

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, DECEMBER 8, 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; Don Black, Chair of the Commemorations and Celebrations Committee.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Ms. Pine took a moment to thank the Groton Interfaith Community for organizing a Walk of Lights, a community tree lighting, and a ceremony honoring Tom Delaney held on Saturday, December 6th.

Mr. Cunningham gave a shout-out to the Groton Business Association for Winterfest, held on Saturday, December 6th, saying it was incredible.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Update.

Mr. Haddad explained that Budget Review Meetings have started with various departments. He will update the Board on the status of the budget at the next meeting. Mr. Haddad mentioned he and others met with Senator Cronin to discuss the possibility of submitting legislation (a copy of the proposed legislation is included in these minutes) to amend Proposition 2 ½ to exempt health insurance and pension costs from the Proposition 2 ½ Levy Limit. He said the meeting was very productive, thanked Senator Cronin for his time, and said relief is needed. The Senator provided helpful input and advice and explained that the focus should be increasing Chapter 70 per-pupil aid for hold-harmless districts. Mr. Haddad will draft a letter with Lacey McCabe, the Chair of the Groton Dunstable Regional School District, to send to the legislators urging the Legislature to increase this aid.

The Dunstable Town Administrator, Jason Silva, and Mr. Haddad met with Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine and the MMA's Legislative Director to discuss securing the MMA's support for their initiative to amend Proposition 2½ and the goals they want to achieve. Mr. Haddad is considering requesting a home rule petition to include this legislation in the Spring Town Meeting Warrant and has asked the Board to consider it. Mr. Haddad stated that Groton needs assistance from the Legislature if local aid is not increased. If health insurance and pension costs were exempt from the Proposition 2½ levy limit, they would be about \$4 million below that limit.

He thanked Mr. Silva and Mr. Chapdelaine for their time in meeting with him on Friday.

The Board authorized the Town Manager to draft a letter and send it to the Board before forwarding it to the legislature. Mr. Haddad also thanked Senator Cronin for taking the time to meet with Groton and Dunstable officials.

2. Select Board Meeting Schedule through the End of the Year.

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

6:15 PM. Commemorations and Celebrations Committee Update

Mr. Donald Black, Chairman, attended to give the Select Board an update on the Commemorations and Celebrations Committee.

Mr. Black announced that Wreaths Across America will be held on Saturday, December 13th, 2025, at 11:00 A.M at the Old Burying Ground. Mr. Black outlined several upcoming events planned to celebrate Groton's 250th anniversary. These include a proposed colonial ball, the planting of 250 sugar maple trees around the Town of Groton, and an Arbor Day ceremony scheduled for April 24, 2026. On April 25, at the Old Burying Ground, a British march will be met by Minutemen to ceremoniously bring back to Groton the soldiers from Groton killed in the Battle of Bunker Hill. The event will conclude at dusk with a march to the Liberty Tree for a reenactment. Additional events include the Memorial Day Parade, Groton's Avenue of Flags event (which will involve planting 261 new flags on Main and Hollis Street), Fourth of July fireworks, a commemoration of the 25th anniversary of September 11th, an annual Veterans Day ceremony, and a closing ceremony for Wreaths Across America.

Ms. Pine told Mr. Black that the Veterans Day Ceremony was well done and would like to see it publicized more so that more people can attend. She also suggested that the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee work together with the Commemorations and Celebrations Committee on Juneteenth.

Mr. Haddad thanked Mr. Black for attending and for his time.

ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL

1. Consider Approving a Fund-Raising Letter.

Member Pine has revised the proposed Fundraising Letter discussed at a previous Select Board meeting, removing any reference to operational expenses and tailoring it to support some of the Town's gift funds. Mr. Haddad provided the updated Draft to the Board for review. He explained that they would post it on the website, and the School Committee offered to publish it in their newsletter.

Ms. Manugian made a motion to approve and issue the amended Fundraising letter. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Consider Approving a One-Day All Alcoholic Beverages License for the Friends of Prescott for the Holiday Spirits Celebration to be held on Thursday, December 18, 2025, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve a One Day All Alcoholic Beverages License for the Friends of Prescott for the Holiday Spirits Celebration to be held on Thursday, December 18, 2025, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Funding Proposal for Cow Pond Brook Fields Project.

