

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**MONDAY, AUGUST 11, 2025**  
**APPROVED**

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

**Also Present:** Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; Melisa Doig, Human Resource Director; Bud Robertson, Finance Committee Chair; Charlotte Steeves, Conservation Administrator; Fran Stanley and Nancy Pierce, Assistant Town Clerk's; Nancy Amari, Payroll Coordinator; Michael Hartnett, Assistant Treasurer/Tax Collector; Tom Orcutt, Water Superintendent; Arthur Cheeks, Groton Fire Chief; Megan Foster, Principal Assessor; Ashley Doucette, Groton Channel Director; Jared Laliberte and Grace Bannasch, Town Clerk applicants; Jamie McDonald, David Manugian, Michael O'Rourke, and Thomas Naughton, Capital Planning Advisory Committee Members.

Chair Pisani called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and reviewed the agenda.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Pine asked if there were any applicants for the vacancies on the Charter Review Committee and the Capital Planning Advisory Committee. Mr. Haddad replied that no applications had been received. Ms. Pine then announced to the public that there is one vacancy on each of the committees.

**INTERVIEW APPLICANTS FOR TOWN CLERK- JARED LALIBERTE AND GRACE BANNASCH**

Mr. Haddad explained that he had formed a Screening Committee to interview several candidates for the position of Town Clerk. The Screening Committee consisted of Mr. Haddad, Ms. Melisa Doig, Ms. Raquel Majeski, Mr. John Amaral, and Mr. Jason Kauppi. Mr. Haddad stated that the Town Manager is required to present at least two qualified candidates to the Select Board pursuant to the Charter. He was pleased to introduce Mr. Jared Laliberte and Ms. Grace Bannasch to the Board.

Jared Laliberte

Mr. Jared Laliberte attended the interview for the Town Clerk position at 5:00 p.m. Mr. Laliberte is currently the Town Clerk for the Town of Swampscott. Mr. Cunningham asked Mr. Laliberte what was appealing to him about Groton. Mr. Laliberte expressed his appreciation for the numerous updates and improvements Groton has made. He said that it is a well-managed town. The Select Board posed several questions to Mr. Laliberte, and he inquired about what makes Groton unique and what the Board would like to see in their Town Clerk. The Board unanimously agreed that attention to detail was an important quality for the position.

Mr. Haddad informed Mr. Laliberte that he would hear from Ms. Doig, the Human Resources Director, that evening regarding the decision. He also thanked him for his time.

Grace Bannasch

Grace Bannasch was the next applicant to be interviewed at 5:30 p.m. Currently, she serves as the Town Clerk for the Town of Shutesbury. Mr. Cunningham asked Ms. Bannasch why she believed Groton would be

a good fit for her. Ms. Bannasch responded that she had researched the Town of Groton online and found it to be similar to Shutesbury. She noted that Groton is a beautiful town with many resources that she doesn't currently have. She expressed that she was ready to start working full-time and advance her career. She said that there are many appealing aspects of the town for her. The Select Board asked Ms. Bannasch several questions. Ms. Bannasch then inquired about the priorities for the next Town Clerk. Ms. Pine responded that the town has high standards and values attention to detail.

Mr. Haddad informed Ms. Bannasch that she would hear from Ms. Doig, the Human Resources Director, that evening about the decision. He also thanked her for her time.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

None

### **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

#### **1. Consider Approving Amendment to Intermunicipal Agreement (IMA) Between the Towns of Groton, Dunstable, and Pepperell.**

Mr. Haddad stated that, as previously discussed with the Board and reviewed at the regional meeting with Dunstable and Pepperell officials, he provided them with the proposed amendment to the IMA between Groton, Dunstable, and Pepperell for Phase II of the Water System Expansion. He explained that this would allow the immediate installation of a water main from the Jersey Street Well in Pepperell to North Street in Groton and a portion of Groton Street in Dunstable. He reiterated to the Board that Phase II is covered by the secured \$5.5 million grant. Mr. Haddad said that because they need to speed up Phase II work due to the spread of PFAS contamination, they will need to amend the IMA between the Towns of Groton, Dunstable, and Pepperell. He explained that Town Counsel drafted the amendment, which is subject to ratification by the three Select Boards. He added that the payment schedule will be subject to a side letter.

Ms. Manugian asked Mr. Haddad to provide an overview of the project costs. He explained that the total cost of the additional work under this proposed IMA Amendment is estimated between \$2 million and \$3 million. The grant will fully cover expenses for connecting Jersey Street to North Street and part of Groton Street. The \$16.7 million appropriation from the Groton Town Meeting will fund the section of Reedy Meadow Road, Raddin Road, all of Hawtree Way, and Kemp Street in Dunstable. Mr. Haddad mentioned that Tyler Schmidt, the Apex engineer, has a budget that includes a connection to the water main to the 78 properties the Town is responsible for. He noted that they received negative resident feedback at the regional meeting and questioned why they should pay for the loan costs related to the connections. Mr. Haddad plans to return to the Board with a proposal to have the Town perform the connections. Mr. Haddad stated that the Town will ask the Town's engineer to prepare a proposed change order to have the contractor perform the work related to the connections.

Mr. Haddad respectfully requested that the Select Board vote to adopt this amendment to the Intermunicipal Agreement between the Towns of Groton, Dunstable, and Pepperell and authorize the Town Manager to sign on behalf of the Board.

*Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the amendment to the Intermunicipal Agreement between the Towns of Groton, Dunstable, and Pepperell, and to authorize the Town Manager to sign on behalf of the Board. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**2. Consider Ratifying the Town Manager’s Appointment of Michael Hartnett as Acting Town Treasurer and Nancy Amari as Acting Tax Collector.**

Mr. Michael Hartnett and Ms. Nancy Amari were in attendance.

Mr. Haddad announced that Treasurer and Tax Collector Hannah Moller’s last day was Friday, August 8th. He stated that the Town was fortunate to have two office assistants who agreed to help during the transition period to a new Tax/Treasurer Collector. Mr. Haddad thanked both of them for their assistance during this time.

*Ms. Pine made a motion to ratify the Town Manager’s appointment of Michael Hartnett as Acting Town Treasurer and Nancy Amari as Acting Tax Collector. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**3. Consider Accepting the Town Manager’s Nomination of Dane Krampitz and Steve Beard to the Great Ponds Advisory Committee and Appoint Mr. Krampitz and Mr. Beard to said Committee.**

*Mr. Reilly made a motion to accept the Town Manager’s nomination of Dane Krampitz and Steve Beard to the Great Ponds Advisory Committee and appoint Mr. Krampitz and Mr. Beard to said Committee. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**4. Notification of the Temporary Absence of the Town Manager and the Appointment of Takashi Tada as Acting Town Manager.**

Mr. Haddad notified the Board of his temporary absence as Town Manager from August 15 to August 24. He has appointed Mr. Tada as Acting Town Manager.

**5. Proposed Select Board Meeting Schedule through Labor Day.**

Monday, August 18, 2025	No Meeting
Monday, August 25, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting (First Draft of TM Warrant and set the Stormwater Permit Fee)
Monday, September 1, 2025	No Meeting (Labor Day Holiday)
Monday, September 8, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting

**ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL**

**1. Consider Approving the Cannabis Social Equity Policy.**

Mr. Haddad explained that the Cannabis Control Commission (CCC) contacted the Town and informed us that the Town does not have a Cannabis Social Equity Policy. The Policy aims to establish procedures and minimum standards within a municipality to further promote full participation in the regulated marijuana industry by people from communities that have previously been disproportionately harmed by marijuana prohibition and enforcement, and to impact those communities positively. Mr. Haddad contacted Town Counsel for guidance. Town Counsel recommended adopting a Cannabis Social Equity Policy, which the Town of Shrewsbury adopted,

that meets the requirements of the CCC. The Board reviewed and discussed the proposed Policy. Ms. Pine inquired about the number of cannabis licenses permitted in Town. Mr. Haddad said he would find out this information and would return to the Board.

Mr. Haddad respectfully requested that the Board waive its policy requiring the policy to be returned for a second review.

*Mr. Cunningham made a motion to waive this requirement. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

*Mr. Cunningham made a motion to adopt the Cannabis Social Equity Policy. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

## **2. Review and Consider Adopting the Annual Goals of the Select Board for FY 2026.**

Mr. Haddad drafted the proposed Annual Goals for the Select Board based on input from the members. The members reviewed the proposed Goals and offered suggestions to Mr. Haddad. He said that he had categorized the Goals and hoped the Board would establish five of them. After a brief discussion, the Board decided that Mr. Haddad would arrange a meeting with both Ms. Pine and Mr. Pisani to review the list and select five goals for the Board's consideration.

