



**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, FEBRUARY 27, 2023**  
**AGENDA**  
**SELECT BOARD MEETING ROOM**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> FLOOR**  
**GROTON TOWN HALL**

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| 6:00 P.M.      | Announcements and Review Agenda for the Public   |
| 6:05 P.M.      | Public Comment Period  |
| I. 6:06 P.M.   | In Joint Session with the Finance Committee – Review Proposed Reductions in the Town Manager’s Proposed FY 2024 Operating Budget to Support the Anticipated FY 2024 Operating Assessment from the Groton Dunstable Regional School District  |
| II. 7:00 P.M.  | Town Manager’s Report  |
|                | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Review First Draft of the 2023 Spring Town Meeting Warrant</li><li>2. Consider Approving the DPW Director-In-Training Program</li><li>3. Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Development Update</li><li>4. Update on Select Board Meeting Schedule Through 2023 Spring Town Meeting</li></ol>   |
| III. 7:10 P.M. | Items for Select Board Consideration and Action  |
|                | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Consider Appointing Jennifer Moore to the Commemorations and Celebrations Committee</li><li>2. Consider Approving a One Day All Alcoholic Beverages License for the Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce’s Taste of Nashoba to be held on Tuesday, March 21, 2023 at Lawrence Academy from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.</li><li>3. Consider Approving a One Day All Alcoholic Beverages License for Grotonfest to be held on Legion Common on Saturday, September 30, 2023 from 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Rain Date – 10-1-2023)</li><li>4. Consider Approving a Letter to the Department of Conservation and Recreation in Support of the Nashua Riverwalk Project</li><li>5. Consider Approving Letter Seeking Support of SD2395 (MSBA Additional Funding)</li></ol> |

### 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

- IV. Minutes: Regularly Scheduled Meeting of February 13, 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:** *February 27, 2023*

### **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

Please note that I have posted two separate meetings for Monday evening. The first posted meeting will be an Executive Session beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Manager's Office. The second posted meeting is the regularly scheduled meeting that will commence at 6:00 p.m. In addition to the Town Manager's Report, Items for Select Board Consideration and Action and a review of the On-going Issues List, there is one item scheduled on Monday's Agenda. The Select Board will be meeting in Joint Session with the Finance Committee to review various options to balance the FY 2024 Proposed Operating Budget now that the Groton Dunstable Regional School District Superintendent has released her preliminary budget. Enclosed with this report is a memorandum from me outlining the various options.

1. Enclosed with this Report is the first Draft of the 2023 Spring Town Meeting Warrant. I would like to spend some time at Monday's meeting reviewing it with the Board. Please note that the Public Hearing on the Warrant in joint session with the Finance Committee will take place on Monday, March 13, 2023.
2. In January, I had proposed creating a DPW Director-In-Training Program in anticipation of Tom Delaney's retirement in two years. The Board had requested that I provide additional information before you would consider approving the Program. Attached to this Report is a memorandum from me providing the Board with the requested information. I would like to spend some time at Monday's meeting reviewing this information and would then respectfully request that the Board consider approving the Program. I look forward to discussing this in more detail with the Board at Monday's meeting.

**Select Board**  
**Weekly Agenda Update/Report**  
**February 27, 2023**  
**page two**

3. With regard to this week's update on the development of the FY 2024 Budget, we will be discussing it in detail with the Finance Committee during this week's meeting.
4. Please see the update to the meeting schedule that will take the Board through the 2023 Spring Town Meeting:

Saturday, March 4, 2023	-Joint Budget Meeting with Finance Committee
Monday, March 6, 2023	-Consider Request from Middlesex County Retirement Board to Provide COLA -Consider Request from Division of Fisheries and Wildlife to Purchase Conservation Restriction on Brownloaf Property
Monday, March 13, 2023	-Public Hearing on 2023 Spring Town Meeting Warrant Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Wednesday, March 15, 2023	-School Committee Approves Budget
Monday, March 20, 2023	-No Meeting
Monday, March 27, 2023	-Continuation of Public Hearing on Mail In Voting at Annual Town Election
Monday, April 3, 2023	-Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, April 10, 2023	-Approve Warrant for Posting
Monday, April 17, 2023	-No Meeting (Patriot's Day)
Monday, April 24, 2023	-Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Saturday, April 29, 2023	-2023 Spring Town Meeting

**ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND ACTION**

1. The Commemorations and Celebrations Committee has requested that the Board appoint Jennifer Moore to the Committee. I would respectfully request that the Board consider making make this appointment at Monday's meeting.
2. The Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce has requested a one day All Alcoholic Beverages License for the Annual Taste of Nashoba to be held at Lawrence Academy on Tuesday, March 21, 2023 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. I would respectfully request that the Board approve this License at Monday's meeting.
3. The Groton Business Association has requested a one day All Alcoholic Beverages License for Grotonfest to be held on Legion Common on Saturday, September 30, 2023 from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (Rain Date – 10-1-2023). I would respectfully request that the Board approve this License at Monday's meeting.
4. Paul Funch of the Trails Committee had submitted an application to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) for a MassTrails Grant to support the proposed Nashua Riverwalk Project. While DCR did approve the Grant Application, they significantly reduced the scope of the Project which will not allow the project to meet its original objective which was to assist mobility-impaired individuals enjoy the scenic area around the Nashua River. Mr. Funch has asked the Select Board to submit a letter to DCR requesting that they reconsider their decision. Enclosed with this report is a letter I have drafted for this purpose. I would respectfully request that the Board approve sending this letter to DCR.
5. At your last meeting, Select Board Member Cunningham requested that the Board send a letter to various Cities and Towns that have school construction projects that have seen cost increases due to COVID and supply chain related issues asking them to support Senator Kennedy's Bill seeking additional funding from the State to offset these costs. A draft of the letter is enclosed with this Report for your approval.

MWH/rjb  
enclosures



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**Town Manager**  
Mark W. Haddad

**To:** *Select Board  
Finance Committee*

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

**Subject:** *Update/Proposed Reductions to the Town Manager's Proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget*

**Date:** *February 22, 2023*

Now that the Superintendent of the Groton Dunstable Regional School District (GDRSD) has released her Proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget and Assessment to the Town of Groton, the Select Board and Finance Committee need to evaluate various options to balance the FY 2024 Budget. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide those options to both the Select Board and Finance Committee. As you will recall, the Original Town Manager's Proposed Balanced FY 2024 Operating Budget was as follows:

<u>Category</u>		<u>FY 2023</u>		<u>FY 2024</u>		<u>Dollar Difference</u>	<u>Percentage Change</u>
General Government	\$	2,293,398	\$	2,349,147	\$	55,749	2.43%
Land Use	\$	460,356	\$	494,508	\$	34,152	7.42%
Protection of Persons and Property	\$	4,833,510	\$	4,831,397	\$	(2,113)	-0.04%
Department of Public Works	\$	2,345,816	\$	2,366,495	\$	20,679	0.88%
Library and Citizen Services	\$	1,892,083	\$	1,993,320	\$	101,237	5.35%
Employee Benefits	\$	4,797,706	\$	4,955,663	\$	157,957	3.29%
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>16,622,869</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>16,990,529</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>367,660</b>	<b>2.21%</b>
Debt Service - Excluded	\$	3,320,202	\$	4,506,102	\$	1,185,900	35.72%
Debt Service - In Levy Only	\$	331,056	\$	323,654	\$	(7,402)	-2.24%
<b>Sub-Total - All Municipal</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>20,274,127</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>21,820,285</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,546,158</b>	<b>7.63%</b>
Nashoba Tech	\$	810,037	\$	810,037	\$	-	0.00%
Groton-Dunstable Operating	\$	24,319,318	\$	25,537,716	\$	1,218,398	5.01%
Groton-Dunstable Excluded Debt	\$	422,713	\$	406,982	\$	(15,731)	-3.72%
Groton-Dunstable Debt	\$	60,191	\$	58,814	\$	(1,377)	-2.29%
Groton Dunstable Capital	\$	577,026	\$	552,203	\$	(24,823)	-4.30%
<b>Sub-Total - Education</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>26,189,285</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>27,365,752</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,176,467</b>	<b>4.49%</b>
<b>Grand Total - Town Budget</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>46,463,412</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>49,186,037</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>2,722,625</b>	<b>5.86%</b>

According to the Superintendent's Proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Budget, the Operating Assessment for Groton is as follows:

Operating Assessment	\$26,800,655
Debt Assessment – Excluded	\$ 406,982
Debt Assessment – Non-Excluded	\$ 58,814
Capital Assessment	<u>\$ 542,257</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$27,808,707</b>

While there is a slight reduction in the anticipated Capital Assessment (\$9,946), this reduction does not have an impact on the Proposed Operating Budget since the FY 2024 Capital Assessment will be funded from the GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund (\$253,407) and Free Cash (\$288,850). The total increase in the Anticipated Operating Assessment of the GDRSD for FY 2024 is \$2,481,337, or 10.2%. Based on the Proposed Operating Assessment of the GDRSD, the Town Manager's FY 2024 Proposed Operating Budget is out of balance by \$1,262,939. Please note that this a reduction of \$749,645 from the original anticipated deficit of \$2,012,584 (The GDRSD Superintendent has reduced her original anticipated Assessment from \$27,550,300 to \$26,800,655).

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As you will recall, the original Town Manager's Fiscal Year 2024 Proposed Operating Budget anticipated \$1,809,881 in new revenues (when you eliminate Free Cash used to fund one-time expenditures in the Municipal Budget) and set aside sixty-seven (67%) percent, or \$1,218,398, of those anticipated new revenues for the GDRSD Operating Assessment, while the Town received thirty-three (33%) percent or \$591,483 (this is an overall increase in the Municipal Budget of 3.5%). As you will see later in this memorandum, the GDRSD Operating Assessment makes up fifty-nine (59%) percent of the Town's Budget when you eliminate all debt, with the Town making up forty-one (41%) percent.

That said, to eliminate the deficit, the Finance Team and I would propose the Select Board and Finance Committee follow one of the following four options:

**Option #1** – Following the percentage breakdown of the budget outlined above, GDRSD would be responsible for \$745,134 of the deficit, while the Town would be responsible for \$517,805. Eliminating \$517,805 from the Municipal Requested Budget, would result in an actual year over year (FY 23 to FY 24) increase of \$73,678 or 0.44%, while the School District would receive an increase of \$1,736,203, or 7.1% (and receive 93% of anticipated new revenues). For the Town to reduce its proposed budget by \$517,805, we looked at current and anticipated vacancies in the Municipal Budget, along with any new proposed positions. The following is a summary of those positions:

Police Department – Currently One Vacancy  
Fire Department – Proposed One New Position  
Library – Anticipated Retirement of Technology Librarian  
Communications Department – Currently Two Vacancies  
Municipal Buildings – Anticipated Retirement of One Custodian

Based on this, along with a review of further reductions in the Operating Budget that would minimize the impact of services to our residents, we would propose the following reductions:

<u>Line Item</u>	<u>Amount Reduced</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
Nashoba Tech Assessment	\$ 69,000	The anticipated assessment from Nashoba Tech has come in \$69,000 less than carried in the original budget
Police Department Wages	\$ 53,000	The current vacancy would not be filled. To minimize the impact on the delivery of emergency services and reduce overtime, it is proposed that one of the two school resource officer position be eliminated. While the total salary savings would be \$68,000, the Town would lose the \$15,000 it receives from Dunstable for this position.
Fire Department Wages	\$ 30,000	The proposed new position would be eliminated. While the total savings is \$61,800, the overtime and call salaries budget would need to be increased, thereby reducing the savings by \$31,800.
Fire Department Expenses	\$ 1,800	Since the new Firefighter Position is being eliminated, the clothing allowance would not be funded.
Communication Wages	\$ 52,000	One of the two vacancies would not be filled.
Library Wages	\$ 81,000	The Technology Librarian is due to retire in April. That position would not be filled.
Municipal Building Wages	\$ 59,000	One of the three custodians is due to retire in April. That position would not be filled.
Council on Aging Wages	\$ 19,000	The part-time Administrative Assistant Position would be funded from the COA Gift Account, as well as the Formula Grant. This would result in less funding for programs, but the Administrative Support is essential to the Operation of the COA.
Select Board Expenses	\$ 24,000	The Town's share of the Pepperell Sewer Debt would be eliminated and the full share would be paid by the Sewer Enterprise.
Health Insurance	\$ 31,000	Based on the above reductions, the Town would realize a savings of \$31,000 in this budget.
<b>Total Reductions</b>	<b>\$ 419,800</b>	

Even after these reductions, the Town would still need to reduce its proposed budget by \$98,005. Currently, the Proposed Budget is carrying a \$100,000 Snow and Ice Deficit for next year. If we make up this deficit in Fiscal Year 2023, the \$100,000 set aside for the deficit will be available to fund the Proposed Operating Assessment of the GDRSD. If we cannot make up any deficit in FY 2023, we would need to further reduce the proposed Municipal Budget. While the Finance Team and I would not recommend any further reductions to the Budget, the following list may be an option to consider:

Eliminate Part-Time Position in the Treasurer/Collectors Office	\$17,570
Reduce Reserve Fund for Emergencies	\$27,015
Eliminate DPW Director-In-Training Program	\$ 7,000
Eliminate All Minor Capital in Municipal Budget	<u>\$46,420</u>

**Additional Reductions Total** **\$98,005**

Again, please note that the Finance Team and I would not recommend these additional reductions unless absolutely necessary.

