

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
HYBRID MEETING  
MONDAY, AUGUST 25, 2025  
APPROVED**

**Select Board Members Present:** John Reilly; Peter Cunningham; Alison Manugian, Clerk;

**Select Board Members Virtually Present:** Matt Pisani, Chair; Becky Pine, Vice Chair;

**Also Present:** Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; Melisa Doig, Human Resources Director; Bud Robertson, Finance Committee Chair; Patricia DuFresne, Assistant Finance Director; Michael Hartnett, Acting Treasurer; Nancy Amari, Acting Tax Collector; Katie Kazanjian; Jeff Gordon, Groton Business Association; Jesse Tarbell, owner of Sterling Street Brewery; Jaydeep and Toralben Patel; Attorney Brian Akashian.

At 5:30 p.m., Mr. Cunningham made 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 litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares and return to Open Session. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Reilly-aye; Cunningham-aye; Manugian-aye; Pisani-aye; Pine-aye.

Return to Open Session.

Chair Pisani called the meeting to order at 5:56 p.m. and reviewed the agenda.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Cunningham announced there will be a Charter Review Committee public hearing held on Thursday, September 4<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 p.m. at the Groton Town Hall.

Mr. Haddad provided an update on the appointment of the new Town Clerk, Grace Bannasch. He was pleased to announce that Ms. Bannasch's background investigation has returned clean. She will begin her role on Tuesday, September 2nd. The Moderator, Mr. Jason Kauppi, will swear her in at 8:30 a.m., and Mr. Haddad has invited members of the Board to attend. Mr. Cunningham wanted to clarify that she is from the Town of Shutesbury, not Shrewsbury.

Mr. Haddad explained that the Community Preservation Committee prefers to establish a trust agreement when transferring funds to the Affordable Housing Trust. He provided the Board with a copy of the grant agreement and explained that it had been approved during the prior transfer of funds. Mr. Pine noted that this is a recommended best practice from the consortium of the Community Preservation Act. Mr. Haddad said that the Spring Town Meeting allocated \$200,000 to the Housing Trust from Community Housing funds. He respectfully requested that the Board approve the grant agreement and authorize the Town Manager to sign on behalf of the Board.

*Ms. Manugian made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to sign the grant agreement for the Affordable Housing Trust. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll call: Reilly-aye; Cunningham-aye; Manugian-aye; Pisani-aye; Pine-aye.*

## **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

None

## **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

### **1. Consider Ratifying the Town Manager's Appointment of Katie Kazanjian as the Treasurer/Tax Collector for the Town of Groton.**

Mr. Michael Hartnett, Acting Town Treasurer, and Ms. Nancy Amari, Acting Tax Collector, were in attendance along with Ms. Katie Kazanjian.

Mr. Haddad said he was very pleased to report that he has completed the search for a Town Treasurer/Tax Collector to replace Hannah Moller. He asked the Board to consider this his formal notification of his appointment of Katie Kazanjian of Townsend as Groton's Town Treasurer/Tax Collector. Mr. Haddad provided Ms. Kazanjian's resume for the Board's review and consideration. He stated that Ms. Kazanjian brings municipal experience, a strong work ethic, and great enthusiasm to the role. She will be a valuable addition to the Finance Team and the Town Hall Staff, and she will officially start on September 15<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Haddad expressed excitement for Ms. Kazanjian's start and mentioned they have a great transition plan. Mr. Haddad respectfully asked the Select Board to consider ratifying this appointment.

*Mr. Reilly made a motion to ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Katie Kazanjian as the Treasurer/Tax Collector for the Town of Groton. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. Roll call: Reilly-aye; Cunningham-aye; Manugian-aye; Pisani-aye; Pine-aye.*

### **2. Fiscal Year 2025 Fourth Quarter/Final Financial Update.**

Mr. Bud Robertson, Finance Committee Chair, and Ms. Patricia DuFresne, Assistant Finance Director, were present for the meeting to review and discuss the Fourth Quarter Revenue and Expenditure Report. Mr. Haddad reported that Fiscal Year 2025 was financially successful. He noted that the Town's revenues exceeded estimates, reaching 103% of the projected total. The Country Club also had a successful year, generating over \$1 million in revenue. Mr. Haddad mentioned that State Aid is meeting expectations and that licenses and permits continue to perform well. Although investment income did not match last year's figures due to the completion of the Florence Roche Elementary School, it was still a strong financial year for the Town. He believes the Board will be pleased with the Free Cash figure that will be certified in the Fall.

