

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, AUGUST 31, 2026
APPROVED

Select Board Members Present: Becky Pine, Vice Chair; Nick Degaitas Jr., Clerk; John Reilly; Matt Pisani;

Select Board Members Absent: Peter Cunningham, Chair;

Finance Committee Members Present: Bud Robertson, Finance Committee Chair; Gary Green; Scott Whitefield; Nancy Muller; David Manugian;

Finance Committee Members Absent: Kristina Legyel; Jamie McDonald;

Also Present: Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; Patricia DuFresne, Assistant Director of Finance/Town Accountant; Deputy Police Chief Rachael Mead; Takashi Tada, Town Planner/ Land Use Director; Shawn Campbell; Groton Country Club General Manager; Andres Correa, Energy Manager; Charlotte Weigel, Sustainability Commission; Tammi Mickel, Principal Assessor; Katie Kazanjian, Treasurer/Tax Collector; Mark Presti and Mary Jennings of the Park Commission; Megan Buczynski, Activitas Consultant; Russ Harris; Jennifer Moore; Leslie Row; Sam Palmer and John Bellessa.

Vice Chair Pine called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and reviewed the agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Haddad made an announcement regarding the Town's use of Flock Safety. He informed the Board and the community that they are aware of the Town's use of Flock Safety and the automated license plate reader cameras utilized by the Groton Police Department. After several weeks of reviewing the cameras and discussing their use with Chief Luth and Deputy Chief Mead, they decided to terminate the contract with Flock Safety, effective immediately. The Town Manager and Police Chief issued a Press Release earlier today, and Mr. Haddad read a statement into the record concerning this decision. (Please see the Press Release included with these minutes.)

Ms. Pine reminded everyone that the Massachusetts State Primary is on Tuesday, September 1st, and urged residents to vote.

Mr. Haddad announced an Employee Appreciation Cookout, weather permitting, hosted by the Town Manager's Office, Human Resources, and Information Technology Departments, from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 3rd, at Town Hall.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD - Zoom

None

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Update from Deputy Chief Mead on the Police Camera Working Group.

Deputy Police Chief Mead provided an update on the Police Camera Working Group, which met on August 18th to establish its mission statement. The group's goal is to make informed recommendations, address community concerns, and support technology decisions that enhance public safety and accountability in the Groton Police Department.

A Public Forum is scheduled for Thursday, September 24th at 6:00 p.m. at the Groton Center. While Deputy Mead was disappointed that the contract was canceled, she was relieved and felt it would allow for more thorough discussions about camera technology. Ms. Pine thanked Deputy Mead and Mr. Haddad for their efforts in finding the best solution for the Town, and Deputy Mead noted that the Flock cameras were placed in response to traffic complaints. (The Report from the Working Group is attached to these minutes)

2. Regional Energy Manager- First Year Update.

Andres Correa, the Energy Manager, and Charlotte Weigel, the Chair of Sustainability, attended the meeting to provide a summary of Mr. Correa's work over the past year as the Municipal Energy Manager (MEM) for the towns of Groton, Harvard, Ayer, and Shirley. The presentation reviewed various projects and outlined the total Green Communities Grant funding awarded to each community, totaling \$734,851. Mr. Correa discussed challenges he encountered and lessons he learned this year as MEM. He explained that the Town of Groton's next steps include completing the municipal decarbonization roadmap and continuing to submit Green Community reporting in January 2027. He also outlined the upcoming Green Community grant application projects for the Spring of 2027.

Mr. Correa asked the Select Board to help publicize the MEM work, encourage ongoing collaboration with the Groton Dunstable Regional School District (GDRSD), and address any potential bottlenecks. He also asked the Board to advise on making the case for funding beyond the Grant, which would end mid-2028. Mr. Haddad explained that during the meeting with the Managers discussing Mr. Correa's work, they believed the position was valuable and would like to see it continue. They are willing to keep the position funded and enter into an Inter-Municipal Agreement (IMA) with the other towns after 2028. Mr. Haddad and the Board emphasized that Mr. Correa has done a great job in his first year and thanked him for his efforts.

3. Presentation from the Town Manager on Creating a Regional Veterans' Service Officer with Pepperell and Littleton.

Mr. Haddad provided a recommendation that the Town regionalize the Veterans Services Officer (VSO) position with the Towns of Littleton and Pepperell. He explained that this proposed regional model aims to provide Groton's veterans with a higher, more consistent level of service while addressing the Town's long-term staffing commitments in a fiscally responsible manner. Mr. Haddad noted that he had previously suggested increasing the hours for the Town's VSO position, acknowledging the workload and level of service required. He then explained that the Select Board did not support that request. As a result, Mr. Haddad explored other approaches to improve veterans' services without placing the financial burden of a full-time position on Groton alone. Regionalization provided such an opportunity.

Mr. Haddad explained that under Massachusetts law, if a community has a population greater than 12,000 and appoints a new Veterans Services Officer (VSO), the position must be full-time unless veteran services are provided through an approved regional agreement. With Groton's population nearing 12,000, he emphasized presenting this proposal now rather than waiting for a future

vacancy or for the population to exceed the threshold, which would require the town to hire a full-time VSO. The proposed regional agreement with Pepperell and Littleton would establish full-time regional VSO operations with the necessary administrative support and allow the participating communities to share the costs. Mr. Haddad provided a chart showing the anticipated FY 2027 cost of \$33,571.25 for the Town of Groton. He believes this makes good fiscal and operational sense, and Meg Murphy, Groton's interim VSO, is off to a great start. Ms. Murphy also serves as the VSO for the towns of Pepperell and Littleton, positioning her to become the permanent VSO for the Town of Groton. The Board discussed the proposal, and Mr. Haddad explained that it would be discussed further with the Finance Committee during the public hearing on the warrant.

4. Fiscal Year 2028 Budget Update.

The Town Manager/Town Administrator Working Group meeting was productive. Mr. Haddad said the Group shared experiences from successful override campaigns in Grafton, Melrose, and Marblehead and took a closer look at long-term financial projections. He explained that current projections indicate an override will likely be necessary for FY 2028, but he still believes it is too early to discuss a definitive number. He said the Group aims to bring forward a more concrete proposal later this fall. Mr. Haddad and Dunstable Town Administrator Jason Silva prepared a three-year projection based on school impacts and projected town costs. Mr. Degaitas added that the Group is collaborating well. Mr. Robertson added that FY 2028 will be challenging.

5. Update on Select Board Schedule through Labor Day.

Monday, September 7, 2026-	No Meeting (Labor Day)
Monday, September 14, 2026-	Issue the Warrant for the Fall Town Meeting
Monday, September 21, 2026-	No Meeting
Monday, September 28, 2026-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Saturday, October 3, 2026-	2026 Fall Town Meeting
Monday, October 5, 2026-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, October 12, 2026-	No Meeting (Indigenous Peoples' Day Holiday)
Monday, October 19, 2026-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, October 26, 2026-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, November 2, 2026-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, November 9, 2026-	No Meeting
Monday, November 16, 2026-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, November 23, 2026-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, November 30, 2026-	No Meeting
Monday, December 7, 2026-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 14, 2026-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 21, 2026-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, December 28, 2026-	No Meeting (Christmas Holiday)
Monday, January 4, 2027-	No Meeting (New Year's Holiday)
Monday, January 22, 2027-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting

ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL

Jennifer Moore, representing the Groton Business Association, attended the meeting to review plans for the Annual GrotonFest Fall festival and to discuss two special one-day licenses for wine and malt beverages. Ms. Moore provided the Board with a map showing vendor setup locations and the designated beer garden area. She explained that all beer and wine will be restricted to a specific area and that the Police Department has approved the locations where alcohol will be served. The Board was satisfied with Ms. Moore's explanation and plans, found her input very helpful, and thanked her for her efforts.

- 1. Consider Approving a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for Broken Creek Vineyard at Legion Common for GrotonFest on Saturday, September 26, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**
- 2. Consider Approving a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for Mass Brewing LLC d/b/a Sterling Street Brewery at Legion Common for GrotonFest on Saturday, September 26, 2026.**

Mr. Pisani moved to approve a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for both Broken Creek Vineyard and Mass Brewing LLC, d/b/a Sterling Street Brewery, for GrotonFest at Legion Common on Saturday, September 26, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mr. Degaitas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- 3. Consider Approving a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for the Friends of Prescott for Open Mic Night on Friday, September 11, 2026, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.**

Mr. Reilly moved to approve a One-Day Wine and Malt Beverages License for the Friends of Prescott for Open Mic Night on Friday, September 11, 2026, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Mr. Degaitas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

On-Going Issues

- A. PFAS Issue – A kickoff meeting was held with the contractor, DeFelice, to initiate the next phase of the PFAS waterline project, now underway. The team is working on Reedy Meadow Road, and individual connections to the homes will begin soon. During the kickoff meeting, the team discussed a process in which the contractor, the engineer, and the water superintendent will meet with each homeowner before making the connections. This meeting will provide an opportunity to discuss the connections, and homeowners will sign off on the process. A total of 78 individual connections are planned. A formal proposal to address properties that test higher than 4 parts per trillion after the project is closed will be presented at the September 14th Select Board meeting.
- B. UMass Satellite Emergency Facility – None.
- C. Fire Department Staffing – None.
- D. West Groton Dam Removal- None.
- E. Main Street Study – Mr. Haddad apologized to the Board for the release of the Main Street Study Report before the Select Board had the opportunity to review it. The Working Group met to review the report, and the Complete Streets Committee met the following day.

Unfortunately, the report was made public, and an article appeared in the Groton Herald about it before the Select Board could review it. The Working Group has reviewed the plans, and Mr. Haddad is currently waiting to receive the final designs from MDM Transportation Consultants. MDM has completed its preliminary designs for improvements to the Main Street Corridor. Mr. Haddad explained that they are focusing on the four major intersections along Route 119. One proposal includes installing a traffic light at Broadmeadow and Lowell Road. The Complete Streets Committee will hold a public hearing and lead the public engagement for the community.

F. Flock Cameras- None.

SELECT BOARD LIAISON REPORTS

None

Approval of the Regularly Scheduled Meeting of August 17, 2027.

Mr. Pisani made a motion to approve the minutes from the regularly scheduled meeting on August 17, 2026. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

7:00 P.M. In Joint Session with the Finance Committee- Public Hearing on the Various Warrant Articles Contained in the Warrant for the 2026 Fall Town Meeting.

Mr. Haddad read the public hearing notice into the record and asked the Board to open the public hearing.

Mr. Reilly made a motion to open the public hearing for the October 3, 2026, Fall Town Meeting Warrant. Mr. Degaitas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Robertson called the Finance Committee to order.

Mr. Haddad explained that the warrant includes nineteen (19) articles and wanted to review them. He began by reviewing a summary of the proposed Fall Town Meeting expenditures based on the Warrant Articles, along with a summary of available funds:

FY 2027 Levy Capacity:	\$37,714
Anticipated Free Cash:	\$2,000,000
Stabilization Fund:	\$2,873,587
Capital Stabilization Fund:	\$144,028
GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund:	\$26,593
Winter Recovery Assistance Program (WRAP) Funds:	\$275,893

The Town of Groton received \$275,893 from the Commonwealth through the Winter Recovery Assistance Program (WRAP) to help cover extraordinary snow and ice costs incurred during Fiscal Year 2026. Mr. Haddad explained that the Town's FY 2026 Snow and Ice Deficit was funded by \$180,000 from the Capital Stabilization Fund and \$165,000 in free Cash. With guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services, the Town will use \$180,000 of the WRAP reimbursement to restore the amount previously withdrawn from the Capital Stabilization Fund.

Article 1: Prior Year Bills- Service Tire Truck Centers- Requested Amount: \$430

Article 2: Amend the Fiscal Year 2027 Town Operating Budget.

Mr. Haddad reviewed the proposed amendments to the Operating Budget with the Board (see the attached memorandum).

