SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES VIRTUAL MEETING MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2024 APPROVED

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

Also Virtually Present: Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; Megan Foster, Principal Assessor; Patricia DuFresne, Assistant Director of Finance/Town Accountant; Melisa Doig, Human Resources Director; Shawn Campbell, Groton Country Club General Manager; Edward C. Schaffer, On-Premise Retail Liquor License applicant; Mark Scheier, Attorney; Donald Black, Chair of Commemorations and Celebrations; Greg Sheldon, Destination Groton Committee Member, Takashi Tada, Land Use Director/Town Planner; Bud Robertson, Chair, Finance Committee.

Mr. Cunningham called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Pine reminded everyone that the Presidential Primary will be held on March 5th from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at either the Groton Center or the Middle School South Gymnasium.

She also announced that someone posted on line regarding the leash law in Groton. Ms. Pine said there has been ongoing confusion regarding this, and Groton has a very clear leash law. She requested that the temporary signs put up before COVID be removed. Mr. Haddad said that Groton's Animal Control Officer, Mr. Greenhault, had reached out, and the temporary signs would be removed.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Consider Ratifying the Agreement with the IPBO Local #522 Concerning Terminating the Current Agreement on June 30, 2024.

Mr. Haddad explained to the Board that effective July 1, 2024, the Patriot Regional Emergency Communications Center (RECC) would take over dispatching for the Town of Groton. He said most of Groton's current employees will be transferred to the Patriot RECC and will become employees of the Town of Pepperell. The employees are covered by a Collective Bargaining Agreement set to expire on June 30, 2025. Mr. Haddad said the Town notified the Union to negotiate the termination. After several negotiation sessions, they reached a Tentative Agreement with the Union that he provided to the Board for their review and consideration. He said that the Town will use the current year (FY2024) appropriations to fund this Agreement. He added that this will not have any additional impact on the budget or taxpayers. He explained there would be one-time cash payments on June 30, 2024, to total approximately \$19,000. The Town agreed that should the Town join the Patriot RECC prior to June 30, 2024, the amounts agreed to will be paid in full and not prorated. (see included Agreement to the minutes).

Mr. Haddad respectfully requested that the Board consider ratifying the Tentative Agreement.

Mr. Cunningham asked if there would be enough coverage in the dispatch center if several employees took a vacation before June 30th. Mr. Haddad said the Chief has a good plan in place for coverage. Ms. Pine asked if there was any likelihood the Town would join Patriot RECC before June 30, 2024. Mr. Haddad said if Patriot RECC is ready, he would like to move there earlier.

Ms. Pine made a motion to ratify the Agreement with the IPBO Local #522 concerning terminating the current Agreement on June 30, 2024. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll Call vote: Reilly-aye; Manugian-aye; Pine-aye; Pisani- aye; Cunningham-aye.

2. FY 2025 Budget Update

Regarding the FY 2025 Budget Update, Mr. Haddad informed everyone that the second of two budget forums will be held at the Center in West Groton on Wednesday, March 6, 2024, beginning at 7:00 p.m. The first Budget Forum that was held in Dunstable last week went well. Mr. Haddad believes Groton was well represented at the forum; the questions were respectful, and a lot of excellent information was shared. He is hoping that the Forum in Groton will be equally successful. Dr. Chesson did a fantastic job responding to the questions with facts. Moderator Jason Kauppi will lead the discussion and moderate the Forum. Mr. Cunningham said that while watching the Forum on the Groton Channel, he was impressed and believed that nobody could go into this saying they were uninformed.

3. Update on Select Board Meeting Schedule Through the End of the Year

Wednesday, March 6, 2024	Special Budget Forum- Groton (Senior) Center
Monday, March 11, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, March 18, 2024	No Meeting
Monday, March 25, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Tuesday, March 26, 2024	2024 Spring Town Meeting
Monday, April 1, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Tuesday, April 2, 2024	Special Election to Consider an Override of Proposition 2 1//2
Monday, April 8, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, April 15, 2024	No Meeting- Patriots Day
Monday, April 22, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Tuesday, April 23, 2024	2024 Annual Town Election

ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND ACTION

1. Consider Expanding the Commemorations and Celebrations Committee and Appoint Connie Sartini, Karen Tuomi, and Maureen Heard to the Committee.

Mr. Donald Black, Chair of the Commemorations and Celebrations Committee, attended the discussion virtually. Mr. Haddad suggested that the Board consider expanding the Committee to seven members, which would help distribute the workload more evenly. Mr. Black mentioned that 2026 marks the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The Committee would like to plan some events to commemorate the occasion.

Mr. Reilly made a motion to expand the Commemorations and Celebrations Committee to seven members and appoint Connie Sartini, Karen Tuomi, and Maureen Heard to the Committee with terms to

expire on June 30, 2024. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Reilly-aye; Manugian- aye; Pineaye; Pisani- aye; Cunningham-aye.

2. Consider Approving a Letter to the MRPC Requesting Planning Assistance for the Destination Groton Committee.

Mr. Greg Sheldon, Chair of the Destination Groton Committee member, attended the discussion virtually. The Destination Groton Committee is requesting funding from the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) for planning services from the Regional District Technical Assistance Augmentation Fund. The Board was provided with the letter to review. Mr. Haddad respectfully requested that the Board approve the letter and authorize the Chair to sign and submit it to the MRPC. Ms. Manugian inquired about the funding needed, and Mr. Greg Sheldon responded that they were aiming for approximately \$45,000 in value.

Mr. Pisani made a motion to approve the letter and authorize the Chair to sign it. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Reilly-aye; Manugian- aye; Pine-aye; Pisani- aye; Cunningham-aye.

3. Consider Approving a One Day Wine and Malt Beverage License for the Prescott Community Center-Friends of Prescott, Inc. for Open Mic Night on Friday, March 8, 2024, from 6:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve a One Day Wine and Malt Beverage License for the Prescott Community Center- Friends of Prescott, Inc. for Open Mic Night to be held on Friday, March 8, 2024, from 6:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Reilly-aye; Manugian- aye; Pine-aye; Pisani- aye; Cunningham-aye.

6:15 P.M. PUBLIC HEARING- REQUEST FOR ON-PREMISE RETAIL LIQUOR LICENSE TO CRAFT BEER ARMORY BREWING, LLC, LOCATED AT 195C MAIN STREET, GROTON, MA, EDWARD SHAFFER, MANAGER

Mr. Haddad read the Public Hearing notice into the record.

Ms. Pine moved to open the Public Hearing. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. Roll Call: Reilly-aye; Manugian- aye; Pine-aye; Pisani- aye; Cunningham-aye.

Attorney Mark Scheier and applicant Ed Shaffer were in attendance virtually for the public hearing.

The Select Board held a Public Hearing to consider an application from Craft Beer Armory Brewing, LLC, for an On-Premise Retail Liquor License at 195C Main Street. During the hearing, Attorney Scheier, representing Mr. Shaffer, mentioned that the Planning Board would determine if adequate parking is available at the proposed location at the Planning Board meeting on March 14th. Attorney Scheier thanked the Select Board and visitors for considering their proposal. Mr. Shaffer explained through a PowerPoint presentation that they intend to establish a taproom and nano-brewery at 195C Main Street. He shared his vision of fostering a sense of community and connection through unique and inclusive brewing experiences while enriching lives in Groton and beyond. The brewery would have an upscale layout and accommodate up to twenty (20) people.

Comment/Questions from the Board

Mr. Cunningham asked whether there would be enough room for fermenters, etc. Mr. Shaffer said the room is approximately 1000 sq. ft., which should be enough room for their initial needs.

Ms. Pine inquired about the maximum occupancy of the building. Mr. Shaffer stated it could accommodate 23 people. Mr. Shaffer said he would like a small stage inside for live music and a couple of guitarists to play background music. Mr. Haddad informed them they would have to obtain an Entertainment License from the Select Board.