Ms. DuFresne highlighted that the Country Club's Revenue has exceeded \$1 million for the first time. She also mentioned that they are still expecting a 3% Marijuana Tax Revenue from the state for the Fourth Quarter, but they have already met the revenue budget even without that income. Mr. Haddad congratulated Ms. DuFresne for her careful tracking of all the details in the Report and thanked her for the excellent work.

### **3. Consider Setting the Stormwater Fee for Fiscal Year 2026.**

Mr. Haddad explained that the 2025 Spring Town Meeting approved the following budget for the Stormwater Utility for Fiscal Year 2026:

LINE	DEPARTMENT/DESCRIPTION	FY 2025 APPROPRIATED	FY 2026 TOWN MANAGER BUDGET	PERCENT CHANGE
<b>STORMWATER UTILITY</b>				
	Stormwater Wages/Benefits	\$ 84,851	\$ 86,890	<b>2.40%</b>
	Stormwater Expenses	\$ 112,000	\$ 112,000	<b>0.00%</b>
	Stormwater Capital Outlay	\$ 51,000	\$ 51,000	<b>0.00%</b>
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<b>500 DEPARTMENTAL TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 247,851</b>	<b>\$ 249,890</b>	<b>0.82%</b>

Mr. Haddad explained that over the past three years, the Select Board has kept the Stormwater Fee at \$60. With a parcel count of 4,075, he recommended that the Board consider maintaining the \$60 fee for the fourth consecutive year.

*Ms. Manugian made a motion to approve a \$60 Stormwater Fee for Fiscal Year 2026. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll call: Reilly-aye; Cunningham-aye; Manugian-aye; Pisani-aye; Pine-aye.*

**4. Update from the Town Manager and Department of Public Works Director on the Squannacook River Dam- Discuss Next Steps.**

The discussion about the Squannacook Dam has been rescheduled for a future Select Board meeting.

**5. Review the First Draft of the 2025 Fall Town Meeting Warrant.**

Mr. Haddad stated that the Warrant closed on Thursday, August 21, 2025, and said that there are a total of 23 Articles, including one Citizen's Petition. Mr. Haddad recommended that the first 15 Articles could be included in a consent agenda. The public hearing on the Warrant is scheduled for September 15th. He said the Board of Assessors estimates that New Growth will come in at \$30 million, which will add an additional \$76,250 to the FY 2026 Anticipated Levy Limit. Unfortunately, the Final State Aid allocation for Groton was reduced by \$9,982 from the last estimate, leaving \$66,268 in available Levy Capacity. He provided the Board with the first draft of the 2025 Fall Town Meeting Warrant and summarized the available funds. Mr. Haddad reviewed the First Draft Warrant with the Board.

**Article 1:** Prior Year Bills- UMASS Memorial Health- Requested Amount: \$85.00

**Article 2:** Amend the Fiscal Year 2025 Town Operating Budget- Mr. Haddad reviewed the proposed amendments to the Operating Budget:

The Total Amounts Requested by Category:	Free Cash:	\$122,098
	Tax Levy:	\$ 36,894
	Cable Receipts:	<u>\$ 11.617</u>
		\$170,609

**Article 3:** Transfer Money into Capital Stabilization Fund- Requested Amount: \$900,000 from Free Cash to fund the anticipated Capital Budget.

**Article 4:** Transfer Money into the Stabilization Fund—Requested Amount: \$0

**Article 5:** Transfer money into the GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund- Requested Amount: \$250,000 from Free Cash.

