities
2. Meet with Town Finance Team to review and update previous attempts to understand limits of Commercial Growth.

3. Continue to work with the various Non-Profit organizations in Groton on PILOT payments
4. Monitor the use of ARPA funds to ensure they are being used for the greatest benefit to Groton residents.
5. Review progress on Green Communities energy-reduction requirements, and future Green Communities Grant Applications. Understand impact of Green Community funds toward reducing costs for taxpayers.

Measurable Benchmark:

Schedule Meeting with Finance Team by December 31, 2022 to discuss Tax Policy and how new Growth is determined. Revisit PILOTs with various organizations by March 31, 2023

11-7-22 Update

The Select Board met in joint session with the Finance Committee and Capital Planning Advisory Committee to review the Capital Plan and to determine how to address the long-term capital needs. The CPAC has scheduled time on their November 7<sup>th</sup> Agenda to discuss this issue.

A meeting with the Finance Team will be scheduled with the Select Board to review tax policy and new growth. Select Board Member Pisani and the Town Manager have had initial conversations on how to proceed with PILOT review.

1-23-23 Update

At the December 19, 2022 Meeting, the Finance Team made a presentation on how Growth is determined and what can be done to promote growth. The Town received its first quarterly payment from Groton Hill Music on the ticket surcharge. During the Town Manager's 2024 Proposed Budget Presentation, a commitment was made to reach back out to the Private Schools to follow-up on the potential of the Schools' help to offset the costs of the FloRo Elementary School Construction Project.

The Green Communities Grant projects at the Library and Center Fire Station to install energy efficient lighting have been completed. The Town will attempt to apply for another Green Communities Grant in the Spring, 2023, although there is still one outstanding project (educational training for the Town's Maintenance Foreman) that may not be completed in time.

The Capital Planning Advisory Committee has scheduled a public forum/hearing on January 30, 2023 to discuss the long-term capital needs of the Prescott School. The Friends of Prescott have been

invited to the forum to provide an update on their future plans with the building. The Town received a grant from the State to install an elevator at the Prescott School. The project has been advertised for bids and they are due at the beginning of February.

**4. Affordable Housing and Housing Diversity**

**Select Board Member Assigned: Peter Cunningham and Becky Pine**

**Goal:**

Support the work of the Affordable Housing Trust, the Groton Housing Authority, and the Housing Partnership to make tangible progress on increasing the number of Affordable Housing Units on the MA Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). Analyze current open market housing values and affordable sale prices. Consider setting up a program to purchase homes for sale in Groton and sell them as an affordable in perpetuity. Support efforts by all of Groton's Housing Committees, and any needed Zoning changes, to increase the supply of Affordable Housing. Work with Planning Board on updating the town's Master Plan. Explore potential zoning revisions to promote less-expensive housing in Groton.

**Measurable Benchmark:**

This is the second year of a two-year goal and the benchmark will be developed as progress is made. Benchmarks may include identifying properties for affordable housing, supporting warrant articles to create more Affordable Housing and issuing RFPs for the creation of affordable housing.

**11-7-22 Update**

Both the Town Manager and Affordable Housing Trust have had conversations with the Community Preservation Committee about providing funding to the Affordable Housing Trust to provide them with the necessary capital to pursue creating affordable housing. Initial feedback has been positive and an application will be made to the CPC for funding.

**1-23-23 Update**

The Affordable Housing Trust is filing a CPA Application for funding in FY 2024 to promote affordable housing. The Affordable Housing Trust is scheduled to attend the February 6<sup>th</sup> Select Board meeting to provide an update/report to the Select Board on their progress to create/promote affordable housing.

**5. Diversity, Equality and Inclusion**  
**Select Board Member Assigned: Becky Pine**

**Goal:** Work with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee to formulate impactful Select Board and Groton-wide interventions to recognize, denounce, and prevent incidents of prejudicial hatred and injustice, such as Anti-Semitism, Racial and Religious Bigotry, Homophobia, and White Supremacy.

**Measurable Benchmark:** Schedule Workshop with Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee by February 15, 2023

11-7-22 Update No action to report.

1-23-23 Update The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee has been invited to the February 13, 2023 meeting for a workshop/update on their work.