He then explained the total amounts requested by category:

Free Cash:	\$100,500
Tax Levy:	<u>\$ 33,571</u>
Total:	\$ 134,071

Article 3: Transfer Money into Capital Stabilization Fund- Requested Amount- \$691,000

The current balance is \$144,028. The town's financial policies require maintaining a fund balance equal to 1.5% of the total Operating Budget. If Article 2 passes as presented, the total Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budget will be \$55,994,017, resulting in a target Capital Stabilization Fund balance of \$839,910. This would require an appropriation of \$695,882. Mr. Haddad explained that funding the anticipated FY 2028 Capital Budget would require an additional \$175,118, bringing the total recommended appropriation to \$871,000. As previously explained, \$180,000 of this appropriation would be funded from the town's WRAP proceeds, restoring the amount previously withdrawn from the Capital Stabilization Fund to address the FY 2026 snow and ice deficit. The remaining \$691,000 would come from Free Cash.

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

With a current balance of \$2,873,587, we do not need to add money to the Stabilization Fund at this time.

Article 5: Transfer Money into the GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund- Requested Amount: \$377,514

The anticipated capital budget for the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District in Fiscal Year 2028 is \$500,000. The current balance is \$26,593, leaving a funding requirement of \$473,407. To address this need, Mr. Haddad recommends allocating \$95,893 from the Town's FY 2027 WRAP funds, as previously explained, and funding the remaining \$377,514 from Free Cash.

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- Requested Amount- \$30,000.

Leslie Row from the Town Forest Committee attended the meeting to discuss funding for the removal of a dead stand of Red Pines that poses a safety hazard in the Forest. The total cost of the removal is \$30,000, of which \$12,238 will be covered by a reimbursement from the Division of Conservation and Recreation.

Articles 1 through 9 will be part of a consent agenda.

Article 10: Cow Pond Brook Fields Improvements- Requested Amount-\$4,200,000

Consultant Megan Buczynski, along with Park Commissioners Mark Presti and Mary Jennings, attended the meeting. Ms. Buczynski outlined the objective of using the \$1 million grant. She discussed modifications to reduce the project's overall cost, which she will present at the Spring Town Meeting. The focus was on materials, utilities, and stormwater management. Mr. Haddad emphasized that these changes will keep the project eligible for the grant and ensure funding is accessible. The revised proposal reduces the overall project cost by an estimated \$600,000 to \$800,000 from the original estimated budget of approximately \$4.8 million while retaining the project's primary objectives. Mr. Haddad clarified that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts currently holds the grant funds and that the federal government cannot reclaim them. If Town Meeting approves this article, the project will remain eligible for the grant.

Article 11: Citizens' Petition- Termination of Automated License Plate Reader Camera Program- Proponent John Bellessa was in attendance.

Mr. Haddad explained that the Flock Contract was canceled and that, moving forward, any new camera will need to be appropriated at a future Town Meeting. He stated that all requests outlined in the Citizens Petition have been addressed. Mr. Bellessa thanked Mr. Haddad and Chief Luth for canceling the contract and said they look forward to the Working Group's findings. Mr. Haddad noted that if 10 of the 25 individuals who signed the original petition wish to withdraw it before the warrant is posted, they should submit a letter with the necessary signatures requesting removal of the article. He also assured Mr. Bellessa that no future action could take place without returning to a Town Meeting.

Article 12: Install Irrigation System/Course Improvements- Groton Country Club-Requested Amount- \$1,700,000.

Groton Country Club General Manager Shawn Campbell attended to review the article. The article requests funding to construct a new irrigation system and complete targeted course improvements at the Groton Country Club. Mr. Campbell explained that the preliminary planning estimate for the project is approximately \$1.7 million. He noted that the current irrigation system is entirely manual and that the new equipment would improve the greens. He also explained that the current irrigation water comes from the pond, as there is no well. Mr. Haddad explained that the funding does not impact the operating budget because funding for the debt service would come from the Capital Budget. In addition, he noted that the country club generated over \$1 million in revenue this past year. He stated that it is treated as an enterprise fund; however, he clarified that

it is not actually considered one. Mr. Campbell's capital budget is based on income from expenses, and he incorporated this into this year's budget. The capital budget is funded through free cash, which he has contributed to since the country club returns money each year. This project will be funded by a BAN (Bond Anticipation Note) with a mandatory principal paydown after year two. If the capital budget has extra funds each year, additional payments toward debt service will be made to pay it off more quickly. Mr. Haddad believes this will be a good thing for the Country Club. Mr. Reilly stated that the Country Club attracts the entire town, emphasizing that it is not just about the golf course: it's about the pool, camps, and the pickleball court, too.

Article 13: Transfer of Land from the DPW to the Electric Light Department - This article authorizes the transfer of a portion of the DPW property at 600 Cow Pond Brook Road to the Groton Electric Light Department for the construction, installation, and use of a battery energy storage system. A meeting will be held with Town Counsel and the Attorney for Groton Electric Light Department on September 1st to discuss whether there is a benefit to the DPW Building located at 600 Cow Pond Brook Road. This is a placeholder that Town Counsel requested be included on the Warrant.

Article 14: Establish Means-Tested Senior Citizen Property Tax Exemption.

Mr. Degaitas introduced this article and explained that it proposes an income-based exemption for seniors who have claimed the Massachusetts tax circuit breaker credit, which can be up to \$2,800. Approximately fifty seniors in Groton meet this requirement. To qualify, they must also have filed their state income taxes. This exemption would provide additional relief from the Board of Assessors if seniors apply annually and meet the other necessary requirements. The town could match up to 200% of the circuit breaker credit. Funding for this initiative would come from the overlay. Mr. Degaitas also clarified that this program is not solely based on income. This language has already passed the legislature and been adopted in the towns of Marblehead and Grafton. Mr. Whitefield asked whether the program could be adjusted annually, and Principal Assessor Tammi Mickel confirmed that it could.

Takashi Tada, Town Planner/Lans Use Director, was in attendance for the discussion of Articles 15 through 17, submitted by the Planning Board.

Article 15: Small Scale Clean Energy Infrastructure Facility Siting and Permitting-

This article proposes a new general bylaw to adopt state-mandated requirements, which will take effect statewide on October 1, 2026. Mr. Tada further explained that all towns will be required to implement small-scale clean energy infrastructure facilities.

Article 16: Small Clean Energy Facilities Consolidating Permitting-

Mr. Tada explained that this article amends the current zoning bylaw to clarify the definition of a small clean energy infrastructure facility. He provided examples such as a solar panel array or a battery energy storage system.

Article 17: Scale Ground Mounting Solar Photovoltaic Facilities-

Mr. Tada explained that this article would introduce a new category to the town's zoning regulations, which does not currently exist: battery energy storage systems.

Article 18: Citizens Petition-Senior Property Tax Freeze Program- Proponent Sam Palmer submitted a citizens' petition stating that if you are 70 years old or older and have owned and occupied the property as your principal residence for 35 years or longer, your taxes would be frozen at that amount permanently after you apply. Tammi Mickel, the Principal Assessor, conducted a study based on the current census and indicated that approximately 433 residents could potentially qualify for this program if it is approved. If this article passes, the Select Board would need to establish specific criteria. Mr. Haddad explained that the Legislature has not considered this proposal in any town. Ms. Pine expressed uncertainty about whether the two proposed articles regarding Senior Citizen taxes should be presented together, as it could backfire.

Article 19: Citizens Petition- Study Housing Opportunities and Municipal Finance-

Proponent Russ Harris was in attendance to discuss this article. The article examines potential ways to adopt different zoning regulations and reviews the budget. Mr. Harris believes property tax is the primary source of revenue in Groton. One way to improve it is to increase the number of taxpayers and add more housing in Groton to help improve the budget situation.

Mr. Pisani made a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The Select Board adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

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



TOWN OF GROTON

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Select Board

Peter S. Cunningham, *Chair*
Rebecca H. Pine, *Vice Chair*
Nicholas J. Degaitas, Jr., *Clerk*
John F. Reilly, *Member*
Matthew F. Pisani, *Member*

Town Manager
Mark W. Haddad

August 31, 2026

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TOWN OF GROTON TO TERMINATE FLOCK SAFETY CAMERA CONTRACT, COMMIT TO DEVELOPING PERMANENT SOLUTION FOR SPRING 2027 TOWN MEETING

GROTON, MA - Town Manager Mark Haddad and Police Chief Michael Luth announced today that the Town will terminate its current contract with Flock Safety, the vendor supplying the Police Department's automated license plate reader (ALPR) camera system, effective immediately. The decision follows several weeks of internal review and reflects the Town's commitment to getting this issue right rather than rushing it.

"These cameras have been a genuinely valuable tool for our officers, and they have helped us solve real cases and keep our residents safer," said Chief Luth. "But we've also listened carefully to the concerns raised by our community, and we recognize that trust and transparency have to come first. Stepping back now gives us the room to build something better, together."

The Town's Police Camera Working Group, which has spent recent months studying the technology, its benefits, and the legitimate privacy and oversight concerns raised by residents, will continue its work uninterrupted. The Working Group's goal is to bring a final, permanent recommendation to voters at the Spring 2027 Town Meeting. The recommendation will be fully vetted, reflect community input, and address the questions raised over the past several months.

"This isn't a step away from public safety, and it isn't a step away from supporting our Police Department," said Town Manager Mark Haddad. "It's a decision to slow down, do this right, and come back to Town Meeting with a solution that the community can have real confidence in. I remain a strong supporter of our Police Department and the work they do every day, and this decision is about giving that work the best possible foundation going forward."

The Town's decision comes amid a broader statewide trend. In recent months, numerous Massachusetts communities, including Easton, Littleton, Cambridge, Watertown, Framingham, Natick, Brookline, Salem, Hopkinton, Wellesley, Bellingham, Douglas, Grafton, and East Bridgewater, have terminated, declined to renew, or otherwise ended their Flock Safety contracts, citing concerns ranging from data privacy and out-of-state data sharing to questions about proper oversight of the technology. Groton joins this growing list of communities choosing to pause, reassess, and pursue a more deliberate, community-informed path forward.

Officials emphasized that terminating the current contract now, ahead of the Fall Town Meeting, allows the Working Group to proceed without the pressure or distraction of a contested Town Meeting vote. The Working Group will continue to meet in the coming months, and will provide opportunities for public input as it develops its recommendation ahead of the 2027 Spring Town Meeting. Updates will be shared on the Town's website and through the Police Department's social media channels.

For more information, please contact the Town Manager's Office.

Mark W. Haddad
Town Manager

Michael Luth
Chief of Police

Police Camera Working Group

August 18, 2026

6 PM

First Floor Meeting Room, Groton Town Hall

1. Finalize the mission statement
2. Review of the department policy on the cameras
3. Review transparency portal
4. Review of Flock cases
5. Report back regarding meeting I had with Axon on June 16
6. Compare Flock vs. Axon
7. Schedule the Forum – Week of September 21st
 - Demo of Flock
 - Discuss Flock vs Axon
 - Make sure slides answer the citizen questions we have received so far

Mission Police Camera Working Group

Option 1: Professional and Balanced

The mission of the Police Camera Working Group is to evaluate and provide informed recommendations regarding public safety camera technologies, ensuring transparency, accuracy, and community engagement. Through collaborative discussion and diverse perspectives, the group seeks to address community questions, promote understanding, and support responsible technology investments that enhance public safety and crime prevention in Groton.

Option 2: Community-Focused

The Police Camera Working Group is committed to fostering open dialogue, transparency, and public trust as Groton explores and implements camera technologies. By bringing together individuals with diverse backgrounds and viewpoints, the group will examine the benefits, challenges, and community concerns associated with these technologies and provide thoughtful guidance that serves the best interests of the town.

Option 3: Concise

To provide objective, community-informed guidance on police camera technologies by evaluating their effectiveness, addressing public concerns, and supporting transparent decision-making that enhances public safety in Groton.

Option 4: Emphasizing Public Trust

The mission of the Police Camera Working Group is to promote informed, transparent, and community-centered discussions about police camera technologies. By examining facts, addressing questions and concerns, and considering diverse viewpoints, the group will help ensure that technology investments support public safety while maintaining community trust and accountability.

Option 5: Future-Oriented

The Police Camera Working Group exists to evaluate current and emerging camera technologies, including fixed cameras, license plate readers, and body-worn cameras, through a collaborative and transparent process. The group's goal is to provide informed recommendations, address community concerns, and support technology decisions that improve public safety, accountability, and public confidence in the Groton Police Department.



GROTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

POLICY & PROCEDURE #: 1.47		DEPARTMENT MANUAL; P&P Operations	
		DATE OF ISSUE: 2/2/2026	EFFECTIVE DATE: 2/2/2026
SUBJECT: Flock Safety Cameras (ALPR)		ISSUING AUTHORITY: Chief Michael F. Luth	
REFERENCE(S): Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission # 41.3.9		☒ NEW ☐ AMENDS ☐ RESCINDS	

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the capture, storage and use of digital data obtained through the use of automated license plate reader (ALPR) technology.

II. POLICY

The ALPR technology, also known as License Plate Recognition (LPR), allow for the automated detection of license plates along with the vehicle make, model, color and unique identifiers through the Groton Police Department's ALPR system and the vendor's (Flock Safety) vehicle identification technology. The technology is used by the Groton Police Department to convert data associated with vehicle license plates and vehicle descriptions for official law enforcement purposes, including identifying stolen or wanted vehicles, stolen license plates and missing persons. It may also be used to gather information related to active warrants, electronic surveillance, suspect interdiction and stolen property recovery.

III. DEFINITIONS

Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR): A device that uses cameras and computer technology to compare digital images to lists of known information of interest.

ALPR Operator: Trained department members may utilize ALPR system/equipment as deemed by the ALPR administrator. ALPR operators may be assigned to any position within the

department and the ALPR Administrator may order the deployment of the ALPR systems for use in various efforts.

ALPR Administrator: The Deputy Chief serves as the ALPR administrator for the department.

Hot List: A list of license plates associated with vehicles of interest compiled from one or more databases including, but not limited to, NCIC, CJIS, MA RMV, Local BOLO's, etc.

Vehicles of Interest: Including, but not limited to, vehicles which are reported as stolen, display stolen license plates, linked to missing/wanted persons and vehicles flagged by the RMV or other law enforcement agencies.

Detection: Data obtained by an ALPR of an image within a public view that was read by the device, including potential images (such as the plate and description of vehicle on which it was displayed) and information regarding the location of the ALPR system at the time of the ALPR's read.

Hit: Alert from the ALPR system that scanned a license plate number may be in the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), or other law enforcement database for a specific reason including, but not limited to, relation to a stolen license plate/vehicle, wanted person, missing person, or terrorist related activity.

IV. PROCEDURES [41.3.9(3A)(3B)]

Use of an ALPR is restricted to the purposes outlined below. Department members shall not use or allow others to use the equipment or database records for any unauthorized purpose.

1. Training – No member of this department shall operate ALPR equipment or access ALPR data without first completing department approved training.
2. Login/Logout Procedure – To ensure proper operation and to facilitate oversight of the ALPR system, all users will be required to have individual credentials for access and use of the system and/or data, which has the ability to be fully audited.
3. Permitted/Impermissible Uses – The ALPR system and all data collected is property of the Groton Police Department. Department personnel may only access and use the ALPR system for official and legitimate law enforcement purposes consistent with this policy. The following uses of the ALPR system are specifically prohibited:
 - a. Harassment or Intimidation - It is a violation of this policy to use the ALPR system to harass and/or intimidate any individual group.
 - b. Use based on a protected characteristic – it is a violation of this policy to use the ALPR system or associated files or hot lists solely based on a person's or group's race, gender, religion, political affiliation, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or other classification protected by law.
 - c. Personal use: it is a violation of this policy to use the ALPR system or associated files or hot lists for personal use or knowledge.

4. Anyone who engages in the impermissible use of the ALPR system or associated files and/or hot list may be subject to the following:
 - a. Criminal prosecution in accordance to applicable laws.
 - b. Civil liability
 - c. Administrative sanctions, up to and including termination, pursuant to and consistent with the relevant collective bargaining agreement and department policies.
5. Visual Verification of license plate number- the officer should verify an ALPR response through the CJIS/NCIC telecommunications system (absent exigent circumstances) before taking enforcement action that is based solely on an ALPR alert. This can be done via the MDT, dispatch or records. Once an alert has been received, the operator should confirm that the observed license plate from the system matches the license plate of the observed vehicle. Because the ALPR alert may be related to a vehicle and may not relate to the person operating the vehicle, officers are reminded that they need to have reasonable suspicion and/or probable cause to make an enforcement stop of any vehicle.
6. Only properly trained sworn officers and the department's IT liaison are allowed access to the ALPR system or to collect ALPR information.
7. Departmental computers, databases, cell phone applications or other electronic devices compatible with Flock Safety may be used for ALPR monitoring in accordance with this policy.
8. Any and all hot list, hot plate, BOLO's or suspect information entered into the ALPR system shall be approved by a supervisor.

A. Data Collection and Retention [41.3.9(3D)(3E)(3G)]

The Detective is responsible for ensuring systems and processes are in place for the proper collection and retention of ALPR data. Data will be transferred to the designated storage in accordance with department procedures.

All ALPR data downloaded to the server should be stored for no longer than thirty (30) days and in accordance with the established records retention schedule. Thereafter, ALPR data should be purged unless it has become, or it is reasonable to believe it will become evidence in a criminal or civil action or is the subject to a discovery request or other lawful action to produce records. In those circumstances the applicable data should be downloaded from the server onto portable media and booked into evidence, maintained on the investigators computer or kept within the investigator's case file.

B. Accountability and Safeguards [41.3.9(3F)]

All data will be closely safeguarded and protected by both procedural and technological means. The Groton Police Department will observe the following safeguards regarding access to and stored data

1. All non-law enforcement requests for access to stored ALPR data shall be processed in accordance with applicable procedures.
2. All ALPR data downloaded to the workstation shall be accessible only through a login/password protected system (Flock) capable of documenting all access of information by name, date and time.
3. Persons approved to access ALPR data under these guidelines are permitted to access the data for legitimate law enforcement purposes only, such as when the data relates to a specific criminal investigation or department related civil or administrative action.
4. ALPR data may be released to other authorized and verified law enforcement officials and agencies for legitimate law enforcement purposes.
5. Every ALPR browsing inquiry must be documented by either an associated Groton Police Department case number or a specific reason for the inquiry. (The word 'investigation' alone is not considered specific)

C. ALPR Data Detection Browsing Audits

It is the responsibility of the Deputy Chief to ensure that an audit is conducted of ALPR detection browsing inquiries at least once during each calendar year. The department will audit a sampling of the ALPR system utilization from the prior twelve (12) month period to verify proper use in accordance with the above authorized uses. The audit shall randomly select at least ten (10) detection browsing inquiries conducted by department employees during the preceding six (6) month period and determine if each inquiry meets the requirements established.

The audit shall be documented in the form of an internal department memorandum to the Chief of Police. The memorandum shall include any data errors found so that such errors can be corrected.

D. Releasing ALPR Data

The ALPR data may be shared only with other law enforcement or prosecutorial agencies for official law enforcement purposes or as otherwise permitted by law. The agency makes a written request for the ALPR data that includes:

Name of agency

Name and position of person requesting

Intended purpose for obtaining the information

The request is reviewed by a supervisor and approved prior to the request being fulfilled.

E. Training [41.3.9(3C)]

The Deputy Chief is responsible for and should ensure that members receive department approved training for those authorized to use or access the ALPR System.

Flock Questions and Answers for Select Board

1. Is this mass surveillance?
 - a. The system is designed around vehicle evidence with limited retention, we have complete local control, and there are full audit trails so every search that is done is accountable, reviewable, and tied to a legitimate investigative use.
 - b. LPR cameras read license plates and vehicle attributes, they do not read faces. People are not a searchable category.
 - c. Flock does not have access to personally identifiable information. They can't see what is on our system due to its encryption.
 - d. Vehicle based searches reduce reliance on subjective descriptions alone
 - e. The Groton Police controls access. We have opted out of external sharing, therefore, no outside police departments, both local and federal, have any access. GPD owns the data outright and for any data, the outside agency has to request the information, as they would with any town owned camera.
 - f. Audits are done regularly by the Deputy Chief of Police per policy. Only three officers have access to the system. Every search that officers do is logged and is reviewable through the audit.
 - g. Data retention is very limited per our policy
2. Will residents' data be shared with federal agencies, or sold?
 - a. The Groton Police controls access. We have opted out of external sharing, therefore, no outside police departments, both local and federal, have any access. GPD owns the data outright and for any data, the outside agency has to request the information, as they would with any town owned camera.
 - b. Data is encrypted, so only the authorized officers with accounts can view it. Flock does not have access to the data, so they can't share it or sell it.
3. How is the system used?
 - a. There are 2 types of cameras, LPRs and live cameras. LPRs are the searchable cameras, the live camera is like a traditional surveillance camera. The LPRs an officer can search by vehicle attributes or license plate. People are not captured by the LPR. The LPR is taking a picture of the front or back of the vehicle, depending on the direction of travel. The live cameras are video recordings of select intersections and officers must search this manually by date and time, not by vehicle attributes. I.E. if we know an accident occurred at an intersection, we have a date and time and can pull that up. We cannot search the live cameras any other way, and people are not searchable in any way.
 - b. All comparisons of license plates/vehicle attributes are done by an actual user, not the system. The system takes pictures, the pictures are searchable, and it is

up to the officer to confirm the accuracy of the picture per policy, and best practices in criminal investigations.

4. Who is reviewing how the system is used?
 - a. We only have three officers who have access to the system.
 - b. The system is audited regularly per policy by the Deputy Chief of Police.
 - c. Searches are tied to the individual users, have a time stamp, information searched and the case it is tied to.
 - d. Searches are done following MA CJIS regulations. Officers must have a valid criminal justice reason to conduct a search.
5. What about ICE and the Shield Law?
 - a. We do not share nationwide or federally. We share with two agencies outside of Groton, MA State Police and NESPIN – they are the regional crime intelligence clearing center. We regularly use them to help us solve cases
 - b. Immigration detainers and civil warrants do not constitute a need to share our data with those federal agencies per Massachusetts Law.
 - c. Per our policy, and MA law, there are search filters in place that automatically flag and block officers from searching vehicles that would violate the shield law.
6. Is Flock data secure?
 - a. Flock cameras have no public IP, therefore, are not addressable remotely to access footage.
 - b. All data collection points are equipped with secure communication protocols to protect data in transit from interception and tampering.
 - c. All data is encrypted using industry-standard algorithms (AWS Key Management Service or KMS) before being transmitted to our servers.
 - d. CJIS data is stored in the AWS GovCloud.
 - e. Flock is CJIS certified as well as NDAA, SOC2 (Type II), SOC3, ISO 27001, Higher Education Community Vendor Assessment Tool (HECVAT), HIPAA, and FERPA complaint. They are also aligned with security protocols established by NIST Cybersecurity as well as Cloud Security Alliance's CAIQ framework.

Differences between Flock and Axon LPRs

1. Primary Function & Equipment

- **Flock Safety:** Focuses primarily on fixed cameras mounted on poles or traffic lights. They capture vehicle details (make, model, color, license plate)
- **Axon:** Traditionally known for body-worn cameras, tasers, and in-car dashcams Axon also offers an automated license plate reading system designed to attach to similar surfaces as Flock, but it focuses on localized, department-only control.

2. Data Sharing and the "National Database"

- **Flock:** Operates a massive, searchable national database. This allows multiple law enforcement agencies across different cities or states to opt to share and search for vehicle tracking data easily, either nationally, statewide, or with specific jurisdictions.
- **Axon:** Their network is primarily built to be localized and controlled by the individual agency, however does allow an invite-only system for neighboring departments to share or audit footage. (so essentially the same thing)

3. Privacy and Data Control

- **Flock:** Because of the wide-ranging data sharing and partnerships (which have occasionally included federal agencies), Flock systems often face public scrutiny and pushback from privacy advocacy groups over mass surveillance concerns.
- **Axon:** Allows municipalities to strictly control their own data and because Axon does not offer cross-department data pooling, many cities are transitioning to Axon to appease local privacy concerns.

Here is what Flock has on their website about their cyber security.

- <https://www.flocksafety.com/blog/flock-safety-cybersecurity-how-we-protect-customer-community-data>
- <https://www.flocksafety.com/trust/data-privacy>

I don't know much about Axon cameras yet, and have a zoom with them in the coming weeks to learn about their products.