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**Option #2** – To provide as much funding as possible for the Groton Dunstable Regional School District, in addition to the above listed reductions in the Municipal Budget, the proposed Capital Budgets of both the GDRSD and Municipal Budget could be reduced by \$250,000 each, or \$500,000 (\$250,000 from Free Cash set aside for the GDRSD Capital Budget and \$250,000 from the Capital Stabilization Fund for the Municipal Capital Budget). This would provide the School District with and overall increase \$2,236,203, or 9.2%. It is important to note here that the additional \$500,000 is one-time revenues that will not be repeated in FY 2025 and should be used to fund previously approved ARPA positions that are needed for one additional year. This funding will not be available in FY 2025 and those positions should be phased out after FY 2024.

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**Option #3** – The Groton Dunstable Regional School District further reduces its Anticipated Operating Assessment by \$1,262,939 and stays within the original proposed increase of 5.01%, or \$1,218,398. This option is being provided based on total municipal and school spending over the last five Fiscal Years. Over that time, the Town has made a significant investment in the Groton Dunstable Regional School District, in both Operating Expenses and Capital Expenses (Florence Roche Elementary School). Please note the following comparison of the Municipal Budget and the Operating Assessment of GDRSD since Fiscal Year 2018 (excluding debt):

	<u>Fiscal Year 2018</u>	<u>Fiscal Year 2023</u>	<u>Total Increase</u>	<u>Average Yearly Increase</u>	<u>Total Percentage Increase</u>	<u>Average Percentage Increase</u>
Municipal Budget	\$ 13,816,235	\$ 16,622,869	\$ 2,806,634	\$ 561,327	20.31%	4.06%
GDRSD Assessment	\$ 19,038,970	\$ 24,319,318	\$ 5,280,348	\$ 1,056,070	27.73%	5.55%
Total	\$ 32,855,205	\$ 40,942,187	\$ 8,086,982			
GDRSD Percentage of Budget	57.95%	59.40%				
Municipal Percentage of Budget	42.05%	40.60%				



Spending for the GDRSD has not only outpaced Municipal Spending over the past five fiscal years, but its overall share of the budget has increased by 1.5% percent over that time.

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**Option #4** – The Select Board calls for a General Override of Proposition 2½ in the amount of \$1,262,939. An override of this magnitude would add \$0.50 to the Tax Rate and add \$317 to the average tax bill (a home valued at \$633,985).

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The Finance Team and I look forward to discussing these options in more detail with the Select Board and Finance Committee.

MWH/rjb

cc: Kara Cruikshank – Executive Assistant  
Patricia DuFresne – Town Accountant  
Megan Foster – Principal Assessor  
Hannah Moller – Town Treasurer/Tax Collector  
Michael Hartnett – Assistant Town Treasurer/Tax Collector  
Melisa Doig – Human Resources Director  
Dawn Dunbar – Town Clerk  
Dr. Laura Chesson – GDRSD Superintendent  
Sherry Kersey – GDRSD Business Manager



**TOWN OF GROTON**  
**Office of the Sewer**  
**Commission**  
173 Main Street, Town Hall  
Groton, Massachusetts 01450  
  
Office: 978-448-1117  
Fax: 978-448-1123

*Commissioners:*

*Chairman:*  
James Gmeiner  
*Vice-Chairman:*  
Thomas Orcutt  
*Clerk:*  
Michael Bouchard

Mark Haddad, Town Manager  
Town of Groton

February 23, 2023

VIA Email: mhaddad@grotonma.gov

RE: Town Obligation for 50% of Pepperell Plant debt assessment.

Dear Mark:

While the Sewer Commission has not yet met to discuss this proposed default, I want to express my very strong objection to this failure to pay a Town obligation. This is debt service; and while it comes in the form of an assessment from the Town Of Pepperell, it is very much an obligation in the nature of a bond payment. Perhaps I have been remiss in not characterizing this obligation as a bond payment but that is very much what it is.

I do not think the Town should be defaulting in its obligation to pay this sum. If it is not included in the budget for FY 2024, then it should then either be paid from Free Cash in the fall or else added to the Town's obligation for Fiscal Year 2025. But I believe the better course of action is to no treat this as some sort of a voluntary payment but as the debt obligation which it is and to include it in the FY 2024 budget.

Very truly yours,

James L. Gmeiner, Chair

## Warrant, Summary, and Recommendations

# TOWN OF GROTON



## 2023 SPRING TOWN MEETING

Groton-Dunstable Middle School Auditorium  
344 Main Street, Groton, Massachusetts 01450

Beginning Saturday, April 29, 2023 @ 9:00 AM

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Attention – Voters and Taxpayers

Please bring this Report to Town Meeting

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

# Introduction to Groton Town Meeting

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

## What is Town Meeting?

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

## What is a warrant?

The warrant is the official notice to voters that a Town Meeting is scheduled. The warrant includes the date, time, location and a description of each subject to be acted on at Town Meeting. In Groton, the warrant must be posted in two public places 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.”<sup>1</sup> “Every action taken at the meeting must be pursuant to some article in the warrant and must be within the scope of such article.”<sup>2</sup>

## How does Town Meeting proceed?

Voters attending Town Meeting must first check in with the clerks and receive a voting card 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 a show of voter cards. If the vote is too close to call by sight or if seven voters immediately question the moderator’s declaration of the vote, the moderator will order a hand count to confirm the vote.

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<sup>1</sup> *Town Meeting Time: A Handbook of Parliamentary Law* (page 12) Johnson, Trustman and Wadsworth, Third Edition, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> *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.



## **Town Meeting Access for Voters with Disabilities**

**Parking** – Universally accessible parking spaces are available in the parking lot in front of the Groton Dunstable Middle School South. There is a ramp providing access from the parking lot to the front door of the Middle School.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**SPRING TOWN MEETING WARRANT  
APRIL 29, 2023**

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 Groton-Dunstable Middle School Auditorium in said Town on Saturday, the twenty-ninth day of April, 2023 at Nine O'clock in the morning, to consider all business other than the election of Town Officers and on the twenty-third day of May, 2023, between the hours of 7:00 A.M. and 8:00 P.M., at an adjourned session thereof at the following locations:

Precincts 1 & 3A	The Groton Center 163 West Main Street	Precincts 2 & 3 Middle School North Gymnasium 346 Main Street
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to give their ballots for:

Vote for One	Board of Assessors	3 Years
Vote for One	Board of Health	3 Years
Vote for Two	Select Board	3 Years
Vote for One	Commissioner of Trust Funds	3 Years
Vote for One	Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee	3 Years
Vote for One	Groton Electric Light Commission	3 Years
Vote for Two	Park Commission	3 Years
Vote for One	Park Commission	2 Years
Vote for Two	Planning Board	3 Years
Vote for One	Sewer Commission	3 Years
Vote for Two	Trustees of the Groton Public Library	3 Years
Vote for One	Trustee of the Groton Public Library	1 Year
Vote for One	Water Commission	3 Years
Vote for One	Groton Housing Authority	5 Years

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\*Will be presented as one Consent Motion

\*\*The Budget will be presented as one Motion

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



**Article 1: Hear Reports**

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

***Select Board***

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

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

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**Article 2: Elected Officials Compensation**

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

***Town Manager***

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *To provide compensation for elected officials as proposed by the Town Manager. The Town Moderator is proposed to receive a salary of \$1,000 in FY 2024.*

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**Article 3: Wage and Classification Schedule**

To see if the Town will vote to amend and adopt for Fiscal Year 2024 the Town of Groton Wage and Classification schedule as shown in Appendix B of this Warrant, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Select Board***  
***Town Manager***

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *The purpose of this Article is to set the wage and classification schedule for the three (3) employees (Executive Assistant to the Town Manager, Human Resources Director and IT Director)*

*covered by the Personnel Bylaw. Under the policy of the Select Board, these employees receive the same benefits as contained in the Town Supervisors' Union Contract. These employees will receive a 2% cost-of-living adjustment in Fiscal Year 2024.*

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**Article 4:      *Appropriate FY 2024 Contribution to the OPEB Trust***

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

***Select Board  
Town Manager***

**Select Board:  
Finance Committee:**

**Summary:**    *The purpose of this article is to fund the Town's OPEB Liability. The Select Board and Finance Committee have adopted a funding policy for this purpose. One of the funding goals is to commit to an annual appropriation to the Trust that would keep the Net Present Value Liability from growing until such time as the Town can begin to pay down the liability. In Fiscal Year 2024, the anticipated amount necessary for this purpose is estimated to be \$185,000. This Article will seek an appropriation of \$185,000 from Free Cash to add to the OPEB Liability Trust Fund.*

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**Article 5:      *Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Operating Budget***

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow pursuant to any applicable statute, a sum or sums of money as may be necessary to defray the expenses of the Town for the next Fiscal Year (2024), and act upon the budget of the Finance Committee, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Finance Committee  
Select Board  
Town Manager***

**Select Board:  
Finance Committee:**

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

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**Article 6: Fiscal Year 2024 Capital Budget**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow pursuant to any applicable statute, a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager in Fiscal Year 2023 and thereafter, for the purpose of funding the Fiscal Year 2024 Capital Budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**TOWN MANAGER**

**Summary:** *The following is the proposed Town Manager's Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2024:*

<b>Item #1 – Ambulance 1 Replacement</b>	<b>\$108,511</b>	<b>Fire and EMS</b>
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**Summary:** *Ambulance 1 will be due for replacement in 2024. The cost of the Ambulance is approximately \$435,000. To pay for this ambulance, the Town will borrow the total amount through State House Notes and pay it back over 5 years. In Fiscal Year 2024, the Town will appropriate \$108,511 from the EMS Fund to pay the first year's Debt Service.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

<b>Item #2 – Command Vehicle</b>	<b>\$70,000</b>	<b>Fire and EMS</b>
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**Summary:** *In FY 2024, the Command Vehicle to be replaced is the vehicle that the Deputy Chief uses for emergency response and management of incidents.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Item #3 – Dump Truck** **\$22,000** **Highway**

**Summary:** *In Fiscal Year 2021, Town Meeting approved a bond for \$185,000 to purchase a new Dump Truck for the Highway Department, with the intent to pay it back over five years. The appropriation this year is the third of five payments for this truck.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Item #4 – Loader** **\$220,000** **Highway**

**Summary:** *The current loader is a 1995 model and is 25 years old. This is an important piece of equipment for the Highway Department as it performs many functions, including snow removal operations. This should be considered a scheduled replacement.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Item #5 – IT Infrastructure** **\$50,000** **Town Facilities**

