

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2024  
APPROVED**

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

**SB Members Absent:** John Reilly;

**Also 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; Takashi Tada, Land Use Director; Bud Robertson, Finance Committee Chair.

Ms. Manugian called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Pine announced that GrotonFest would be held on Saturday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Legion Common.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD #1**

None

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

**1. Update on Fiscal Year 2026 Budget.**

Mr. Haddad said there were no updates at this time, and they will continue the conversation once the school district gathers more information about proposed amendments to the Regional Agreement.

**2. Proposed Select Board Meeting Schedule through the End of the Year.**

Monday, September 23, 2024	No Meeting
Monday, September 30, 2024	Executive Session Collective Bargaining Guidance Interview Applicant- Charter Review Committee
Saturday, October 5, 2024	2024 Fall Town Meeting
Monday, October 7, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, October 14, 2024	No Meeting (Indigenous People's Day)
Monday, October 21, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Tuesday, October 29, 2024	In Joint Session with the Finance Committee-Provide FY 2026 Budget Guidance
Monday, November 4, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, November 11, 2024	No Meeting (Veteran's Day)
Monday, November 18, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, November 25, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 2, 2024	No Meeting
Monday, December 9, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 16, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 23, 2024	No Meeting
Monday, December 30, 2024	No Meeting
Monday, January 6, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting

**ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL**

**1. Consider Appointing Olive Cote to the Local Cultural Council**

*Mr. Pisani made a motion to appoint Olive Cote to the Local Cultural Council, with a term to expire on June 30, 2030. M. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**6:15 p.m. Continuation of the Public Hearing on the 2024 Fall Town Meeting Warrant**

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to reopen the public hearing.

*Mr. Cunningham made a motion to reopen the public hearing for the 2024 Fall Town Meeting Warrant. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**2. Take Positions on All Articles Contained in the Warrant for the 2024 Fall Town Meeting.**

Mr. Haddad provided the Board with the Final Draft of the 2024 Fall Town Meeting Warrant. Since the last draft, there have been several changes made to the Warrant:

- a. The Article submitted by the Affordable Housing Trust to transfer the property on Hoyts Wharf Road was removed.
- b. The Squannacook River Dam Article was amended to request funding (\$200,000 from Free Cash) to study the dam's repair and/or removal.
- c. The Town Manager's Report to the 2024 Fall Town Meeting Warrant was added. Mr. Haddad noted that the Finance Committee increased funding for Fire Wages to \$154,411. The Town Manager's Report has been updated to reflect the additional Free Cash Transfers.

Article 1: Prior Year Bills- There are no unpaid bills at this time.

The Select Board deferred until Town Meeting.

The Finance Committee deferred until Town Meeting.

Article 2: Amend the Fiscal Year 2025 Town Operating Budget-

1. Select Board Expenses-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.

The Finance Committee was unanimously in favor to support.

2. Town Manager Expenses-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.

The Finance Committee recommended (6 in Favor, 1 Against- Green)

3. Town Counsel Expenses-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.

The Finance Committee was unanimously in favor to support.

4. Insurance and Bonding-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.  
The Finance Committee was unanimously in favor to support.

5. Police Expenses-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.  
The Finance Committee was unanimously in favor to support.

6. Fire Wages-

The Select Board recommended (4 in Favor, 1 Abstain- Pisani)  
The Finance Committee was unanimously in favor to support.

7. Fire Expenses-

The Select Board recommended (4 in Favor, Abstain- Pisani)  
The Finance Committee was unanimously in favor to support.

8. Council on Aging Expenses-

The Select Board recommended (4 in Favor, 1 Against- Manugian)  
The Finance Committee recommended (5 in Favor, 1 Against-Lengel, 1 Deferred- Green)

9. Weed Management—Groton Lakes-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.  
The Finance Committee recommended (5 in Favor, 1 Against- Lengyel, 1 Deferred- Green)

10. Debt Service-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.  
The Finance Committee was unanimously in favor to support.

11. Health Insurance-

The Select Board recommended (4 in Favor, 1 Abstain- Pisani)  
The Finance Committee was unanimously in favor to support.

Article 3: Transfer Money into Capital Stabilization Fund-

The Select Board was unanimously in support.  
The Finance Committee was unanimously in favor to support.

Article 4: Transfer Money into the Stabilization Fund-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.  
The Finance Committee was unanimously in favor to support.

Article 5: Transfer Money into the GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.  
The Finance Committee was unanimously in favor to support.

Article 6: Revoke Opioid Settlements Special Purpose Stabilization Fund-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.  
The Finance Committee was unanimously in favor to support.

Article 7: Transfer Within the Water Enterprise Fund-  
The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.  
The Finance Committee was unanimously in favor to support.

Article 8: Transfer Within the Center Sewer Enterprise Fund-  
The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.  
The Finance Committee was unanimously in favor to support.

Article 9: Transfer Within the Four Corners Sewer Enterprise-  
The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.  
The Finance Committee was unanimously in favor to support.