- <https://www.axon.com/products/axon-outpost>
- I couldn't find anything on their website about how they store their data, so I'll have to ask that, but I assume it's similar. I have a zoom meeting with them June 16th

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER AT FORUM - PAT

Rachael Mead

From: Pat Parker-Roach <Pat@parker-roach.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 16, 2026 11:23 AM
To: Rachael Mead
Cc: Brian Callahan; cjr@lawcjrpc.com; Mark Haddad; Michael Chiasson; Paul Garcia
Subject: Re: Police Camera Working Group Meeting

Greeting Fellow Working Group Members!

I have had some time to do a little research, read the recent Herald articles on Flock and to let things sink in a little bit. I have been participating in some Bunker Hill battle events all week in Charletown but have a little break to jot down a few thoughts.

I believe that whatever this working group recommends, the acceptance of the recommendation will be based much less on facts than on perception. The Herald article, which I believe will shape a lot of resident's perceptions on this issue, seemed long on assumptions and very short on facts relative to both the pros and cons of continued participation with Flock.

In my mind, citizens at Town Meeting will make their decision based upon the value proposition of whether the law enforcement/public safety benefits of continuing with Flock exceed their privacy concerns. In my mind, the financial balance sheet won't play much of a role.

Some thoughts/questions....

- The article in Herald referenced Chief Luth's statements regarding how the system could have been useful in previous investigations. During our meeting, Rebecca gave a real example of how the system helped make some parents feel more comfortable when they thought their daughters were being stalked. I can't remember whether the abandoned boat incident that Brian spoke to was solved or could have been solved with the help of Flock. If I remember right, we have been using Flock for at least a year. If there is any hope of convincing the public on the benefits to law enforcement/safety, we would need to present real, convincing narratives based on actual examples here in Groton. I don't think hypotheticals would carry the day.
- Regarding hypotheticals... a strong hypothetical often brought up is the Amber Alert scenario. The Herald article mentions that because Groton does not share its data with other towns, many don't share with Groton. This makes me wonder if the Flock system would be of any value in the Amber Alert situation if its use is only within our Town limits.
- The Herald article says that Mark Haddad said we are investigating the use of encryption to ensure that we are the only ones who can see our data. I personally would like a little more information on this. Does this only cover the shipping of data to/from Flock's cloud storage system? I assume that Flock already does this. My guess is that it means that the files get encrypted by us prior to

Pat Parker-Roach
Pat@Parker-Roach.com

"Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat." Sun Tzu - The Art of War

On Tue, Jun 16, 2026 at 9:35 AM Rachael Mead <rmead@grotonma.gov> wrote:

|

CITIZEN QUESTIONS # 1

Rachael Mead

From: Rachael Mead
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2026 10:49 AM
To: Pat Parker-Roach
Cc: Brian Callahan; cjr@lawcjrpc.com; Mark Haddad; Michael Chiasson; Paul Garcia
Subject: Re: Questions from Paul Fitzgerald for Flock working group

Thank you Pat. This are very good points and I will add them to our agenda!

Rachael Mead
Deputy Chief
Groton Police

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From: Pat Parker-Roach <Pat@parker-roach.com>
Sent: Wednesday, 22 July 2026 10:30:07
To: Rachael Mead <rmead@grotonma.gov>
Cc: Brian Callahan <bcallahan@grotonma.gov>; cjr@lawcjrpc.com <cjr@lawcjrpc.com>; Mark Haddad <mhaddad@grotonma.gov>; Michael Chiasson <mchiasson@grotonma.onmicrosoft.com>; Paul Garcia <paulgarcia48@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: Fw: Questions from Paul Fitzgerald for Flock working group

Thanks Rachael

Looking at these questions, from what I have read from you and the Chief, we have answers to most, if not all of these questions. Unfortunately, posting them in the Herald, especially without coming to us to ask them first, will set an impression with those that read it that our working group is not transparent, is hiding things, and is sneaking money around to avoid the voice of the Town via Town Meeting. I still believe that votes at Town Meeting will be driven mostly by emotion based not so much on facts as on unfounded assertions from all sides of the issue. No matter how we might want to respond to these questions, the impression will already have been set in readers minds.

In full transparency to you, my fellow team members, I haven't taken a position yet on the "surveillance" question which I believe is different than the Flock question. I want to collect as many "facts" as possible before I advocate for anything. I have my ear to the ground leads me to believe that the motivation for the visible pushback on the Flock question isn't about "surveillance" but is about "process". There is a vocal group that is really angry about process. Specifically how we found alternate funding for the Flock contract after the Town Vote at the last meeting. Remember when we put in the "All Are Welcome" markers on the highways and the resultant uproar. In some forums after the fact, it turns out the the uproar wasn't about the markers as much as how we the decision was made to put them in. Just something I think we should keep in mind. I think we need to frame our work around a clear, concise team charter and work to keep all the other "noise" out of the public discussion.

The implementation of a new system, such as Flock, involves change. I have a theory of change - "People don't mind change as much as they mind being changed". I ahve been watching the Destination Groton

1. What version of Flock do we have?
2. What sharing and network options are there on our version and what has been enabled? Example:

<Screenshot 2026-05-29 at 4.16.53 PM.png>

3. During Town Meeting, I seem to recall that the Chief first said that only 3 people in the GPD can access Flock but later said Southern NH police and area police also have access. In the list on the GPD website it only has Massachusetts State MA PD and NESPIN - New England State Police Info. Are there additional entities beyond the two listed?
4. Do these entities we share with have independent access to the Groton Flock system and data or do they have to go through the 3 people on the GPD to ask for access each time?
5. What is the official GPD Flock policy on sharing?
6. An article to read for members of the Flock Study Group: <https://www.zerohedge.com/technology/flock-safety-defends-cameras-after-ai-system-triggers-wrongful-police-stops-two>
7. In the Flock Transparency Portal (<https://transparency.flocksafety.com/groton-ma-pd>) It shows the number of Hotlist Hits over the last 30 days. What percentage of hits were human verified in 2026? How are they "human verified"? What percentage of human verified were correct and incorrect? How do partial plate hits affect our Flock system? Why are some hits not acted upon? What is the ratio of correct human verified hits to Unique Vehicles Detected? What is the ratio of attempted human verified but determined to be a false hits to Unique Vehicles Detected?
8. Does the number of searches shown on the Portal include searches from the State PD, NESPIN and any and all other entities? Or is it only from GPD? What is the ratio of searches from GPD to other entities?
9. How many Amber Alerts and NCMEC from Flock have been acted on by the GPD in 2026? What is the ratio of Amber + NCMEC hits to NCIC hits?
10. How many NCIC hits in 2026 led to the car being stopped? How many of the stopped led to arrests? What is the ratio of hit stopped then arrested, to total Unique Vehicles Detected in 2026?
11. How many crimes have been solved in 2026 due to Flock? What is the ratio of crimes solved to total Unique Vehicles Detected?
12. There are 4 "LPR cameras only" but 6 "LPR and other cameras". What are the other two cameras used for by GPD?
13. What is the Pareto Analysis of the Number of Searches for 2026?
14. Could other government agencies access Groton's Flock data indirectly by going through Massachusetts State Police or NESPIN portals they have established? What does an analysis of their search histories reveal?
15. What is the total number of Searches in 2026? What does the audit of those searches show?
16. From precisely where in the GPD budget was the post-Town Meeting Flock contract payment made?

Thank you,

Paul Fitzgerald
272 Lowell Rd
Groton, MA 01450
978-337-8535 cell

CITIZEN QUESTIONS #2

Rachael Mead

From: Rachael Mead
Sent: Wednesday, August 5, 2026 1:29 PM
To: 'Big AL'; Mark Haddad
Cc: Moderator; Police; Kara Cruikshank
Subject: RE: RE: Help with town legislation

Hello Mr. Soloman,

I'm happy to take your questions to the working group. We have not scheduled the forum yet but I am looking at mid September. I will put something in the newspaper once I have a date. We are meeting later this month and will come up with a date at our next meeting.

You can also get more information on the flock cameras and what the working group has already discussed on the police department tab on the town's website. I have some frequent questions already answered here as well. They would be in the packet to the select board back in June.

Best,

Rachael Mead
Deputy Chief
Groton Police Department

From: Big AL <BigALSolomon@pm.me>
Sent: Wednesday, August 5, 2026 1:22 PM
To: Mark Haddad <mhaddad@grotonma.gov>
Cc: Moderator <moderator@grotonma.gov>; Police <Police@grotonma.gov>; Kara Cruikshank <kcruikshank@grotonma.gov>
Subject: Re: RE: Help with town legislation

Hey Mark,

I wasn't expecting such a quick response. I truly appreciate how thoughtful and detailed you are here. That's how you've always operated at town meeting and it's nice to see it when it's just back to one person. This was going to be a stop gap before I could make a more detailed and comprehensive proposal on surveillance, mostly focused on data sharing. It's fantastic to hear you're already on it and I'd much rather engage in the manner you've suggested. I look forward to working with you. Only have a few questions.

Is the working group public? If not, could I submit some ideas or questions to consider?
Is there a date for the hearing or a way to be informed when it's scheduled?

Thanks again for your time,
AL

under your proposal? The DPW has installed several cameras that monitor road conditions that help with snow and ice removal. Would those need to be removed? More recently, at the request of several residents, the Town installed security cameras at Sargisson Beach to address public safety concerns. Would those cameras also have to be removed? The Working Group is reviewing Police Worn Cameras that are also used by several area Police Departments. Would these be banned as well? While your proposal appears focused on street surveillance, these examples demonstrate why clearly defining the scope of any policy is so important.

There are also legal and procedural questions regarding whether Town Meeting can require future Town Meeting approval for operational decisions or contracts in the manner proposed. Those are questions that would need to be reviewed by Town Counsel before any definitive answer could be provided. Based on my municipal experience, my initial inclination is that one Town Meeting cannot bind action on another Town Meeting. These are significant policy issues with practical, legal, and public safety implications, which is precisely why the Town established the Police Camera Working Group. My hope is that the Working Group process, including the upcoming public hearing, will allow these issues to be fully vetted before any action is considered.

That said, if after considering my position on this issue, if you still wish to move forward with a citizen petition article, you certainly have every right to do so. Please keep in mind that such an article requires the signatures of at least ten registered Groton voters and must be filed with the Town Clerk no later than Thursday, August 13, at the close of business. If you do decide to submit the petition, I would respectfully ask that you provide it to the Town Clerk by Tuesday, August 11, if possible, to allow sufficient time for the signatures to be certified before the filing deadline.

Thank you again for contacting me and for your willingness to engage constructively on this issue. I hope you will participate in the upcoming public hearing, as I believe it will provide the best opportunity for a thoughtful community discussion before any policy decisions are made.

Sincerely,

Mark W. Haddad
Town Manager

The flock info site notes that we have 4 LPR but 6 total. What are the other 2?

Is there any other street level surveillance devices being used that might need to be exceptions in this article or might force a different wording?

Is requiring a future town meeting vote something that I can even put into an article at town meeting?

I truly appreciate your time,

Al Solomon

LITTLETON PD FLOCK PROGRAM FACTS

Rachael Mead

From: Rachael Mead
Sent: Thursday, August 6, 2026 8:19 AM
To: Brian Callahan; cjr@lawcjrpc.com; Mark Haddad; Michael Chiasson; Pat Parker-Roach; Paul Garcia
Subject: FW: Littleton Police Vow Transparency After Flock Camera Miscommunication

FYI some concerns about Littleton's Flock program. The news media is painting a very different picture than the actual reality. See my response to the select board, and there is also a link to LPD's press release correcting the misinformation provided by the news media.

Rachael Mead
Deputy Chief
Groton Police Department

-----Original Message-----

From: Rachael Mead
Sent: Thursday, August 6, 2026 8:18 AM
To: Mark Haddad <mhaddad@grotonma.gov>
Cc: Peter Cunningham <pcunningham@grotonma.gov>; Becky Pine <bpine@grotonma.gov>; Nick Degaitas <ndegaitas@grotonma.gov>; John Reilly <jreilly@grotonma.gov>; Matt Pisani <mpisani@grotonma.gov>; Kara Cruikshank <kcruikshank@grotonma.gov>
Subject: RE: Littleton Police Vow Transparency After Flock Camera Miscommunication

Hello,

I spoke with the Littleton Police Chief two days ago about this, as I was concerned about the news article as well. The news did not provide the actual facts, but a distorted story that fit a certain narrative. LPD has recently posted a press release correcting the misinformation that was provided by the news media.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1JPVTQkAx3/>

In speaking with Chief Landry, they made the decision to deactivate the flock cameras after the town meeting vote. They advised LEID to remove electricity, however, did not explicitly tell Flock Safety that they were powering down the cameras. They just informed them that the town voted them down and they would not be utilizing them.

