

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
HYBRID MEETING
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2024
APPROVED**

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

SB Members Virtually Present: Peter Cunningham, Clerk;

Finance Committee Members Present: Bud Robertson, Chair; Mary Linskey, Vice Chair; David Manugian; Gary Green; Kristina Lengyel; Michael Sulprizio; Scott Whitefield;

Also Present: Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; Patricia DuFresne, Assistant Director of Finance/Town Accountant; Tom Delaney, DPW Director; Brian Callahan, DPW Director in Training; Takashi Tada, Land Use Director; Dawn Dunbar, Town Clerk; Melisa Doig, Human Resource Director; Fire Chief Arthur Cheeks; Greg Baker; Tom Orcutt, Groton Water Superintendent; Attorney Kyle Croteau; Charter Review Candidates: Jim Barisano, Kristin Frank, Bob Collins, Anna Eliot, and Richard Kingsborough.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Pine announced that there will be a celebration in honor of Marion Stoddart on Friday, October 25, from 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. The event will take place at the Marion Stoddart Building, Groton Dunstable Middle School. The celebration will feature a 30-minute film and other celebratory activities. She said the Nashoba Paddler will offer free canoe rentals and \$15 kayak rentals from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Ms. Dunbar announced that the state election is on Tuesday, November 5th. Early ballots are expected to arrive by October 7th. She said everyone should have received the ballot information booklet in the mail from the Commonwealth, and the last day to submit an Absentee Ballot or Vote by Mail ballot is Tuesday, October 29th. Please visit www.grotonma.gov for the In-Person Early Voting Schedule, or contact the Town Clerk's Office with any questions.

Mr. Cunningham announced the establishment of the Nashoba Valley Health Planning Working Group under Secretary Walsh's Office. Town Manager Haddad will be part of this Working Group, which consists of 36 members. The first meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 2, 2024.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD #1

None

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- 1. Consider Accepting the Nomination of the Town Manager and Appoint Bob Elam and Jesse Cotter to the Great Ponds Advisory Committee.**

Mr. Pisani made a motion to accept the Town Manager's nomination and appoint Bob Elam and Jesse Cotter to the Great Ponds Advisory Committee, with a term to expire on June 30, 2025. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll Call: Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Cunningham-aye; Manugian-aye; Pine-aye.

2. Review Motions and Article Assignments for the 2024 Fall Town Meeting.

The Motions and Article Assignments for the 2024 Fall Town Meeting were provided to the Board. Mr. Haddad noted a few changes and reviewed them with the Board:

Mr. Haddad explained that Article 6 would be voted on separately from the consent agenda, requiring a 2/3 majority vote at the Town Meeting.

Article 16, The Squannacook River Dam: The requested amount is reduced by \$52,000 (from \$212,250 to \$160,250) due to items listed in the proposal from Haley Aldrich for repairs that are related to construction and are not currently needed. Department of Public Works Director Tom Delaney and DPW Director Training Brian Callahan were in attendance. Mr. Delaney will give a PowerPoint Presentation at the Town Meeting to explain that a “yes” vote indicates support for a study of both the repair and removal of the Squannacook River Dam. This information will help the Select Board make an informed decision. Mr. Haddad asked the Board what their interpretation of a “no” vote would mean, which would go back to the Select Board to decide. Mr. Haddad stated that he and Mr. Delaney believe that if the Town Meeting votes against using town funds for this project, they will assume that the Town does not want to allocate any Town Funds for the Dam, and the Town should pursue State funding for the removal of the dam. Ms. Pine thinks it’s important for the Town to make an informed decision. She explained that a “no” vote at the Town Meeting would bring them back to where they were now without a decision. Ms. Pine said if there is a “no” vote, it should be interpreted as not knowing what action will be taken. Mr. Haddad said he is uncertain about how the Select Board would assess the situation without funding. Mr. Delaney stated that if they commit to receiving funding from the DER, they also agree to remove the dam. Mr. Haddad hopes the Town Meeting will support the Article so they can secure the funding to gather more information about the dam and make a well-informed decision. Mr. Delaney said the Board will still need to decide after the Town Meeting.

The Squannacook River Dam Discussion was to be continued later during the meeting.

6:15 p.m. Introduction and Update from the Opioid Settlement

Opioid Remediation Working Group Members Ms. DuFresne, Fire Chief Arthur Cheeks, and Mr. Greg Baker were in attendance for the discussion. Ms. DuFresne gave a brief overview of the Working Group. She provided an update to the Board on the work they have been doing to address the implementation of programs to spend the funds the Town has received from the opioid settlement. She explained that the group has been meeting once a month since February and that the Town of Groton has received approximately \$13,000 and expects a total allocation of just over \$43,000 through 2039. She said pooling resources may make sense in a community like Groton. The goal is to formulate a plan and use the money for its intended purposes. Ms. DuFresne said the Working Group drafted a Groton Opioid Strategy Survey to see how the community wants the funds to be spent. A copy of the survey was provided in the packet to the Board and will be posted electronically on the Town of Groton website along with the Groton Electric Light Department (GELD) bill. Ms. DuFresne said finding voices that have lived with personal experience of addiction themselves or through family, friends, or other loved ones are encouraged to volunteer their experience. Article 6 on the 2024 Fall Town Meeting Warrant will propose discontinuing the Opioid Settlement Special Purpose Stabilization Fund. Instead, the town will use a Special Revenue Fund to utilize the settlement awards. Ms. DuFresne will seek the Board's permission to access the funds if the article is approved. Mr. Haddad thanked Ms. DuFresne for the excellent presentation.

6:25 p.m. Jim Barisano- Review/Discuss Citizens Petition- Article 24 -Town Wide Speed Regulation

Mr. Jim Barisano, the proponent of Article 24 Citizen’s Petition for the 2024 Fall Town Meeting, and Mr. Tom Delaney, the Director of the Department of Public Works, were present for the discussion. Mr. Haddad said this article would authorize the Select Board to set a town-wide speed limit of 25 MPH on non-posted roads. Mr. Haddad asked Mr. Barisano to explain his article, which suggested conducting a town-wide speed study. Mr. Barisano said many streets have not been studied in 50 years. Mr. Reilly said the speed limits could potentially increase on some roads if a study were conducted, as they take the average speed. Mr. Haddad said he doesn’t know where that appropriation would come from for the expense of a study, because the town doesn’t have a budget for it. Mr. Barisano explained he would like the study to be conducted by volunteers. Ms. Manugian expressed concerns, stating that she thought a speed study was problematic. Mr. Delaney said that the Police Department would have to conduct the study, and the results are then sent to the state. The state then sets the speed limit at the 85th percentile. He further explained that the Select Board must vote on each road separately. Ms. Pine clarified that Mr. Barisano’s article does not mention anything about a study, only in the summary; the Town Meeting will vote based on the article content, which does not include a study. Ms. Pine told Mr. Barisano that he needed to clarify to the voters that the content in the summary would not happen and a study would not take place. Mr. Haddad explained to Mr. Barisano that the Board was trying to clarify that the town does not have the funding to conduct a speed survey, and it may backfire and be unsafe. Mr. Barisano said he would explain to the voters at the Town Meeting that the Select Board would decide the next steps.

6:30 p.m. Interview and Consider Appointing Individuals to the Charter Review Committee

Interested residents serving on the Charter Review Committee were invited to the meeting to be interviewed and appointed to fill the vacancies on the Committee appointed by the Board. Candidates Jim Barisano, Kristin Frank, Robert Collins, Anna Elliott, and Richard Kingsborough were all present for the Committee’s interviews. Mr. Haddad explained that the Select Board has three appointees on the Committee, one of whom can be a member of the Select Board. Select Board Member Cunningham expressed interest in joining the Charter Review Committee.

Ms. Pine suggested Mr. Cunningham would be an excellent representative.

Ms. Pine moved to appoint Mr. Cunningham to the Charter Review Committee. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. Roll call: Pisani-aye, Pine-aye, Manugian-aye, Reilly-aye; Cunningham-abstained.

Mr. Haddad explained that the Select Board would now have two appointees out of the five candidates interested in joining the Charter Review Committee.

Ms. Pine and Ms. Manugian asked the candidates to briefly overview their interest in joining the Committee.

Candidate Anna Eliot is a former Select Board member and Life resident of the Town of Groton. She wants to ensure the process is fair and transparent.

Candidate Robert Collins said he was on the last Charter Committee. He drafted the provisions, thoroughly enjoyed it, and would like to be part of it again.

Candidate Jim Barisano said he is a newer resident of Groton, semi-retired, and interested in joining the Committee.

Candidate Kristin Frank said she is a new resident. She has not served in an elected position but has participated in other committees. She would like to be part of the process.

Candidate Richard Kingsborough is a Groton resident. He is an Eagle Scout and strongly believes in giving back to the community.

Mr. Cunningham questioned the candidates about which areas of the Charter the Boards should focus on. Mr. Kingsborough and Ms. Frank were unsure and said they would like to review the Charter again. Mr. Barisano said they could focus on giving the Town Manager some help. Mr. Collins stated that it would be premature to specify a particular area and mentioned that the Town Government functions well. He suggested that a good committee could focus on a few specifics. Ms. Eliot said there were two-lifetime candidates and three newcomers. She believed it was important to have newcomers on the Committee and wanted to withdraw her candidacy. Mr. Haddad said the first thing he would like to do is schedule a public hearing. Mr. Collins said it was great to see newcomers interested.

Mr. Haddad explained that the Select Board's tradition is to vote by ballot, then tally up, and finally do a roll call.

The Select Board voted five in favor of Ms. Frank and five in favor of Mr. Collins (see the attached ballots for official public records).

Ms. Pine made a motion to appoint Mr. Robert Collins and Ms. Kristin Frank to the Charter Review Committee. Mr. Pisani seconded. Roll call: Cunningham aye; Pisani-aye; Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Reilly-aye.