**Summary:** *This item in the Capital Budget was established eleven years ago and has been very successful. In Fiscal Year 2024, the following items will be purchased/upgraded with this allocation: 10 replacement computers; Replace aging servers and storage arrays; Investment to expand the network and keep equipment and maintenance costs current; and network switch upgrades and increased wireless coverage and improve door lock and security system maintenance.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Item #6 – Municipal Building Repairs** **\$25,000** **Town Facilities**

**Summary:** *This appropriation will be used to continue to maintain all municipal buildings by performing various maintenance activities to prevent major breakdowns in the Town's building infrastructure. Priorities continue to change when it comes to the minor repairs and upgrades in the municipal buildings. Furnaces, a/c units, flooring and painting are some of the small items this capital program handles.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Item #7 – Building Maintenance Van****\$60,000****Town Facilities**

**Summary:** *This Van is used by the DPW's Maintenance Foreman to carry tools and other necessary items used in the maintenance of our buildings. The current van was purchased used (2003) four years ago and needs to be replaced. This is a vital and necessary vehicle for the maintenance of Town Facilities.*

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee:**

**Item #8 – Property Improvements****\$25,000****Park Department**

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

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee:**

**Item #9 – Police Cruisers****\$125,142****Police Department**

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

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee:**

**Item #10 – Hazmat Storage Evidence Locker****\$40,000****Police Department**

**Summary:** *A secure twelve by twenty Out Building for the purpose of securing hazardous evidence (narcotics and flammables) as well as large items of evidence. The out building will need to have a concrete foundation and floor. The building wall will be on block construction. The overhead and wall through doors will be of industrial grade steel construction.*

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee:**

**Item #11 – Golf Carts** **\$40,000** **Country Club**

**Summary:** *In FY 2023, the Town replaced the fleet of twenty-five golf carts with new 21 Yamaha gas powered carts and four Yamaha electric carts using a five year lease to purchase agreement at an annual cost of approximately \$25,000. This is the second of five payments.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Item #12 – Driving Range Improvements** **\$50,000** **Country Club**

**Summary:** *The damaged netting needs to be replaced at the Driving Range at the Country Club. In addition, the height of the poles used to secure the netting need to be increased to prevent balls from going over the netting and into the wetland behind the netting.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Item #13 – Greens Equipment** **\$10,000** **Country Club**

**Summary:** *The Country Club needs to replace aging greens equipment. Some pieces age better than others and the maintenance staff attempt to use all the equipment until repairing it becomes cost prohibitive. The greens superintendent and course mechanic will determine the items needed most. The Town will enter into lease purchase agreements for the equipment and pay it off over five years.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

***Town Manager***

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**Article 7: Revenue Dedication of Opioid Settlements to Special Purpose Stabilization Fund**

To see if the Town will vote to dedicate all or a percentage, which may not be less than 25 percent of the municipal opioid settlement revenue to the Opioid Settlement Stabilization Fund established under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 5B, effective for Fiscal Year 2023, beginning on July 1, 2022 or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Town Manager***

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *The Town of Groton is eligible to receive up to \$19,295 in Opioid Abatement funds pursuant to settlements reached between the Attorney General and companies and individuals that allegedly fueled the opioid crisis. 40% of the payments to be received by the state, will be directly passed on to its political subdivisions. The allocation of abatement funds will be made over a period of 17 years, ending in 2038. These funds can only be used by the Town for very specific purposes, namely opioid abuse prevention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery. Accordingly, in order to give municipalities time to strategize how best to meet their community's needs, as well as aid in the long-term tracking, spending and reporting requirements, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is permitting towns to create a special purpose stabilization fund to which this revenue can be dedicated. To date, Groton has received \$4,990.48 of Opioid Settlement funds that will be transferred into the special purpose stabilization fund if it is authorized.*

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**Article 8:      *Funding for Destination Groton Committee***

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow pursuant to any applicable statute, a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager in Fiscal Year 2023 and thereafter, for the purpose of providing funding for the Destination Groton Committee to carry out the Charge of the Committee and all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Destination Groton Committee***

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *The purpose of this Article is to provide funding for the Destination Groton Committee to carry out its charge, which is to pursue a course of action intended to engage all Town stakeholders, including the business and non-profit communities, Town leaders, and Town residents in a series of public information forums in order to prepare for an increase in visitors to town while at the same time work to preserve its rural small-town charm. A portion of this funding will be used to hire consultants to assist in procuring grant funding to create tourism programing, strategic marketing, infrastructure and regional transportation mitigation.*

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**Article 9:      *Funding for Sustainability Commission***

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

***Sustainability Commission***

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:**      *The purpose of this Article is to provide funding for the Sustainability Commission to pay for their tire recycling program, pollinator garden program and provide educational materials to residents in their endeavor to have informational/educational seminars that focus on Sustainability. At the direction of the Select Board in October, 2021, the Sustainability Commission added climate change and resilience to their purview. Beginning in 2022, the Commission added climate change work projects and a tire recycling program to their ongoing pollinator garden program. Continuing and bringing these projects to fruition requires funding. The Commission is seeking \$15,000 for the above-mentioned activities in FY 2024.*

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**Article 10:      *Amend the Charge of the Sustainability Commission***

To see if the Town will vote to amend Article 20 of the April 28, 2008 Spring Town Meeting which created the Sustainability Commission by authorizing the Select Board, in conjunction with the Sustainability Commission, to create a new Charge of the Commission, including the number of members of the Commission and length of terms, and authorize the Select Board to amend said Charge and Membership from time to time as the Board deems appropriate at a duly posted meeting of the Select Board, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Select Board***  
***Sustainability Commission***

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:**      *The Sustainability Commission has been in existence for the past 13 years operating under the original Charge and membership as voted by the 2008 Spring Town Meeting. Sustainability has taken on a more and more important role in today's world. The focus of the Commission needs to be able to adapt to changing priorities. Unfortunately, since the Commission and Charge were voted on*



*by Town Meeting, only Town Meeting can amend it. This can cause a delay in addressing issues. The purpose of this Article is to authorize the Select Board, working with the Sustainability Commission, to draft a Charge that can be amended from time to time by the Select Board. In addition, at the direction of the Select Board in October, 2021, the Sustainability Commission added climate change to their purview. Members were added to the Commission to work on this initiative. At present, the Commission is at maximum capacity, with one alternative member temporarily authorized. However, the work involved requires additional flexibility in the membership and the expertise members can bring.*

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**Article 11: Election Equipment Purchase – Poll Pads**

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 purchase Poll Pads for use by the Town Clerk to check-in voters at all elections and Town Meetings, and all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any action relative thereto.

**Town Clerk**  
**Town Manager**

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *The use of Poll Pads will help to accelerate the check-in process at Town Meetings and at Elections by taking the place of the paper check-in system we currently use. These tablets will allow the election worker to look up the voter by manually entering the first few letters of the voters first and last name or but scanning the bar code on the back of a driver's license or state issued ID. If an ID is scanned, the Poll Pad matches the name and birth date of the person on the voter list with the name and date of birth it reads from the bar code. At Town Meetings, voters will have the ability to check-in at any staffed station as the Poll Pads automatically sync to one another via Bluetooth connectivity and not Wi-Fi, which eliminates any chance of checking in more than once. The Town Clerk's Office staff will also be able to electronically record voter turnout totals, load voter history into the State Voter Registration System post-election and run essential reports in a more time efficient manner. Over 200 cities and towns in the Commonwealth are currently utilizing this technology.*

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**Article 12: Construct New Water Main to Address PFAS Issue at GDRSD High School**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum or sums of money for the purposes of financing the planning, designing, permitting, and constructing of a new water main from the Groton Water Distribution System to the Groton-Dunstable Regional High School and on Kemp Street and Groton Street In Dunstable and a portion of North Street in Groton in order to bring potable drinking

water to the School and private homes, required for the treatment of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in said water supply sources, and all incidental and related costs, including without limitation all costs thereof as defined in Section 1 of Chapter 29C of the General Laws; to determine whether this appropriation shall be raised by borrowing or otherwise; or to take any other action relative thereto.

### **Select Board**

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *This Article is for the extension of municipal drinking water to the Groton Dunstable Regional High School and the surrounding properties in Dunstable on Groton Street and Kemp Street and on North Street in Groton. In 2021, the drinking water source was tested for PFAS/PFOS as required by the MassDEP. Measured levels at the High School were well over the Mass DEP's limits for potable drinking water and the drinking water source was removed from service. It appears that the surrounding properties have also been impacted by the PFAS contamination at the High School. A new water source for the High School and surrounding properties is necessary to address this issue. The estimated cost of this project is \$9 million. The Town is seeking all available Federal and State Grants to offset the cost of this water main extension.*

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### **Article 13: Community Preservation Funding Accounts**

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

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

or to take any other action relative thereto.

### **Community Preservation Committee**

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**  
**Community Preservation Committee:**

**Summary:** *This is an accounting procedure that is necessary so that the Community Preservation Committee will have access to the funds raised during Fiscal Year 2024. Except for the CPC Operating Expenses, none of these funds will be spent without additional approval at Town Meeting.*

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**Article 14: Community Preservation Funding Recommendations**

To see if the Town will vote to adopt and approve the recommendations of the Community Preservation Committee for Fiscal Year 2024, 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 General Laws, and by authorizing the Select Board, with the approval of the Community Preservation Committee, to acquire, by purchase, gift or eminent domain, such real property interests in the name of the Town, or enforceable by the Town, including real property interests in the form of permanent affordable housing restrictions and historical preservation restrictions that will meet the requirements of Chapter 184 of the General Laws, as may be necessary or proper to carry out the foregoing, or to take any other action relative thereto.

<b>CPC Proposal A:</b>	<b>Housing Trust Funds Request</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>
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**Summary:** *This application is seeking \$200,000 in CPA funds to be used to help the Affordable Housing Trust meet its affordable housing goals. This application is requesting that the funding be transferred to the Affordable Housing Trust to be used for any and all allowable community housing purposes. Community housing funds can be used to acquire, create, support and rehabilitate and / or restore housing if acquired or created with CPA funds. The Trust would plan to submit a CPC application each year to be considered for CPA funding. The full amount to be paid from the Community Housing Reserve.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**  
**Community Preservation Committee:**

<b>CPC Proposal B:</b>	<b>Preservation of Lake Massapoag</b>	<b>\$4,000</b>
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**Summary:** *This application is requesting \$4,000 in CPA funds to cover a portion of the 2023 rehabilitation/preservation costs for the Upper Massapoag Pond. The pond is currently overrun by invasive aquatic plants and the eighteen-acre cove portion of the pond located in Groton has added significant costs to the treatment. Both the Town of Tyngsboro and the Town of Dunstable have been supporting this project since it first started. The full amount to be paid from the Unallocated Reserve.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**  
**Community Preservation Committee:**

**CPC Proposal C:****Conservation Fund – FY 2024****\$400,000**

**Summary:** *The Conservation Commission is requesting \$400,000 in CPA funds to be added to the Town's Conservation Fund to help preserve open space, protect water resources and wildlife habitat, and preserve land for agricultural, recreational, and forestry activities. The Conservation Fund allows the Town to move quickly in the event a priority parcel becomes available. In the past, the Conservation Fund has been used to purchase Conservation Restrictions, Agricultural Preservation Restrictions, and fee ownership of conservation land in the Town. The Commission adheres to the Select Board's General Financial Guideline #6, which states the goal "to maintain a balance in the Conservation Fund of at least 2% of the Town's current line-item budget." However, due to the rising cost of land and the current number of properties the Commission is anticipating closing on in 2023, the need to augment the Fund is as crucial this year as ever. As of the January 1, 2023 the Conservation Fund balance is \$1,691,087. It should be noted that of this amount, \$635,000 represents a gift earmarked for the conservation of a specific parcel in the coming year. The full amount to be paid from the Unallocated Reserve.*