Part of the service contract is that technicians will address issues as they come up. So if a camera goes down, they come out, troubleshoot the problem and fix it so the camera is up and running as soon as possible. We have had cameras go down here in Groton and they have had them up and running within a few days. This is normal part of business with them. So when they saw the cameras in Littleton were down, they do what they do for all of the towns they have a contract with; they serviced the cameras and got them up and running. LPD admits that they did not realize that this was part of the contract, and did not think to tell them that they were deactivating the cameras. Flock Safety did not do anything "shady" as has been painted by the news media, they were just providing their customer, the Town of Littleton, with the service that they agreed to in their service contract.

I hope this helps answer peoples' questions, and it will be something I will address in both the working group, and the forum. I will be forwarding this response to the working group as an FYI so they are up to speed on local/area developments.

SALEM PD SWITCH TO AXON

Rachael Mead

From: Rachael Mead
Sent: Sunday, July 26, 2026 6:43 AM
To: Brian Callahan; cjr@lawcjrpc.com; Mark Haddad; Michael Chiasson; Pat Parker-Roach; Paul Garcia
Subject: Fw: Salem MA cancels Flock contract

Good morning everyone!

A local news station is covering a story about the Salem Police Department who just ended their contract with Flock. The link to the story is below and is a topic was posted on the TAG forum (Talk About Groton, it's an email Google group that a number of citizens use). Salem hasn't uncovered anything that we haven't already discussed/discussing in our group in the short time we have been together. Salem PD has opted to use Axon instead. I will add this to our discussion of Flock vs Axon.

Best,

Rachael Mead
Deputy Chief
Groton Police

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From: Rachael Mead <remead@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, 26 July 2026 06:37:33
To: Rachael Mead <rmead@grotonma.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Salem MA cancels Flock contract

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Rob Foley <Unknown>
Date: Saturday, July 25, 2026 at 7:46:48 AM UTC-4
Subject: Salem MA cancels Flock contract
To: TalkAboutGroton <Unknown>

article from WCVB Channel 5 News. It might be a good idea for our Select Board or the working group to reach out to the Salem Mayor and request the data and findings they gathered and save us a lot of time and effort.

<https://www.wcvb.com/article/flock-camera-contract-ending-salem-ma-july-24/73258537>

meeting next Tuesday 23 11 AM

Meeting w/ Axon re LPRS
6.16.26 11 AM

- LPRS
- on car
- on poles
- ~~bodycam~~

live stream
built into
one single
camera
(they can do both)

Axon ^{company}

don't own anything it's all owned by town

- ~~town~~ own hardware etc data.

- hard wire/solar

- share at our discussion

- traffic trailers too

- you can move them if you want
gives you lots of flexibility

nothing is owned by Axon

attribute searches also

partial plates etc.

no people can be searched.

~~driver can~~

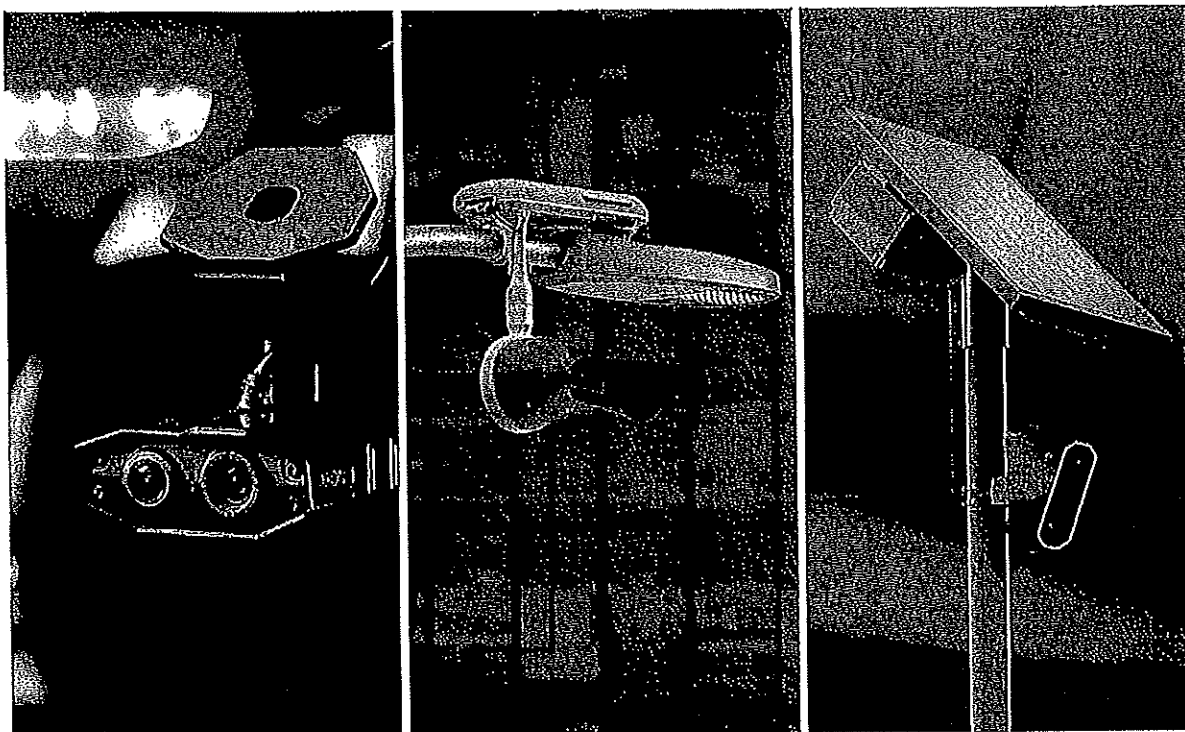
everything is customizable based
on town PD policy.

cost is more affordable than Flock

from week of Sept
21-25 or
28-2

Protect Life, Protect Privacy

Axon ALPR: Fleet 3, Outpost and Lightpost



Why ALPR matters

More than 75% of crimes committed involve a motor vehicle.

Automated license plate recognition (ALPR) helps agencies accelerate investigations, find missing persons, and better protect the communities they serve by locating and identifying those vehicles faster and more accurately.

ALPR is not surveillance for surveillance's sake. When designed responsibly, it provides safety with accountability. Agencies retain ownership, set the rules, and preserve community trust with transparency tools. Axon Fleet 3, Outpost, and Lightpost are built around responsible use, transparency, and control. Designed in alignment with Axon's Responsible Innovation framework, they give agencies a model that is effective in the field and defensible in the community.

Your agency is always in control

- You own your data, not Axon
- Data sharing is opt-in, explicit invite-only, and revocable
- Retention period is policy driven by your agency
- Axon never discloses data on your agency's behalf
- All access is logged and reviewable

Axon ALPR camera overview

Axon Fleet 3:

Mobile ALPR camera capturing video and detections across multiple lanes. Introduced in 2021 and deployed in more than 75,000 patrol vehicles at 2,000+ agencies.

Axon Outpost:

Fixed ALPR camera, deployable on poles, trailers or buildings with solar or wired power. Designed to capture multiple lanes, day and night, at highway speeds.

Axon Lightpost:

Streetlight-mounted ALPR camera, developed with Ubicquia for fast deployment. Installs in under an hour and expands coverage without new poles.

All Axon ALPR cameras:

- Read license plates across multiple lanes at highway speeds, delivering reliable detections in varied conditions
- Support livestreaming for real time visibility, helping agencies improve response and accountability
- Integrate with Axon Fusus for vehicle attribute recognition, search, alerts and visualization, with data transferred into Axon Evidence for secure storage and retention
- Are covered under Axon's Technology Assurance Plan (TAP), with a five-year warranty, software updates, 24/7 support, and a hardware refresh at year five

Responsible Innovation at Axon

Every Axon product is developed under our Responsible Innovation framework. Connected cameras have revolutionized public safety, but legal and ethical rigor must remain paramount. For cameras, sensors, and software, we prioritize privacy, fairness, accountability, and transparency, and commit to the following principles:

Our devices help solve crime and promote transparency.

Data and evidence collected by law enforcement through Axon devices is intended to help solve crimes, reduce threats, improve training, and promote transparency and accountability.

Our customers own their ALPR data, we protect its privacy.

Agencies own and control all data collected by Axon devices. We protect that data by investing in and remaining committed to world-class information security and privacy.

We safeguard privacy as a human right.

We further enable agencies to safeguard the privacy, human rights, and dignity of individuals with tools such as access controls and redaction.



Privacy and governance standards

ALPR data received from Axon cameras, third-party cameras integrated through our certified Works with Axon program, or community devices is protected under the following standards and safeguards:

Ownership: Agencies own and control their ALPR data, Axon does not pool, resell, or repurpose agency detections.

Access & Sharing: Agencies control access to their ALPR data. Data sharing is invite-only, visible, and revocable. Axon does not operate a national pool or enable automatic sharing, and agencies always know exactly who has access to their data. Axon's access is limited to rare support cases and when explicitly authorized by the agency. Shared access does not create copies of ALPR records, and agencies retain sole ownership and disclosure authority over their data.

Lawful Requests: Warrants, subpoenas, and FOIA requests are always routed through the agency as the data owner. Axon never discloses data or responds on behalf of agencies.

Retention: All detections transfer into the agency's secure instance of Axon Evidence, where retention settings are determined by policy. Non-evidentiary data can be automatically purged.

Audit: Axon platforms maintain immutable audit logs showing who accessed data, when, and why, ensuring accountability.



Building transparency and trust

Transparency Tools: Agencies have access to a public transparency portal to share retention policies, usage metrics, and program details, with full control over what is displayed.

Edge Processing: A guiding design principle to improve speed, reduce latency, and give agencies more flexibility and control.

Privacy First: Designed with our Responsible Innovation principles at the core, with input from ethicists and community leaders to ensure data privacy and security expectations are met.



Proven scale and results

Axon ALPR empowers agencies to expand responsibly while meeting the highest standards of community trust and oversight. Today, agencies using Axon's ALPR solutions make up the largest agency-controlled ALPR network in public safety. With Axon's mobile ALPR, agencies have detected more than 8.1 billion license plate reads since 2021—driving felony arrests and stolen vehicle recoveries nationwide—while always retaining full ownership of their data and authority over its use.

Crime statistics referenced from the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP).

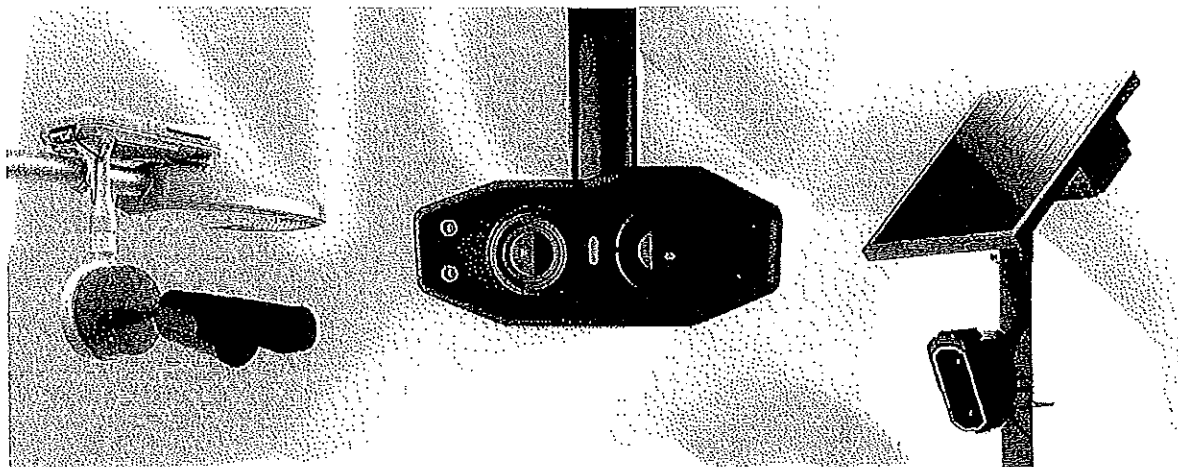
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Axon Fusus Vehicle Intelligence Search

Smarter, unified ALPR and vehicle attribute search



Over 75% of crimes in the U.S. involve a vehicle, but identifying and finding the right vehicle is the hardest part. Automatic license plate reader technology is essential for law enforcement agencies to respond to and solve crimes more quickly, but identifying the right vehicle quickly from captured data is often difficult.