**Article 6:** Transfer Within the Water Enterprise Fund- Requested Amount: This is a placeholder.

**Article 7:** Transfer Within the Center Sewer Enterprise Fund- Requested Amount: This is a placeholder.

**Article 8:** Transfer Within the Stormwater Enterprise Fund- Requested Amount: \$50,000

**Article 9:** Assessors Quinquennial Certification-Requested Amount: \$30,000 from Free Cash.

**Article 10:** Repair to Fitch's Bridge Head Wall- Requested Amount: \$60,000 from Free Cash.

**Article 11:** Provide Funding to Maintain the Former Nod Road Landfill- \$100,000 from Free Cash.

**Article 12:** Repair Fire Alarm- Function Hall and Restaurant at the Country Club-\$60,000 from Free Cash.

**Article 13:** Engineering Funds for Complete Streets Grant Work- If that Grant is received, the Complete Streets will request \$30,000 from Free Cash for the engineering.

**Article 14:** Debt Service for Middle School Track- The Community Preservation Committee allocated \$70,000 for the Squannacook Railroad project, which will no longer proceed. Instead, they will use the funds to cover some of the debt service for the Middle School Track.

**Article 15:** Establishing Limits for Various Revolving Funds- To increase the spending limit of the Home Recycling Equipment Revolving Fund and the Senior Center Fitness Equipment Revolving Fund from \$10,000 to \$25,000.

**Article 16:** Proposed Amendments to the Groton Charter- A public hearing on the Proposed Amendments to the Charter will be held on Thursday, September 4<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 p.m. at the Groton Town Hall. Ms. Pine said she was uneasy with revisiting the appointment process in the Charter.

**Article 17:** Replace Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus for the Fire Department- Requested Amount: \$500,000. Mr. Haddad is recommending that these funds be borrowed and paid over five (5) years if the Town does not receive the grant.

**Article 18:** Squannacook River Dam- Requested Amount: This is a placeholder.

**Article 19:** Chapter 202 of the General Bylaws- "Transient Merchants"- Mr. Haddad explained that there are Transient Merchants going door to door in Town. This Article is to add a new chapter, Chapter 202, entitled "Transient Merchants".

**Article 20:** Amend Chapter 161- Licenses and Permits of the Groton Code-

**Article 21:** Prohibit the Use of Second-Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides-

**Article 22:** Accept Bluebird Lane as a Town Way – A Road Acceptance Public Hearing will be held on September 15, 2025.

**Article 23:** Citizens' Petition - Authorization to Create an Advisory Committee - Mr. Haddad explained that proponents will be invited to the public hearing.

**6. Consider Approving an Amendment to the Agreement Between the Town of Groton and IAFF, Local 4879, to Add a Light Duty Provision to the Agreement.**

Mr. Haddad stated that the Select Board met in Executive Session earlier that evening to discuss an amendment to the Agreement between the Town of Groton and IAFF, Local 4879, to include a Light Duty Provision. He further explained that the Select Board reviewed and approved the amendment to the Agreement to add the Light-Duty Provision. Mr. Haddad respectfully requested the Board vote in public session to approve this amendment.

*Mr. Cunningham made a motion to approve the amendment to the Agreement between the Town of Groton and IAFF, Local 4879, to add a Light Duty Provision. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll call: Reilly-aye; Cunningham-aye; Manugian-aye; Pisani-aye; Pine-aye.*

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

Monday, September 1, 2025	No Meeting (Labor Day Holiday)
Monday, September 8, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, September 15, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, September 22, 2025	No Meeting
Monday, September 29, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, October 6, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, October 13, 2025	No Meeting (Indigenous Peoples' Day)
Saturday, October 18, 2025	2025 Fall Town Meeting
Monday, October 20, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting (Possibly No Meeting)
Monday, October 27, 2025	Budget Guidance Meeting
Monday, November 3, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, November 10, 2025	No Meeting
Monday, November 17, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, November 24, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 1, 2025	No Meeting
Monday, December 8, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 15, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 22, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 29, 2025	No Meeting
Monday, January 5, 2025	No Meeting
Monday, January 12, 2026	Regularly Scheduled Meeting

**ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL**

**1. Finalize and Approve the Town Manager's Annual Performance Evaluation.**

Mr. Haddad stated that the Annual Performance Evaluation of the Town Manager has been completed. According to the Policy, the next step was for the Select Board Chair to present the final Evaluation to the full Board at a public meeting for approval. Once approved, it will be filed with the Town Clerk.