Article 10: Debt Service for the Middle School Track—Fiscal Year 2025-  
The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.  
The Finance Committee was unanimously in favor to support.

Article 11: Water Supply System for Heritage Landing-  
The Select Board deferred to Town Meeting.  
The Finance Committee was unanimously in favor to support.

Article 12: Funding for Security Improvements at Sargisson Beach-  
The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.  
The Finance Committee was unanimously in favor to support.

Article 13: Funding to Purchase Budget Software for the Town of Groton-  
The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.  
The Finance Committee was unanimously in favor to support.

Article 14: Engineering Funds for Complete Streets Grant Work-  
The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.  
The Finance Committee was unanimously in favor to support.

Article 15: Amend Purpose of CPA Project for Improvements to Baseball Diamond-  
The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.  
The Finance Committee was unanimously in favor to support.

Article 16: Squannacook River Dam-  
Mr. Haddad said mentioned that they have received quotes for the cost of engineering to study the repair of the Squannacook River Dam. DPW Director Tom Delaney has contacted two firms for quotes for removing the dam, and they will receive them before Town Meeting. He said they also followed up to check if grant money was available. Mr. Haddad explained that the Town can't apply for the DER

grant money unless they decide to remove the dam. There are other grant programs available that they will pursue. Mr. Haddad also mentioned that Town Counsel is currently looking into the dam's ownership issue.

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.

The Finance Committee was unanimously in favor to support.

Article 17: Authorize the Lease of Town-Owned Land-

Ms. Pine asked Mr. Haddad if anyone had conducted a study or provided information about PFAS at the compost facility. Mr. Haddad remembers talking about this previously but needed clarification on the answer. He would find out per Ms. Pine's request.

Mr. Brendan Mahoney, a 47 Hoyts Warf Road resident, inquired whether the Board was considering entering into a 30-year lease with the possibility of new housing being developed next door and how it might impact the builder. Mr. Haddad replied that the Board of Health had met with the neighbors and was satisfied with the improvements made by the compost facility. Also, if they extend the lease to 30 years, they would make more improvements to the facility.

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.

The Finance Committee has not taken a position at this time.

Article 18: Amend Chapter 81, "Town Meetings" of the Code of the Town of Groton-

The Select Board recommended (4 in favor, 1 Against- Cunningham)

The Finance Committee has not taken a position at this time.

Article 19: Zoning Amendment—Firearms Retail Sales Establishment-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.

The Finance Committee has not taken a position at this time.

Article 20: Zoning Amendment- Solar Parking Canopies-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.

The Finance Committee has not taken a position at this time.

Article 21: Zoning Amendment—Accessory Dwelling Units-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.

The Finance Committee has not taken a position at this time.

Article 22: Amend Chapter 198 Stormwater Management—Low Impact Development-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support.

The Finance Committee has not taken a position at this time.

Article 23: Accept Monarch Path as a Town Way-

Town Planner Takashi Tada provided an update on the Road Acceptance of Monarch Path. Mr. Tada said that the work to uncover the paved-over manhole covers is scheduled to be completed by September 20th. The developer's engineer is set to complete the survey on Monday, September 23rd. They need to provide Mr. Tada and Nitsch Engineering with an as-built plan for the public hearing continuation joint meeting of the Select Board and Planning Board by September 26th.

The Select Board deferred to Town Meeting.

The Finance Committee has not taken a position at this time.

Article 24: Citizens' Petition—Reduce Statutory Speed Limit from 30 MPH to 25 MPH-

Ms. Manugian asked what the process would be moving forward if this passed at Town Meeting. Mr. Haddad said his understanding was that if the Town approves the Citizens' Petition to lower the Speed Limit of non-posted roads to 25MPH, it is still up to the Select Board to set the limit. Approving the law gives the Select Board the option but does not compel the Board to take this action. Mr. Haddad said that he would seek clarification from Town Counsel regarding the Board's next steps if the Town votes yes to this Article at Town Meeting.

The Select Board deferred to Town Meeting.

The Finance Committee has not taken a position at this time.

*Mr. Cunningham moved to close the public hearing on the 2024 Fall Town Meeting Warrant. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **ON-GOING ISSUES**

- A. PILOTs- The PILOT Working Group will meet again on Thursday, September 19, 2024.

### **SELECT BOARD LIASON REPORTS**

None

### **Public Comment Period #2**

Mr. Takashi Tada inquired about an agenda item that he believed was on the Select Board agenda for that evening, which was to consider the Right of First Refusal for Lot 1 Sandy Hill Road. Mr. Haddad explained that he had removed this agenda item until the Conservation Commission had a scheduled site walk for September 30th. Mr. Tada explained the Planning Board would not take a position on this matter until the Conservation Commission conducted its site walk.

### **Approval of the Regularly Scheduled Meeting Minutes of September 9, 2024**

*Mr. Cunningham made a motion to approve the minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of September 9, 2024. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

The meeting was adjourned at 7:09 p.m. Respectively submitted by Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager.