

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, APRIL 7, 2025
APPROVED

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

Also Present: Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; Melisa Doig, Human Resources Director; Groton Police Chief Michael Luth; Groton Deputy Police Chief Rachel Bielecki; Members of the Groton Police Department; Adam Scott and Justine Wagner, Groton Police Officer Candidates for the Police Department.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Pine wanted to thank the participants who attended the demonstration in Groton, as well as the Groton Police Department, for ensuring a peaceful event on the morning of Saturday, April 5th. She said the event was wonderful, and the officers kept everyone safe. Ms. Pine said later that afternoon, the Groton History Center and Lawrence Academy hosted a performance at the Lawrence Academy Richardson Mees Performing Arts Center about the history of the Women's Suffrage Movement. She said the performance was well done. On Sunday, April 6th, the Destination Groton Committee organized the first of many events to celebrate America's 250th anniversary. Joshua Vollmar also gave an excellent lecture at the Lawrence Academy's Richardson Mees Performing Arts Center. Ms. Pine announced that Lawrence Academy generously provided the theater free of charge for both events, and many people attended the events.

Mr. Cunningham announced some important upcoming dates and events: On Saturday, April 12th, at 2:00 p.m., there will be a Fire Informational Session to learn about the need for an additional six (6) Firefighters/EMTs, held at the Center Fire Station. Another Informational Session is scheduled for 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 15th, at the Groton Center. The Groton Dunstable Community Budget Forum will take place at 7:00 p.m. on April 16th at the Groton Dunstable Regional High School. Also, Saturday, April 19, marks the 250th Anniversary of the Battles of Lexington and Concord, MA.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD #1

None

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Ratify the Town Manager's Appointments of Adam Scott and Justine Wagner as Police Officers for the Groton Police Department.

Mr. Haddad announced that the Groton Police Department currently has two vacancies, and they are fortunate to have two outstanding candidates. He had the opportunity to meet with both individuals. Mr. Haddad explained they underwent a rigorous interview process with the Police Department. Mr. Adam Scott graduated with a Master's degree from Saint Anselm College, and Ms. Justine Wagner comes from a family with an impressive military and police background. Mr. Haddad expressed his excitement about bringing them on board and said they are scheduled to

attend the Police Academy in May 2025. Police Chief Luth stated that both candidate's families come from law enforcement backgrounds. He said it is exceptional to receive these two candidates and that the department is excited to bring them on board; they will be a great fit.

Mr. Reilly made a motion to ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Adam Scott, effective Friday, April 11, 2025, and Justine Wagner, effective Monday, April 14, 2025, as Police Officers for the Groton Police Department. Ms. Pine seconded the motion.

Discussion

Mr. Cunningham welcomed Mr. Adam Scott and Ms. Justine Wagner aboard.

The motion carried unanimously.

2. Update on the FY 2026 Budget.

Mr. Haddad stated that an Informational Forum was held on Saturday, April 5th, at the Fire Station to learn about the need for an additional six (6) Firefighters/EMTs. He explained that many good questions were raised during the Forum. He expressed concern about the upcoming Town Meeting, explaining that there would be a balanced budget and two contingent budgets requesting increased funding. One contingent budget is for additional funding for the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District, and the other is for additional funding for the Fire Department to add six additional Firefighters/EMTs to address a need for additional coverage. Mr. Haddad balanced the operating budget to maintain current services. Mr. Haddad does not recommend cutting the budget to fund other things. He explained that they would ask voters to consider expanding the services of the Fire Department, not to the detriment of the other town departments. He wanted to clarify that he would not recommend reducing the municipal budget, as there is no room for cuts. If they want to expand the service of the Fire Department, it should not come at the expense of other Departments.

Ms. Pine inquired whether the situation concerning the School District's funding override would be similar. Mr. Haddad responded that the School District is in urgent need of additional funding. If the Town of Dunstable cannot match the funding that the Town of Groton is putting forward, the School District will be in a difficult situation. He stated that both the Select Board and Finance Committee unanimously support the override for the schools. Mr. Haddad said individuals are asking for budget reductions in other areas of the Budget to fund the increases with the School Department and Fire Department, but he stated that he will do whatever is necessary to maintain services within the balanced budget. Mr. Cunningham expressed confidence that no funding currently exists in the municipal budget for the proposed additional six (6) Firefighters/EMTs. Mr. Pisani explained that the letter from the Select Board, which was drafted to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means ahead of the public hearing on April 8th regarding the FY 2026 State Budget, identifies the reasons for this situation.