Mr. Pisani asked Ms. Pine, the Vice Chair, to present the Evaluation. She explained that the Town Manager's review received the highest rating, which was outstanding. She also noted that two members rated the review slightly lower than the other three members. There were written comments that accompanied the evaluation, and there was unanimous applause for the Town Manager's accomplishments over the past year. Mr. Pisani commented that the Town Manager did an excellent job, and the Evaluation reflects that. Mr. Haddad stated that he is only as good as the department heads that he works with and praised his great staff. He thanked and congratulated the staff and thanked the Board. Ms. Pine added that one of his strengths is drawing out the best in those he hires.

*Mr. Reilly made a motion to accept the Town Manager's Annual Performance. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. Roll call: Cunningham-aye; Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Manugian-aye.*

**2. Review and Vote to Accept Deed for Monarch Path.**

Mr. Haddad respectfully requested the Select Board to vote to accept the Deed for Monarch Path.

*Mr. Cunningham made a motion to accept the Deed for Monarch Path. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll call: Reilly-aye; Cunningham-aye; Manugian-aye; Pisani-aye; Pine-aye.*

**3. Approve Intermunicipal Agreement for the Use and Expenditures of Certain Opioid Abatement Funds between the Towns of Groton, Ayer, Harvard, Bolton, Littleton, Shirley, and Pepperell.**

Ms. Patricia DuFresne was present for the discussion. She explained that they had drafted an Intermunicipal Agreement (IMA), but a few pieces were still missing; they had not yet chosen a host community. Mr. Haddad mentioned that they discussed hiring a professional to support all seven communities, but they are not moving forward with that plan. Ms. DuFresne said they cannot support a full-time position. The Towns decided to pool the money and give it to an organization instead. She explained that a Request for Proposals (RFP) has been drafted, and they will be interviewing organizations. Ms. DuFresne said the RFP will go out after the IMA is completed. Mr. Haddad provided the Draft (IMA) for the Town's use of and expenditures of certain opioid abatement funds among the Towns of Groton, Ayer, Harvard, Bolton, Littleton, Shirley, and Pepperell.

Mr. Haddad respectfully asked the Board to consider authorizing the IMA, contingent on a host community determination, and to allow the Town Manager to sign.

*Ms. Manugian made a motion to approve the IMA for the Use and Expenditures of Certain Opioids Abatement Funds among the towns of Groton, Ayer, Harvard, Bolton, Littleton, Shirley, and Pepperell, pending a host community determination, and to authorize the Town Manager to sign. If any community makes changes, Ms. DuFresne will return to the Board to discuss the updates to the IMA. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. Roll call: Cunningham-aye; Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Manugian-aye.*

**4. Consider Approving a One-Day All Alcoholic Beverages License for the Groton Business Association for GrotonFest to be held on Saturday, September 27, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

Mr. Jeff Gordon from the Groton Business Association was in attendance along with Mr. Jesse Tarbell, the owner of Sterling Street Brewery. They submitted a request regarding GrotonFest to allow visitors to purchase beer and hard seltzers without being confined to a specific area for consumption. Mr. Gordon stated that Mr. Tarbell has done this many times. Mr. Tarbell mentioned they have worked with several towns for festivals. He explained that when they run these events, they provide all the necessary equipment, as well as TIPS certification. He said they will set up a table and a tent, check IDs, and only sell what they make. He added that they have done hundreds of these events. The license is with the Groton Business Association, and everything is in order.

There would be a limit of two beverages per person. Mr. Tarbell clarified that it is individual cans or drinks.

