

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2026
APPROVED**

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

Select Board Members Absent: Becky Pine, Vice Chair;

Also Present: Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; Patricia DuFresne, Assistant Director of Finance/Town Accountant; Bud Robertson, Finance Committee Vice Chair; Dan Stoneking, Water Superintendent; Katie Kazanjian, Treasurer/Tax Collector; Michelle Collette, Groton Board of Health Member.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Cunningham thanked the Commemoration Committee for the ceremony held on the morning of September 11th. He said it was a beautiful day and a solemn event.

Town of Groton Treasurer/Tax Collector Katie Kazanjian explained that she prepared a Quarter 2 tax bill reminder notice because it will not be mailed this quarter and will instead be posted at various locations. Mr. Haddad thanked Ms. Kazanjian for pushing the tax bill reminder to taxpayers. Mr. Reilly suggested posting the announcement on the signboard.

Water Superintendent Dan Stoneking informed residents that fall water main flushing will start in early October.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD - Zoom

Mr. Robertson announced that the Prescott Oversight Committee met with the Prescott team last Thursday, September 10th, to review their quarterly revenues. He said they exceeded projections for both net income and net revenue. He added that they are doing a great job.

Council on Aging Member Michell Collette said that, in collaboration with Loaves and Fishes, the Council on Aging will now arrange a pickup service to Loaves and Fishes for those without transportation. She said to make arrangements, call The Center.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Fiscal Year 2026 Fourth Quarter Financial Update.

Ms. Patricia DuFresne, Assistant Finance Director, attended the meeting to review and discuss the Final FY 2026 Fourth Quarter Revenue and Expenditure Report. Mr. Haddad reported that Fiscal Year 2026 was financially successful, with Free Cash certified at approximately \$2,066,000. He reviewed the report with the Board and said that Motor Vehicle Excise Tax remains strong; Local Room Occupancy Tax and Meals Tax were outstanding; Marijuana revenues came in higher than expected; Country Club revenues are record-breaking, up \$208,000; License and Permit Fee revenues were up \$393,000; and Real Estate Tax Collections continue at 99%, which he said was a

testament to the taxpayers. Ms. DuFresne said revenues are consistent year over year, and Mr. Haddad added that it was a strong year overall. He said more money was spent than last year, at 97.75% of the budget, but added that money is getting tighter and heating costs are going through the roof.

Mr. Haddad noted that Payments in Lieu of Taxes have increased because the town's nonprofit partners increased their PILOTs through cooperative efforts. He said Groton Hill Music exceeded the town's estimate by \$56,000, while Groton School exceeded it by \$35,000.

2. Review and Consider Adopting a Policy Update for “Post-Closure Eligibility for Water Main Connection Assistance”.

Water Superintendent Dan Stoneking attended the discussion. Mr. Haddad explained that a public meeting was held on August 6th regarding the next phase of the PFAS Water Main Extension Project. The meeting was well attended and generated feedback. He said they shared substantial information and answered questions. Several residents raised a legitimate concern: although their private wells currently test below the 4 parts per trillion (ppt) standard, they worry that PFAS levels could increase in the future. Their primary question was what protection the Town would provide if that occurred after the project and environmental response had been completed. Mr. Haddad discussed the question with Dunstable Town Administrator Jason Silva and Mr. Stoneking. He believes the Town needs a policy to address the possibility of elevated PFAS test results in the future. Mr. Stoneking drafted a proposed Policy and provided it to the Board in advance for review and consideration. The Policy outlines how the Town would respond in these situations. Under the proposed Policy, qualifying properties within the identified contamination zone that develop elevated PFAS levels in the future would be eligible for the Town to fund 85% of the cost of connecting the property to the public water system.

Mr. Haddad explained that the Licensed Site Professional (LSP) completed all testing, the Town met all requirements, and 78 houses will be connected to the new water main extension. He suggested that the Select Board reserve the remaining appropriation balance for the PFAS Water Main Extension Project to cover potential future connection costs. Because the Town received a \$1 million federal earmark, he said approximately \$500,000 to \$600,000 will remain in the project budget upon completion. The Policy proposes keeping those funds in an account for the next five years. If a property tests above 4 ppt, a resident could come to the Town and provide proof, and the Town would cover 85% of the connection and hookup costs. Mr. Haddad believes this approach is reasonable and demonstrates that the Town cares. The funds would be available to properties within the zone whose owners contact the Town. He said the hookups should be completed by June 2027.

Mr. Stoneking walked the Board through the proposed Policy (see the Policy included with these minutes). He noted that the LSP has stated that the plume has not increased in over a year. Mr. Pisani asked whether assistance would transfer to new homeowners. Mr. Haddad believes it should and would like to add that provision to the Policy. The Board would like to share the Policy with Town Counsel for feedback before bringing it back for adoption. The Board thanked Mr.

Stoneking for crafting the Policy, and Mr. Haddad will bring it back to the September 28th Select Board Meeting.

3. Fiscal Year 2028 Budget Update.

There was no update at this time. Mr. Haddad said he will continue working with the School District and the Town of Dunstable Town Administrator, and that a Working Group Meeting is scheduled for September 30th.

