

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JUNE 9, 2025
APPROVED

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

Also Present: Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; Hannah Moller, Treasurer/Collector; Megan Foster, Principal Assessor; Dawn Dunbar, Town Clerk; Ryan Hennrikus, Nashua River Watershed Association; Virginia Wood; Michelle Collette, Board of Health

Pursuant to the Select Board Policy regarding Board Reorganization, Mr. Haddad called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and reviewed the agenda.

Annual Reorganization of the Select Board- Per Select Board Operational Policy, Town Manager Calls Meeting to Order and Calls for Nominations for Chair.

Mr. Haddad called for nominations for the position of Chair. Mr. Cunningham nominated Mr. Pisani. Ms. Manugian seconded the nomination.

Mr. Haddad called for a vote. The vote to name Mr. Pisani as Chair was unanimous.

Mr. Pisani took over the meeting and called for nominations for Vice Chair. Ms. Pine nominated herself. Ms. Manugian seconded the nomination. The vote to name Ms. Pine as Vice Chair was unanimous.

Mr. Pisani asked if anyone was willing to be the clerk. Ms. Manugian said she would be willing to be the Clerk. Mr. Reilly seconded the nomination. The vote to name Ms. Manugian as Clerk was unanimous.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Haddad announced that the Town is in the process of updating the housing production plan. To assist in the update, there is a survey on the website. Mr. Haddad urged residents to go on line and complete the survey.

Mr. Cunningham stated that recent Federal aid cuts have impacted the Meals on Wheels program. He said it was shame this was happening as Seniors depend on these meals. He hopes that funding will be restored.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Ms. Darcy Donald was in attendance to announce that yesterday, a turtle was killed by the Town Hall. She asked whom she should speak to regarding this. Mr. Haddad suggested Mr. Tom Delaney as a good contact.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Approve and Sign Notes for FloRo BAN.

Hannah Moller, Treasurer/Tax Collector was in attendance for this discussion.

Mr. Haddad said that in anticipation of going to the Bond market to renew the Florence Roche Elementary School Construction Ban, S&P Global maintained the Town's AAA Bond Rating. He said the Town has kept its AAA Rating since 2014. The BAN is valued at \$28,681,061, broken down as follows:

\$27,050,000 for Florence Roche
\$ 660,708 for the Water Treatment Plant Engineering
\$ 353,784 for the Ambulance approved in 2024
\$ 285,000 for the Dump Truck approved in 2024
\$ 225,000 for the Whitney Well Engineering
\$ ~~33,569~~ for the Dump Truck approved in 2021
\$28,681,061 in total

Due to the Town's strong Bond Rating, it received seven competitive bids for this Bond Anticipation Note (BAN). The lowest bid came from Bank of America Securities, Inc., which offered an interest rate of 4%. Mr. Haddad mentioned that they agreed to pay a premium of \$202,329, resulting in a net interest cost of 2.9%. Although the estimated interest was initially set at 4%, the debt budget can be reduced at the Fall Town Meeting. Mr. Haddad emphasized the monumental work done by Ms. Moller and Mr. Hartnett, expressing his gratitude to Ms. Moller for her efforts. Mr. Cunningham inquired whether the letter regarding the Bond Rating could be made public, emphasizing its importance for community awareness, particularly since Wall Street affirmed it. Mr. Haddad said he would post it on the Town's website.

Mr. Reilly made a motion to issue the Bond Anticipation Notes as recommended by the Treasure/Tax Collector as outlined in the attached document. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Follow-Up on Proposed FY 2026 Budget Amendments.

Mr. Haddad wanted to update the Board on his proposed Budget amendments to address funding the Assessment of the Groton Dunstable Regional School District. He had said that the additional new growth would add \$0.06 to the tax rate. He acknowledged an error in his spread sheet and said that new growth would have not impact on the tax rate. He apologized for the error.

The postcards for the Special Town Meeting have been sent out, and the warrants have been posted. Harris McWade said she would like the warrant to be sent out to Groton's Seniors and not by postcards.

Mr. Haddad has drafted the motions for the June 23, 2025 Special Twon Meeting and they have been approved by Town Counsel. There will be five budget motions under Article 1. Ms. Pine asked if it was true that the Budget will be reduced and wondered what will draw people to Town Meeting. Mr.

Haddad said that it was not true. The budget is actually being increased by approximately \$280,000 to meet the GDRSD Assessment.

Mr. Haddad stated that Town Moderator Jason Kauppi will be in attendance at the June 16th Select Board Meeting to discuss lowering the Quorum for the Special Town Meeting as there is nothing controversial on the Warrant, but that it is imperative the budget be approved to fund the School District.

3. Consider Declaring the Playground Equipment as Surplus and Authorize the Town Manager to Dispose of Said Equipment.

Mr. Haddad informed the Board that there is playground equipment behind Prescott School that has not been used for many years. There have been several attempts to relocate this equipment. According to the Bylaw, if equipment is deemed surplus, Mr. Haddad reaches out to various departments to see if anyone is interested. If there is no interest, he designates it as surplus. He would like to dispose of the equipment but is seeking permission from the Board to do so.

Ms. Pine suggested declaring the equipment as surplus and offering it to anyone interested, with a set time frame for responses. She mentioned that the non-profit organization has a mailing list to which this information could be sent. Mr. Haddad proposed a deadline of June 30th for anyone who wants to take the equipment; they would need to arrange to pick it up. Mr. Robertson suggested that the Board consider disposing of all the equipment at once, rather than doing so piecemeal.

4. Review and Consider Amendments to the Filling of Elected Official Vacancy.

When the Planning Board came to fill a vacancy on the Board, Ms. Pine was concerned with the process and asked the Select Board to consider amending the current policy to fill these vacancies. Mr. Haddad presented the Board with proposed amendments that would essentially require the Select Board and the elected Board with the vacancy to interview up to three candidates in joint session before making the appointment. (see attached amendments to the policy)

Ms. Pine provided some background on previous events involving Committees and Boards. She believed it should be a joint appointment.

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to adopt the policy as presented. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Proposed Select Board Meeting Schedule through Labor Day.

Monday, June 16, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, June 23, 2025	Special Town Meeting
Monday, June 30, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, July 7, 2025	No Meeting
Monday, July 14, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting (L.I. Transfers/Call for FTM)
Monday, July 21, 2025	No Meeting
Monday, July 28, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting

Monday, August 4, 2025	No Meeting
Monday, August 11, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, August 18, 2025	No Meeting
Monday, August 25, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, September 1, 2025	No Meeting (Labor Day)
Monday, September 8, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting

ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL

1. Consider a Request from Virginia Wood to Adopt a Policy Concerning the Use of Second-Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides on Town-Owned Property.

Ms. Virginia Wood was present at the meeting. She requested that the Board adopt a policy to ban Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARS) on Town Property. Mr. Haddad confirmed with the Department of Public Works (DPW) and Country Club that the Town does not utilize any of these products on Town property. Ms. Wood is requesting a ban, specifically for commercial use.

Ms. Michelle Collette announced that the Board of Health voted unanimously to recommend to the Select Board the adoption of the policy. She said that they are doing this to help educate the public.

Ms. Wood also asked the Select Board to consider adding an Article to the Fall Town Meeting Warrant to ban SGARS completely in Town. She also asked the Select Board to submit a letter to the State Delegation requesting that they support legislation currently before both Chambers that would ban SGARS completely.

Ms. Pine made a motion to adopt the proposed policy as presented, add a Fall Town Meeting article for a Home Rule Petition to ban SGARS in Town, and authorize the Town Manager to send a letter on the Board's behalf to the State Delegation. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Wood thanked the Board.

