

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 2026
APPROVED**

Select Board Members Present: Peter Cunningham, Chair; Nick Degaitas Jr., Clerk; John Reilly; Matt Pisani;

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

Also Present: Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; Patrica DuFresne, Assistant Director of Finance/Town Accountant; Bud Robertson, Finance Committee Chair; Deputy Police Chief Rachael Mead.

Mr. Cunningham called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and reviewed the agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Cunningham announced that the first Town Takeover for the Town of Groton was held at Polar Park in Worcester, MA, and called it a great event. Mr. Haddad added that over 150 tickets were sold to Groton residents.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD - Zoom

None

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Deputy Chief Mead-Flock Camera Working Group Update.

Deputy Chief Rachael Mead attended the meeting to provide an update on the Flock Camera Working Group. She said that a Working Group meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 18th. During this meeting, they will finalize their mission statement, review the Police Department's policy on the cameras, and review their transparency portal on the town's website that was launched. They will also review ongoing cases in which the Flock cameras are being utilized as evidence. Deputy Chief Mead outlined the top five types of cases being addressed: breaking and entering, hit-and-run car accidents, embezzlement, assault and battery, and failure-to-stop incidents. Deputy Chief Mead announced that a public forum will be held during the week of September 21st. Mr. Haddad clarified that the information collected from the cameras is not shared and that safeguards are in place to protect it. He expressed his hope that the Town Meeting will provide the Working Group an opportunity to further explore the use of Flock cameras before any decisions are made. Deputy Chief Mead will also provide another update at the Select Board meeting on August 31st.

2. Fiscal Year 2028 Budget Update.

Mr. Haddad did not have an update this evening.

3. Ratify the Town Manager's Appointment of Anna Eliot to the Historical Commission.

Mr. Pisani made a motion to ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Anna Eliot to the Historical Commission, with a term to expire June 30, 2027. Mr. Degaitas seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Degaitas-aye; Reilly-aye; Cunningham-aye; Pisani-aye.

4. Update on Select Board Schedule through Labor Day.

Monday, August 24, 2026-	No Meeting
Monday, August 31, 2026-	Public Hearing on the Fall Town Meeting Warrant
Monday, September 7, 2026-	No Meeting (Labor Day)
Monday, September 14, 2026-	Issue the Warrant for the Fall Town Meeting

ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL

1. Review First Draft of the 2026 Fall Town Meeting Warrant.

Mr. Haddad presented the Board with the first draft of the 2026 Fall Town Meeting Warrant. He explained that the warrant closed on August 12, 2026, and it includes 19 articles. Mr. Haddad took a few moments to review the warrant articles prior to the public hearing, which is scheduled for August 31, 2026.

Articles 1 through 9 will be a consent agenda.

Article 1: Prior Year Bills- There is currently one unpaid bill.

Article 2: Amend the Fiscal Year 2027 Town Operating Budget- Mr. Haddad explained that there will be several requests for line-item transfers.

Article 3: Transfer Money into Capital Stabilization Fund- Mr. Haddad will have a clearer understanding of the funds needed once he knows about the available Free Cash.

Article 4: Transfer Money into the Stabilization Fund— Mr. Haddad is currently uncertain whether a transfer to the Stabilization Fund will be necessary.

Article 5: Transfer Money into the GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund- There will be funds set aside based on the anticipated capital budget.

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

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

Article 8: Transfer Within the Stormwater Enterprise Fund- This is a placeholder.

Article 9: Appropriations to Fund Town Forest Expenses- This is a repeat Article from the Spring Town Meeting for the Town Forest Committee.

Article 10: Termination of Automated License Plate Reader Camera Program- This is a Citizens' Petition.

Article 11: Install Irrigation System/Course improvements- Groton Country Club-Mr. Haddad explained that the bids are out and the bid opening is scheduled for September 9, 2026.

Article 12: Cow Pond Brook Fields Improvements- This is a rebid with modifications. The original article presented at the Spring Town Meeting requested \$4.8 million. The revised bid is now \$4.2 million, reflecting adjustments to the initial proposal. The bid opening is scheduled for September 10, 2026.

Mr. Cunningham suggested moving Article 12: Cow Pond Brook Fields Improvements before Article 10: Termination of the Automated License Plate Reader Camera Program. Mr. Haddad stated he would reorder the articles.

Article 13: Transfer of Land from the DPW to the Electric Light Department- This article proposes authorizing the transfer of a portion of the DPW property at 600 Cow Pond Brook Road. This is a placeholder.