3. Update on Fiscal Year 2026 Budget.

There was no update at this time.

4. Proposed Select Board Meeting Schedule through the End of the Year.

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, 2024

Regularly Scheduled Meeting

ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL

1. Consider the Right of First Refusal for Lot 1 Sand Hill Road.

Attorney Kyle Croteau, representing the property owner of Lot 1 Sandy Hill Road, was present for the discussion. The Board had received a Notice of Intent to sell a parcel currently classified under Chapter 61 and convert it to residential use pursuant to M.G.L. c 61. The lot is a portion of land situated on 260 Common Street and Sand Hill Road, known as Lot 1 Sand Hill Road, Groton. The Board was provided with a letter from the seller's Attorney. Under Chapter 61, the Town has 120 days (by December 14, 2024) to consider exercising or releasing an option to purchase the property. The Town would need to match the proposed selling price of \$260,000. The Town has asked for recommendations from the Assessors, Conservation Commission, and the Planning Board if there was any interest in the property. No Board has expressed an interest. Therefore, Mr. Haddad respectfully requested the Select Board not to exercise its right to purchase and release the property.

Mr. Reilly moved to release the town's right of first refusal for Lot 1 Sand Hill Road. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion.

Discussion

Ms. Pine inquired whether the builder was constructing a home for a particular individual. Attorney Croteau clarified that the builder would buy the property, build a single-family house, and sell it to a third party. Ms. Pine mentioned that the Affordable Housing Trust had discussed the possibility of the town or the Affordable Housing Trust purchasing the land but determined it wasn't a good choice for them.

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

2. Consider Approving a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverage License for the Friends of Prescott for Open Mic Night on Friday, October 1, 2024, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverage License for the Friends of Prescott for Open Mic Night on Friday, October 1, 2024, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. Roll call: Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Cunningham- aye; Manugian-aye; Pine-aye.

Continue of the Squannacook River Dam Discussion

Mr. Haddad explained that Town Counsel did a title search, and the results did not help them. This brings this back to the Select Board's hands to decide whether to pursue the removal of the dam or repair it. Ms. Pine added that should the Board decide to repair the dam, they can request Mr. Helmar Nielson (former President of Groton Land Holdings) to grant a deed to the Town at no cost so that Groton owns the dam. Then, the ownership issue would be cleared up.

After the Select Board deliberated, it was decided that a "no" vote would return the decision to the Board for further consideration. Ms. Manugian stated that the Board could potentially seek funding or donations to

proceed with the removal or move forward with grant funding. The Select Board is scheduled to meet on Monday, October 7th and they will need to decide.

OTHER BUSINESS

Pursuant to the Charter, Authorize the Town Manager and One Member of the Select Board to Sign Warrants for the Next 30 days.

Ms. Pine made a motion to authorize the Town Manager and one member of the Select Board to sign the Warrants for the next 30 days. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Manugian-aye; Cunningham-aye.

SELECT BOARD LIASON REPORTS

None

Public Comment Period #2

None

Approval of the Regularly Scheduled Meeting Minutes of September 16, 2024

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of September 16, 2024. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. Roll Call: Roll Call: Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Manugian-aye; Cunningham-aye.

Executive Session

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to make a motion to enter Executive Session Pursuant to M.G.L., c.30A, §21(a), Clause 3 – “to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation If an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigation position of the public body and the chair so declares”- Purposes- Collective Bargaining.

And not to return to open session.

Ms. Pine made a motion to enter into Executive Session. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Reilly-aye; Cunningham-aye; Pisani-aye.

Mr. Robertson made a motion to enter into Executive Session. Roll Call: Linskey-aye; Manugian-aye; Green-aye; Lengyel-aye; Sulprizio-aye; Whitefield-aye; Robertson-aye.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 p.m. Respectively submitted by Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager.

Rebecca Pine

CHARTER COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT – VOTE FOR TWO

Bob Collins

Kristen Frank

Jim Barisano

Anna Eliot

Richard Kingsborough

Matthew Pisani

CHARTER COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT – VOTE FOR TWO

Bob Collins

Kristen Frank

Jim Barisano

Anna Eliot

Richard Kingsborough

Peter Cunningham


CHARTER COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT – VOTE FOR TWO

Bob Collins 

Kristen Frank 

Jim Barisano 

Anna Eliot 

Richard Kingsborough 

John Reilly

CHARTER COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT – VOTE FOR TWO

Bob Collins ✓

Kristen Frank ✓

Jim Barisano

Anna Eliot

Richard Kingsborough

Alison Manugian

CHARTER COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT - VOTE FOR TWO

Bob Collins	<u>X</u>	last committee, PB - read -
Kristen Frank (SO)	<u>X</u>	new. 2 yrs. no munic. exp. read - unsure
Jim Barisano	—	exp., 5 yrs. presid, read - essen TM role/ get help
Anna Elliot	—	fair, transparent, balanced
Richard Kingsborough	—	exp.; commu. commitment read - unsure

withdrew

Self-Intro
committees
Experience
Role