SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2025
APPROVED

Select Board Members Present: Matt Pisani, Chair; Becky Pine, Vice Chair; Peter Cunningham; Alison Manugian, Clerk;
Select Board Members Absent: John Reilly;
Also Present: Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; Melisa Doig, Human Resource Director; Jeff Gordon, Aubrey Theall, Historical Commission Chair; Patricia DuFresne, Assistant Finance Director; Grace Bannasch, Town Clerk; Tom Delaney, Department of Public Works Director; John Sopka, Dan Emerson, and Sherry Murray, Groton Housing Authority Members.

Chair Pisani called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and reviewed the agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Cunningham announced that GrotonFest will be held on Saturday, September 27th, 2025.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Mr. Jeff Gordon from the Groton Business Association attended and mentioned that there are many events planned for GrotonFest, including food trucks.

Mr. Aubrey Theall, Chair of the Historical Commission, attended the meeting to make an announcement. He explained that a partnership has been formed among the Historical Commission, the Friends of Prescott, and the Destination Groton Committee as part of a grant from the Society of the Cincinnati, celebrating America's 250th Anniversary. The grant request aims to design and install 15 permanent historical markers that will celebrate Groton's significant landmarks. Mr. Theall said they will meet with the Sign Committee and the Historic Districts Commission to seek approval for the signage. He thought it was important to inform the Select Board about this initiative. When Mr. Pisani inquired whether the markers would be permanent or temporary, Mr. Theall confirmed that they would be permanent.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. **Update from the Town Manager on the West Groton Dam- Consider Delaying any Decision Until Spring 2026- Remove Article from the 2025 Fall Town Meeting Warrant.**
   Mr. Tom Delaney, DPW Director, was in attendance.

   Mr. Haddad respectfully asked the Select Board to delay any decision on the West Groton (Squannacook River) Dam until Spring 2026 at the earliest. He believes there won't be enough information to make an informed decision this fall, and he doesn't want the Board to rush the issue. Mr. Haddad explained that he would like to give the engineers more time to finish their work and gather reliable information on whether to remove or repair the dam, so the Board and Town Meeting can base their decision accordingly. Although Mr. Delaney is retiring as the DPW Director in November, he will remain involved with this project. Mr. Haddad also respectfully requested that the Board allow him to remove the Warrant Article from the 2025 Fall Town Meeting Warrant. He has added this issue to the Agenda's Ongoing Issues List so it remains at the forefront.

The Select Board agreed with Mr. Haddad and permitted him to remove the Squannacook River Dam Article from the 2025 Fall Town Meeting Warrant to gather more information. Mr. Haddad will keep the Board informed as he receives information.

Mr. Haddad announced that Mr. Delaney's last official day as the Director of Public Works will be November 7th. He explained that Mr. Brian Callahan will be stepping in as the new Director. Mr. Haddad expressed his gratitude to Mr. Delaney for his mentorship, stating that Mr. Callahan will be ready to hit the ground running in his new role. Mr. Delaney has served in this position for the last 40 years.

2. **Consider Opening the Warrant for the 2025 Fall Town Meeting Warrant to Add an Article to Create a Local Access Cable Grant Fund.**

Mr. Haddad respectfully requested that the Select Board allow him to add a Warrant Article to the Warrant for the 2025 Fall Town Meeting. He explained that it was recently brought to his attention that when the Cable Enterprise Fund was closed out last year, $16,000 was inadvertently returned to the General Fund (closed out as Free Cash) that should have been allocated for equipment. Each year, the two cable carriers in Town provide an equipment grant that can only be used for purchases within the Cable Department. Mr. Haddad said that they need to return this money to the Cable Department.

Ms. Pine made a motion to open the 2025 Fall Town Meeting Warrant. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Pine made a motion to authorize adding the Cable Department Article to the 2025 Fall Town Meeting Warrant. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion.

<u>Discussion</u>
Ms. Pine inquired about the meaning of the acronym PEG within the article and asked Mr. Haddad to spell it out. Ms. Ashley Doucette, the Cable Director, clarified that PEG stands for Public Education, Government.

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Pine made a motion to close the warrant. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. **Proposed Select Board Meeting Schedule through the End of the Year.**

Monday, September 15, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting (Warrant Hearing)
Monday, September 22, 2025	No Meeting (Rosh Hashana Holiday)
Monday, September 29, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting (Approve Warrant)
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)
Tuesday, October 28, 2025	Regularly Scheduled Meeting (Budget Guidance)
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. **Consider Appointing Elizabeth Callendar to the Complete Streets Committee.**
   Mr. Cunningham made a motion to appoint Elizabeth Callendar to the Complete Streets Committee. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. **Consider Approving an Amendment to the FMLA Policy.**
   Included in the Town Manager's Report were proposed amendments to the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Policy. Mr. Haddad explained that the update in 2019, as proposed by our previous Town Counsel, did not accurately update the policy to reflect the Federal FMLA law. Labor Counsel Marc Terry has done a complete review of the Policy and updated it to reflect the actual law. Ms. Pine asked Mr. Haddad about the language concerning spouses within the policy. He explained that it was a federal Policy and that the federal government does not recognize same-sex marriages. Ms. Doig, Human Resource Director, explained that the changes within the Policy were more of a cleanup of the Policy. Mr. Haddad said that employees are permitted to take Family Medical Leave for a family member, veteran, or spouse, but this was not included in the previous policy.