Existing search tools are fragmented, limited in capability, or siloed between different LPR solution providers. This slows investigations and puts critical response time at risk. To address these challenges, Axon Fusus now delivers an upgraded search experience across Fleet 3 and other LPR solution data, bringing ALPR and vehicle attributes together in a single search experience.

Respond in Real-Time

Hotlist Alerts

Get alerts from Fleet 3 and other LPR solutions directly in Fusus.

Real-Time Search and Mapping

Search for additional results of a plate of interest in Fusus, which provides a table and a map visualization to help agencies coordinate deployment of assets to intercept based on movement patterns.

Investigate Across Sources

Powerful Attribute-Based Search

Search by full or partial plate, vehicle make, model, color, state, or visible vehicle attributes such as roof racks, window stickers, and bumper stickers, regardless of the camera source, enabling agencies to find the right vehicle faster.

Narrow Down Results by Geographical Area

Filter down search results to a specific geographical area of interest and reduce search time.

Unified Experience

Unified Axon Device Integration

Fusus automatically syncs agency and user data from Axon Vehicle Intelligence devices, including Fleet 3, Outpost, and Lightpost, making ALPR search available without manual configuration.

Search Across ALPR Systems

Clearly see which ALPR provider returned each result. If a search query isn't supported by that provider, Fusus flags it immediately.

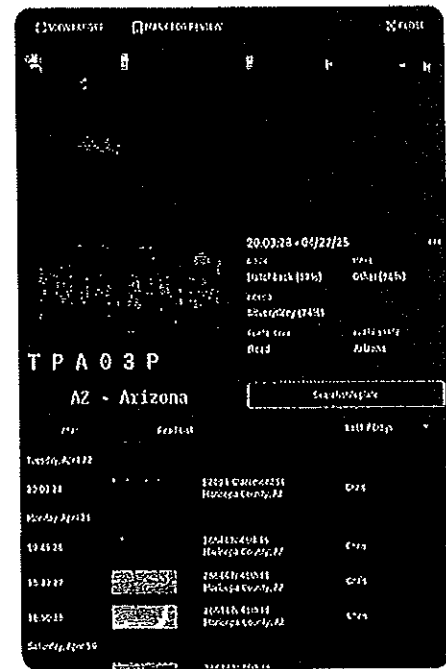
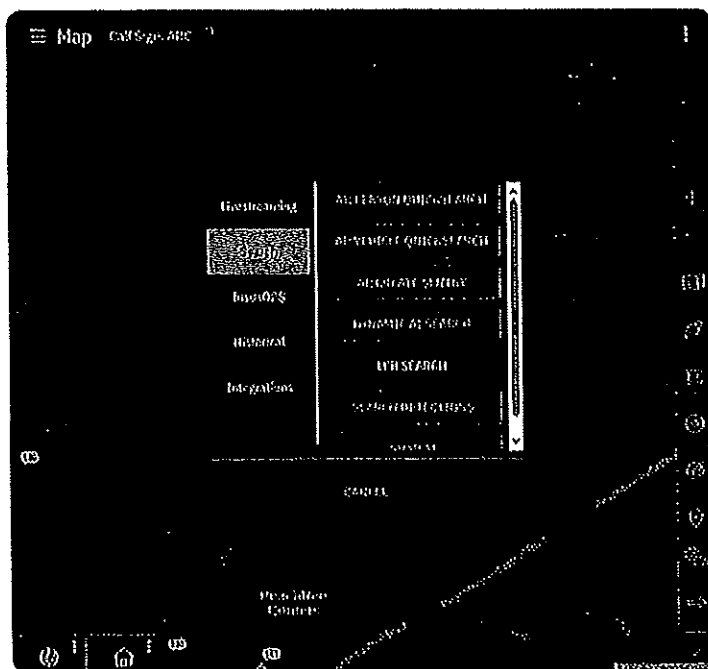
Certified Partner Integration

Works With Axon-certified LPR systems will integrate automatically into Fusus and be easily searchable, no effort required.

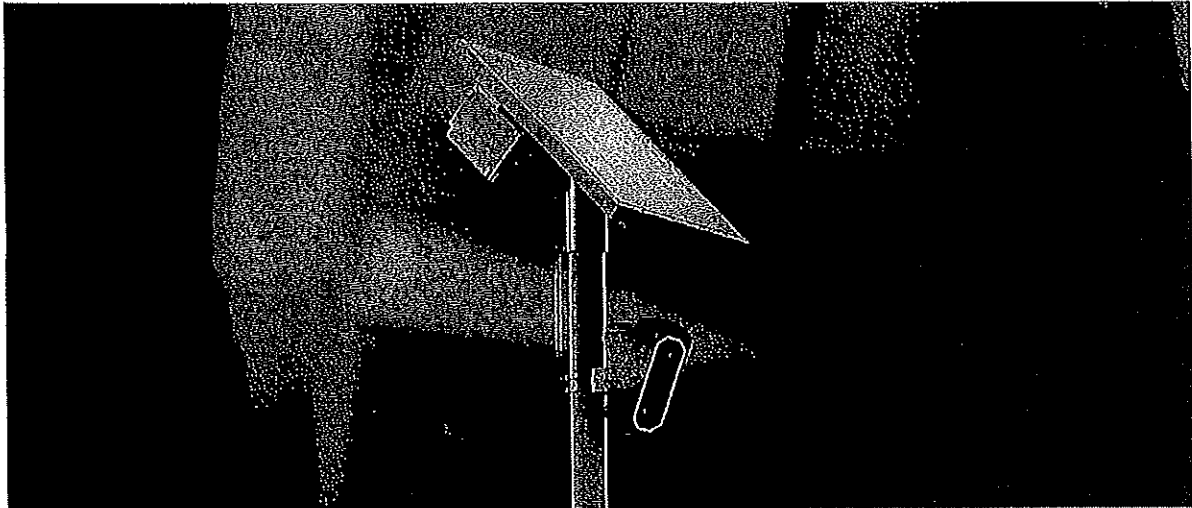
Part of the Axon Vehicle Intelligence Suite

Fleet 3, Outpost, Lightpost, and partner ALPR cameras operate as one integrated solution within Fusus — letting teams livestream, search, receive alerts, and investigate within a single, integrated Fusus experience.

Reach out to your Axon representative to learn more about the future of vehicle intelligence.



Axon Outpost



Axon Outpost represents the next leap in fixed camera technology, offering powerful performance, real-time intelligence, and seamless integration into Axon Fusus.

By combining livestreaming, ALPR, and vehicle recognition in one fixed device, Outpost goes beyond just a license plate hit to provide the full picture in real time.

Benefits

Immediate, actionable intelligence

Axon Outpost detects vehicles through both ALPR and vehicle attribute recognition and is designed to give officers immediate visibility through integrated livestreaming. It delivers reliable plate and vehicle attribute recognition in challenging conditions, such as nighttime, high speeds, and multi-lane roads.

Quicker resolution with easy search across a range of attributes

Axon's unified search in Fusus allows agencies to search the results from Axon Outpost devices by intelligent attributes — including plate, partial plates, make, color, and more — to more efficiently find what they need and take action. Fusus also enables vehicle movement history visualizations, near-instant alerts, and cross-agency sharing that is explicit, controlled and auditable.

Share at your discretion

Fusus is built with strong privacy safeguards. Agencies own and control all their own data, with configurable retention periods and data access audit logs. Sharing is intentional, outbound, and fully controlled by the data owner.

Efficient evidence management

In Axon Evidence, users can build a case file in minutes with fewer mistakes, and clearer transparency for the public. Every video, plate read and image is designed to flow securely into Axon Evidence without extra transfers, re-uploads or mismatched time stamps.

Features

Flexible deployment options

Axon Outpost can easily be deployed wherever it's needed, including on existing poles, new poles, buildings, vehicles, trailers, or trees.

Reliable capture at distance

Designed to capture multiple lanes, day and night, at highway speeds.

Installation support

Assistance with attachment agreements, permitting, site prep, and installs is provided.

Multiple power options

Opt for solar or 110V power.

Software

Outpost bundles include a full LTE subscription for real-time livestreaming and ALPR data upload. The vehicle search capabilities in Axon Fusus*, our real-time operations platform, provide visibility and insight across ALPR cameras. This means:

- Unified search across any ALPR-enabled camera by plate, partials, make, model, color, or unique attributes.
- Visualization of vehicle movement history to support interception or investigation.
- Near-instant alerts from any ALPR camera — fixed, mobile, or partner.
- Cross-agency sharing when and where you choose.

Axon Fusus also enables you to immediately get vehicle intelligence from any third-party cameras you already own that are certified Works With Axon partners.

Deployment

In order to ensure success, Axon bundles include assessment and installation services. We will:

- Evaluate and recommend installation sites, including:
 - Assessing feasibility, traffic flow and power/network availability.
 - Conducting a solar survey to evaluate viability.
- Organize permitting for Axon Outpost, including:
 - Identifying required permits and supplying drawings and specs.
 - Coordinating with local/state agencies.
 - Tracking and supporting permit progress.
- Install and activate each unit with full documentation.

Warranty & Maintenance

Our included 5-year coverage plan will protect your investment and keep your LPR system running at its best:

- Full hardware warranty including repair or replacement as needed.
- Ongoing software updates.
- Reliable technical support 24/7.
- Preventative maintenance, such as solar panel cleaning, and live telemetry for device health.
- On-site or remote assistance

Let's design an Axon Outpost deployment that fits your agency's mission and goals. Contact us today at [axon.com/contact](https://www.axon.com/contact).



Non-Binding Budgetary Estimate

Q-872754-46196SB



Issued: 06/23/2026

Quote Expiration: 12/31/2026

Estimated Contract Start Date: 04/01/2027

Account Number: 114953

Payment Terms: N30

Mode of Delivery: AUTO-GND

Credit/Debit Amount: \$0.00

SALES REPRESENTATIVE	PRIMARY CONTACT
Spencer Bassett Phone: Email: sbassett@axon.com Fax:	Rachael Mead Phone: Email: rmead@grotonma.gov Fax:

SHIP TO	BILL TO
Groton Police Dept. - MA 99 Pleasant St Groton, MA 01450-1205 USA Email:	Groton Police Dept. - MA 99 Pleasant St Groton MA 01450-1205 USA Email:

Quote Summary

Program Length	60 Months
TOTAL COST	\$127,764.38
ESTIMATED TOTAL W/ TAX	\$127,764.38

Discount Summary

Average Savings Per Year	\$12,764.38
TOTAL SAVINGS	\$63,821.90

Non-Binding Budgetary Estimate

Payment Summary

Date	Subtotal	Tax	Total
Mar 2027	\$25,423.44	\$0.00	\$25,423.44
Mar 2028	\$25,423.44	\$0.00	\$25,423.44
Mar 2029	\$25,423.44	\$0.00	\$25,423.44
Mar 2030	\$25,423.44	\$0.00	\$25,423.44
Mar 2031	\$25,423.44	\$0.00	\$25,423.44
Total	\$127,117.20	\$0.00	\$127,117.20

Non-Binding Budgetary Estimate

Quote Unbundled Price: \$190,945.20
 Quote List Price: \$145,111.20
 Quote Subtotal: \$127,117.20

Pricing

All deliverables are detailed in Delivery Schedules section lower in proposal

Item	Description	Qty	Term	Unbundled	List Price	Net Price	Subtotal	Tax	Total
Program									
B00076	OUTPOST TAP PLAN	6	60	\$365.09	\$249.20	\$199.22	\$71,718.00	\$0.00	\$71,718.00
Fleet3B	Fleet 3 Basic	4	60	\$182.46	\$166.82	\$166.82	\$40,036.80	\$0.00	\$40,036.80
A la Carte Software									
80401	AXON FLEET 3 - ALPR LICENSE - 1 CAMERA	4	60		\$64.01	\$64.01	\$15,362.40	\$0.00	\$15,362.40
Total							\$127,117.20	\$0.00	\$127,117.20