# SELECT BOARD POLICY

Policy Category:	Employee
Policy Number:	EMP – 2019 – 6
Latest Revision Date:	November __, 2022

## POLICY NAME: **POLITICAL ACTIVITY BY TOWN EMPLOYEES** **POLICY**

### I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

~~A. The purpose of this policy is to establish limits for employee advise paid Town staff members ("employees") of the limitations on participation in political activities during normal working hours and/or on town-owned property.~~

### II. DEFINITIONS

~~Employee – For the purposes of this Policy, an employee shall be defined pursuant to Internal Revenue Code 3401(c) as follows: any officer, employee or official of the Town of Groton, or instrumentality of any one or more of the foregoing. Elected Officials shall comply with M.G.L., set forth in Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 55, (the Campaign Finance Law) and Chapter 268A (the Conflict of Interest Law). It is not the intent of this policy to create restrictions beyond those established by Chapter 55, 268A or any other state or federal law. The Town's elected and appointed officials (non-staff members) are covered by a separate policy.~~

### III. POLICY

All employees of the Town must comply with M.G.L. ~~Chapter 55, Chapters 55 and 268A, and any violations of these laws shall be considered violations of this policy. Below is a summary of the Campaign Finance Law, which states limitations on the political finance activities of public employees and the use of public buildings and resources in part political campaigns under Chapters 55 and 268A:~~

- ~~No employee may, directly or indirectly, participate in political activities and/or, solicit or receive any contribution or anything of value for any political purpose (e.g. candidates, parties, PACs). For the purposes of this restriction, a person who is a paid employee and an elected official will be considered to be an employee.~~
- ~~Employees may not be treasurers of political committees, as defined by Chapter 55.~~



## SELECT BOARD POLICY

- No employee may solicit or receive campaign contributions in a building occupied for any state, county or municipal purpose.
- No employee may be compelled to make a political contribution or to render any political service, and no employee will be prejudiced in his or her employment for failure to make a political contribution or be rewarded for making a political contribution.
- No public resource may be expended or utilized in order to promote or oppose the nomination or election of any candidate to public office or to promote or oppose any ballot question ~~committees~~ placed before the voters. Examples of public resources include: paid time of public employees<sup>1</sup>, office equipment, vehicles, buildings and supplies.

~~A public~~

### EXAMPLES

An employee may not, in connection with an election:

- Sell tickets to a political fundraiser or otherwise solicit or collect political contributions in any manner, including in person, by phone, by email or by conventional mail.
- Sponsor or host a political fundraising event.
- Allow ~~his~~their official title, department or ~~her~~Town affiliation or name to be used in a fundraising letter, advertisement, phone call or email.
- Help identify people to be targeted for political fundraising.
- Serve as treasurer of a political committee.
- Send campaign-related material related to fundraising.
- Use a public office to make campaign-related phone calls.
- Provide general or specific advice to a political campaign with regard to fundraising strategies.

An employee, while working, may not:

- Display or distribute any campaign material (such as, but not limited to, flyers, pins, buttons, shirts, etc.) in the workplace.

A public employee may:

- Contribute to candidates and attend fundraisers.
- Run for office (an employee must organize a campaign committee if ~~he or she plan~~they plan to raise any money).

<sup>1</sup> Policy-making employees may be allowed to use public resources for limited purposes to further the Town's interest as a part of their job responsibilities.



## SELECT BOARD POLICY

- Work On non-work time and without the use of public resources, work for campaigns and committees in a non-fundraising capacity, such as holding/displaying signs, stuffing envelopes, hosting coffees or other meetings, or being a member of a committee.

**No one** (not just public Town employees) may:

- Sell tickets to a fundraiser or otherwise solicit or collect political contributions in a public building.
- Send a solicitation into a government building, such as by phone, mail or email.
- Use a public building as the site of a fundraiser, the return address for contributions or the contact.
- Post in a public building any advertisement for a fundraiser.
- No one with access to Town systems may use such systems for political activities of any kind, including printers and copy machines.

An employee, while working, may not:

Wear, \_\_\_\_\_ display

Employees observing any of the above in a public building should notify their supervisor or the Town Manager's Office.

As Chapter 55 and the Conflict of Interest Law, General Laws Chapter 268A, are complex and result in fact-specific outcomes, employees who wish to engage in any political activity are strongly encouraged to contact the Office of Campaign and Political Finance at 617-979-8300 or [www.ocpf.us](http://www.ocpf.us) and State Ethics Commission at 617-371-9500 or [www.mass.gov/orgs/state-ethics-commission](http://www.mass.gov/orgs/state-ethics-commission) for guidance prior to engaging in campaign activities.

- ~~or distribute any campaign material (such as, but not limited to, flyers, pins, buttons, shirts, etc.) in the workplace.~~



# SELECT BOARD POLICY

Policy Category:	Employee
Policy Number:	EMP – 2019 – 6
Latest Revision Date:	November __, 2022

## POLICY NAME: **POLITICAL ACTIVITY BY ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS (NON-EMPLOYEES POLICY)**

### I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

~~A. The purpose of this policy is to establish limits for employee participation in advise the Town's elected and appointed officials of the limitations on political activities during normal working hours and/or on town-owned property.~~

### II. ~~DEFINITIONS~~

~~Employee – For the purposes of this Policy, an employee shall be defined pursuant to Internal Revenue Code 3401(c) as follows: any officer, employee or official of the Town of Groton, or instrumentality of any one or more of the foregoing. Elected Officials shall comply with M.G.L., set forth in Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 55, (the Campaign Finance Law) and Chapter 268A (the Conflict of Interest Law). It is not the intent of this policy to create restrictions beyond those established by Chapters 55, 268A or any other state or federal law. The Town's paid staff members (employees) are covered by a separate policy.~~

### III. ~~II.~~ POLICY

~~All employees of the Town must comply with M.G.L. Chapter 55, the Campaign Finance Law, which states in part:~~

~~All elected and appointed officials of the Town must comply with M.G.L. Chapters 55 and 268A, and any violations of these laws shall be considered violations of this policy. Below is a summary of the limitations on the political finance activities of elected and appointed officials and the use of public buildings and resources in political campaigns under Chapters 55 and 268A:~~

- ~~• No employee person employed for compensation, other than an elected official, may, directly or indirectly participate in political activities and/or, solicit or receive any contribution or anything of value for any political purpose (e.g. candidates, parties, PACs, etc.)~~



## SELECT BOARD POLICY

For the purposes of this restriction, a person who is both an employee and an elected official will be considered to be an employee even if the employment is with another public entity. Any such individual should consult the Political Activities by Employees Policy.

- No elected or appointed official may solicit or receive campaign contributions in a building occupied for any state, county or municipal purpose.
- No person in the public service may compel or be compelled to make a political contribution or to render any political service, and no employee or appointed official may be prejudiced in his or her employment for failure to make a political contribution or be rewarded for making a political contribution.
- No public resource may be expended or utilized in order to promote or oppose the nomination or election of any candidate to public office or to promote or oppose any ballot question ~~committees~~ placed before the voters. Examples of public resources include: paid staff time of public employees, office equipment, vehicles, buildings and supplies.

A public employee may not:

### EXAMPLES

An unpaid, elected or appointed official **may not**, in connection with an election:

- Sell tickets to a political fundraiser or otherwise solicit or collect political contributions in any manner, including in person, by phone, by email or by conventional mail using public resources.
- Sponsor or host a political fundraising event using public resources.
- Allow his or her name, board or Town affiliation to be used in a fundraising letter, advertisement, phone call or email.
- ~~Help identify people~~ Send campaign-related materials using the Town's computer network or email.
- Use a public office ~~to be targeted for~~ make campaign-related phone calls.
- Use on-duty staff to perform any campaign-related work.

An elected or appointed official **may**:

- Sell tickets to a political fundraiser or otherwise solicit or collect political contributions in any manner, including in person, by phone, by email or by conventional mail without using public resources.
- Sponsor or host a political fundraising event without using public resources
- Serve as treasurer of a political committee.



## SELECT BOARD POLICY

A public employee ~~may~~:

- Contribute to candidates and attend fundraisers.
- Run for office (an employee must organize a campaign committee if ~~he or she plan~~ they plan to raise any money).
- Work for campaigns and committees in a non-fundraising capacity, such as holding/displaying signs, stuffing envelopes, hosting coffees or other meetings, or being a member of a committee.
- Use their official position to make statements about ballot questions related to their particular area of responsibility as long as public resources are not used.

**No one** (not just ~~public employees~~ selected or appointed officials) may:

- Sell tickets to a fundraiser or otherwise solicit or collect political contributions in a public building.
- Send a solicitation into a government building, such as by phone, mail or email.
- Use a public building as the site of a fundraiser, the return address for contributions or the contact.
- Post in a public building any advertisement for a fundraiser.
- No one with access to Town systems may use such systems for political activities of any kind, including printers and copy machines.

An ~~employee~~ selected or appointed official, while ~~working~~, ~~may~~ performing Town-related activities, **should not**:

- ~~Wear, display~~ Display or distribute any campaign material (such as, but not limited to, flyers, pins, buttons, shirts, etc.) in the workplace.

**Employees observing any of the above in a public building should notify their supervisor or the Town Manager's Office.**

As Chapter 55 and the Conflict of Interest Law, General Laws Chapter 268A, are complex and result in fact-specific outcomes, employees who wish to engage in any political activity are strongly encouraged to contact the Office of Campaign and Political Finance at 617-979-8300 or [www.ocpf.us](http://www.ocpf.us) and State Ethics Commission at 617-371-9500 or [www.mass.gov/orgs/state-ethics-commission](http://www.mass.gov/orgs/state-ethics-commission) for guidance prior to engaging in campaign activities.



