



## TOWN OF GROTON

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## Board of Selectmen

John G. Petropoulos, *Chairman*  
Anna Eliot, *Vice-Chairman*  
Stuart M. Schulman, *Clerk*  
Peter S. Cunningham, *Member*  
Joshua A. Degen, *Member*

### Town Manager

Mark W. Haddad

**To:** *Board of Selectmen*

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

**Subject:** *Weekly Report*

**Date:** *September 21, 2015*

1. Scheduled on Monday's Agenda are two items. First, with Michael Bouchard's resignation from the Charter Review Committee, the Board of Selectmen has a vacancy to fill. We have advertised the vacancy and received interest from four individuals. Thomas Hartnett, Marlina Gilbert, Joshua Degen and Michael McCoy have submitted interest forms. They will be in attendance at Monday's meeting for the Board to interview and consider making the appointment. Second, the Board will be meeting in Joint Session with the Finance Committee to conduct the Public Hearing on the 2015 Fall Town Meeting Warrant. There are 16 Articles on the Warrant. Enclosed in your packet is the latest draft of the Warrant.
2. As part of the application for the MassWorks Grant and in an effort to improve our Grant Application, the Town applied for and received approval for a Community Compact with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Community Compact is a voluntary, mutual agreement entered into between the Baker/Polito Administration and individual cities and towns of the Commonwealth. A community will agree to implement at least one best practice that they select from across a variety of areas. I have attached a copy of the various "best practices" that the Town could choose from. After consultation with various Department Heads and a study of the areas, we decided to enter into a compact for Financial Management "Budget Document" Best Practice and Information Technology "Cyber Security" Best Practice. The Governor's Office and Division of Local Services approved these areas and authorized the Town to enter into the Compact with the Commonwealth. Since we are approved, the Town needs to enter into a written agreement that is signed by both the Commonwealth and the Town of Groton. The Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, once authorized by the full Board, will sign on behalf of the Town. Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito will sign on behalf of the Commonwealth. The Town will, over a two year period, implement the best practice for the categories chosen. The Division of Local Services serves as the primary point of entry when the Town is looking for resources in best practice development and implementation. Extra points for certain grants (MassWorks) and a grant program specifically for Compact Communities are incentives included for participation in the program. I will be working with the Finance Team and the IT Department to implement these Best Practices over the next two years. I would respectfully request that the Board vote to authorize the Chairman to sign the Compact on behalf of the Town of Groton. Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito will be in Groton on Friday, October 2, 2015 at 1:30 p.m. to sign the Compact on behalf of the Commonwealth. The signing will take place in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Town Hall. I would ask the Board to make themselves available for the Signing Ceremony. I hope you are as pleased as I am that we have entered into this Compact. There are approximately 23 other Communities in the Commonwealth that have entered into a Compact, including Westford, Littleton, Acton, Townsend and Boxborough. We can discuss this further at Monday's meeting.

3. In your correspondence last week was the Report from our Actuary updating the Town's OPEB Liability. I provided the Board of Selectmen with a copy for your information. Patricia DuFresne provided a copy to the Finance Committee. After reviewing the Report, Chairman Petropoulos asked me to provide the Board with a "High Level" take away from the report and place it on this week's Agenda for your review and discussion. I put together the following summary for your information. We can discuss this further at Monday's meeting.

**Summary of Post-Employment Benefit Plan Actuarial Findings**

The Town of Groton is required to conduct an actuarial valuation on our Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) every three years to comply with GASB 45. The last valuation was conducted in 2011. In 2011, the Town's Liability was \$7,150,656, with an annual contribution of \$917,899 to meet this liability. Based on this year's valuation, our liability has increased to \$8,135,213 with an annual contribution of \$1,086,092. As you know, the Town established the Trust in FY 2016 with an annual contribution of \$200,000. Please note that we are not required to meet the outlined annual contribution at this time. What are some of the reasons for this increase?

1. A 12.5% increase in the active population on Health Insurance from 96 in 2011 to 108 in 2014, however the annual average salary of employees has actually decreased from \$63,940 in 2011 to \$63,780 in 2014. Please note that this does not mean we added 12 new employees. It means that 12 benefit eligible employees started taking Health Insurance (some of which may be new).
2. A change in the mortality tables led to an increase in the Town's liability of roughly 2.5%.
3. The Town is carrying four retirees on Family Plans.
4. Individuals eligible for retirement has increased from 12 in 2011 to 13 in 2014.
5. Number of retirees on our health insurance plans has increased from 36 in 2011 to 40 in 2014.
6. Average life expectancy has increased from 71 in 2011 to 72.1 in 2014.
7. Surviving spouse average life expectancy has increased from 73.8 in 2011 to 75.3 in 2014.

The Town needs to review these findings and determine if we should be increasing our annual contribution to the Trust.