Delivery Schedule

Hardware

Item	Description	Qty	Shipping Location	Estimated Delivery Date
101924	AXON FLEET - TAOGUAS ANT - 7-IN-1 4CELL 2WIFI IGSSS INT	4	1	03/01/2027
103346	AXON FLEET - ERICSSON R980-5GD-A45YR NETCLOUD	4	1	03/01/2027
70112	AXON SIGNAL - VEHICLE	4	1	03/01/2027
72036	AXON FLEET 3 - STANDARD 2 CAMERA KIT	4	1	03/01/2027
102032	AXON OUTPOST - CAMERA	6	1	03/01/2027
102488	AXON OUTPOST - SOLAR PANEL - 100W	6	1	03/01/2027
102538	AXON OUTPOST - TOP MOUNT END CAP - STANDARD	6	1	03/01/2027
102552	AXON OUTPOST - POLE - STANDARD	6	1	03/01/2027
102737	AXON OUTPOST - STANDARD SOLAR HARDWARE KIT	6	1	03/01/2027
103151	AXON OUTPOST - BATTERY & CHARGER ENCLOSURE - EXTENDED	6	1	03/01/2027
102144	AXON OUTPOST - TAP REFRESH ONE - CAMERA	6	1	03/01/2032
102810	AXON OUTPOST - TAP REFRESH ONE - BATTERY ENCLOSURE EXTENDED	6	1	03/01/2032

Software

Item	Description	Qty	Estimated Start Date	Estimated End Date
80400	AXON EVIDENCE - FLEET VEHICLE LICENSE	4	04/01/2027	03/31/2032
80410	AXON EVIDENCE - STORAGE - FLEET 1 CAMERA UNLIMITED	8	04/01/2027	03/31/2032
102142	AXON VEHICLE INTELLIGENCE - ALPR LICENSE	6	04/01/2027	03/31/2032
80401	AXON FLEET 3 - ALPR LICENSE - 1 CAMERA	4	04/01/2027	03/31/2032

Services

Item	Description	Qty
100736	AXON FLEET 3 - SIM INSERTION - VZW 4FF	4

Q-872754-46196SB

Non-Binding Budgetary Estimate

Services

Bundle	Item	Description	QTY
Fleet 3 Basic	73981	AXON FLEET 3 - DEPLOYMENT PER VEHICLE - NOT OVERSIZED	4
OUTPOST TAP PLAN	102136	AXON OUTPOST - STANDARD INSTALLATION	6
OUTPOST TAP PLAN	102143	AXON OUTPOST - UPGRADE INSTALLATION	6

Warranties

Bundle	Item	Description	QTY	Estimated Start Date	Estimated End Date
Fleet 3 Basic	80379	AXON SIGNAL - EXT WARRANTY - SIGNAL UNIT	4	03/01/2028	03/31/2032
Fleet 3 Basic	80495	AXON FLEET 3 - EXT WARRANTY - 2 CAMERA KIT	4	03/01/2028	03/31/2032
OUTPOST TAP PLAN	102135	AXON OUTPOST - EXT WARRANTY - CAMERA	6	03/01/2028	03/31/2032
OUTPOST TAP PLAN	102137	AXON OUTPOST - MAINTENANCE	6	03/01/2028	03/31/2032

Non-Binding Budgetary Estimate

Shipping Locations

Location Number	Street	City	State	Zip	Country
1	98 Pleasant St	Groton	MA	01450-1205	USA

Payment Details

Mar 2027					
Invoice Plan	Item	Description	Qty	Subtotal	Tax Total
Annual Payment 1	80401	AXON FLEET 3 - ALPR LICENSE - 1 CAMERA	4	\$3,072.48	\$3,072.48
Annual Payment 1	80076	OUTPOST TAP PLAN	6	\$14,343.60	\$14,343.60
Annual Payment 1	Fleet3B	Fleet 3 Basic	4	\$8,007.36	\$8,007.36
Total				\$25,423.44	\$25,423.44

Apr 2027					
Invoice Plan	Item	Description	Qty	Subtotal	Tax Total
Invoice Upon Fulfillment	Fleet3B	Fleet 3 Basic	4	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total				\$0.00	\$0.00

Mar 2028					
Invoice Plan	Item	Description	Qty	Subtotal	Tax Total
Annual Payment 2	80401	AXON FLEET 3 - ALPR LICENSE - 1 CAMERA	4	\$3,072.48	\$3,072.48
Annual Payment 2	80076	OUTPOST TAP PLAN	6	\$14,343.60	\$14,343.60
Annual Payment 2	Fleet3B	Fleet 3 Basic	4	\$8,007.36	\$8,007.36
Total				\$25,423.44	\$25,423.44

Mar 2029					
Invoice Plan	Item	Description	Qty	Subtotal	Tax Total
Annual Payment 3	80401	AXON FLEET 3 - ALPR LICENSE - 1 CAMERA	4	\$3,072.48	\$3,072.48
Annual Payment 3	80076	OUTPOST TAP PLAN	6	\$14,343.60	\$14,343.60
Annual Payment 3	Fleet3B	Fleet 3 Basic	4	\$8,007.36	\$8,007.36
Total				\$25,423.44	\$25,423.44

Mar 2030					
Invoice Plan	Item	Description	Qty	Subtotal	Tax Total
Annual Payment 4	80401	AXON FLEET 3 - ALPR LICENSE - 1 CAMERA	4	\$3,072.48	\$3,072.48
Annual Payment 4	80076	OUTPOST TAP PLAN	6	\$14,343.60	\$14,343.60
Annual Payment 4	Fleet3B	Fleet 3 Basic	4	\$8,007.36	\$8,007.36
Total				\$25,423.44	\$25,423.44

Mar 2031					
Invoice Plan	Item	Description	Qty	Subtotal	Tax Total
Annual Payment 5	80401	AXON FLEET 3 - ALPR LICENSE - 1 CAMERA	4	\$3,072.48	\$3,072.48
Annual Payment 5	80076	OUTPOST TAP PLAN	6	\$14,343.60	\$14,343.60
Annual Payment 5	Fleet3B	Fleet 3 Basic	4	\$8,007.36	\$8,007.36
Total				\$25,423.44	\$25,423.44

Non-Binding Budgetary Estimate

This Rough Order of Magnitude estimate is being provided for budgetary and planning purposes only. It is non-binding and is not considered a contractable offer for sale of Axon goods or services.

Tax is estimated based on rates applicable at date of quote and subject to change at time of invoicing. If a tax exemption certificate should be applied, please submit prior to invoicing.

Exceptions to Standard Terms and Conditions

Rewrite Estimates

Estimated Amounts and Contract Terminations. Any amounts stated as due under existing or terminated contracts — including contract transfer balances carried forward to new or pending contracts — are estimates based on payments received as of the calculation date. These estimates may be adjusted if new contracts are not executed on the anticipated dates or if expected payments are not made.

Refresh Shipment Timing

Technology Assurance Plan (TAP) Refresh Prior to Renewal. For Customers with expiring agreements that include TAP refresh rights, Axon may, in its discretion, ship refresh hardware under the existing contract while renewal or replacement agreements are in progress. Any such shipments will be deemed made under the terms of the existing contract until the new contract is fully executed, after which any applicable updates, fees, or adjustments will apply.

Shipment Timing

Shipment Variance. Estimated shipment dates are provided for planning purposes only and are not guarantees. Axon may ship hardware before or after the estimated shipment date, and failure to meet an estimated shipment date will not, by itself, constitute a breach, provided Axon uses commercially reasonable efforts to meet estimated shipment dates.



TOWN OF GROTON

173 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450-1237
Tel: (978) 448-1111
Fax: (978) 448-1115

Select Board

Peter S. Cunningham, *Chair*
Rebecca H. Pine, *Vice Chair*
Nicholas J. Degaltas, Jr., *Clerk*
John F. Reilly, *Member*
Matthew F. Pisani, *Member*

Town Manager
Mark W. Haddad

To: **Select Board**
Finance Committee

From: **Mark W. Haddad – Town Manager**

Subject: **Proposed Fall Town Meeting Expenditures**

Date: **August 31, 2026**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Select Board and Finance Committee with a summary of the proposed Fall Town Meeting Expenditures based on the proposed Warrant Articles, along with a summary of available funds. As of the date of this memorandum, the following is a summary of available funds:

FY 2026 Levy Capacity:	\$37,714
Anticipated Free Cash:	\$2,000,000
Stabilization Fund:	\$2,873,587
Capital Stabilization Fund:	\$144,028
GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund:	\$26,593
Winter Recovery Assistance Program (WRAP) Funds*	\$275,893

**The Town of Groton has received \$275,893 from the Commonwealth through the Winter Recovery Assistance Program (WRAP) to assist with the extraordinary snow and ice costs incurred during Fiscal Year 2026. The Town's FY 2026 Snow and Ice Deficit was funded using a combination of \$180,000 from the Capital Stabilization Fund and \$165,000 from Free Cash. In accordance with guidance issued by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, the Town will use \$180,000 of the WRAP reimbursement to restore the amount previously withdrawn from the Capital Stabilization Fund. The remaining \$95,893 will be deposited into a Special Revenue Fund and will be available to help fund the FY 2027 appropriation for the Groton Dunstable Regional School District Capital Stabilization Fund. Please see the further explanation in Articles 3 (page 4) and 5 (page 5) of this memorandum.*

The following is a summary of the submitted Warrant Articles, along with proposed expenditures and recommended revenue source to fund the request:

Article 1 – Unpaid Bills

Requested Amount: \$430

Currently, we have one unpaid bill from Service Tire Truck Centers in the amount of \$430. The bill came in after the Fiscal Year was closed. I recommend that this bill be paid from Free Cash as it is a one-time expenditure.

Article 2 – Amend Fiscal Year 2026 Budget

Requested Amount: \$114,071

I am proposing the following amendments to the Operating Budget:

Line Item 1022 – Select Board Expenses

Request: \$25,000

The Town is seeking a one-time appropriation of \$25,000 in Fiscal Year 2027 to hire a part-time Economic Development Director/Media Consultant to assist the Select Board and Town Manager in identifying opportunities to generate additional revenue and strengthen Groton's economic future. One of the Select Board's goals for Fiscal Year 2027 is to work collaboratively with Town boards, committees, property owners, businesses, developers, and community stakeholders to strengthen Groton's economic future. The consultant will play a key role in advancing this goal by promoting economic development opportunities, improving outreach and communication, supporting existing businesses, and identifying opportunities to expand and diversify the Town's revenue base. This appropriation is intended as a pilot program. Over the next nine months, the Select Board and Town Manager will evaluate the effectiveness of the position, the results achieved, and its potential financial and community benefits. Based on that evaluation, the Town will determine whether this position warrants continued or permanent funding in future fiscal years. I am recommending that this amount come from Free Cash as it is a one-time expenditure.

Line Item 1031 – Town Manager Expenses

Request: \$20,500

When the Cow Pond Brook Field Project was defeated at the Spring Town Meeting, the Park Commission and Town Manager made the decision to reevaluate the project, with the goal of bringing a revised proposal back before voters at the Fall Town Meeting. At that time, no budget was available to compensate Activitas, the Town's consulting firm, for the additional work required to make the necessary adjustments to the Plan. Recognizing the project's importance, the consultant graciously agreed to move forward with the work and accept payment after Town Meeting, rather than delay progress. This work included redesigning key elements of the project, updating the necessary permitting, and rebidding the revised project. Without the consultant's willingness to proceed under these terms, the Town would not have been able to complete this work in time for the Fall Town Meeting. I recommend that this amount come from Free Cash as it is a one-time expenditure.

Line Item 1062 – Board of Assessors Expenses

Request: \$10,000

This request is to fund the cost of the personal property valuation work required for the Town's Fiscal Year 2027 State mandated certification. The additional funding will allow the Town's Personal Property Consultant, RRC, to complete the required valuation and review of personal property accurately and in accordance with Massachusetts Department of Revenue requirements. I recommend that this amount come from Free Cash as it is a one-time expenditure.