**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

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

January 24, 2023

Amanda Lewis  
MassTrails Program Manager  
Dept. of Conservation & Recreation  
136 Damon Road  
Northampton, MA. 01060

Dear Ms. Lewis,

We are writing to convey our enthusiastic support for Squannacook Greenway's application for a Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) MassTrails grant. Groton has a significant history of supporting development of the Squannacook River Rail Trail (SRRT) from funding of the initial feasibility study through our Community Preservation Act, assisting Squannacook Greenways in lease negotiations with the MBTA, and a local match for the current MassTrails grant which is funding phase 3 of the SRRT in Groton. This current application by Squannacook Greenways for the final phase of the SRRT will complete the trail and the connection it provides to our two communities; Groton and Townsend. It also will provide an additional resource for safe outdoor recreational activity that gets users off area roadways that are becoming increasingly busy.

Groton has enjoyed a very positive experience with rail trails as the DCR's Nashua River Rail Trail passes through our town and is very popular among our residents. We understand the importance the DCR MassTrails grant program to the successful completion of the SRRT and fully support Squannacook Greenway's application.

Sincerely yours,

John F. Reilly, Chair  
Groton Select Board

JFR/pc

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**MONDAY, JANUARY 09, 2023**  
**Town Hall: Second Floor Meeting Room, 173 Main Street Groton, MA**

**SB Members Present:** John F. Reilly, Chair; Rebecca H. Pine, Vice Chair (virtual); Matthew F. Pisani, Clerk; Alison S. Manugian; Peter S. Cunningham

**Also Present:** Mark W. Haddad, Town Manager, Dawn Dunbar, Town Clerk, Patricia DuFresne, Town Accountant, Hannah Moller, Tax Accountant; Megan Foster, Principal Assessor; Melisa Doig, Human Resources Director; Michael Luth, Chief of Police; Tom Delany, DPW Director, Finance Committee: Bud Robertson, Chair; Colby Doody, Vice Chair, Gary Green, David Manugian, Scott Whitefield, Michael Sulprizio, Mary Linskey

John Reilly called the meeting to order at 6:30pm and reviewed the agenda.

**Determine Whether or Not to Modify or Uphold the Hearing Officer's Decision to Humanely Euthanize Two Dogs Owned by Daniel Monroe of 828 Martins Pond Road.**

Mr. Haddad said that all Bylaws had been referenced and all documentation had been provided to the Select Board regarding the incident with Daniel Monroe's two dogs. The two dogs were declared dangerous. Mr. Haddad said that the Select Board has the authority to request a hearing for additional testimony or uphold the Hearing Officer's decision to humanely euthanize the two dogs. Mr. Haddad said that the dog owner has the right to appeal the decision within 10 days and proceed to the District Court.

Ms. Manugian questioned if the dogs could be transferred from the Town. Mr. Haddad said that is not an option, the Town is legally required to notify any Town if a dog has been declared dangerous.

Mr. Pisani asked if the Town would be held liable if another situation were to occur. Mr. Haddad said he would need to refer to the Town Counsel.

Ms. Pine commented that there is no need for any additional testimony a comprehensive decision has been provided and requesting that the animals be restricted to the property would not be effective.

Mr. Cunningham asked Mr. Haddad why the final decision was made. Mr. Haddad said that this was the third occurrence and there was no other choice.

Daniel Monroe apologized for the attack and requested for the opportunity to train his dogs to be more obedient. He said that 2 out of the 3 recommendations provided urged confinement whereas the third recommendation came from a source that never conversed with him and only with the victim. Mr. Monroe expressed to the Board how significant his two dogs are to him. He said he would be appealing the Select Board's decision.

*Mr. Cunningham made a motion to uphold the Hearing Officer's decision to humanely euthanize the two dogs owned by Daniel Monroe of 828 Martins Pond Road. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. The motion was carried. Roll Call: Cunningham-aye, Reilly- aye, Manugian-aye, Pine-aye, Pisani- aye*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ms. Pine encouraged the public to attend the Public Hearing regarding various options to improve Broadmeadow Road provided by the Town Consultants and Environmental Partners on Wednesday, January 11, 2023 at 7:00pm at the Groton Center.

Ms. Pine said that she was very disappointed with the delay of the swearing in of Margaret Scarsdale and that the victory had been confirmed in a recount. She said that the Town has been deprived of representation for a year now. Mrs. Scarsdale's opponent Mr. Shepherd has commenced a lawsuit and the six surrounding Towns will be required to utilize tax dollars to defend the lawsuit, if it proceeds. Ms. Pine said that she has full confidence in the Groton Clerk and is calling for Mr. Shepherd to withdraw the lawsuit that has no merit. She is also calling on Speaker Mariano to immediately swear in Mrs. Scarsdale. Mr. Cunningham agreed with Ms. Pine and said that a special committee has been formed and is a concern. He suggested that the Select Board closely track the committee's progress and if there is no movement that the Select Board collaborate with other Select Boards and impose pressure on the speaker to ensure that the job is completed. Mr. Haddad commended Ms. Dunbar on managing the recount amazingly well.