The Board members asked Mr. Shaffer for more information about the location. He explained that the property at 195C Main Street is on the second floor, and it currently houses a pizza place called Brunos and a hair salon on the first floor. He said a bathroom is on the second floor, but additional plumbing and electrical upgrades would be necessary.

Ms. Pine asked if his business plans to serve food, and Mr. Shaffer replied that they do not intend to do so. Mr. Haddad explained they would have to contact the Board of Health regarding this. Ms. Pine said it's a lovely idea for Groton, but she was unsure if this is the best location and said there are many commercial properties, including the one at Four Corners, that would be a better fit. Her main concern was the lack of parking at that location. She had noticed several accidents at that intersection and was concerned it would add even more confusion.

Ms. Manugian said her concerns were around accessibility and opening a business that was not accessible.

Mr. Pisani inquired about the proposed hours of operation and closing time. He was also concerned about capacity management and monitoring. Mr. Shaffer suggested having one entrance and an egress out the back and hanging a sign on the door indicating when the maximum capacity has been reached.

Mr. Reilly also expressed his concerns about the parking. He thought it was a great idea but believed the building was small. He hopes that Mr. Shaffer did his due diligence before selecting this location. Mr. Shaffer said they are exploring other spaces as a backup plan if this location isn't approved. Mr. Reilly asked about the history of the space. Ms. Pine said it had been mostly an office, but she wasn't aware of much of the public going in and out of the space.

Public Comments

Mr. Bud Robertson, an abutter of 195C Main Street, commented that Bruno's does a lot of business with high traffic. He also stated that neighborhoods surround the location.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Mullins own the property located at 197 Main Street. They have expressed their concerns regarding the parking situation in the area. Mr. Mullins has stated that the location receives a high traffic volume, and two accidents have already occurred in their driveway. They said trash from Bruno's is disposed of at the back of the same building. The Mullins said they have invested significant money in their property and do not want trash or people crossing it. While they appreciate having a small pub in the town, they believe the current location is unsuitable for such an establishment. Mr.

Mullins stated that they were notified as an abutter of the Select Board Hearing, but not of the Planning Board's Site Plan Hearing.

Land Use Director Takashi Tada stated that the Planning Board would review the application on March 14th. He further explained that the Planning Board would need to waive the parking requirements in the Bylaw and approve the Minor Site Plan.

Ms. Pine said this location was the site of a fatality during rush hour when someone tried to cross the street to pick up pizza. She said it is a terrible place for people to cross the street.

Mr. Cunningham suggested continuing the public hearing so the Planning Board can review and weigh in on some of the specific issues.

Mr. Pisani made a motion to continue the public hearing until Monday, March 25^{th,} at 6:15 P.M. Ms. Pine seconded the motion.

Attorney Scheier thanked the Board for their time and consideration.

Roll Call: Reilly-aye; Manugian- aye; Pine-aye; Pisani- aye; Cunningham-aye.

TOWN MANAGERS REPORT CONTINUATION

4. Approve and Issue the Warrant for the 2024 Spring Town Meeting.

Mr. Haddad said that the Final Draft of the 2024 Spring Town Meeting Warrant was provided with his Report for their review and approval. He said that before their approval, he wanted to call attention to the following issues, required actions, and changes to the Warrant since last week's public hearing.

6:30 P.M. CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC HEARING ON THE VARIOUS ARTICLES CONTAINED IN THE WARRANT FOR THE 2024 SPRING TOWN MEETING. CONSIDER OPENING THE WARRANT TO ADD ONE ADDITIONAL ARTICLE TO ADDRESS MINUTEMAN NASHOBA HEALTH GROUP RUNOUT EXPENSES.

Mr. Haddad respectfully requested the Board to reopen the public hearing on the 2024 Spring Town Meeting Warrant.

Ms. Pine made a motion to reopen the public hearing. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll Call: Reilly-aye; Manugian-aye; Pine-aye; Pisani- aye; Cunningham-aye.