4. During the review of the various requests before the Community Preservation Committee at last Spring's Town Meeting, there was a discussion on whether or not the Conservation Commission should be asked to develop a "Land Purchase Plan" that would allow the Town to better plan for and consider requests from the Commission to add to the Conservation Fund. Chairman Petropoulos would like the Board to consider making this request at Monday's meeting.
5. The Board needs to fill the "Citizen-At-Large" vacancy on the Regional School Agreement Review Committee. We have advertised the position for the last three weeks and have only received one applicant. Therefore, I would respectfully request that the Board consider appointing John Giger to this vacancy.

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6. I thought it would be a good idea to set aside time on the Agenda for the Board to discuss the Town Counsel Interviews that took place on September 17<sup>th</sup>. The Board can use this time to discuss the interviews and determine next steps. We can discuss this in more detail at Monday's meeting.
7. The Board had discussed the idea of issuing a monthly or quarterly newsletter to the public providing residents with information and news out of the Selectmen's Office/Town Hall. Tom Orcutt had recommended that we consider having the various departments taking turns developing a quarterly newsletter for public distribution. To that end, Tom Orcutt, Michelle Collette, Dawn Dunbar and I took a crack at the first quarterly edition. I have enclosed a copy of the proposed newsletter to this report for your review and approval. We would like to make this newsletter available on October 1<sup>st</sup> and put it on the Website, as well as provide the Groton Herald with a copy as they offered space in the paper for this endeavor. We can discuss this at Monday's meeting.
8. I have received Alison Manugian's resignation from the Municipal Building Committee for the Prescott School. She was the representative from the School Committee. The School Committee has recommended that Leslie Lathrop be appointed to fill that vacancy. I have in fact made that appointment and, pursuant to Section 4-2(c) of the Charter, I would respectfully request that the Board ratify this appointment at Monday's meeting.
9. The Trails Committee has recommended that I appoint Steve Henderson to fill one of the two vacancies on the Committee. I have made this appointment and, pursuant to Section 4-2(c) of the Charter, I would respectfully request that the Board ratify this appointment at Monday's meeting.
10. Now that Michelle Collette has notified the Town of her intention to retire effective February 26, 2016, I would like to discuss with the Board and seek your input on my proposed search process. I am also reaching out to the Planning Board for their input, support and participation in the search. Let me start out first by saying that I am extremely sad that Michelle has decided to retire. Replacing her is going to be very difficult. She has served this Town extremely well for almost 33 years and that kind of experience is impossible to replace. She will be truly missed as an employee, but I am very lucky to be able to call her my friend. As you know, pursuant to Section 4-2(c) of the Groton Charter, it is my responsibility as Town Manager to appoint the Land Use Director/Town Planner, subject to ratification by the Board of Selectmen. That said, I want this to be as collaborative a process as possible. I would like the Planning Board to play a prominent role in the Search and help make the final decision. To that end, I am proposing the following process. First, I am planning on meeting with all Land Use Department Staff (Building Commissioner, Conservation Administrator, Land Use Administrative Assistant, Interdepartmental Administrative Assistant, Zoning Administrative Assistant and Housing Coordinator) in the next week or so to get their input on developing the hiring criteria. I think it is important to hear from the Staff as they work the most closely with this position. Based on this, I will work with the Human Resources Director to draft a job advertisement. I would then like to provide the Planning Board with the proposed advertisement and have them approve the final wording.

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10. ***Continued:***

I would like to advertise the position in the MMA Beacon, Nashoba Valley Communications (which posts it on Monster as well) and the Massachusetts Planning Administrators List Serve. I would like to establish a Search Committee made up of myself, the Human Resources Director, Building Commissioner, a member of the Personnel Board (Bud Robertson), a Selectman (Anna Eliot as Planning Board Liaison) and two members of the Planning Board (their choice). We would then conduct preliminary interviews and narrow the list down to two or three finalists who will then be interviewed by the full Planning Board at a meeting and Town Department Heads at their monthly Staff Meeting. I would then take recommendations and make a final decision that will then be brought to the Board of Selectmen for ratification. I believe this is a very thorough hiring process and have asked the Planning Board to review and approve this process. I would like input from the Board of Selectmen as well. I look forward to working with the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board on this very important Search.

11. At your August 31<sup>st</sup> meeting, the Board voted unanimously, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 54, §34, to approve using new voting machines. Specifically, the Board voted to start using the new equipment (Imagecast devices) and discontinue the old equipment (Optech III-P Eagle equipment). Once this vote took place, the Town needed to notify the State within five days of the vote. Unfortunately, the Town Clerk was on vacation the week you took the vote and was not able to provide the State with notification within the required time frame. Therefore, the Town Clerk has requested that the Board reaffirm the vote so that he can notify the State in a timely manner. I would respectfully request that the Board take this vote at Monday's meeting.

MWH/rjb  
enclosures