3. Update on the Select Board Meeting Schedule through the 2025 Spring Town Meeting.

Saturday, April 12, 2025

Forum on Fire Department Increase in Personnel (to be held at the Center Fire Station beginning at 2:00 p.m.)

Monday, April 14, 2025	Public Hearing- Consider Adopting the Layout of Monarch Path.
Tuesday, April 15, 2025	Forum on Fire Department Increase in Personnel (to be held at the Center Fire Station beginning at 2:00 p.m.)
Wednesday, April 16, 2025	Community Budget Forum to be held at the GDRSD High School Beginning at 7:00 p.m.
Monday, April 21, 2025	No Meeting- Patriot's Day Holiday
Saturday, April 26, 2025	Spring Town Meeting

Mr. Cunningham announced that Early Voting will be held here at the Groton Town Hall on May 10th and May 12th through May 16th.

ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL

1. Consider Submitting Testimony/Letter to House Ways and Means- Public Hearing on April 8, 2025.

Chair Manugian drafted a letter for the Board's review and sought the Board's approval to submit the letter to the Joint Committee Ways and Means for their Budget Public Hearing on April 8, 2025, regarding the FY 2026 State Budget. Ms. Pine suggested sending the letter to the local newspaper so residents could read it; she believes it is excellent.

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to approve and authorize the Board to sign the letter to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means concerning the FY 2026 State Budget. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Approve and Issue the Warrant for the 2025 Spring Town Meeting.

Mr. Haddad provided the Board with the Final Draft of the 2025 Spring Town Meeting Warrant for their review and approval. He said it would be posted by the Constable this week, and postcards would be mailed out on Friday, April 11, 2025. Five hundred copies of the Warrant will be printed and can also be found on the Town of Groton's homepage. He explained that the Article to Adopt Alternative Methods for Notice of Public Hearings had been removed from the warrant.

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve and issue the April 26, 2025, Spring Town Meeting Warrant. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion.

Discussion

Mr. Cunningham asked where the warrant is posted. Mr. Haddad explained that it is posted in three different locations throughout the Town.

The motion carried unanimously.

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.

M. Pisani made a motion to authorize the Town Manager and one member of the Select Board to sign Warrants for the next 30 days. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Pine announced that at least one advocacy group is forming to support the school override. One group is called "Seniors for Our Schools," and another is "Raising Groton." Mr. Haddad urged everyone to read a letter to the editor in the Groton Herald written by Raising Groton, stating that it was a well-written explaining the importance of funding the School System.

SELECT BOARD LIASON REPORTS

None

On Going issues

- A. PFAS- Mr. Haddad said the connection to the Groton Dunstable Regional High School had been made, and the driveway will be paved at night this week. He said that the Chlorine Booster Station will be constructed in June. He explained there will be a meeting on Thursday, April 10th, at 1:00 p.m., with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regarding the plume contamination issue.
Ms. Pine said some residents were unaware of the discount for connecting to the waterline. Mr. Haddad said he would put the information back on the homepage and will have it posted at the Center. Mr. Haddad said the contractor, DeFelice, has been excellent.
- B. UMass Satellite Emergency Facility— Mr. Haddad said there will be a public outreach event for the Nashoba Region on Tuesday, May 6th, at 6:30 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center. Also, the Land Use Committee will meet with the UMass Satellite Emergency Facility engineers and construction team on April 16th.
- D. PILOTs- During the Informational Forums held at the Groton Inn and the Groton Public Library, Mr. Haddad mentioned that Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOTs) was being discussed. He plans to include PILOTs on a future Select Board agenda. Mr. Haddad thanked the Groton Inn for hosting the "Coffee and Conversations" Forum.

Approval of the Regularly Scheduled Meeting Minutes of March 31, 2025.

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the regularly scheduled meeting minutes of March 31, 2025. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:32 p.m.

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