**Select Board:****Finance Committee:****Community Preservation Committee:****CPC Proposal D:****Rebuild Major League Baseball Diamond****\$80,000**

**Summary:** *The Park Commission is requesting \$80,000 in CPA funds to replace an existing baseball field that has served the Town since the 1930's. The funds will be used towards excavating and removing infield grass and clay. The excavated area will then be laser graded in which the layout will meet the major league diamond standards. A new home plate, pitcher's mound, and left and right foul poles will be set. An irrigation only well will be drilled for irrigation purposes only. An irrigation system will be installed for the benefit of the entire playing surface. An electrical service will be installed in the existing maintenance shed. The full amount to be paid from the Open Space Reserve.*

**Select Board:****Finance Committee:****Community Preservation Committee:**

**CPC Proposal E: Construct Softball Diamonds at Cutler Field \$90,000**

**Summary:** *The Park Commission is requesting \$90,000 in CPA funds to build over the site of the former Little League regulations diamonds at Cutler Field in West Groton. The funds will be used towards excavating and removing infield grass and clay. The excavated area will then be laser graded in which two softball diamonds will be constructed in adherence with the proper guidelines and standards. This project will include all necessary materials required to construct the two softball diamonds. The full amount to be paid from the Unallocated Reserve.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**  
**Community Preservation Committee:**

**CPC Proposal F: Conceptual Site Engineering Costs \$120,000**

**Summary:** *The Groton Housing Authority is requesting \$120,000 in CPA funds to cover the estimated costs associated with preparing applications for the Nashua Road Project (Parcel 227 / 135). This project requires a full scope of testing and engineering in order to determine whether the land is feasible for the purposes of generating eight affordable rental units designated for 55 and over. The process will begin with soil testing as per the conceptual plan. However, should the soil be contaminated, unsuitable or too expensive to mitigate, the project will terminate. The full amount to be paid from the Community Housing Reserve.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**  
**Community Preservation Committee:**

**CPC Proposal G: Housing Coordinator – FY 2024 \$55,791**

**Summary:** *This application is requesting \$55,791 in CPA funding from the Community Housing category to fund the wages and benefits of the Housing Coordinator position (25-hours/week). The full amount to be paid from the Community Housing Reserve.*

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**  
**Community Preservation Committee:**

**Summary:** *Squannacook Greenways is requesting \$90,000 in CPA funding for construction of Phase 4 of the Squannacook River Rail Trail (SRRT) from the northern Crosswinds Drive crossing of the MBTA Railroad right of way to the Groton/Townsend town line for a total distance of .25 miles. Construction of the SRRT is being conducted in phases due to environmental permitting requirements which limit construction activity to a period of between 11/15-3/15. Squannacook Greenways is also relying on DCR MassTrails grants to underwrite a large portion of construction costs and has been the successful recipient on three MassTrails grants: 2019, 2020 and 2022. Squannacook Greenways will be applying for the next round of grants and if successful will commence construction in 11/2023. The full amount to be paid from the Open Space Reserve.*

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee:**

**Community Preservation Committee:**

*Community Preservation Committee*

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**Article 15: An Act Merging Certain Voting Precincts in the Town of Groton**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to petition the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for a special act that would merge Precincts 1 and 3A into one Precinct known as Precinct 1, to read as follows:

**An Act Merging Certain Voting Precincts in the Town of Groton**

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

Section 1. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, Precinct 1 and Precinct 3A in the Town of Groton shall merge and become Precinct 1 of the Town of Groton.

Section 2. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

or to take any other action relative thereto.

**Town Clerk**

**Town Manager**

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *In 2021, and as a result of the 2020 Federal Census, boundary lines for Precincts 1 and 3 were adjusted due to shifts in population. The new boundary lines took effect on December 31, 2021 and are in effect for 10 years. During the 2021 process, the Massachusetts Legislature pre-empted the timeline used for reprecincting, and started redistricting simultaneously. The 2010 precinct boundaries were used to redistrict which affected part of Precinct 3. Because of this, the Town now has a sub-precinct, which you will see referred to as Precinct 3A and the Town was split the Town into two (2) Representative Districts, the First Middlesex District and 37<sup>th</sup> Middlesex District. There are currently 236 Residents residing with the newly formed Precinct 3A. This article seeks Town Meeting permission to request Special Legislation to merge Precinct 3A into Precinct 1. This merger will yield a cost savings to the Town as it would require less support during elections.*

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**Article 16: Amend Town Charter – Article 3, Section 3.2.2 (v)**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to petition the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for a special act amending Chapter 121 of the Acts of 2019, the Groton Charter, by amending Article 3, Section 3.2.2 (v) to read as follows:

3.2.2(v) sign all payroll and expense warrants; provided, however, that the select board, at its sole discretion, may delegate this authority to the town manager by a vote of the board at a posted meeting.

or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Town Manager***

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *The signing of the payroll and accounts payable warrants is the responsibility of the Select Board, as identified in M.G.L. Chapter 41, Section 56. This responsibility serves as an oversight on the town treasury. On a bi-weekly basis, the warrants are delivered, usually with a large number of detailed expense and payroll items. Individual Select Board Member practices vary with respect to their detailed review of the warrants. It is recommended that the Charter be revised to authorize the Select Board to delegate the authority, at their discretion, to sign expense and payroll warrants to the Town Manager. The Select Board can also revoke this delegation, and impose limits on signing authority.*

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**Article 17: Amend Town Charter – Article 4, Sections 4.2(iii) and 4.2(iv)**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to petition the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for a special act amending Chapter 121 of the Acts of 2019, the Groton Charter, by deleting Sections 4.2(iii) and 4.2(iv) in their entirety and inserting in their place a new Section 4.2(iii) to read as follows:

4.2(iii) appointing and removing department heads, officers and subordinates and employees and other appointed members of town government for whom no other method of appointment or removal is provided in this charter or by-law. Appointments made by the town manager shall be confirmed by the select board within 15 days of the date the town manager files notice of the action with the select board. Failure by the board of selectmen to confirm an appointment within 15 days shall constitute rejection of the appointment.

or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Town Manager***

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *The Charter Committee in 2017 amended the original Town Charter's appointing authority of the Town Manager by creating a cumbersome, unnecessary procedure of nominating appointments to the Select Board, instead of having the Town Manager appoint members of Town Government, subject to the ratification of the Select Board. It was a change that was not necessary, as the Select Board still has the ultimate authority on who serves Town Government. They also changed the authority of the Town Manager to remove members of Town Government without the approval of the Select Board at a duly posted public meeting. This has the potential to embarrass volunteers and cause unnecessary drama. This proposal would return the appointing authority of the Town Manager back to the original wording in the Charter that was approved in 2008 and worked without issue or complaint for many years.*

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**Article 18: Amend Zoning Bylaw – Accessory Apartment Clarifications**

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Code of the Town of Groton, Chapter 218 Zoning as follows:

1. In Section 218-3 Definitions, amend the existing definition of Accessory Apartment by deleting the words "one bedroom" and inserting in their place the words "eight hundred (800) square feet of habitable floor area".



2. Amend Section 218-9.4 Accessory Apartment as follows:
- a. In Section 218-9.4.2 Attached Accessory Apartment, by inserting the words “of habitable floor area” in the first sentence after the words “eight hundred (800) square feet”.
  - b. In Section 218-9.4.2.k, by inserting the word “attached” in the first sentence before the words “accessory apartment”.
  - c. In Section 218-9.4.3 Detached Accessory Apartment, by deleting the words “detached-accessory apartment” in the first sentence and inserting in their place the words “detached accessory apartment not to exceed eight hundred (800) square feet of habitable floor area”.
  - d. In Section 219-9.4.3.a, by deleting the words “and j-l” and inserting in their place the words “j, and l”.

or to take any other action relative thereto.

### ***Planning Board***

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *This article clarifies certain inconsistencies in the provisions regulating Attached and Detached Accessory Apartments in Section 218-9.4. Specifically, this article clarifies that all accessory apartments, whether attached or detached, shall have a maximum of 800 square feet of living area (i.e., habitable floor area). This article also modifies the definition of Accessory Apartment to be consistent with Section 218-9.4 by inserting the maximum living area provision.*

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**Article 19:     *Extend Center Sewer District to Include 100 Whitman Road***

To see if the Town will vote to extend the "Groton Center Sewer District" as established by the vote of the Special Town Meeting of February 6, 1989, under Article 7, and as shown most recently on the plan approved under article 14 of the Annual Town Meeting of April 25, 2005, to include the property shown on Assessor's Map 234 Lot 55-1 (100 Whitman Road), and further described in a Deed recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds in Book 80620, Page 135, and its successors or assigns, and provided that all costs of designing, laying, and construction of the extension and any associated connection and the cost of additional capacity and the property owner's proportionate share of the general benefit facilities, Connection Fees, and all other costs associated therewith, are paid by the owner of the property benefited thereby, whether by the assessment of betterments or otherwise, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Board of Sewer Commissioners***

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee:**

**Board of Sewer Commissioners:**

**Summary:**     *This Article, if approved, will extend the Center Sewer District to 100 Whitman Road (Assessors Map 234 Lot 55-1). Please note that the parcel shown on Assessors Map 234 Lot 55, which is used as an apple orchard, is not included in this article. Under Groton's Charter, placing an article on the Warrant requires a sponsor, either a Department, Board or Committee of Town or by Citizens' Petition. In an effort to allow the Town Meeting to take action on this request, the Board of Sewer Commissioners has agreed to place this Article on the Warrant on behalf of the proponent.*

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**Article 20:     *Grant Easement for Sewer Connection for 100 Whitman Road***

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to grant an easement to Ryan J. McGuane, and his successors and assigns, for the purpose of placing and maintaining a subsurface sewage disposal line to service 100 Whitman Road (Assessors Map 234 Lot 55-1), , and further described in a Deed recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds in Book 80620, Page 135, and only that land, below existing grade surface and under the surface of Town owned property under the control of the Select Board located at 94 Lovers Lane, shown on Assessors Map 115, Parcel 34, Recorded Deed Book 20265, Page 302 at the South Middlesex Registry of Deeds, as shown on the plan on file with the Office of the Town Clerk, on terms and conditions deemed by the Select Board to be in the best interest of the Town, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Board of Sewer Commissioners***

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee:**

**Board of Sewer Commissioners**

**Summary:**     *Should a sewer extension to 100 Whitman Road (Assessors Map 234 Lot 55-1) be authorized by town meeting, the extension will be a private connection and will not extend beyond the confines of what is currently 100 Whitman Road (Assessors Map 234 Lot 55-1). The work will be done using directional drilling from the site of the existing house lot and is not expected to result in surface disturbance except for a small area at the point of connection to the town sewer at the edge of the golf course across from Johnson's Restaurant. The easement would run along the eastern edge of the 6th fairway. The owner of 100 Whitman Road (Ryan J. McGuane) will pay for the cost of construction and connecting to the existing sewer line. It is anticipated there will be no cost to the Town of Groton for the connection and maintenance. In an effort to allow the Town Meeting to take action on this request, the Board of Sewer Commissioners has agreed to place this Article on the Warrant as well.*

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**Article 21:     *Conservation Land Purchase***

To see if the Town of Groton will vote to appropriate the sum of \$601,500, for the purpose of purchasing for conservation and passive recreation purposes, by eminent domain or negotiated purchase or otherwise, a certain property, known as the "Casella Property", consisting of 119 acres, more or less, owned by the Casella Realty Trust as shown on a plan entitled "Plan of Land in MUNICIPALITY made by SURVEYING FIRM dated XX/XX/XX"; that said land be conveyed to said Town of Groton under the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 8c, and as it may hereafter be amended and other Massachusetts statutes relating to Conservation, to be managed and controlled by the conservation commission of Groton, and the conservation commission be authorized to file on behalf of the Town of Groton any and all applications deemed necessary for grants and /or reimbursements from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts deemed necessary under Chapter 132A,

Section 11 and/or any others in any way connected with the scope of this Article, and the Town of Groton and the conservation commission be authorized to enter into all agreements and execute any and all instruments as may be necessary on behalf of the Town of Groton to affect said purchase, and, further, to authorize the Select Board and the Conservation Commission to grant a conservation restriction on said parcel to a qualified entity in accordance with M.G.L. c. 184, Sections 31 through 33, or to take any other action relative thereto.

