

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2025
APPROVED**

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

Also Present: Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Ms. Pine said that, with it being the week of Thanksgiving, she is thankful for many things, including living in a beautiful community and for the employees and volunteers in town.

Mr. Haddad announced that the Education Funding Forum, hosted by Representative Scarsdale, took place on November 20 at the Marion Stoddart Performing Arts Center. He stated that the panelists did an excellent job and that a sixth-grader from the Town of Dunstable gave an amazing speech and received a standing ovation. At the end of the forum, a resident suggested amending Proposition 2 ½ to exclude mandatory costs, such as health insurance and pension contributions. Mr. Haddad expressed that balancing the budget has been a real hardship, and those costs are beyond their control. Senator Cronin indicated during the forum that he would be open to discussing this proposal. Mr. Haddad has scheduled a meeting next week with Senator Cronin and Representatives Scarsdale and Sena to begin the discussion. He hopes attendees paid attention during the forum, as there was a lot of valuable information shared by the panelists and through audience questions. Mr. Haddad took a moment to thank Representative Scarsdale and Senator Cronin for attending and addressing questions at the funding forum.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Notification of Holiday hours of the Town Hall.

Mr. Haddad reviewed the hours set for the Town Hall during the Holiday Season:

Wednesday, November 26, 2025-	Town Hall will close at Noon.
Thursday, November 27, 2025-	Town Hall will be closed for the Thanksgiving Holiday.
Friday, November 28, 2025-	Town Hall will be closed. Employees can either work that day off or take a personal vacation day.
Wednesday, December 24, 2025-	Town Hall will close at Noon.
Thursday, December 25, 2025-	Town call will be closed for the Christmas Holiday.
Friday, December 26, 2025-	Town Hall will be closed.
Wednesday, December 31, 2025-	Town Hall will close at Noon.
Thursday, January 1, 2026-	Town Hall will be closed for the New Year's Day Holiday.

Friday, January 2, 2026 -

Town Hall will be closed. Employees can either work that day off or take a personal or vacation day.

2. Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Update.

Mr. Haddad said that budgets are due to the Town Manager by Monday, December 1st, and budget meetings with department heads are scheduled for the week of December 8th. He will send out ZOOM invitations to the Select Board Members if they want to participate.

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

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, 2026-	No Meeting
Monday, January 12, 2026-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting

ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL

1. Review/Approve Board/Committee Annual Update Schedule.

Mr. Haddad explained that one of the Select Board's Goals was to develop a meeting schedule for the Board to meet with Committees and Boards to receive updates. He and Executive Assistant Kara Cruikshank began scheduling these meetings:

Monday, December 8, 2025-	Commemorations and Celebrations Committee Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee
Monday, December 15, 2025-	Sustainability Commission
Monday, December 22, 2025-	TREAD Committee Trails Committee
Monday, January 26, 2026-	Conservation Commission Sargisson Beach Committee Williams Barn Committee
Monday, February 2, 2026-	Planning Board Complete Streets Committee

Mr. Haddad inquired about the Council on Aging attending the January 12th Select Board meeting. Ms. Pine also suggested that the Town Forest Committee attend an upcoming Select Board meeting.

2. Consider Approving a Fund-Raising Letter.

Ms. Pine drafted a proposed fundraising letter she would like the Board to consider sending to various non-profit partners, as well as posting on the website and in prominent locations throughout the town. Mr. Haddad explained that, according to Town Counsel and the Ethics Commission, the Board may approve and sign the letter for general distribution in the town, rather than targeting specific individuals or entities. He stated that no disclosures are necessary for this. Mr. Haddad provided the Board with a copy of the proposed fundraising letter for their review. Ms. Pine explained that during discussions about urging private schools to contribute more, she suggested using a method similar to that of non-profit organizations. Ms. Pine said this would be a mechanism for individuals to donate and support the town. Ms. Manugian expressed her discomfort with sending a town-wide letter requesting funds for operating costs. Ms. Manugian then inquired about the method for tracking contributions. Mr. Haddad clarified that they would establish several gift funds for this purpose, and contributors would receive a tax deduction for their donations. Ms. Pine said the purpose of the letter is to remind people of the local giving opportunities in Groton.

The Board discussed the letter and suggested several changes. Ms. Pine stated that she would collaborate with Mr. Haddad on these suggestions and would return the letter to the Select Board on December 8th for their consideration.

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.

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

Mr. Haddad provided an update on the Cow Pond Brook Project. He clarified that when they applied for the federal grant, they could receive up to \$1 million. The grant offers a 50 percent reimbursement, up to \$1 million, depending on the documentation submitted. He explained that they presented a \$3.5 million project, with the state reimbursing 29% of the total cost, up to \$1 million. Mr. Haddad said the Community Preservation Act application has been submitted for the Cow Pond Brook Project, totaling \$4.1 million. He also explained that the Cow Pond Brook Working Group will hold a public hearing with the Park Commission regarding the project. Additionally, the Land Use Committee will hold a meeting to discuss it. Mr. Haddad clarified that the project would be funded by CPA funds, meaning it would not increase taxes but would limit funds available for other projects.

On-Going Issues

- A. PFAS Issue-none
- B. UMass Satellite Emergency Facility – none
- C. Fire Department Staffing – none
- D. West Groton Dam—Mr. Haddad stated he and consultant Tom Delaney are prepared to present to the Select Board. He mentioned that a public hearing will be held to gather input and determine the Board's position.

SELECT BOARD LIASON REPORTS

None

Approval of the Regularly Scheduled Meeting of November 17, 2025

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of November 17, 2025. Mr. Cunningham seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

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

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