4. Update on Select Board Schedule through Labor Day.

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-	Provide Budget Guidance to the Town Manager
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

1. Take Positions on Various Articles Contained in the 2026 Fall Town Meeting Warrant.

Mr. Haddad provided the Select Board with the latest draft of the Warrant for the 2026 Fall Town Meeting. The postcards with QR codes will be sent to the printer on Tuesday, September 15th, and mailed on Friday, September 18th. He said 500 paper copies of the Warrant will be printed for those who prefer them. He reviewed changes to the draft Town Meeting Warrant, including removing Article 1: Prior Year Bills from the consent agenda and making it a separate motion because there wasn't enough money in the account when the bill was incurred. The Article now requires a 9/10ths Town Meeting vote. He also reviewed the articles removed from the Warrant, such as Article 10: Citizens' Petition – Termination of Automated License Plate Reader Camera Program and Article 13: Transfer of Land from the DPW to the Electric Light Department.

Mr. Cunningham announced that a Town Meeting Roundtable was held earlier today on the Groton Channel, with the Town Manager, Town Moderator, Town Clerk, Finance Committee Chair, Town Planner, and Mr. Cunningham as the Select Board Chair. The Roundtable will be broadcast on the

Groton Channel. Mr. Haddad further explained that the Town Website will feature an exciting new Town Meeting Dashboard with helpful features. The IT Department and the Cable Director have been working hard to develop it, and it should be live the week before Town Meeting.

Mr. Haddad wanted to discuss the Cow Pond Brook Project proposal. He said the bid opening took place on September 10th, and the bids came in \$300,000 below the estimate. He explained that the project was originally estimated at \$4.2 million but will be reduced to \$3.9 million because the bids were favorable. Seven highly competitive bids were submitted, and the lowest bidder was MJ Cataldo, Inc., which will be awarded the project if Town Meeting appropriates the funds. Mr. Haddad was pleased to announce that Little League Baseball will contribute \$20,000 toward the project lights if the Article passes at Town Meeting. He thanked Little League Baseball for its contribution. He also shared that the Groton Country Club Irrigation Project bids came in on budget, with an estimated project cost of \$1.7 million. Both projects came in on budget, which was great news!

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to take positions on the following Articles:

Article 1: Prior Year Bills- Service Tire Truck Centers-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support this Article

Article 2: Amend the Fiscal Year 2027 Town Operating Budget- (Please see the Town Manager's Report for proposed transfers).

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support all line-item transfers.

Article 3: Transfer Money into Capital Stabilization Fund-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support this Article.

Article 4: Transfer Money into the Stabilization Fund—

The Select Board was unanimously in favor of withdrawing this Article.

Article 5: Transfer Money into the GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support this Article.

Article 6: Transfer Within the Water Enterprise Fund-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor of withdrawing this Article.

Article 7: Transfer Within the Four Center Sewer Enterprise Fund-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor of withdrawing this Article.

Article 8: Transfer Within the Stormwater Enterprise Fund-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support this Article.

Article 9: Appropriations to Fund Town Forest Expenses-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support this Article.

Articles 2 through 9 will be part of a consent agenda.

Article 10: Cow Pond Brook Fields Improvements-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support this Article.

Article 11: Install Irrigation System/Course Improvements-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support this Article.

Article 12: Establish Means-Tested Senior Citizen Property Tax Exemption-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support this Article.

Article 13: Small Clean Energy Facilities Consolidating Permitting-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support this Article.

Article 14: Scale Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Facilities-

The Select Board was unanimously in favor to support this Article.

Article 15: Citizens Petition-Senior Property Tax Freeze Program-

The Select Board was unanimously not in favor of supporting this Article.

Article 16: Citizens Petition- Study Housing Opportunities and Municipal Finance-

The Select Board deferred until Town Meeting.

2. Approve and Issue the Warrant for the 2026 Fall Town Meeting.

Mr. Haddad explained that Town Meeting postcards will be mailed to all households on Friday, September 18, 2026, and that the Constable will post the Warrant the same day. He respectfully requested that the Board vote to approve and issue the Warrant for the 2026 Fall Town Meeting.

Mr. Degaitas moved to accept and issue the warrant for the 2026 Fall Town Meeting. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

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

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

On-Going Issues

- A. PFAS Issue – None
- B. UMass Satellite Emergency Facility – The final occupancy inspection is scheduled for mid-October. He said they are on schedule and plan to open in March 2027.
- C. Fire Department Staffing – The final Report will be presented at the Select Board meeting, held in joint session with the Finance Committee and the Consultant, on September 28th.

Mr. Haddad believes that Consultant Jack Parrow Consulting and Associates did an excellent job on the Report, and he will send it to the Select Board and the Finance Committee for review later this week.

- D. West Groton Dam Removal—Mr. Haddad explained that rumors suggested the Dam removal was uncertain and that no specific decision had been made. He clarified that the Select Board decided to begin the removal process, and that the 2026 Spring Town Meeting did not fund the repair. He informed the Board that he and Tom Delaney are moving forward with the removal and will bring Grant applications before the Board.
- E. Main Street Study – None
- F. Flock Cameras- None.

SELECT BOARD LIAISON REPORTS

None

Approval of the Regularly Scheduled Meeting of August 31, 2026.

Mr. Pisani made a motion to approve the minutes from the regularly scheduled meeting on August 31, 2026. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried 3 in favor, 1 abstained -Cunningham.

The Select Board adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

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