### ***Conservation Commission***

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *Applying for a state grant will enable the Town to leverage funds already set aside in the Conservation Fund for the acquisition of approximately 119 acres of conservation land. The Conservation Commission is able to spend from the Conservation Fund without Town Meeting approval, however, the Commission needs approval to receive reimbursement from the grant. The negotiated purchase price for this property is \$601,500 and the grant would reimburse approximately \$360,900 (approx. 60% of total project cost) to the Conservation Fund. This land has frontage on Nashua Road and is adjacent to the Reedy Meadow Conservation Area to the south, and the GDRSD High School property to the east. In addition to providing an extensive trail connection between Chicopee Row, Reedy Meadow Road, and Nasua Road, the Casella Property features exceptionally diverse habitats for its size. It is the last parcel of land with such habitats within the ring of development from Reedy Meadow Road to the south, Nashua Road to the west, Wyman Road to the north, and the Groton-Dunstable Regional High School to the east. Protecting large tracts of contiguous open space ensures a diversity of wildlife, habitats, and recreational opportunities for generations of Groton residents.*

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### **Article 22: Grant Conservation Restrictions on Various Parcels**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen and the Conservation Commission to grant conservation restrictions encumbering all or a portion of the parcels of land described below to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, by and through its Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, AND to the Groton Conservation Trust, a 501(c)(3) organization with an address of PO Box 395, Groton, MA 01450, upon such terms and conditions as the Board of Selectmen and the Conservation Commission in accordance with M.G.L. c. 184, Sections 31 through 33. The parcels of land over which the conservation restrictions are to be granted are described as follows:

1. The parcel of land located off Chicopee Row, Groton, Middlesex County, Massachusetts (Groton Assessor's Parcel 231-85) described in a deed to the Town of Groton from R. THOMAS DELANEY JR. & JENNIFER L. DELANEY and others recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds on June 27, 2011, in Book 57046 at Page 248;

2. The parcel of land located off Chicopee Row, Groton, Middlesex County, Massachusetts (Groton Assessor's Parcel 231-94) described in a deed to the Town of Groton from ADELAIDE M. LUCA and others recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds on December 18, 1997, in Book 27992 at Page 315;
3. The parcel of land located off Hawtree Way, Groton, Middlesex County, Massachusetts (Groton Assessor's Parcel 231-63) described in a deed to the Town of Groton from BREEZY HILL REALTY CORP. and others recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds on October 24, 1997, in Book 27801 at Page 119;
4. The parcel of land located off Chicopee Row, Groton, Middlesex County, Massachusetts (Groton Assessor's Parcel 231-95) described in a deed to the Town of Groton from PHILIP H. COLLIER & NANCY W. COLLIER and others recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds on July 13, 1973, in Book 12477 at Page 130;
5. The parcel of land located off Martins Pond Road, Groton, Middlesex County, Massachusetts (Groton Assessor's Parcel 243-17) described in a deed to the Town of Groton from BUILDERS COLLABORATIVE, INC. and others recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds on December 31, 1986, in Book 17744 at Page 99;
6. The parcel of land located off Martins Pond Road, Groton, Middlesex County, Massachusetts (Groton Assessor's Parcel 244-26) described in a deed to the Town of Groton from BUILDERS COLLABORATIVE, INC. and others recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds on December 31, 1986, in Book 17744 at Page 99;
7. The parcel of land located off Sawtell Drive, Groton, Middlesex County, Massachusetts (Groton Assessor's Parcel 232-9) described in a deed to the Town of Groton from CYRIL G. LUNN and others recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds on December 2, 2003, in Book 41544 at Page 397;
8. The parcel of land located off Sawtell Drive, Groton, Middlesex County, Massachusetts (Groton Assessor's Parcel 232-14) described in a deed to the Town of Groton from CYRIL G. LUNN and others recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds on December 2, 2003, in Book 41544 at Page 397;
9. The parcel of land located off Kailey's Way, Groton, Middlesex County, Massachusetts (Groton Assessor's Parcel 232-38) described in a deed to the Town of Groton from JOSEPH M. CAPPELLETTI and others recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds on July 24, 1996, in Book 26519 at Page 185;
10. The parcel of land located off Lowell Road, Groton, Middlesex County, Massachusetts (Groton Assessor's Parcel 243-31.1) described in a deed to the Town of Groton from NEW ENGLAND FORESTRY FOUNDATION, INC. and others recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds on March 3, 2011, in Book 56554 at Page 226;
11. The parcel of land located off Lowell Road, Groton, Middlesex County, Massachusetts (Groton Assessor's Parcel 233-98.2) described in a deed to the Town of Groton from 114 REALTY TRUST and others recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds on November 30, 2009, in Book 53921 at Page 1;
12. The parcel of land located off Otter Lane, Groton, Middlesex County, Massachusetts (Groton Assessor's Parcel 234-3) described in a deed to the Town of Groton from 114 REALTY TRUST

- and others recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds on December 18, 1987, in Book 18766 at Page 24;
13. The parcel of land located off Martins Pond Road, Groton, Middlesex County, Massachusetts (Groton Assessor's Parcel 224-15) described in a deed to the Town of Groton from HELLEN H. TRIMPER INVESTMENT TRUST and others recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds on February 13, 2020, in Book 74129 at Page 313;
  14. The parcel of land located off Martins Pond Road, Groton, Middlesex County, Massachusetts (Groton Assessor's Parcel 224-18) described in a deed to the Town of Groton from HELLEN H. TRIMPER INVESTMENT TRUST and others recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds on March 14, 2019, in Book 72329 at Page 472;
  15. The parcel of land located off West Main Street, Groton, Middlesex County, Massachusetts (Groton Assessor's Parcel 106-31) described in a deed to the Town of Groton from MARTHA M. HARVEY and others recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds on September 27, 2018, in Book 71675 at Page 143;
  16. The parcel of land located off West Main Street, Groton, Middlesex County, Massachusetts (Groton Assessor's Parcel 106-32) described in a deed to the Town of Groton from MARTHA M. HARVEY and others recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds on September 27, 2018, in Book 71675 at Page 143;

or to take any other action relative thereto.

### ***Conservation Commission***

#### **Select Board:**

#### **Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *This article will satisfy the requirement of the LAND Grant to have all properties purchased with CPA funds protected by a Conservation Restriction (CR). With this requirement met, the Town will be eligible for the 60% reimbursement the LAND grant will provided to the Town for the purchase of the Casella Property. In total, there are five properties that require a CR, which include parcels: 1.) Priest Family Conservation Area (Assessor's Parcels 224-15 & 18); 2.) Patricia Hallet Conservation Area (Assessor's Parcels 106-31 & 32); 3.) "Fuccillo Land" (Assessor's Parcels 233-98.1 & 98.2); 4.) "Baddacook Pond East Shore" (Assessor's Parcel 243-31.1); and 5.) "Unkety Well Site" (Groton Assessor's Parcel 231-85). The Groton Conservation Trust will hold the CR on the Priest & Hallet properties. The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife will hold the CR for the "Fuccillo Land," "Baddacook Pond East Shore," and "Unkety Well Site" properties. The Division of Fisheries of Wildlife aims to bundle several bordering properties owned by the Town under the care and custody of the Conservation Commission to broaden the reach of the protection of the CRs they will hold.*

**Article 23: Grant Conservation Restriction to Division of Fisheries and Wildlife**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board and the Conservation Commission to grant a conservation restriction encumbering all or a portion of the parcel of land described below to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, by and through its Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, upon such terms and conditions as the Select Board and the Conservation Commission set in accordance with Massachusetts General Law, c. 184, §§31 through 33. Said parcel of land described as follows:

1. The parcel of land located off Lowell Road, Groton, Middlesex County, Massachusetts (Groton Assessor's Parcel 234-04) described in a deed to the XXXX from XXXX and others recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds on XXXX, in Book XXXX at Page XXXX;

or to take any other action relative thereto.

**Select Board  
Conservation Commission**

**Select Board:  
Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *As part of the work to address the outstanding parcels needing conservation restrictions as required by the Community Preservation Act and LAND grant conditions, the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) has expressed an interest in protecting the "Brown Loaf" parcel (Groton Assessor's Parcel 234-04), which is a 103 +/- acre parcel, located south of Lowell Road behind the GELD substation. This property, purchased by the Town in 1999 at the Spring Town Meeting, was originally purchased by the Town for general municipal purposes. Options were explored for the best development potential but none panned out. This resulted in a 2011 Spring Town Meeting (Article 19) authorizing the Select Board to transfer the parcel to the Conservation Commission. This article would allow the Town to recoup most of the funds it spent to purchase the property while allowing the Conservation Commission and DFW the means to preserve a parcel with significant ecologic value.*

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**Article 24:     *Citizens' Petition – Rezone 797 Boston Road***

To see if the Town will vote to rezone the property situated at 797 Boston Road, which is shown on the Groton Assessor's Maps as Parcel 133-49 and described in a deed recorded with Middlesex County South District Registry of Deeds in Book 45322 at Page 597, as Neighborhood Business (NB), allowing for the construction of an indoor pickleball facility, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Citizens' Petition***

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>
James McLean	4 Little Hollow Lane	Roberta Fusari	331 Riverbend Drive
Alfred Von Campe	29 Worthen Drive	Kristen Von Campe	29 Worthen Drive
Michael J. Hutton	33 Overlook Drive	Karen Hutton	33 Overlook Drive
Catherine Pauly	42 Forest Drive	Kathy Pietras	9 West Street
David Fusari	331 Riverbend Drive	Robert E. Anderson	270 Whiley Road

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee:**

**Planning Board:**

**Summary:**     The following summary was prepared by the petitioners and represents their view on the Article: *The owner of this parcel wishes to change the zoning of the property from Residential–Agricultural (R-A) to Neighborhood Business (NB) to allow for the development of an indoor pickleball facility. The proposed facility would require the issuance of a Special Permit by the Zoning Board of Appeals, pursuant to the Zoning Bylaw.*

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**ARTICLES 25 THROUGH 33 WILL BE PART OF THE CONSENT AGENDA. PLEASE SEE EXPLANATION PROVIDED ON PAGE 2 OF THIS WARRANT.**

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**Article 25:     *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 2023 Water Department Operating Budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Board of Water Commissioners***

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee:**



**Summary:** *This article will request a transfer of funds from Water Surplus to help fund the Fiscal Year 2023 Water Department's Operational Expenses. As of the printing of the Warrant, it is anticipated that \$\_\_\_\_,\_\_\_\_ will be transferred for this purpose.*

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**Article 26:     *Transfer Within the Center Sewer Enterprise Fund***

To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum or sums of money from the Center Sewer Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2023 Center Sewer Enterprise Department Budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Board of Sewer Commissioners***

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *This article allows the Sewer Department to transfer money from its surplus account to cover any deficit in the Fiscal Year 2023 Center Sewer Budget. As of the printing of the Warrant, it is anticipated that \$\_\_\_\_,\_\_\_\_ will be transferred for this purpose.*

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**Article 27:     *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 2023 Four Corners Sewer Enterprise Department Budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Board of Sewer Commissioners***

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *This article allows the Sewer Department to transfer money from its surplus account to cover any deficit in the Fiscal Year 2023 Four Corners Sewer Budget. As of the printing of the Warrant, it is anticipated that \$\_\_\_\_,\_\_\_\_ will be transferred for this purpose.*

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**Article 28:     *Transfer Within Cable Enterprise Fund***

To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum or sums of money from the Cable Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2023 Cable Enterprise Department Budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Cable Advisory Committee***