Mr. Pisani said that an open house is being held this Saturday, January 14, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. to anyone of interest in becoming an on-call firefighter.

Mr. Pisani confirmed that the bonfire is scheduled for this Friday, January 13, 2023 weather permitting.

Mr. Haddad said that the Groton Council on Aging was chosen by Massachusetts Council on Aging to host training videos on the challenges and changes of managing during a pandemic. The Groton Center will be hosting a premiere of the videos this Friday, January 13, 2023 at noon. He said to please call the Groton Center to preregister.

Mr. Haddad said that there have been numerous comments on social media regarding the tax bill and felt it was necessary to address the residents and explain how the tax bills are calculated. A document has been drafted and will be accessible on the Town Website for all residents to view. Mr. Haddad said that the Town's Board of Assessors is required by law to value dwellings up to 90%-110-% in fair market value. Groton's Assessors are consistent with 97% and that value is determined based on the sales records for the previous year and the Department of Revenue also certifies that value. On average, all property values have increased by 18.5%. He said that if the property values did not change the tax rate would have been \$18.56 resulting in an increase of \$733. However, the tax rate has decreased from \$17.19 to \$15.64 bringing the average tax bill to \$717. \$300 of the amount represents the allowed increase in the levy in proposition 2.5% and the remaining \$417 is associated with the excluded debt service for the construction of the new Florence Roche Elementary School. Mr. Haddad explained that the finance team observed low interest rates and locked in the percentage which then moved up the timeframe to paying off the debt services. He wanted residents to be aware that the increase did not result from hiring firefighters as noted on several blogs. The Board briefly discussed the Tax Bill Scheduling and the calculation of quarterly billing.

Mr. Art Prest, resident, said he is concerned with the increase of taxes, his bill specifically increased 24% and he is afraid that others will not be able to afford these increases. He said residents are panicking and are unsure of how they are going to fund all of their bills. Mr. Prest recommended that a detailed forensic analysis be performed.

Mr. Cunningham noted that there are various programs that residents can receive relief from.

Mr. Haddad said at the previous Select Board meeting it was voted to increase the Senior Work Off program's abatement of \$700 to \$1,000. There will be at least 6-7 slots available for the next fiscal year. Mr. Haddad said that Ms. Moller has been working on receiving donations for the T. R. E. A. D (Tax Relief for Elders and

the Disabled) and that program will also provide additional assistance. Ms. Foster said that her office is accepting applications for the following exemptions, elderly older than 70, surviving spouses, tax deferrals and disabled veterans. Ms. Foster noted that the Senior Work Off Program allows for applications to be submitted up until November 1st and hopes that all 30 slots are fulfilled next year. Ms. Moller said that she has been actively working on receiving donations for the T. R. E. A.D and the committee would be meeting this Wednesday. She encouraged residents to reach out to the Town Hall for assistance and said that there are multiple programs that can be considered.

Mr. Val Prest said that he has been a long time resident of Lost Lake and receives one of the higher tax bills in Town. He said that he is strictly on Medicare and is finding it difficult to pay for his taxes. He commented that the Town has received significant land donations and suggested that the properties be sold for commercial use. By creating taxable income it would allow for the Town to reduce its taxes for residents.

**Bud Robertson called the Finance Meeting to order at 7:18 p.m.**

Connie Sartini, resident, asked who is responsible for increasing the number of participants in the Senior Work Off Program. Mr. Haddad said that the Select Board makes the determination on the number of slots; however the impact of the overlay needs to be considered. Ms. Sartini asked what occurs if the valuation of a property changes. Mr. Haddad said that the property would be reassessed however, reiterated that if the property values drop the tax rate would increase. Ms. Foster stated that the State requires assessors to perform revaluations every year. Ms. Sartini requested more information on auditing the School District. Mr. Haddad said that the Finance Committee would determine the budget as soon as it is provided by the school. Mr. Robertson explained the process of reviewing the school budget and stated that 80% of the budget is generally made up of employees and the Committee will seek if those employees are necessary. Mr. Green said that Regional School Districts operate themselves and the Town has no ultimate power on their actual budget. He explained that the Town collaborates with the schools and provides recommendations; however, it can be determined how each dollar is expensed at Town Meeting. Mr. Brian LeBlanc, Groton Dunstable School Committee Chair, said that the committee would present a budget by February 8th, 2023. A public hearing will be on February 15, 2023 if there is any feedback. Mr. LeBlanc said that the school committee is supportive of the Finance Committee's recommendations and tries to answer all their questions; however, confirmed that the school committee has control over their final budget.