Mr. Haddad provided the Board with a memo he sent to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) outlining the proposed funding plan for the Cow Pond Brook Playing Fields improvement project. He explained that he and Town Treasurer Katie Kazanjian met with CPC Treasurer Bruce Easom to review funding options and a timeline that would allow the project to move forward in Fiscal Year 2027, should the CPC agree to bring the project to the 2026 Town Meeting for consideration and approval. Mr. Haddad reviewed the memo with the Board and will attend the CPC meeting later this evening to discuss it in more detail (see the included memo with these minutes).

Mr. Haddad asked if the Select Board had any input to provide to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) that evening. He also announced a public hearing scheduled for January 12th at 5:00 PM. The CPC application is for \$4.1 million, and the Working Group is reviewing it with the Park Commission. Mr. Haddad explained that the application could be scaled back, but the total will not exceed \$4.1 million. It must be at least \$3.5 million to secure the \$1 million federal grant.

Ms. Pine expressed that she feels conflicted because the Affordable Housing Trust may be interested in using some of the unallocated reserved funds for a project. However, she believes that the fields are important and that the project should move forward. Mr. Pisani would like to review the plan and is concerned about the potential limitations on available funds. Mr. Haddad explained that while it is not a tax increase, it does restrict the funds available for other projects.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

On-Going Issues

- A. PFAS Issue—None
- B. UMass Satellite Emergency Facility – None
- C. Fire Department Staffing –None
- D. West Groton Dam—None

SELECT BOARD LIASON REPORTS

Approval of the Regularly Scheduled Meeting of November 24, 2025

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of November 24, 2025. Mr. Cunningham seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

The Select Board adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

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



TOWN OF GROTON

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Select Board

Matthew F. Pisani, *Chair*
Rebecca H. Pine, *Vice Chair*
Alison S. Manugian, *Clerk*
John F. Reilly, *Member*
Peter S. Cunningham, *Member*

Town Manager
Mark W. Haddad

To: *Community Preservation Committee*

From: *Mark W. Haddad – Town Manager*
Katie L. Kazanjian – Treasurer/Tax Collector

Subject: *Funding Proposal for Cow Pond Brook Fields Project*

Date: *December 5, 2025*

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an overview of the proposed funding plan for the Cow Pond Brook Playing Fields improvement project, which we look forward to discussing in more detail at your meeting on Monday, December 8, 2025.

Town Treasurer Katie Kazanjian and I recently met with CPC Treasurer Bruce Easom to review funding options and a timeline that would allow the project to move forward in Fiscal Year 2027 should the Community Preservation Committee agree to bring the project to the 2026 Town Meeting for consideration and approval.

As part of this discussion, we noted that the remaining debt associated with the Middle School Track project, currently estimated at approximately \$650,000, would need to be paid off in FY 2027. This would create an opportunity to reallocate CPC debt capacity toward the proposed Cow Pond Brook project.

The total estimated cost of the Cow Pond Brook Playing Fields improvements is \$4.1 million. This cost will be offset by a Federal/State Grant award of \$1 million. It is important to note that the Federal Grant is a reimbursable grant, meaning that the Town must appropriate and expend the full project cost up front and then submit invoices to the State for reimbursement.

To accomplish this, Ms. Kazanjian and I propose that an Article be submitted to the 2026 Spring Town Meeting seeking authorization to borrow the full \$4.1 million project cost. Under this schedule, construction would begin in July, 2026 and is expected to be completed by December 2027 to comply with federal grant requirements.

The proposed financing structure is as follows:

- The Town would borrow the full \$4.1 million.
- In FY 2027 (July 2026 – June 2027), the Town would issue a Bond Anticipation Note (BAN) in the amount of \$4.1 million.
- In FY 2028 (July 2027 – June 2028), the Town would make the first-year interest payment on the BAN, estimated at approximately \$143,500.
- Upon receipt of the full \$1 million Federal Grant reimbursement, estimated to be received by December 2027, we would proceed with permanent financing in the reduced amount of \$3.1 million in February, 2028.
- We anticipate structuring the permanent debt over 15 years, with an estimated annual debt service payment of \$318,375 beginning in Fiscal Year 2029 (July 2028 – June 2029) and declining over the 15 years to \$212,688 in Fiscal Year 2044 (July 2043 – June 2044).
- Depending on the timing of grant reimbursement, there is a possibility that a second year of BAN interest may be required in FY 2029 (\$149,650), with permanent financing beginning in FY 2030 (July 2029 – June 2030).

We believe this approach provides a clear, responsible, and achievable path to funding the Cow Pond Brook project while making effective use of anticipated grant funds and existing CPC debt capacity.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to discussing this proposal with you on December 8th.

MWH/KLK/rjb