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:**     *This article allows the Cable Advisory Committee to transfer money from its surplus account to cover any deficit in the Fiscal Year 2023 budget. As of the Printing of the Warrant, it is anticipated that \$\_\_\_\_,\_\_\_\_ will be transferred for this purpose.*

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**Article 29:     *Prior Year Bills***

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

***Select Board***

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

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

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**ARTICLE 30:    *Current Year Line-Item Transfers***

To see if the Town will vote to transfer certain sums of money within the Fiscal Year 2023 budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Select Board***

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *To transfer money within the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget should the need arise. A handout explaining any necessary transfers will be available at Town Meeting.*

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**Article 31: *Appropriate Money to Offset the Snow and Ice Deficit***

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager, to reduce the deficit in the Fiscal Year 2023 Snow and Ice Budget, as approved under Article 5 of the 2022 Spring Town Meeting, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Town Manager***

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:** *This article will allow the Town to fund any deficit in the Snow and Ice Account in FY 23.*

---

**Article 32: *Debt Service for Middle School Track***

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds, a sum or sums of money, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44B, Section 5 for debt service for Fiscal Year 2024 for the Middle School Track Project, as authorized under Article 7 of the May 1, 2021 Spring Town Meeting and Article 9 of the April 30, 2022 Spring Town Meeting, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Community Preservation Committee***

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**  
**Community Preservation Committee:**

**Summary:** *This article appropriates the debt payments for the Middle School Track Project. The anticipated debt service for Fiscal Year 2024 is \$\_\_\_\_,\_\_\_\_. Funding for this article will come from the Unallocated Reserve of the Community Preservation Fund.*

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**Article 33:     *Establishing Limits for the Various Revolving Funds***

To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 44 sec 53E½ and the Revolving Fund Bylaw, to amend the Revolving Fund Bylaw to add or delete any revolving account and/or to set the FY 2023 spending limits for the various revolving funds as follows:

<b>Program or Purpose</b>	<b>FY 2024 Spending Limit</b>
Stormwater Management	\$20,000
Conservation Commission	\$50,000
Building Rental Fund	\$50,000
Affordable Housing Marketing	\$20,000
Home Recycling Equipment	\$10,000
Access for Persons with Disabilities	\$10,000
Council on Aging Program Fund	\$50,000
Boat Excise Tax Fund	\$ 5,000
Transfer Station Glass	\$10,000
Senior Center Fitness Equipment	\$10,000

or take any other action relative thereto.

***Town Manager***

**Select Board:**

**Finance Committee:**

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

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

Given under our hands this 10<sup>th</sup> Day of April in the year of our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Three.

John F. Reilly

John F. Reilly, Chair

Rebecca H. Pine

Rebecca H. Pine, Vice Chair

Matthew F. Pisani

Matthew F. Pisani, Clerk

Alison S. Manugian

Alison S. Manugian, Member

Peter S. Cunningham

Peter S. Cunningham, Member

OFFICERS RETURN  
Groton, Middlesex

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Constable

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Duly Posted



## 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*

**Town Manager**  
Mark W. Haddad

**To:** *Select Board*

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

**Subject:** *DPW Director-in-Training Program*

**Date:** *February 9, 2023*

At your meeting of January 23, 2023, I presented a proposal to create a DPW Director-In-Training Program in anticipation of Tom Delaney's Retirement in two years. As we have had success with other "In-Training" Programs (Town Accountant, Treasurer/Collector and Building Commissioner), I believe that we would have similar success with the DPW Director's position. As you know, I am a strong proponent of promoting from within for the following reasons:

1. **Internal Mobility Can Help with Retention and Motivation** – Career advancement is extremely important in today's job market. People leave jobs when there are no opportunities for advancement. In addition, promoting from within is great for morale and shows that the Town supports hardworking employees who are vested in the organization.
2. **There is less risk involved with internal promotions** – When promoting from within, you have had the opportunity to see the work ethic and production of the employee. They are a known entity whose work style and work ethic has been established. They also understand the Town's culture and most likely are a good fit within the Department. Some of the biggest challenges in hiring externally is that you may end up hiring an individual who is not a "fit" within the Department which could hurt morale and cause employees within the Department to seek employment elsewhere. There is also a longer training period due to the fact that they are not familiar with the Town's policies and procedures.
3. **Promoting from Within Saves Time and Money** – Advertising for the position is expensive and could take months to find the right candidate. By promoting from within, the chosen employee can hit the ground running the day Mr. Delaney retires as they are already familiar with the department staffing and the overall organization.

It is obvious that there are clear, tangible benefits to promoting from within. In addition, by adopting the "In-Training" program, we will have the opportunity, based on real time in service, whether or not a person has the skills and experience to in fact do the DPW Director's Job. The program provides for

an annual stipend of \$7,000. The chosen candidate would shadow Mr. Delaney and perform their daily tasks, however, if there were night meetings or additional training needed, the stipend would cover the additional hours. By providing a two-year period to review the candidate in the training program, we can be sure the individual is ready to take over the position given the fact that training would be provided for the varying responsibilities within four seasons. In addition, the chosen candidate will have the opportunity to determine if they, in fact, want the position. We lose nothing by establishing the program (other than \$14,000 in stipend pay over two years). If the chosen candidate does not work out, nothing prohibits the Town from advertising the position two years from now. I see this as a win-win situation with very little risk to the residents and taxpayers of Groton.

That said, when I first presented this to the Select Board, some members had concerns that, if the Town were to pursue this Program, the chosen individual should meet certain requirements with the extensive amount of management and knowledge that is necessary to manage the various departments within the Department of Public Works. The Board had requested that we provide a copy of the current job description for review and consideration. The job description is attached to this memorandum as requested. Please note that the current educational requirements for Groton's DPW Director is as follows: *High School Diploma or trade school graduate; eight years of experience, including four years of supervisory experience, in public works construction and maintenance programs; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.*

The Board also requested that we conduct a survey of Towns that surround Groton. The purpose of the survey was to review education requirements, department responsibilities, pay and licenses required. The following Towns were surveyed: Ayer, Dunstable, Harvard, Littleton, Lunenburg, Pepperell, Shirley, Townsend, Tyngsboro and Westford. The results of the Survey are also attached to this memorandum. (Please note that Tyngsboro is in the process of creating the DPW Director position. Currently the highest position in Tyngsboro is the Highway Senior Foreman.)

With the exception of Dunstable, all Towns surveyed require a Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering for their DPW Director. Please note that the Select Board in Townsend waived that requirement when appointing the current Highway Superintendent because they decided to promote from within and the chosen candidate did not have a Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering. In addition, most of the DPW Director positions surveyed also oversee the Water Department, and in some instances the Sewer Department. Groton has a separate Superintendent managing the Water Department and the Town does require a Master's Degree in Civil Engineering, Business Management or Environmental Studies for that position.

I do not find the results of this survey compelling enough to change Groton's DPW Director Job Description to require a Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering. Our DPW Director is a "hands-on" working Director. I expect our next DPW Director to serve in a similar fashion. When we need engineering services (for Stormwater, for example), we contract out for engineering services. This has been highly successful and dependable. It should also be noted that even though our Water Superintendent has a college degree, both the Water and Sewer Departments contract with a consulting engineer. It is no different than what we do with the Department of Public Works.

For the reasons listed in this memorandum, even taking into consideration the results of the Survey, I strongly recommend that the Select Board not make any changes to the DPW Director Job Description and allow me to move forward with the DPW Director-In-Training Program.

I look forward to discussing this in more detail with the Board at your meeting to be held on February 27, 2023. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me with any additional questions or concerns with regard to this matter.

MWH/rjb

cc: Melisa Doig – Human Resources Director  
enclosures



## **Department of Public Works Director**

### **Statement of Duties**

Administrative and supervisory work in planning, directing and managing the operations of the Public Works Department which is comprised of divisions responsible for building, maintaining and/or administering the Town's streets, sidewalks, traffic control, storm drains, parks, commons, playing fields, tree work, snow, ice control, sanitation and recycling, maintenance of Town facilities; all other related work as required.

### **Supervision**

The Public Works Director reports to the Town Manager and is responsible for providing all Highway, maintenance and Transfer Station services to the Town; also receives policy direction from the Select Board. The position is subject to the annual review and evaluation program.

Performs highly responsible functions requiring the exercise of independent judgment in planning and inspecting the construction of highway projects and in determining the scope and scheduling of maintenance projects.

Supervises all Highway, Transfer Station, Stormwater, and Maintenance employees. Provides daily direction, prepares annual employees performance evaluations and counsels and disciplines staff consistent with Town policies. Oversees contractors for major construction and activities for public projects to ensure compliance with plans and specifications. Frequently attends night and weekend meetings.

### **Job Environment**

Work is generally performed outdoors, with frequent exposure to hazards associated with heavy equipment construction sites; some work is performed indoors pertaining to the repair and maintenance of vehicles and DPW equipment On call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Operates heavy and light equipment and an automobile, as well as computer and standard office equipment.

Makes frequent contact with the general public and has constant contact with other town officials, including utilities and private contractors; contact is made in person, by phone, or in writing and involve discussing complex information and resolving difficult customer service requests.

Has access to department-related confidential information.

Errors could result in lower standards of services, sub-standard construction and inadequate maintenance programs which could cause personal injury or loss, injury to others, damage to buildings and equipment, and have legal repercussions and monetary loss.

## Essential Functions

*The essential functions or duties listed below are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related, or a logical assignment to the position.*

Plans, assigns, schedules, supervises and reviews the work of subordinates with regard to all operations in the highway department; the construction and maintenance of streets, roads, sidewalks, traffic lights, bridges, drains, storm-control structures, and recreational facilities; supervises the installation of the signs.

Responsible for the daily supervision of all employees of the DPW and personnel from other divisions and private contractors involved in emergency, snow removal, or other projects as applicable.

Responsible for street cleaning operations, including catch basins, culverts, drains, outfalls and manholes, street sweeping and, in the construction, and repair of bridges. Orders materials for all phases of highway activities including fleet maintenance.

Applies for Federal and State grants, reimbursement and implementation of the grants received. Makes sure proper procurement are applied for supplies and services for the grants.

Plans, schedules and supervises pavement markings and the installation of traffic signs, including all informational signs and maintenance.

Oversees and participates in snow removal, plowing, sanding operations and operations resulting from fires, floods or other emergencies.

Inspects work for compliance with standards or instructions or for contract compliance.

Plans, oversees and supervises the work of all employees in the Maintenance department. For the cleaning operation and maintenance of the heating and cooling systems, alarm systems, generators, elevators and smoke alarms in all municipal buildings.

Oversees procurement all custodial and maintenance supplies and equipment and prepares specifications and bidding documents for maintenance projects, supplies, equipment and utilities. Oversees maintenance equipment contracts. Develops, implements and administers the department's yearly financial and capital expenditure requests for building maintenance.

Creates bid specifications and procures materials and supplies for all construction work and related items that are in compliance with State and Federal laws.

Performs a variety of building maintenance such as the proper operation and preventative maintenance of HVAC equipment, elevators, and minor repairs to buildings, fixtures and hardware.

Conducts quarterly building and system inspections to insure the elimination of hazardous conditions.

Manages and oversees operations of the Town's Transfer Station; including marketing sale and distribution of recycled materials. Make sure all DEP permits are in place for operation at the station.

Responsible for the preparation, submission and administration of the Highway Division budget and future capital plans and expenditures.

Responsible for inventory of Stormwater drainage pipes and tools.

Plans use of manpower and equipment and carries through to execution highway projects and programs; directs activities of field crews and may serve as a leader on a variety of construction and maintenance projects for Town-owned property, facilities and structures. Assigns laborers, operators, and foremen to specific tasks; instructs laborers and operators in proper use of equipment, ensures that safety procedures are followed.

Coordinates field operations and assists in emergency highway repairs and in other highway related emergency repairs, as required.

Performs similar or related work, as required, or as situation dictates.