Ms. Manugian asked if there are any tax relief programs that the Town is not taking advantage of. Ms. Foster said that the Town has not adopted the Valor Act which is directed toward military personnel. She said she would be willing to research the program further.

Mr. Art Prest said that he conducted a forensic analysis on the budget in 2016 when the Town was facing a \$1.9 million override and to his understanding there were many questionable items. He suggested that the level service budget be analyzed for any pre-covid expenses that may not be necessary for the upcoming fiscal year.

**TOWN MANAGERS REPORT**

**1. Call for and Open the Warrant for the 2023 Spring Town Meeting**

Mr. Haddad said that the Town's Bylaw states that the Spring Town Meeting is to be held on the 4th Monday of April. He said that the Town has been successful holding the meetings on Saturdays and is requesting that the meeting be held on April 29, 2023 which allows for an additional week to be prepared. The warrant would open tonight and close on February 24th.

*Mr. Cunningham made a motion to call for the 2023 Town Spring Meeting to be held on Saturday, April 29, 2023. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried. Roll call: Pine-aye, Manugian-aye, Pisani-aye, Cunningham, Reilly-aye*

*Ms. Manugian made a motion to open the warrant for the Spring Town Meeting tomorrow January 10, 2023 at 8:00 a.m and to close the warrant on Friday, February 24, 2023 at the end of the business day. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried. Roll Call: Pine-aye, Manugian-aye, Cunningham-aye, Pisani-aye, Reilly-aye*

## **2. Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Development Update**

Mr. Haddad presented the Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget in a joint session with the Finance Committee using a PowerPoint presentation. He commenced the presentation by discussing the process of maintaining the municipal services at the same level as FY2023 and supporting the Operational Assessment of the Groton Dunstable Regional School District. He said under Section 6.4.1 of the Groton Charter that the proposed budget shall be balanced and not require an Override of Proposition 2 ½. Mr. Haddad said in October, 2022 the Finance Committee and the Select Board collaboratively set the following guidance in developing the FY2024 proposed Balanced Budget. On November 1, 2022 Mr. Haddad requested that the Departments provide an outlook on their anticipated expenditures. Those budgets were due on November 21st and review meetings proceeded the following week by the Town's Finance Team, (Patricia Dufresne, Hannah Moller, Megan Foster, Dawn Dunbar, Melisa Doig, Michael Hartnett, and Kara Cruikshank.) Mr. Haddad said prior to completing the proposed budget the Town heard that the anticipated increase of 5.01% that was set aside for the School District would be insufficient and would not meet the schools anticipated increase of 13.3%. The Select Board and Finance Committee had a meeting on December 19, 2022 to discuss alternatives to address the issue. At that time no final decision was made due to the school committee not being able to provide a preliminary budget until February 8, 2023. Mr. Haddad said that he was required to submit a balanced budget by December 31, 2022 and the budget proposed would reflect the original 5.01% for the School District.

The presentation highlighted Budget Development next. Mr. Haddad said that after performing a comprehensive review of the building permits issued and proposed projects that there would be an estimation of \$18 million in new growth for the FY2024, adding \$281,520 to the tax levy. There is anticipation that State Aid will increase by \$75,000 totaling to \$1,152,749 which will also account for the full reimbursement of the Senior Van Expenses. Mr. Haddad said that there is anticipation for an increase in estimated receipts or an additional \$575,318 from the following items, Motor Vehicle Taxes (\$1,828,638/increase of \$16,380), Meal Tax/Room Occupancy Tax (increase of \$50,000), Recreational Marijuana Revenue (new revenue line of \$150,000), Payments in Lieu of Taxes (\$350,000/increase of 25,000 from ticket sales from Groton Hill Music), Other Charges for Services (\$99,000/ increase of \$9,000 agreement with Dunstable) and Other Departmental Revenue (\$800,000/increase of 25,000). Mr. Haddad urged reductions to Licenses and Permits due to the concern that the significant 36% increase in FY2024 for the redevelopment of the Deluxe Property will not be met in the future years. He also said that the anticipated Investment Income that has been averaging for the last five years at \$49,929 is being pushed to its limits and should also be reduced. There have been higher interest rates this year increasing the revenue to \$90,000, and Mr. Haddad believes those rates will fall. For Recreation Revenues based on the success of the Country Club the amount of revenue is being increased to \$94,733 totaling \$700,000. Mr. Haddad said on February 6, 2023 that the Town would be notified of the Health Insurance rate.

Ms. Linskey questioned the status of the committee that was supposedly addressing the private schools to offset some of those expenses. Mr. Haddad said that the committee would be contacting the schools within the month.