*Mr. Cunningham made a motion to approve a One-Day All Alcoholic Beverages License for the Groton Business Association for GrotonFest to be held on Saturday, September 27, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll call: Cunningham-aye; Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Manugian-aye.*

**6:15 P.M. Public Hearing- Consider the Transfer of the Off-Premise All Alcohol Package Store License for the Groton Market, John Madigan, President, to Shreeumiya Kuldevi, DBA Groton Market, Jaydeep Patel, President, with Toralben Patel as the Manager.**

*Mr. Cunningham made a motion to open the public hearing. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll call: Cunningham-aye; Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Manugian-aye.*

Mr. Haddad read aloud the public hearing notice into the record.

A public hearing was held to consider the transfer of the Off-Premise, All-Alcohol Package Store license for Groton Market, located at 235 Main Street, from John Madigan, President, to Shreeumiya Kuldevi, DBA Groton Market, with Jaydeep Patel, President, and Toralben Patel as the Manager. The Select Board received a copy of the application for review.

Attorney Brian Akashian was present along with Jaydeep and Toralben Patel. Attorney Akashian explained that Mr. Patel currently holds a license for the business located at 127 Main Street, Country Farms. Both he and Mrs. Patel are familiar with the rules and regulations of the Town of Groton and the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission (ABCC). Mrs. Patel will be managing the Groton Market, working forty to fifty hours a week. Attorney Akashian noted that she is TIPS certified and will use a scanner to verify customer IDs. He mentioned that the Patels are residents of Groton, and this location has been popular for many years, and they would like to maintain that success. Mr. Haddad added that the Patels have been excellent partners with the Town of Groton.

Mr. Reilly asked Mr. and Mrs. Patel if they planned to keep the same layout. Mr. Patel confirmed that it would remain the same, as Mr. John Madigan has it set up. Ms. Pine asked who Romula Roma was. Mr. Patel explained that he was the manager at 127 Main Street. Mr. Patel said Romula Roma is a director of the corporation.

**Public comment**

*Mr. Gus Widmayer, the property owner of 240 Main Street, Emerson Health building, said there have never been any complaints about the current owners, the Madigans, and welcomed the Patels to the neighborhood.*

*Mr. Chip Detwiler, of 22 Elm Street in Groton, wanted to thank Mr. Madigan for his fine wines and hopes Mr. Patel will keep the building the same.*

Ms. Pine commented that Mr. Madigan's store has been an asset to the community. She was pleased that the new owner lives in Groton and will manage the local liquor store. Ms. Pine welcomed the Patels.

*Mr. Cunningham made a motion to close the public hearing. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll call: Reilly-aye; Cunningham-aye; Pisani-aye; Manugian-aye; Pine-aye.*

*Mr. Cunningham made a motion to grant the transfer of the license of 235 Main Street, from John Madigan, President, to Shreeumiya Kuldev, DBA Groton Market, with Jaydeep Patel, President, and Toralben Patel as the Manager. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll call: Reilly-aye; Cunningham-aye; Pisani-aye; Manugian-aye; Pine-aye.*

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

None

### **On-Going Issues**

- A. PFAS Issue- None
- B. UMass Satellite Emergency Facility - Mr. Haddad was pleased to announce that the Conservation Commission and Stormwater Committee have approved their permits for UMass. The Planning Board closed the public hearing and is hopefully issuing the decision later that week. He explained that the State approvals are still pending. Mr. Haddad said all three Boards were very thorough and did a great job.
- C. PILOTs-None
- D. Fire Department Staffing -None

### **SELECT BOARD LIASON REPORTS**

None

### **Approval of the Regularly Scheduled Meeting of August 11, 2025**

*Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of August 11, 2025, as presented. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. Roll call: Cunningham-aye; Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Manugian-aye.*

Mr. Cunningham announced that the Groton Firefighters' Association will be having its annual drive-through Chicken Barbeque to be held on Monday, September 1<sup>st</sup> at the Fire Department.

The Select Board adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

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