### **Recommended Minimum Qualifications**

#### **Education and Experience**

High School Diploma or trade school graduate; eight years of experience, including four years of supervisory experience, in public works construction and maintenance programs; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

#### **Special Requirements**

Valid Driver's License

Commercial Class B Driver's License (CDL)

Hoisters license

MCPPO Certification

#### **Knowledge, Ability and Skill**

**Knowledge:** Thorough knowledge of the procedures, equipment, materials and tools relative to public works construction and maintenance operations. Working knowledge of civil engineering principles, practices and methods as applicable to a municipal setting. Practical knowledge of vehicle maintenance procedures. Thorough knowledge of all applicable policies, and regulations affecting highway, water and sewer system activities. Thorough knowledge of Massachusetts laws governing highway and maintenance.

**Ability:** Ability to plan, assign and supervise the work of groups of employees engaged in a variety of highway construction and maintenance operations. Ability to maintain good public relations. Ability to communicate effectively, orally and in writing, with employees, contractors, city officials and the general public. Ability to plan, assign, supervise and review the work of subordinates.

**Skill:** Good organizational, planning and supervisory skills.

### **Physical Requirements**

Moderate physical effort required in performing work. Occasionally required to move (push, pull, lift or carry) objects weighing up to 60 pounds. Ability to lift heavy objects and to occasionally perform strenuous work under varying weather conditions. Ability to walk and stand for long periods of time. Required to work long periods of time beyond normal working hours. The employee is frequently required to use hands to finger, handle, or feel objects, tools or controls and to reach with hands and arms. Must be able to access all levels of a construction site/ building/ structure, traverse uneven terrain, climb a ladder, and enter and exit from vehicles. Ability to speak and listen. Manually operates all office equipment. Live within a 10-mile radius of the Town.

*This job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and employee, and is subject to change by the employer, as the needs of the employer and requirements of the job change.*

TOWN	SALARY	YEARS IN POSITION	EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT SIZE	POPULATION	DUTIES	LICENCES	TITLE
AYER	\$ 122,761.60	1 Yr. 3 months	Bachelor's degree in Engineering, Business or related field; 5 yrs. municipal public works experience; 3 yrs. supervisory	24	8,001	Manages the Highway, Water, Transfer Station. Budgets and overall operations.	Valid Driver's License; Licensed as a Massachusetts Registered Professional Engineer; Certified Operator-Wastewater and Water, Commonwealth of Massachusetts	Superintendent of Public Works
DUNSTABLE	\$ 95,630.00	15	High School Diploma or equivalent; exp in operation of heavy equipment, trucks, related field; Master's Degree is preferred. 7-10yrs engineering and	5	3,435	Supervises all functions of the Highway Department and	Valid Driver's License, CDL Class B, and Hoist Engineer License	Highway Superintendent
HARVARD	\$ 117,665.00	5 Yrs.	Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering or related field; Master's Degree is preferred. 7-10yrs engineering and	13	6,573	Manages the operation of the DPW, including budgeting.	Valid Drivers License; Registration in MA as a Professional Engineer preferred	Director of Public Works
LITTLETON	\$117,282.96	1 YR	Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering; 7-10 yrs. in public works administration, with 5 yrs. supervisory.	15	9,912	Operations for Public Works, Highway, Park, Transfer Station, engineering, storm/waste water,	Valid Drivers License; Registration in MA as a Professional Engineer	Director of Public Works
LUNENBURG	\$ 96,945.84	8 Months	Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering, Construction Management, Public or Business Admin or closely related	13	11,241	Manages the operation of the DPW and budgeting	Valid CDL Massachusetts Driver's License	DPW Director
PEPPERELL	\$ 126,992.16	13	Bachelor's degree Civil Engineering; 10yrs exp including 5 yrs. supervision	33	12,165	Manages Highway, maintenance Water/distribution system, sewer collection/treatment	Valid Drivers License; Registration in MA as a Professional Engineer required	Director DPW/Town Engineer
SHIRLEY	\$ 91,700.00	1 YR	High School Graduation, GED, Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering or related field; 5 yrs. exp in operations management, supervisory, public works construction, building trades, heavy	5	7,400	Manages Public Works, Storm Water Management, budgets and building maintenance	Class C Hoist License Restrictions 31 and 35; CDL Class B License; Class A Driver's License	Public Works Director
TOWNSEND	\$ 79,312.00	5	Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering and 5 yrs of Public Works exp. Or any equivalent combination of education	5	9,515	Manages the operation of the DPW, including budgeting.	Valid CDL and Hoisting Operator License	Highway Superintendent
WESTFORD	\$ 152,894.10	13	Bachelor's degree Civil Engineering, Public Admin, Business Admin, or closely related field; Master's degree preferred; 7 yrs. exp in public works including 2 yrs. utility and 5 yrs. supervisory	52	23,831	Manages Tree Warden, Highway, Fleet Maintenance, Engineering, Wastewater, Water Department, and Stormwater Enterprises.	Valid Drivers License	Director of Public Works
TYNGSBORO	No DPW Director, in the process of expanding the highway garage and moving to having an engineer. Currently the highest position is a Highway Senior Foreman							
Average	\$ 111,242.63				10,230			
GROTON	\$ 113,384.00	38	High School Diploma; 8 yrs. exp w/4 yrs. of supervisory	19	10,739	Manages Highway. Transfer Station, Maintenance, Storm Water, budgets, and works	Valid drivers License, Class B (CDL), Hoisters License, MCPPO Certification	DPW Director



## 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*

**Town Manager**  
Mark W. Haddad

February 28, 2023

Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Commissioner Doug Rice  
Department of Conservation and Recreation  
251 Causeway Street  
Ninth Floor  
Boston, MA 02114

RE: Nashua Riverwalk Project Approval – MassTrails Grant – P23-3515-G14A

Dear Commissioner Rice:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Groton Select Board concerning a recent decision on a Grant Application for the Nashua Riverwalk Project. For background, in February of 2022, the Town submitted an application to the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) for a riverwalk along the Nashua River within the J. Harry Rich State Forest. Specifically, the project proposal included the following:

- A 1,000-foot accessible trail, 6 feet wide over an existing dirt trail (only alteration required would be adding a 6" layer of compressed stonedust over the trail)
- A 400-foot accessible loop trail at the end of the main trail, 3 feet wide over an existing dirt trail
- 2 rest areas, each 10 feet by 20 feet (ground-cover removed, then raked by hand, and then a 6" layer of compressed stonedust put on top)
- An observation area, 20 feet by 50 feet, created like the rest areas. Removal of just two 3" diameter trees would be preferred to open up views of the river.
- An additional parking area, 30 feet by 50 feet, adjacent to the existing parking area. The design required no live trees to be removed and the area would be created like the rest and observation areas.
- Granite curbing on the river side of the rest and observation areas as a safety barrier, placed on top of the stonedust.
- A 6-foot bench in each of the rest areas and three in the observation area, placed on top of the stonedust
- A handicap table in the observation area, placed on top of the stonedust.
- Five educational signs to be installed in the observation area using helical piers to minimize soil disruption and possible disruption of archaeological historical artifacts (Mass Historical Commission has approved this approach).

On June 7, 2022, DCR notified the Town that a MassTrails Grant was awarded for this project. As is required by DCR, the Town moved forward with completing all of the Grant paperwork, including submitting a WPA Form 3 (Notice of Intent – NOI) for DCR's approval. During the review process, DCR asked to reduce the size of the project and the Town complied and resubmitted the revised NOI that reduced the project as follows:

***Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Department of Conservation and Recreation  
February 28, 2023  
page two***

- A 1,000-foot accessible trail, 6 feet wide
- 2 rest areas, each 10 feet by 20 feet
- An observation area, 25 feet by 30 feet
- Granite curbing on the river side of the rest and observation areas
- A 6-foot bench in each of the rest areas and three in the observation area
- A handicap table in the observation area
- Five educational signs to be installed in the observation area

While the Town had hoped for the original project, we complied with the request. We expected approval of the reduced project based on feedback and information from DCR. However, much to our dismay and disappointment, on February 3, 2023, DCR informed the Town that the project has been further reduced due to the fact that the Project did not meet WPA Regulations Performance Standards for the Riverfront Area. The approved project has now been reduced to the following:

- A 1,000-foot accessible trail, 6 feet wide
- A 6-foot bench or two placed on the trail itself towards the end of the trail
- Five educational signs to be installed along the trail

The Select Board is extremely disappointed that the project has been reduced so significantly as the original project was built to assist mobility-impaired individuals enjoy and utilize this important and scenic area of Groton. The Board is specifically concerned about the following:

- Elimination of the two (2) planned rest areas and one observation area means that mobility-impaired individuals will be deprived of the opportunity to observe the bank of this river, and all the wildlife activity it supports. Since all able-bodied visitors can easily observe the riverbank from the existing path, we are concerned about the discriminatory message conveyed by the DCR decision, which is fundamentally contrary to providing equity of access on public land to the maximum extent feasible.
- Without rest areas, the benches will need to be placed on the trail itself, creating a serious and potentially dangerous obstacle for equestrians, who are also expected to use this trail.
- This trail has been designed to provide opportunities for guided group hikes to learn about the history of this area (highly valued as a hunting area by the indigenous people in the area, and near the first known colonial settlement in the town) and the history of the cleanup of the Nashua River, spearheaded by Groton resident Marion Stoddart. Her efforts led to the transformation of the Nashua from being one of the ten most polluted rivers in our country in the 1960's to its designation as a Wild and Scenic River in 2019. Eliminating the rest areas from the plan means there will be no place for educators or hike leaders to gather a group for information and discussion. Such education efforts are vital to having an educated public that will sustain conservation efforts.

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
**Department of Conservation and Recreation**  
**February 28, 2023**  
**page three**

The Groton Select Board urges you to do everything in your power to approve the original reduced project for the intended purpose of providing access and educational opportunities for all residents of the Commonwealth. We wish to make it clear that Groton has a well-established Trails Committee whose members maintain all of the trails in Groton. We are confident that both the construction and the maintenance of this trail, as it was proposed and preliminarily approved, will be handled in a professional manner, without any additional burden falling on the DCR.

The Town would appreciate an opportunity to work directly with members of DCR to approve this wonderful project.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Mark W. Haddad  
Town Manager

MWH/rjb

cc: Select Board  
Paul Funch  
Senator John Cronin  
Representative Margaret Scarsdale  
Representative Danillo Sena





## TOWN OF GROTON

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Peter S. Cunningham, *Member*

**Town Manager**  
Mark W. Haddad

February 28, 2023

Dear City Council/Select Boards (distribution to communities identified by Left Field)

As a community which has received MSBA funding for new school construction, you are painfully aware of the impact of the pandemic on the original estimates for your project. Original cost estimates used for MSBA funding applications and local debt obligations were severely impacted by the unprecedented rise in costs and related supply chain issues across the construction industry. Many project budgets were scaled back through 'value engineering' to the point where they just could meet the education program standard stipulated in their MSBA grants. And in some cases, in spite of these reductions in project budgets, many communities had to seek additional funding authorizations from their citizens.

Recognizing the extreme financial burden the pandemic had inflicted upon new school construction projects and the fact that the Commonwealth had unexpended Federal COVID 19 funds, Senator Edward Kennedy of Lowell has filed Senate Bill SD2395; 'An Act relative to increased material costs in school construction projects'. This bill would seek to set aside no less than \$150 M of Federal COVID 19 relief funds to be used by the MSBA to increase reimbursements to previously approved school building projects that can show a demonstrated cost increase brought about by the pandemic and related supply chain issues. Given the clear and direct relationship of the pandemic to these project cost overruns and the underlying intent of Federal relief funds to mitigate that impact, it is a completely appropriate use of those funds.