2. Consider Approving a Special One-Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for the Friends of Prescott Open Mic Night to be held on Friday, June 13, 2025, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Ms. Manugian made a motion to approve a Special One-Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for the Friends of Prescott Open Mic Night to be held on Sunday, June 13, 2025, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

6:15 P.M. Nashua River Watershed Association- Update on Municipal Vulnerability and Preparedness Program

Representative Ryan Hennrikus from the Nashua River Watershed Association was in attendance. Mr. shared a presentation with the Board on their work concerning a Grant received under the Municipal Vulnerability and Preparedness Program. Under an MVP Action Grant, the Nashua River Watershed

Association, BSC Group, and Regenerative Design Group have worked with the communities of Groton, Ashburnham, Fitchburg, Leominster, and Pepperell to understand and address local environmental issues. The communities involved in this project have identified flooding, drought, invasives, and extreme temperatures to be key issues that are negatively affecting human health and safety. Specific nature-based solutions were identified as tools to mitigate these impacts in Groton. Several Community engagement meetings were held in Groton during year one of the project, 2023-2024. These included a Municipal Kickoff Meeting, an in-person Community Meeting, a virtual Community Meetings, Site Visits to 6 potential Nature-based solutions sites in town, and 2 tours of existing Nature-based Solutions sites In Devens Massachusetts. Notes from the Groton community meetings can be accessed on the NRWA website. NRWA's education team visited dozens of classrooms in the five participating communities, offering hands-on lessons and take home activities to third and fourth grade students. The project was able to reach over 2000 kids in 99 individual classes across 9 schools. Hundreds of maps were created in the course of this project at the watershed-wide, town-wide, and project site scales. These maps cover everything from soil drainage class to wetland cover to the potential installation of rain gardens at specific sites. All MVP maps are currently publicly available on the NRWA site and will be covered in greater detail during the presentation. Plans for future nature-based solutions project sites were developed in each of the towns including Groton. Priority sites were chosen and recommendations for those sites were written up. These are published on the NRWA site along with 35 nature-based solutions implementation resource memos. In addition to the maps and planning materials above numerous other web tools have been developed as part of this MVP project. These include town-specific nature based solutions.

Mr. Haddad asked the Board if they would like him to review these materials in more detail and come back to the Board with proposed Grant opportunities. The Board agreed that this would be the best path forward.

Mr. Haddad said the presentation was excellent and thanked Ryan for attending.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ongoing issues

- A. PFAS Issue- Mr. Haddad expressed disbelief that there is rumor going around Town that the Water Main installed on Chicopee Row into Dunstable to address the PFAS issue at the High School was undersized and had to be removed. He stated this was completely false and wanted to assure the Board that the Project was constructed properly. He doesn't understand how this rumor got started. He stated that the Town will be meeting with DEP later this week to discuss what properties need to be added to the project and whether or not we needed to provide extend the project to provide Town water to residents of Reedy Meadow and Raddin Road. He will report back to the Board at the next meeting.
- B. UMass Satellite Emergency Facility- That is ongoing. They plan to submit their application by the end of this month to the Planning Board and Stormwater Committee.
- C. PILOTs- Final PILOT recommendation will be placed on next week's Agenda for Board action.

Ms. Manugian expressed concern on the Destination Groton Committee's proposal to change the Town Center. Mr. Haddad will invite the Destination Groton Committee to a Select Board meeting to discuss their Town Center Wide project.

SELECT BOARD LIASON REPORTS

Mr. Cunningham asked about the Conservation Commission meeting on Tuesday and why the Squannacook River Dam was on the Agenda. Mr. Haddad said that this was part of the review process to finalize a recommendation to the Select Board. The Conservation Commission will be meeting to discuss repairing the dam so the engineer can finalize a budget for repairing the Dam. Mr. Haddad said that the owner of the property on the Shirley side has passed away.

Approval of the Regularly Scheduled Meeting Minutes of May 19, 2025 and Special Meeting of May 23, 2025

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the regularly scheduled meeting minutes of May 19, 2025, and the Special meeting of May 23, 2025. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

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