   He respectfully requested that the Select Board waive the requirement to wait for an additional meeting before approving new policies or amendments and adopt the policy.

   Ms. Pine made a motion to waive the policy requiring the Board to wait an additional meeting to approve new and/or amendments to polices. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

   Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the amendment to the Family Medical Leave Act Policy, as presented. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. **Review and Consider Adopting the Annual Goals of the Select Board.**

Mr. Haddad said that he met with Ms. Pine and Mr. Pisani and had a productive meeting to review and discuss the proposed Goals. He said they came up with categories and assignments during the meeting. Mr. Haddad then reviewed the Goals with the Board. He believes that it was a good list and asked the Board to consider adopting these Goals (See the Annual Goals of the Select Board included in these minutes).

Ms. Manugian made a motion to adopt the Annual Goals of the Select Board. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. **Consider Approving a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for the Friends of Prescott for Open Mic Night to be held on Friday, September 12, 2025, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.**
   Ms. Manugian made a motion to approve a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for the Friends of Prescott for Open Mic Night to be held on Friday, September 12, 2025, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

6:15 P.M. In Joint Session with the Groton Housing Authority- Consider Appointing Catherine MacDonald to the Housing Authority as the Tenant Representative- Consider Appointing Leslie Colt to the Housing Authority to Fill a Vacancy on the Authority.
Members of the Groton Housing Authority, including Chair Dan Emerson, Ms. Sherry Murray, and Mr. John Sopka, were present.

The Groton Housing Authority conducted interviews for the vacant positions and recommended Ms. Catherine MacDonald as the Tenant Representative and Ms. Leslie Colt for the Elected Seat. Mr. Haddad noted that this was the first time in many years that the Groton Housing Authority would have a full Board.

Tenant Seat
Ms. Pine made a motion to appoint Catherine MacDonald to the Groton Housing Authority to fill the tenant seat, with a term ending June 30, 2027. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Elected Seat
Mr. Cunningham made a motion to appoint Leslie Colt to the elected seat until the May 2026 Election. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Pisani-aye; Cunningham-aye; Emerson-aye; Murray- aye; Sopka-aye;

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- No update
B. UMass Satellite Emergency Facility – No update

C. PILOTs-The Board has agreed to remove PILOTs from the On-Going List
D. Fire Department Staffing – No update
E. West Groton Dam-No Update

Mr. Cunningham provided an update to the Board on the Proposed Charter Amendments and explained that the Charter Review Committee held a public hearing on Thursday, September 4th. They presented the proposed Amendments to the Town Charter. The Committee decided to present proposed Amendments to the Town Charter in two separate motions. One motion would be to consider amending the way the Police Chief, Fire Chief, and Town Clerk are appointed, and the other motion would be everything else.

Mr. Cunningham explained that the Committee decided to keep a provision that prevents a Select person from running for another office, so that will remain unchanged. He said that the meeting went well and involved a lot of discussion.

SELECT BOARD LIASON REPORTS

None

Approval of the Regularly Scheduled Meeting of August 25, 2025

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of August 25, 2025, as presented. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The Select Board adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

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

FISCAL YEAR 2026

GOALS OF THE GROTON SELECT BOARD

Category - Public Safety **Select Board Member Assigned – Peter Cunningham**

In consultation with Police, Fire, and DPW Departments, establish a prioritized list of sidewalks, bicycle and roadway concerns and timelines for addressing them. Tasks to be considered:

- Striping Parking Spots on Main Street
- Narrowing Roads and/or other ways to create more pedestrian/bike access
- Paving section of roadway between Station Avenue and Broadmeadow Road
- Setting a Town wide speed limit

Budget Priorities – Funding **Select Board Member Assigned – Alison Manugian**

Operating Budget

- Establish the process to determine the minimal staffing needed in all departments to continue functioning without an override.
- Beginning with the Groton Fire Department, establish process and requirements for, and conduct an in-depth cost benefit analysis of any proposed increase in staffing

Capital Budget

- Considering input from the Town Manager and the Capital Planning Advisory Committee, review all town property and capital spending priorities for coming years

Grant Funding

- Conduct in-depth analysis of available grants to help offset operating budget pressures

Structure of Government **Select Board Member Assigned – Becky Pine**

- Review and determine action to be taken by the Select Board and staff on items identified in the Master Plan
- Develop a 3-year schedule to meet with all committees under the Select Board's purview. Consider combining or eliminating committees with similar or overlapping roles

Economic Development **Select Board Members Assigned – John Reilly and Matt Pisani**

- Work with Groton Business Association and Destination Groton Committee to develop new sources of revenue.
- Encourage efforts to establish more restaurants in Groton, specifically in the former Station House property and available commercial sites in the Four Corners area

Ongoing Goals **All Members**

- Continue advocating for a predictable increase in State support for education and municipal functions
- Present a FY 2027 Budget in conjunction with Peer Boards that meets the Town of Groton and GDRSD needs
- Continue support of DEI Committee and Affordable Housing Trust