Groton Country Club's General Manager, Shawn Campbell, was virtually present to answer the Board's questions that were raised during last week's public hearing regarding the Country Club Capital Plan. Mr. Campbell also updated the summaries as requested by the Board. Mr. Haddad mentioned that the Finance Committee is unanimously in favor of supporting all of the Capital Plan items.

Article 6: Fiscal Year 2025 Capital Budget -

Item #14- Golf Carts-\$25,553- Country Club

Mr. Haddad stated this would be the third of five lease payments for the fiscal year's fleet of 21 Yamaha gas and four electric carts.

Item #15- Greens Equipment Ventrac- \$10,918- Country Club

In FY 2024, the Town purchased a Ventrac unit using a five-year lease-to-purchase agreement at an annual cost of \$10,918. The Ventrac unit is the most versatile piece of equipment the Country Club uses.

Item #16- Greens Equipment's- Hauler Pro X- \$20,000 - Country Club

This superintendent utility cart will replace one of the two carts currently to travel the course for maintenance.

Item #17- Greens Equipment- Truckster XD \$13,500- Country Club

This heavy payload 4x4 utility truck will transfer up to 3,500 lbs. of debris, sand, and loam to and from areas of the Course.

Item #18- Ventrac Attachment- \$18,000 - Country Club

The Ventrac unit is attachment-driven. The following attachments will be purchased and used for Course Maintenance: Tough Cut Deck - \$6,000-

Item #19- Greens Equipment- Greens Mower- \$10,000 Country Club

Questions/Comments

Ms. Manugian raised a question about the pricing of the superintendent utility cart (Item # 16- Hauler Pro X), which was more expensive than the Greens Equipment cart (Item #17-Truckster XD). Mr. Campbell first clarified that the carts needed to be replaced as they were over a decade old. The problem with the Hauler Pro X carts is the capacity of the loader that's in the back. He said it provides a bedload capacity of 500 lbs. for the material. Mr. Campbell stated that the Truckster XD could transfer up to 3,500 lbs. of debris, sand, and loam to and from areas of the Course. Mr. Campbell explained that the Truckster XD would be \$13,500 annually, totaling approximately \$49,000, and the Hauler Pro X was \$20,000 outright. Ms. Manugian expressed her concern about some items that she believed to be total purchase prices but were listed as only one payment.

Mr. Pisani and Mr. Cunningham asked for clarification on outright purchase items. Mr. Haddad stated that the Capital Plan outlines the purchase prices, but he could write the prices in the summaries. Ms. Pine said the more financial information can be provided, the better. She also expressed that her concerns about the summaries were addressed.

Positions of the Select Board

Article 6:

Item #1- Unanimously in favor to support.

Item #2- Unanimously in favor to support.

Item# 3- Unanimously in favor to support.

Item #4- Unanimously in favor to support.

Item #5- Unanimously in favor to support.

Item #6- Unanimously in favor to support.

Item #7- Unanimously in favor to support.

Item #8- Unanimously in favor to support.

Item #9- Unanimously in favor to support.

Item #10- Unanimously in favor to support.

Item #11- Unanimously in favor to support.

Item #12- Unanimously in favor to support.

Item #13- Unanimously in favor to support.

Item #14- Unanimously in favor to support.

Item #15- Unanimously in favor to support.

Item #16- 4 In Favor, 1 Against- Manugian.

Item #17- Unanimously in favor to support.

Item #18- Unanimously in favor to support.

Item #19- Unanimously in favor to support.

Item #20- Unanimously in favor to support.

Item #21- Unanimously in favor to support.

Item #22- Unanimously in favor to support.

Item #23- Unanimously in favor to support.