Article 14: Establish Means-Tested Senior Citizen Property Tax Exemption- Mr. Degaitas requested that this article be brought forward. Mr. Haddad said that a few Massachusetts towns have successfully submitted this article to the legislature, where it was approved. The Town of Marblehead adopted this article in 2023. Mr. Haddad stated that it is a great idea. The Assessor's Office is currently estimating the overlay's impact.

Article 15: Small Scale Clean Energy Infrastructure Facility Siting and Permitting- This article is submitted by the Planning Board.

Article 16: Small Clean Energy Facilities Consolidating Permitting- This article is submitted by the Planning Board.

Article 17: Scale Ground Mounting Solar Photovoltaic Facilities-This article is submitted by the Planning Board.

Article 18: Citizens Petition-Senior Property Tax Freeze Program- This is a property tax freeze program. If you are 70 years old or older and have occupied your principal residence for 35 years or longer, your taxes will be frozen at that amount for that year, permanently after you apply. Mr. Degaitas explained that this program is not based on income. Ms. Pine asked a few questions about the wording in Section 2.

Article 19: Citizens Petition- Study Housing Opportunities and Municipal Finance- This article is to look at potential ways to adopt different zoning regulations and review the budget.

2. Approve Letter to Community Preservation Committee in Support of the Cow Pond Brook Fields Project.

Mr. Haddad provided the Board with a letter he drafted for the Community Preservation Committee, expressing support for the Cow Pond Brook Fields Project. He noted that the Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Stormwater Committee, and the Board of Health also submitted letters of support. Mr. Haddad respectfully requested that the Select Board approve the letter supporting the project and authorize the Select Board Chair to sign it.

Mr. Reilly moved to approve the letter of support to the Community Preservation Committee and authorize the Chair to sign it. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pisani-aye; Pine-aye; Degaitas-aye; Reilly-aye; Cunningham-aye.

OTHER BUSINESS

Authorize the Town Manager and One Member of the Select Board to Sign Warrants for the Next Thirty Days.

Ms. Pine 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. Degaitas seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pisani-aye; Pine-aye; Degaitas-aye; Reilly-aye; Cunningham-aye.

On-Going Issues

- A. PFAS Issue – A public hearing on the PFAS Watermain Project was well attended on August 6th at the Town Hall. Mr. Haddad stated that the meeting was productive and that attendees asked many

questions. He thanked the residents who attended and explained that a replay of the meeting is available on the Groton Channel. The new Water Superintendent, Dan Stoneking, and Apex Engineer Tyler Schmidt were present and did an excellent job.

- B. UMass Satellite Emergency Facility - None
- C. Fire Department Staffing – A draft report from the study will be completed soon by the consultant and sent to Mr. Haddad and Chief Cheeks. Mr. Haddad said he will arrange a meeting for the Fire Department Working Group to review the report. After the review, Chief Cheeks and the consultant will attend a Select Board meeting to present their findings.
- B. Main Street Study – MDM Transportation Consultants has completed its preliminary designs for improvements to the Main Street Corridor. A meeting will be held on Thursday, August 20th, with the Working Group and MDM Transportation Consultants to review the study. Mr. Haddad will share the designs with the Select Board and the Complete Streets Committee for review. The Complete Streets Committee will then hold a public hearing.
- C. Flock Cameras- Deputy Chief provided a report earlier in the meeting.

SELECT BOARD LIASON REPORTS

None

Approval of the Special Scheduled Meeting of July 16, 2026 and regularly Scheduled Meeting of July 27, 2027.

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the minutes from the special meeting on July 16, 2026, and the regularly scheduled meeting on July 27, 2026. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pisani-aye; Pine-aye; Degaitas-aye; Reilly-aye; Cunningham-aye.

Mr. Haddad explained the process for filing a complaint under the Open Meeting Law. The Select Board held a special meeting on July 9, 2026, to address an Open Meeting Law complaint submitted by Patrick Higgins. The complaint concerned the Board's meetings on June 15 and June 29, 2026. Mr. Higgins alleged that the Board violated the Open Meeting Law because the agendas for those meetings did not include the names of individuals being considered for appointments to various positions and committees. In response, the Select Board submitted a response to both the complainant and the Attorney General's Office. After the Board's response was filed, the complainant had ninety days to appeal the Board's action regarding the potential violation. Mr. Higgins is requesting that the Attorney General's Office conduct a further investigation into this matter. Mr. Haddad explained that Town Counsel advised that there are two possible remedies: either vacate the appointment made during the meetings or require the Select Board and Town Manager to attend training on the Open Meeting Law. The Attorney General could also take no further action. Mr. Haddad will keep the Board updated.

The Select Board adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

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