Mr. Haddad explained that this was the largest yearly increase in anticipated revenues and that the Finance Team has been very aggressive in developing the numbers. He noted that there could potentially be an adverse impact on Free Cash. Mr. Haddad then showed the calculated projections for the expected levy limit for FY2024 totaling \$36,550,000. The FY2023 total tax levy was calculated at \$41,461,933. Mr. Haddad said that the Other Estimated Revenues (state aid, motor vehicle excise, general revenues, free cash, and other available funds) totaled \$7,554,514. A pie graph was displayed showing the sources of revenue being acquired from property taxes, excluded debt, state aid, local receipts, the Country Club revenue, and other available funds for FY2024

Mr. Haddad reminded the Boards in his Budget Summary that the Finance Team thoroughly reviewed all submitted budgets and that the Town has no option but to fund Pensions and Health Insurance. The Middlesex County has informed the Town that the assessment would decrease by 1.76% to \$2,494,280. Health insurance has been estimated at 11% however, the number would be adjusted accordingly in February once the final rates are received. Mr. Haddad said that there are a few routine budgetary expenditures that need to be funded as well. Salaries and wages will increase by a total of \$260,735. Municipal Excluded Debt is significantly increasing by \$1,143,549 due to paying the debt service of the new Florence Roche Elementary School. Mr. Haddad said that the levy will be set at \$230,980. The Town Accountant's position is being reclassified to Assistant Director of Finance/ Town Accountant and the salary is to increase by \$13,298. Mr. Haddad said that the DPW Director will be retiring and a DPW Director in Training Program has been established. There will be no associated wage increases as the proposed \$7,000 stipend will come from the savings in wages from a recent retirement. Mr. Haddad said that a Major Initiative is being proposed in the FY2024 Operating Budget. He said that the Operating Budget includes \$87,000 of funding for an additional Fighter/EMT however; wages will decrease due to the one time expenditures in FY2023. Mr. Haddad explained if this position is not funded the total reduction would be \$30,000 due to covering additional overtime and on-call salaries. The Enterprise Fund Budgets were calculated totaling \$3,370,790 and the total Capital Budget requested is \$2,120,856. Mr. Haddad then displayed the calculated expenditure breakdown and the Municipal Government totaled \$16,990,530, the increase for FY2024 would be 3.4%. Tax Impact was discussed and as shown the highest percentage change resulted from the construction of the new Florence Roche Elementary School.

Mr. Haddad then discussed five additional scenarios to address the anticipated budget shortfall of \$2,012,584 that the School District estimated. Scenario #1- Town approves balanced budget proposed by the Town Manager and increases the Operating Assessment of the District by 5.01%. The school would need to reduce their anticipation to meet the proposed appropriation. Scenario #2 The Town and the School District jointly reduce budgets to meet the anticipated shortfall of \$2,012,584. The School District would be responsible for \$1,167,299 and the Town would need to provide \$845,285. The Districts Operating Assessment would increase to \$2,063,683. In order for the Town to meet the assessment the Town would not fund the Districts Capital Assessment and utilize \$552,203 in a onetime revenue source. Scenario #2(B) same a #2 Town and School District share the burden. The Town would fund the Districts Capital Assessment by reducing the Municipal

Budget Request by \$845,285. This would result in the FY2024 budget appropriation being \$203,802 less than the current fiscal year. Mr. Robertson commented that an alternative scenario had already been discussed and it was the preferred solution 2(c) that the School District receives \$250,000 of the \$552,000 and that the Town would reduce their capital budget by an equal amount. Scenario #3 Town fully funds the anticipated Operating Assessment. The Town's fiscal year budget would be 2,012,584 less than this year's appropriation. Scenario #4 The Select Board calls for an Operational Override of Proposition 2 ½ to meet both the Municipal Balanced Budget and the Operational Assessment of the School District. The override amount would increase the anticipated FY2024 Tax rate by \$.80.

Mr. Haddad then discussed the timeline of receiving the proposed school budget on February 8th and the dates of reviewing it and the deadlines that need to be met by March 15th. The Select Board has until April 10th to call for an override. Mr. Haddad recommended delaying the Saturday, February 4th 2023 Finance Committee/Select Board Budget Review meeting until the number from the school is received.