Line Item 1080 – Town Counsel Expenses

Request \$20,000

The Town is seeking additional legal funding for Fiscal Year 2027 to ensure that sufficient funds are available to address two specific matters that are expected to require significant legal representation. The first matter involves the Zoning Board of Appeals' recent denial of a variance associated with the proposed installation of a cell tower on the Groton-Dunstable Regional High School property. The Town has been

advised that the applicant intends to appeal the ZBA's decision. Defending the Board's decision through the appeals process could require substantial legal work and result in costs well beyond those anticipated in the Town's Fiscal Year 2027 Town Counsel Budget. The second matter involves an easement/right-of-way previously granted to the Town on Paquawket Path to provide access to the rail trail. Certain neighboring property owners are contesting the Town's interpretation of the easement and dispute whether it provides the Town and the general public with the right to cross the property to access the rail trail. Because the parties have differing interpretations of the rights granted by the easement, it may be necessary for a court to determine the respective legal rights of the Town and the affected property owners. Both matters have the potential to require significant legal expense. The FY 2027 Budget did not expect, nor contemplate these two issues. Absorbing these costs within the current appropriation could leave insufficient funding to address the Town's routine legal needs throughout the remainder of the fiscal year. I recommend that this amount come from Free Cash as it is a one-time expenditure.

Line Item 1541 – Municipal Building Expenses

Request: \$25,000

The Town is requesting a one-time appropriation of \$25,000 to fund unanticipated repairs to the HVAC system at the Fire Station. The system, which is approximately 12 years old, was not operating properly and required immediate attention. Due to the complexity of the system, the Town needed to engage the manufacturer's recommended consultant to diagnose the problems and perform the necessary repairs. This is an unanticipated expense that was not included in the Fiscal Year 2027 Budget. While this expense could be covered by a Reserve Fund Transfer, the Town Manager and Town Accountant were concerned about taking such a significant amount from the Reserve Fund this early in the Fiscal Year. Based on this, it was determined that seeking a Town Meeting appropriation was the better choice. I recommend that this amount come from Free Cash as it is a one-time expenditure.

Line Item 1620 – Veteran's Service Officer Salary

Request: \$33,571

The Town is seeking additional funding to support the regionalization of the Veterans' Services Officer (VSO) position with the Towns of Pepperell and Littleton. The proposed regional model is intended to provide Groton's veterans with a higher and more consistent level of service while addressing the Town's long-term staffing obligations in a fiscally responsible manner. The Town Manager had previously recommended increasing the number of hours allocated to Groton's VSO position in recognition of the workload and level of service required. The Select Board did not support that request. As a result, the Town Manager explored alternative approaches that would improve veterans' services without requiring Groton to assume the cost of a full-time position on its own. Regionalization provides such an opportunity. Under Massachusetts Law, when a community with a population greater than 12,000 appoints a new Veterans' Services Officer, the position is required to be full-time unless veterans' services are provided through an approved regional arrangement. With Groton's population approaching 12,000, it is prudent to address this issue now rather than wait until a future vacancy or population threshold requires the Town to hire a full-time position on its own. The proposed regional arrangement with Pepperell and Littleton would establish a full-time regional VSO operation with the required administrative support, with the participating communities sharing the cost of providing these services. The following chart shows the anticipated cost for FY 2027:

	Regional Budget	Pepperell	Groton	Littleton
Population	33030	11695	11315	10020
	100.00%	33.30%	33.30%	33.40%
Salary of Director	\$ 62,786.16	\$ 20,907.79	\$ 20,907.79	\$ 20,970.58
Salary of admin	\$ 53,724.24	\$ 17,890.17	\$ 17,890.17	\$ 17,943.90
Empl. Benefits	\$ 30,926.40	\$ 10,298.49	\$ 10,298.49	\$ 10,329.42
Indirect costs	\$ 5,100.00	\$ 1,698.30	\$ 1,698.30	\$ 1,703.40
Expenses	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 1,498.50	\$ 1,498.50	\$ 1,503.00
Total Administrative	\$ 157,036.80	\$ 52,293.25	\$ 52,293.25	\$ 52,450.29
Vet. Benefits / Service	\$ 189,000.00	\$ 65,000.00	\$ 14,000.00	\$ 110,000.00
Total	\$ 346,036.80	\$ 117,293.25	\$ 66,293.25	\$ 162,450.29
FY2027 Budget		\$ 100,152.00	\$ 32,722.00	\$ 153,652.00
Net need		\$ 17,141.25	\$ 33,571.25	\$ 8,798.29
Oct start net need		\$ 12,855.94	\$ 25,178.44	\$ 6,598.72
Dec start net need		\$ 8,570.63	\$ 16,785.63	\$ 4,399.15

For Groton, the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 cost is approximately \$33,571. Regionalizing at this time makes good fiscal and operational sense. It allows Groton to obtain the benefits of a full-time veterans' services operation while sharing personnel and administrative costs. It also provides greater staffing capacity, improved continuity of service, broader office coverage, and greater flexibility in responding to veterans and their families. Most importantly, it allows the Town to proactively establish a sustainable service model before Groton's population growth or a future vacancy potentially requires a more costly solution. Because Groton's \$33,571 share represents an ongoing annual obligation rather than a one-time expense, the Town Manager recommends that it be funded through the Town's unexpended tax capacity.

The Total Amounts Requested By Category:	Free Cash:	\$100,500
	Tax Levy:	<u>\$ 33,571</u>
	Total	\$134,071

Article 3 – Capital Stabilization Fund

Requested Amount: \$691,000

The current balance in the Capital Stabilization Fund is \$144,028. The Town's financial policies call for maintaining a balance in the fund equal to 1.5% of the total Operating Budget. If Article 2 passes as presented, the total Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budget will be \$55,994,017, resulting in a target Capital Stabilization Fund balance of \$839,910. Meeting this target would require an appropriation of \$695,882. However, to provide sufficient funding for the anticipated FY 2028 Capital Budget, an additional \$175,118 would be required, bringing the total recommended appropriation to \$871,000. As explained previously in this memorandum, \$180,000 of this appropriation would be funded from the Town's WRAP proceeds, restoring the amount previously withdrawn from the Capital Stabilization Fund to address the FY 2026 snow and ice deficit. The remaining \$691,000 would be appropriated from the Free Cash.

Article 4 – Stabilization Fund**Requested Amount: \$0**

The current balance in the Stabilization Fund is \$2,873,587. The Town's financial policies call for a balance in this fund of 5% of the total Operating Budget. Should Article 2 pass as presented, the total FY 2026 Operating Budget will be \$55,994,017, requiring a Stabilization Fund Balance of \$2,799,700. At this time, we do not need to add money to the Fund.

Article 5 – GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund**Requested Amount: \$377,514**

The anticipated Fiscal Year 2028 Capital Budget for the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District is \$500,000. The current balance in the GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund is \$26,593, leaving a funding requirement of \$473,407. To fund this, I recommend that \$95,893 be provided from the Town's FY 2027 Winter Recovery Assistance Program (WRAP) funds as explained previously in this memorandum, and the remaining \$377,514 funded from Free Cash.

Article 6 – Water Enterprise Fund**Requested Amount: \$0**

At this time, it is anticipated that this Article will be withdrawn from consideration at Town Meeting as the Water Department is not expecting any unforeseen expenses at this time. This Article is being left on the Warrant in the event a need arises. Should a need arise, an update will be provided at Town Meeting.

Article 7 – Four Corner Sewer Enterprise Fund**Requested Amount: \$0**

At this time, it is anticipated that this Article will be withdrawn from consideration at Town Meeting as the Sewer Department is not expecting any unforeseen expenses at this time. This Article is being left on the Warrant in the event a need arises. Should a need arise, an update will be provided at Town Meeting.

Article 8 – Stormwater Enterprise**Requested Amount: \$0**

At this time, it is anticipated that this Article will be withdrawn from consideration at Town Meeting as the Department of Public Works is not expecting any unforeseen expenses at this time. This Article is being left on the Warrant in the event a need arises. Should a need arise, an update will be provided at Town Meeting.

Article 9 – Town Forest Expenses**Requested Amount: \$30,000**

From the Summary in the Warrant: The Town Forest Committee is seeking funds from their Receipts Reserved for the Town Forest to cover the cost of removing a dead stand of Red Pines that are creating a hazard in the Town Forest. The amount needed is estimated to be \$30,000, with \$12,238 coming from a reimbursement from the Division of Conservation and Recreation, based on an estimate from the Committee's consulting Forester.

Article 10 – Cow Pond Brook Fields Improvements**Requested Amount: \$4,200,000**

From the Summary in the Warrant: This article requests Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding for a revised improvement project at the Cow Pond Brook Fields recreational complex. A similar proposal considered at the 2026 Spring Town Meeting was not approved by the voters. Following Town Meeting, the Parks Commission and Town Manager collaborated with user groups, Town departments, project consultants, and other stakeholders to revise the project in response to public feedback. The revised proposal reduces the overall project cost by an estimated \$800,000 to \$1 million from the original estimated budget of approximately \$4.8 million, while retaining the project's primary objectives. The revised project includes rehabilitation and modernization of one of the Town's most heavily used recreational facilities; improvements to comply with Natural Heritage requirements by addressing the existing access road; construction of ADA-compliant pathways and amenities to improve accessibility; upgrades to drainage, parking, traffic circulation, and supporting infrastructure; and improvements designed to provide a safe, functional, and sustainable recreational complex for residents, schools, youth organizations, and community groups. Approval of this article will also preserve the Town's eligibility to receive a \$1 million federal grant that has been awarded for the project. If the project does not proceed, the Town will lose access to these federal funds. The grant would significantly reduce the amount of local funding required to complete the project. The Parks Commission believes the revised proposal reflects the concerns raised during the Spring Town Meeting by reducing costs, refining the project scope, and maintaining the long-term goal of preserving and improving an important community recreational asset. If approved, this article would authorize the use of CPA funds to support the project and leverage substantial outside funding for improvements intended to serve Groton residents for many decades.

Article 12 – Irrigation/Course Improvements – Country Club**Requested Amount: \$1,700,000**

From the Summary in the Warrant: This article requests funding to construct a new irrigation system and complete targeted course improvements at the Groton Country Club. The Club's existing irrigation system provides only limited coverage and requires manual operation, making it difficult to maintain consistent playing conditions, particularly during dry weather. The proposed irrigation system would be fully automated, allowing watering during non-playing hours, and would provide comprehensive coverage of all greens, tee boxes, fairways, and selected in-play rough areas. The project is intended to improve turf health, course conditions, water management, and the overall quality of the golf course. In addition to the irrigation system, the project includes targeted improvements to enhance playability and course infrastructure. These include redesigning portions of Holes 1 through 3 to improve playability and installing a drainage system on Hole 7 to address persistent drainage issues. The preliminary planning estimate for the project is \$1.7 million. Prior to Town Meeting, the Town intends to solicit competitive bids so that a firm project cost can be presented to voters for consideration. If approved, the project would be financed through borrowing. Annual debt service would be appropriated through the Town's Capital Budget and funded from Free Cash, with the expectation that revenues generated by the Groton Country Club will support the debt service over the life of the borrowing. The project is intended to protect the Town's investment in the municipal golf course, enhance the experience for residents and visitors, and support the Club's long-term operational and financial sustainability.

Based on these recommendations, if all recommendations are accepted by the Select Board and Finance Committee and Town Meeting approves the Articles, each account will have the following balances:

<u>Account</u>	<u>Beginning Balance</u>	<u>Requested Amount</u>	<u>Final Balance</u>
Lewy Capacity	\$ 37,714	\$ 33,571	\$ 4,143
Anticipated Free Cash	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 1,169,444	\$ 830,556
Stabilization Fund	\$ 2,873,587	\$ -	\$ 2,873,587
Capital Stabilization Fund*	\$ 324,028	\$ 691,000	\$ 1,015,028
GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund**	\$ 122,486	\$ 377,514	\$ 500,000

* Beginning Balance Includes \$180,000 from WRAP Funds

** Beginning Balance Includes \$95,893 from WRAP Funds

I look forward to reviewing this with the Select Board and Finance Committee in more detail. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me with any additional questions or concerns.

MWH/rjb

cc: Patricia DuFresne – Assistant Finance Director/Town Accountant
Katie Kazanjian – Treasurer/Collector
Tammi Mickel – Principal Assessor
Melisa Doig – Human Resources Director
Kara Cruikshank – Executive Assistant

enclosures