Article 7: NEW ARTICLE- Repurpose GDRSD Cap Stab to Cover MNHG Obligations-

Mr. Haddad said that in an effort to close the anticipated projected fiscal year 2025 budget deficit, he had recommended that the Town leave the Minuteman Nashoba Health Group and join MIIA. He said this decision lowered the anticipated FY 2025 projected deficit by approximately \$118,000. However, there is not enough funding left in the MNHG Trust to cover the so-called runout claims (those claims uncured before June 30, 2024, but are billed after June 30th). The Town of Groton will need to provide \$340,000 to the Trust for their anticipated Claims in FY 2024. To pay for this, Mr. Haddad recommended that the Town use the remaining funds in the Groton Dunstable Regional School District Capital Stabilization Fund (approximately \$263,000) to help offset some of this expense. The rest of the expense can be covered by ARPA funds that were set aside for another project that is no longer needed. Mr. Haddad asked the Select Board to open the Warrant and add an Article to allow for the GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund to be repurposed to cover this expense.

Ms. Pine made a motion to open the Warrant. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll call: Reilly-aye; Manugian- aye; Pine-aye; Pisani- aye; Cunningham-aye.

Ms. Manugian made a motion to add Article 7 to the Warrant. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Reilly-aye; Manugian- aye; Pine-aye; Pisani- aye; Cunningham-aye.

Ms. Pine made a motion to close the Warrant. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. Roll call: Reilly-aye; Manugian- aye; Pine-aye; Pisani- aye; Cunningham-aye.

Position

Article 7: Select Board: Unanimously in support.

Finance Committee: Defer to Town Meeting.

Articles 13 and 14: Community Preservation Funding Recommendations-

Mr. Haddad said the CPC is recommending all the Articles and has adjusted the numbers based on their vote, and the Finance Committee voted unanimously to support all the Articles. He explained that all the summaries had been adjusted. Mr. Haddad pointed out that the CPA Funding Recommendations have been divided into two separate articles, one for a project using FY 2024 CPA Funds and one for projects using FY 2025 Funds.

Position of the Select Board

Article 13: CPC Proposal A: Unanimously in support.

Article 14: CPC Proposal A: Unanimously in support.

CPC Proposal B- Unanimously in support.

CPC Proposal C: Unanimously in support.

CPC Proposal D: Unanimously in support.

Mr. Haddad and Town Counsel Brian Falk met with the Attorney General's Office to review the Bid protest regarding the Prescott School Building Assessment Project, and they are waiting for their decision. He stated that Mr. Falk did an excellent job representing the Town.

CPC Proposal E- Unanimously in support.

CPC Proposal F- Unanimously in support.

CPC Proposal G- Unanimously in support.

CPC Proposal H- Unanimously in support.

CPC Proposal I – Unanimously in support.

CPC Proposal J- Unanimously in support.

CPC Proposal K- Unanimously in support.

Article 15: Extend Center Sewer District-

Mr. Haddad said the Sewer Commission voted unanimously to support the Article.

Position

Article 15: Select Board: Unanimously in support.

Article 16: Extend Four Corner Sewer District-

The Sewer Commission asked for an opinion from Town Counsel on whether or not the Article could be tied to a specific project. Town Counsel has opined that the bylaw governing the district's extensions pertains to expansions to "serve an increased land area." It does not contemplate extensions only for certain projects. Once extended, the district would incorporate the land regardless of how it may be developed. The Sewer Commission is contemplating entering into a development agreement with the Developer. The Sewer Commission voted unanimously to recommend this Article to Town Meeting.

Ms. Pine mentioned that she attended the Sewer Commission Hearing. The Attorney agreed to sign an agreement stating that if the project didn't go ahead, they would return the capacity. The Affordable Housing Trust is scheduled to meet with the Attorney on Thursday, March 7th. The Planning Board will have to rule on this for Site Plan Review. At this time, Ms. Pine was not sure how she felt about this

article. Mr. Cunningham expressed his support for this article, but he believes that more clarification is needed.

Position-

Select Board: Defer until Town Meeting- Cunningham, Pine, Reilly.

Manugian and Pisani are in support.