As with all bills that are filed on Beacon Hill, the greater support received from our legislative delegations, the greater the chance of their success. To that end, we are requesting that you reach out to your respective State Senators and Representatives and ask them to sign on as co-sponsors of Senate Bill SD2395. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Groton Select Board

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2023  
TOWN HALL SECOND FLOOR MEETING ROOM**

**SB Members Present:** Rebecca H. Pine, Vice Chair; Alison S. Manugian, Peter Cunningham, Matthew F. Pisani

**SB Absent:** John Reilly, Chair

**Also Present:** Dawn Dunbar, Town Clerk (acting Town Manager), Diversity and Equity and Inclusion Committee: Michelle Collette, Fran Stanley, And James Moore

Becky Pine called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and reviewed the agenda.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Vanessa Abrahams, Groton Librarian, said that this week the library would be launching the annual Groton Reads. They are partnering with the Groton Garden Club and there are two books to choose from: Nature's Best Hope, A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard written by Douglas W. Tallamy and Gardening in Eden, The Joys of Planning and Tending a Garden written by Arthur T. Vanderbilt. Ms. Abrahams said there is a full month of free activities planned for March. She invited all patrons tomorrow February 14, 2023 to enjoy homemade goodies and hot chocolate. Ms. Abrahams said that Jeffrey Pike is retiring and she is asking for stories to be shared of Mr. Pike to help celebrate everything that he has accomplished for the library.

Ms. Dunbar said that she distributed an email to all Town Personnel regarding the Conflict of Interest Training and to remain compliant it must be completed within the next 30 days. She said the training would take approximately one hour to complete and is user friendly.

Mr. Cunningham said that the Conservation Forum is being held this Thursday, February 16, 2023 at 6:30pm at the Groton Center.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Dan Twomey, Groton Resident, advocated for all young families that reside in Groton and are expected to pay the \$5,000 tuition for full day Kindergarten. He said that there are only 18 schools remaining in Massachusetts that are required to pay tuition and Groton is the highest of them all. He said families are significantly impacted by paying this additional fee along with the high tax rates.

**TOWN MANAGER REPORT**

**1. Review Memo from Town Clerk on Early Voting and Mail-In Voting for Annual Town Election**

Ms. Dunbar said that she attended the Massachusetts Town Clerk's Conference last week. At that time she had asked Michelle Tassinari, Director and Legal Counsel for Elections Division of the Secretary of the Commonwealth if the Board of Registrars were required to officially vote to not recommend In Person Early Voting or if taking no action was considered the same action. Ms. Tassinari confirmed that they both meant the same thing. Ms. Dunbar said she would not need to hold another meeting to officially recommend opting out of Early Voting. The only option at this point is to offer voters to Vote by Mail.

Connie Sartini, from the Groton Herald, commented that the Select Board can only take a position on Voting by Mail and not Early Voting. Ms. Dunbar said that is correct due to the Board of Registrars not recommending the action by more than 50%.

Mr. Cunningham asked what the census of the Select Board was at the previous meeting and said that he was unsupportive of Early Voting due to the lack of voters that took the opportunity last time it was provided. Ms. Pine said that there will be further discussion at an upcoming meeting and that there were concerns of the financial burden of Voting by Mail. However, there was recognition that the additional options provided flexibility to voters that may not be able to vote in person. She said the information presented by the Town Clerk tonight has made the decision easier.

Ms. Dunbar informed the Select Board that she received \$4,000 as a reimbursement from the State for the expense of the Primary and General Election and the funds would be applied to the General Funds.

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

Ms. Dunbar said that Dr. Chesson, Groton Dunstable Regional School Superintendent, released her FY24 Proposed Budget and the proposed assessment for the Town of Groton is \$27, 808,707. Mr. Haddad had budgeted \$26,800,655 leaving a \$1,262,939 deficit. He and the Finance team will be working over the next several weeks on determining how to balance the budget. There will be an Executive Session held on February 27, 2023 at 6:30pm to discuss Collective Bargaining adjustments to try and cover some or the entire deficit. Then on March 4, 2023 at 8:30am the Finance Team and the Select Board will be meeting to discuss the budget in a joint session.

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

Monday, February 20, 2023	- No Meeting (President's Day)
Monday, February 27, 2023	-Executive Session to review collective Bargaining Budgeting Related Issues
	- Review First Draft of 2023 Spring Town Meeting Warrant
	-Consider Approving DPW Director in Training Program
Saturday, March 4, 2023	-Joint Budget Meeting with Finance Committee
Monday, March 6, 2023	- Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, March 13, 2023	-Public Hearing of 2023 Spring Warrant Regularly Scheduled meeting
Wednesday, March 15, 2023	-School Committee Approves Budget
Monday, March 20, 2023	- No Meeting
Monday, March 27, 2023	-Continuance of Public Hearing on Mail in Voting at Annual Town Election
Monday, April 3, 2023	- Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, April 10, 2023	- Approve Warrant for Posting
Monday, April 17, 2023	- No Meeting (Patriot's Day)
Monday April 24, 2023	- Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Saturday, April 29, 2023	-2023 Spring Town Meeting

## **ITEM FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND ACTION**

### **1. Ms. Dunbar asked the Select Board to approve the letter of support to the Community Preservation Committee on the Affordable Housing Trust Application.**

Ms. Pine said that the Affordable Housing Trust had met with the Planning Board and the Housing Authority and they had both agreed to draft a letter of support.



*Mr. Cunningham made a motion to approve the letter of support to the Community Preservation Committee on Affordable Housing Trust Application. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. The motion was carried. Ms. Pine- abstain*

Ms. Manugain said that it was important to provide the Trust with funding to establish a track record; however, she is not fully supportive of the request made for consistent funding.

**2. Ms. Dunbar asked the Select Board to approve the letter of interest and the application to MRPC to update the Walkability Study.**

Ms. Dunbar said that the Planning Board reached out to the MRPC for a Unified Planning Working Program to provide assistance to study the walkability in the Town of Groton. She said that there is an extensive trail network however, not everything can be accessed on foot. The amount of pedestrian traffic has increased and the need for improvement is necessary. A study was performed 10 years ago and the MRPC is requesting for an updated study. Ms. Dunbar said that she had conversed with the Planning Board and was told that a letter of interest needs to be submitted prior to February 28, 2023. She said that the Planning Board has granted Russell Burke permission to file and submit the application. Ms. Dunbar said that she asked Mr. Tada to draft the letter to show that Groton is interested in updating the study.

Ms. Manugian asked for clarification if the walkability study assists in connecting sites and not only replaces sidewalks. Mr. Cunningham said that the previous study was very resourceful and assisted in applying for State Grants to be utilized for sidewalk extensions. The one for West Groton has been approved and it is expected to be completed this year. Ms. Dunbar confirmed that Mr. Tada is waiting on the engineering plans for the West Groton extension along with the extension from Rt40 proceeding up to Gibbet Hill, and the work on Peabody Street. Ms. Manugian asked if the study would only mirror roadways. Ms. Dunbar said she believes that the study would explore everything including pathways to connect establishments. Ms. Pine agreed that the study would be beneficial for the Town.

*Mr. Cunningham made a motion to authorize the Select Board Chair to sign the letter of interest to the MRPC to update the Walkability Study. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.*

*Ms. Manugian made a motion to approve the application to be submitted to the MRPC to update the Walkability Study. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.*

**3. Ms. Dunbar asked the Select Board to approve a One Day Wine and Malt Beverage License for the Friends of Prescott for an Open Mic Night at the Prescott School on Friday, March 10, 2023 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.**

*Mr. Cunningham made a motion to approve a One Day Wine and Malt Beverage License for the Friends of Prescott for an Open Mic Night at the Prescott School on Friday, March 10, 2023 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.*

**Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee – Annual Report Update**

Ms. Dunbar said that there was an error in the posting of the February 9, 2023 Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee meeting. The login password for zoom was inadvertently left off the posting. The meeting was held and recorded on zoom. Ms. Dunbar spoke with the Open Meeting Law Division and they said it is up to the Committee how to remedy the violation. Ms. Dunbar said that she also spoke with the DEI Chair and they agreed that it would be proper for the violation to be added to the DEI's agenda for further discussion. She formally apologized for the error.

Ms. Michelle Collette, James Moore and Fran Stanley were present for the annual Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee update.



Ms. Collette said that a year ago the Committee's name was changed to the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee. She said that the Committee is made up of 7 voting members and one nonvoting member (Officer Gordon Candow). Ms. Colette expressed that the Committee is very fortunate to have Officer Gordon Candow. He has been extremely resourceful with determining when police intervention is needed. The Committee has been focusing on reporting incidents of hate and hate crimes. Ms. Collette expressed that at times the position is challenging and can be emotional. The Select Board had asked the DEI Committee to formulate impactful Select Board and Groton wide interventions to recognize and try to prevent incidents of prejudice and hatred. The DEI Committee has recommended that the Select Board make a statement to condemn the incident and recognize the victimized community excluding incidents within the School District. Ms. Collette said that annually the Select Board would be provided a report from the DEI Committee on incidents of hate and hate crimes within the Town. She said that a forum is planned to educate the community about official hate incidents and crimes. Marian Ryan, Middlesex District Attorney, has been asked to attend the forum. The Committee will be celebrating Juneteenth by partnering with neighboring towns to coordinate a series of activities.

Ms. Collette apologized for the error of the missing login password and that said that the Committee would be discussing the violation at their next scheduled meeting.

Mr. Pisani said that he is very appreciative of all the work the Committee has done and expressed that this is a proactive group and it shows that Groton is embracing this. Mr. Cunningham commented that it is important to invite speakers such as Marian Ryan to discuss what constitutes a hate crime. Ms. Collette said in all the situations the Committee has reached out to the targeted individuals and made them aware that the Town is supportive of them. Ms. Pine informed the Board that Marian Ryan has sponsored a webinar once a month in regards to hate crimes and it is very resourceful. She recommended that the Committee subscribe to the mailing list.

Ms. Pine requested that there be clarification within the reporting of incidents of hate crimes, "The Select Board will make a statement to condemn the incident and recognize the victimized community excluding the Groton Dunstable Regional Public School and Private Schools." She said that the Town has no jurisdiction within the Schools. Ms. Pine said she was collaborating with the Conservation Commission and they have identified a piece of land that will be named after the Nipmuc Tribe and it will be finalized in the next couple of months. They would like to ask a representative from the Nipmuc Tribe to partake in the process.

Mr. Moore said it's amazing the timeline of how long that people have inhabited this area. He suggested combining the idea of naming the parcel of land after the Nipmucs and creating a trail to signify movement. Ms. Pine commented that in those hundreds of years people relied heavily on rivers for travel. Mr. Moore said it is important to keep the initiative of Destination Groton in mind. Ms. Collette noted that there is a resident of Groton who is an active member of the United Native American Cultural Center and partnering with that organization to request their knowledge and participation would be significant.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms. Manugian said that the School Committee had previously looked into eliminating the tuition for full day Kindergarten however; they had received numerous concerns from parents that did not want the option of ½ day kindergarten removed. She also recommended that the Select Board members review the School Committees presentation from January 25, 2023, the Superintendent had identified various scenarios if the deficit was not met by the municipalities and the reductions that would need to occur. Ms. Manugian said she hopes the Town Manger can compile a similar document.

Ms. Manugian said that she has noticed that the parking lot lights are remaining on throughout the night at the Groton Hill Music Center and feels that it is unnecessary and should be addressed.

Mr. Cunningham said that he is working on drafting a letter to other communities that have been impacted by school debt to encourage them to work with their legislatures to support the bill established by Senator Kennedy. Ms. Manugian requested that MASC is included when the letter is distributed.

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

Ms. Dunbar said that the Select Board had met in a joint session with the School Committee and the Town Manager and Tom Orcutt would continue to work on the PFAS issue. Ms. Pine said that WBUR is airing a week-long program on PFAS and a segment emphasized on the fertilizer that comes from septic sludge contains a high level of PFAS.

#### **SELECT BOARD LIAISON REPORTS**

#### **MINUTES**

*Ms. Manugian made a motion to approve the minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting on February 06, 2023. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.*

The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 pm

Respectfully Submitted by Kristine Fox, Minute Taker