## **3. Consider Appointing an Individual to the Position of Town Clerk.**

Mr. Haddad said he was very pleased with the Search Committee's work, which brought forward two qualified candidates. He mentioned that both would be great additions to the staff, but he believed one would fit in better. Ms. Manugian expressed her appreciation for the group's effort; both candidates interviewed well, and either could do the job. She was particularly impressed with the second candidate, but believes they couldn't make a wrong choice. Mr. Cunningham agreed with Ms. Manugian. Mr. Haddad stated that the Board's decision would depend on the successful background check and contract negotiations. He does not believe any issues will be found with either candidate. Ms. Pine said there are two very strong candidates, but one had a more engaging personality. Mr. Reilly believes Ms. Bannasch would be a good fit for the position. The Board all agreed.

*Mr. Cunningham made a motion to appoint Grace Bannasch as Groton's Town Clerk subject to a successful background check and contract negotiations with the Town Manager. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

## **6:15 P.M. Discussion- Determine Whether or Not to Disband the Capital Planning Advisory Committee and/or Consider Amending the Charge of the Committee.**

Capital Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC) Members Jamie McDonald, David Manugian, Michael Rourke, and Thomas Naughton were in attendance.

Ms. Manugian asked the Capital Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC) to join a meeting with the Select Board to discuss whether to disband the Committee and/or amend its Charge. She stated that the CPAC Committee has been active and has accomplished a lot. She stated that a few of her quandaries may not

have been as successful as she wished when looking at town properties overall and prioritizing capital spending. Ms. Manugian wanted to determine whether the Committee should continue its work or if it had fulfilled its purpose.

Finance Committee Chair, Mr. Bud Robertson, stated that the CPAC Committee was formed in 2019. The Finance Committee supports CPAC because it includes two members from their committee who will report findings back to the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee believes the CPAC should review issues that fall outside its purview. Mr. Robertson emphasized the importance of considering the Town's priorities. Regarding buildings, Mr. Haddad noted that all projects have been completed.

Ms. Pine suggested that it would be helpful for the Committee to review parks, etc. Mr. Haddad stated at the Spring Town Meeting that many of the issues raised were related to Community Preservation Act projects, but the CPAC is not involved in these projects. Ms. Pine agrees but believes the public is not aware of this. Mr. O'Rourke noted that over the past few years, the school building project has overwhelmed everything, and people were unwilling to discuss other matters. Mr. Haddad stated that the Town has been very supportive of maintaining its buildings and asked what the focus should be moving forward. Mr. Reilly sees the capital plan as the department head's responsibility to decide what is needed. Mr. Haddad explained the five-year projection process and said that the CPAC serves as a check and balance before presenting to the Finance Committee. Mr. Manugian expressed difficulty in estimating projects beyond five years.

The Board discussed the fields in Town and who manages those projects. Mr. Robertson believes the Capital Planning Advisory Committee should not set project priorities for the Community Preservation Committee, as the Select Board should handle that. Ms. McDonald stated that the CPAC is an advisory committee; its role is to make recommendations.

Mr. Haddad suggested scheduling a meeting of the Capital Planning Advisory Committee to discuss the Charge and develop a recommendation for the Select Board to either keep the Committee as is, amend the Charge, or recommend disbandment.

Mr. Haddad and the Board thanked the Capital Planning Advisory Committee for attending and for their efforts.

## **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. Manugian made a motion to authorize the Town Manager and one member of the Select Board to sign the Warrants for the next 30 days. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

## **On-Going Issues**

- A. PFAS Issue- Discussed previously.
- B. UMass Satellite Emergency Facility - Mr. Haddad stated that the public hearing with the Planning Board will continue on Thursday, August 14th.
- C. PILOTs-None

- D. Fire Department Staffing - Governor Healey signed legislation early today to allocate \$5 million in emergency funding for the region's fire and EMS departments.

#### **SELECT BOARD LIASON REPORTS**

None

#### **Approval of the Regularly Scheduled Meeting of July 28, 2025, and the Joint Regional Meeting of July 30, 2025.**

*Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of July 28, 2025, and the Joint Regional meeting of July 30, 2025, as presented. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

The Select Board adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

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