Article 21: Transfer Within the Four Corners Sewer Enterprise Fund-

The Sewer Commission has informed Mr. Haddad that they will need to transfer \$20,000 from their Excess and Deficiency Fund to pay the connection fee to Ayer for a new home to be constructed on Oriole Drive. They will collect the fee but must pay Ayer using the expense line.

Position-

Select Board: Unanimously in support.

Article 24: Current Year Line-Item Transfers-

Mr. Haddad will be recommending that Town Meeting be asked to make two transfers at the Spring Town Meeting as Follows:

Council on Aging Salaries—The Community Engagement Specialist position was moved from the Wage Account to the Salary Account to reflect its exempt status. To reflect this designation, the request is for \$59,000 to be transferred from the Wage Line to the Salary Line.

Postage- Town Hall Expenses- The Special Election will cost \$13,000 (ballots, banner, election workers, ballot booklet, staff hours). The request is for \$13,000 to be transferred from the Health Insurance Budget to this line item to cover the cost.

Mr. Haddad said a handout explaining any necessary transfers would be available at the Town Meeting. Ms. Dufresne also said they will need approximately \$10,000 to cover the Medicare match at year-end.

Position-

Select Board: Unanimously in support.

Mr. Haddad said he would update the Warrant, which will be sent to the printer in the morning. He respectfully requested that the Select Board approve and issue the 2024 Spring Town Meeting.

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve and issue the 2024 Spring Town Meeting Warrant. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion.

Discussion

Mr. Haddad made some changes to the summary of Article 7 based on Ms. Pine's suggestions. Ms. Pine inquired about the articles that would be presented as a consent agenda. Mr. Haddad responded that Articles 1 through 4, Article 14, and Articles 19 through 28 would be presented as a consent agenda. Mr.

Haddad also wanted to clarify that in Article 5: Operating Budget, the Finance Committee would present every section of the government at the Town Meeting.

Roll Call: Reilly-aye; Manugian- aye; Pine-aye; Pisani- aye; Cunningham-aye.

OTHER BUSINESS ON-GOING ISSUES

None

Public Commenting Period #2

None

Approval of Minutes from Special Budget Meeting with Finance Committee on January 27, 2024

Mr. Reilly made a motion to approve the minutes of the Special Budget Meeting with the Finance Committee regularly scheduled meeting from January 27, 2024. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Reilly-aye; Manugian- aye; Pine-aye; Pisani- aye; Cunningham-aye.

Approval of Minutes from the regularly Scheduled Meeting of February 26, 2024

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the minutes of the Select Board regularly scheduled meeting from February 26, 2024. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. Roll Call: Reilly-aye; Manugian- aye; Pine-aye; Pisani- aye; Cunningham-aye.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

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

Town of Groton IBPO Local #522

Groton Communications Officers Tentative Agreement February 6, 2024

Pursuant to Article 33 "Duration of the Agreement" between the Town of Groton and the IBPO, Local #522, Groton Communications Officers, the Town notified the Union of its Intent to terminate the Agreement on June 30, 2024 based on the fact that the Town will join the Patriot Regional Emergency Communications Center (RECC) effective on or about July 1, 2024. As the current Agreement was set to expire on June 30, 2025, the Town and the Union entered into impact bargaining. Based on a bargaining session held on January 31, 2024, the Town of Groton and the Groton Communications Officers have tentatively agreed to the following (please note that this Agreement is subject to ratification by the Groton Select Board):

1. Wages

A. The Town and the Union agree that the members of the Union shall be paid a one-time cash payment on June 30, 2024 (or earlier should the Town of Groton Join the Patriot REGC prior to June 30, 2024) as follows:

1,000
1,000 1,000

B. The Town will also pay unused vacation time as well as owed holiday pay for the second half of 2024 upon termination of employment.

2. Final Termination of Contract

The Town agrees that should the Town join the Patriot RECC prior to June 30, 2024, the amounts agreed to in Clause 1 will be paid in full and not prorated.

ACCEPTED:

Town of Groton

Groton Communications Officers

Deter

Date

7024