Mr. Robertson commented that the Town or the School District funding the entire amount would not be feasible and suggested that they find a solution to reach the \$2 million. Mr. Haddad said that the Finance Team has reductions to meet all scenarios discussed. He said once the number is finalized by the School Committee then there will be an executive session. Mr. Robertson said when the discussion commenced the Town did not want an override situation due to the impact on taxes. There needs to be a split for the municipalities and the School District to then discuss what can be reduced or eliminated to reach those numbers. Mr. Haddad said that February 8, 2023 is an important date; the superintendent will release the budget for the School District. He said he failed to mention that Nashoba Valley Technical High School will be level funded due to four less students attending than the prior year. Mr. Green asked why the Finance Committee and the Select Board would be meeting to discuss the operating budget if the School District's number is not in. Mr. Haddad requested an executive session prior to the March 4th meeting. Mr. Robertson commented that it's important for the Finance Committee to be knowledgeable of the numbers that Mr. Haddad is thinking of prior to meeting with the Department Managers. Mr. Leblanc said that the School District would have a "good, better, best scenario" at the end of January which would allow for them to observe the number of teachers or positions that can be eliminated. He said that the community will also have a better understanding of the impacts to the School if their numbers are not met. Mr. Green reiterated the importance of knowing the tradeoffs prior to the executive session; he then asked Mr. Haddad if it would be worthy to have a more detailed discussion to provide the entire context or background. Mr. Haddad said that the executive session would be sufficient and there would still be opportunities to make recommendations.

Ms. Manugian asked whether it makes sense to change the date requirement of the Charter from December 31st due to all the work that is performed prior to receiving the finalized budgets from the School District. She also asked if there is a way to change the requirement of needing a balanced budget. Mr. Haddad said that the Charter Committee had previously considered changing the date however decided against it. Ms. Manugian said that the MMA Conference is coming up next week and that the School District cannot be the only ones finding that the Covid impacts require more time and investment. She suggested that Mr. Haddad coordinate with Laura Chesson,

Superintendent, and commence advocating with the State through the school committees or superintendents to try and receive any additional funding that may be available.

Mr. Sulprizio questioned whether user fees, permits, and or licenses had been increased. Mr. Haddad said that Ms. Dunbar conducted a study a couple of years ago and the revenue at the Transfer Station increased significantly. He said that the building, electrical and plumbing permits have been increased and recommended against increasing those fees so soon.

Mr. Robertson recommended a pre-executive session and then a post executive session. Ms. Manugian commented that it may be difficult to fit in the extra sessions with April vacation.

**Mr. Robertson adjourned the Finance Committee meeting at 8:27p.m.**

**3. Update on Select Board Meeting Schedule Through 2023 Spring Town Meeting**

Mr. Haddad updated the meeting schedule that would take the Board to the 2023 Spring Town Meeting.

Wednesday, January 11, 2023	-Public hearing on Broadmeadow Improvements
Monday, January 16, 2023	-No Meeting (MLK Holiday)
Monday, January 23, 2023	-Regularly Scheduled meeting
Monday, January 28, 2023	-Potential FinCom Budget Hearing
Monday, January 30, 2023	-Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Saturday, February 4, 2023	-Potential FinCom Budget Hearing
Monday, February 6, 2023	- Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, February 13, 2023	- Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, February 20, 2023	- No Meeting (President's Day)
Monday, February 27, 2023	- Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, March 6, 2023	- Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, March 13, 2023	- Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, March 20, 2023	- No Meeting
Monday, March 27, 2023	- Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, April 3, 2023	- Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, April 10, 2023	- Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, April 17, 2023	- No Meeting (Patriot's Day)
Saturday, April 29, 2023	-2023 Spring Town Meeting

**SELECT BOARD ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AND ACTION**

1. The Squannacook Greenways requested that the Select Board approve the letter of support to the Community Preservation Committee. Application (#2024-09)  
Mr. Cunningham said there have been minor changes to the first paragraph of the drafted letter. The letter had referenced the phase of the construction of the rail trail in Townsend Center and Townsend Harbor and that section has been completed. The letter currently reflects the construction from Bertozzi to Crescent Drive.

Mr. Hadadd requested that the Select Board approve the amended letter.

*Ms. Manugian made a motion to approve the letter to the Community Preservation Committee in support of the Squannacook Greenways Application. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried. Roll Call: Cunningham-aye; Manugian-aye; Pine- aye; Reilly-aye; Pisani-Aye*

#### **ON-GOING ISSUES**

Mr. Haddad said there needs to be a solution for the PFAS Issue at the High School. He said he would be meeting with engineers to decide the best remediation plan this week. The topic will be added to the upcoming agenda to discuss how the expenses will be funded.

Mr. Haddad reminded the Board that there will be a topping off ceremony at the Florence Roche Elementary School and recommended taking the opportunity to sign the exposed beam. He commended Gilbane Building Company for the work they have completed. Ms. Manugian commented that the next bid package would be authorized this month and it will bring the Town to approximately 90% of the gross maximum price.

#### **MINUTES**

*Mr. Cunningham made a motion to approve the minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting on December 19, 2022. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried. Roll Call: Cunningham-aye; Manugian-aye; Pine- aye; Reilly- Aye, Pisani-Abstain.*

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Kristine Fox, Minute Taker