



TOWN OF GROTON

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Board of Selectmen

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Peter S. Cunningham, *Member*
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Town Manager
Mark W. Haddad

To: *Board of Selectmen*

From: *Mark W. Haddad – Town Manager*

Subject: *Weekly Report*

Date: *March 28, 2016*

1. Scheduled on Monday's Agenda is just one item. The Board will continue the Public Hearing on the 2016 Spring Town Meeting Warrant. There are several articles left for the Board to take a position. The following is a list of the remaining articles, along with any new information I have received since last Monday's Hearing:

Article 2 – Elected Officials Compensation – The Finance Committee has finalized the Budget and has decided to eliminate both the Selectmen and Assessor Stipends. Therefore, this Article will authorize the salaries of the Town Clerk and Town Moderator.

Article 4 – Annual Operating Budget – The Finance Committee has voted to approve the budget without any additional changes. The total budget is \$36,497,484, which includes the Needs Assessment of the Groton Dunstable Regional School Committee. The total increase of 9.34% will require an override of \$1,899,746.

Article 6 – Capital Budget – Item #2, Police/Fire Boat – There was an issue as to whether or not the FY 2017 Police Wage Budget required additional funding for patrols to utilize the new Boat. I spoke to the Police Chief about this and he believes that by the time the Boat is received this summer, it will be late August, thereby negating the necessity for additional wages. He is planning on reviewing the need as part of his FY 2018 Budget. Therefore, in the opinion of the Chief, there is no impact on the FY 2017 Operating Budget.

Article 7 – Senior Center Feasibility Study – The Council on Aging Feasibility Oversight Committee was scheduled to interview architects on Thursday, March 24th. At the conclusion of the interviews, they will rank the proposals. At that time, I will be opening the cost proposals and determining a final cost. I should have a proposed budget for the Board to consider at Monday's meeting.

Article 8 – Extend Sewer to 122 Old Ayer Road – I did not have a final determination on this Article in my notes. I am not sure why the Board did not take a position on this Article last Monday. I would respectfully request that the Board consider taking a position at Monday's meeting.

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1. **Continued:**

Article 10 – Library Retaining Wall – At last week’s hearing, the Board requested that we have a structural engineer review the proposed repairs and provide a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen. We have asked Val Prest to review this for the Board. He is scheduled to review the proposed repairs prior to Monday’s meeting. I will have his recommendation, if any, at Monday’s meeting for the Board to review and consider.

Article 13 – Water Enterprise Budget – The Water Commissioners will be requesting a transfer of \$60,000 from Water Surplus to complete the Fiscal Year. This is in line with transfers in previous years.

Article 14 – Sewer Enterprise Budget – The Sewer Commissioners will be requesting a transfer of \$50,000 from Sewer Surplus to complete the Fiscal Year. This is also in line with transfers in previous years.

There are several articles that the Board voted to defer their recommendation until Town Meeting, including Articles 11 (Line Item Transfers), 12 (Transfer to Offset Snow and Ice Deficit), 15 (Prior Year Bills), 19(B) (Middle School Track Rehabilitation), 21 (Zoning – Development Rate Limitation) and 22 (Non-Conforming Structures). Please let me know if anything has changed and whether or not you want a specific recommendation included in the Warrant.

2. Jonathan Greeno has put together some good information on the various Senior and Elderly Exemptions and Deferrals. Jonathan had previously presented this information at a forum at the Senior Center. Chairman Petropoulos thought it would be a good idea to have him present the same information to the public at a Selectmen’s meeting to reach a wider audience. Jonathan will be at Monday’s meeting to make this presentation to the Board and the public. Enclosed with this report is a summary sheet outlining the exemptions that he will cover at the meeting.
3. A few meetings ago, the Board reviewed an article that was in the Boston Globe that described declining median income in Massachusetts. Based on this Article and subsequent discussion, the Board requested that I put together a report on demographics in the Town of Groton. Specifically, the Board asked me to provide various metrics and dimensions. With the outstanding assistance of our Council on Aging Director Kathy Shelp, Town Treasurer/Collector Michael Hartnett and Town Clerk Michael Bouchard, I put together a report that identified various metrics. It is attached to this report for your review. I would like to discuss this further with the Board at Monday’s meeting.

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4. Last Wednesday, I emailed the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee and School Committee concerning the proposed second night of the Spring Town Meeting. As you are aware, the three Boards agreed to a scenario on the Budget that would have the second night of Town Meeting held on May 23rd, which would occur after the Annual Election. I have been informed that the Performing Arts Center is not available on May 23rd. Therefore, we need to determine another date for the second night of Town Meeting. The PAC is available on Thursday, May 19th. I believe this date still allows you to follow the scenario approved at your joint meeting two weeks ago. I had previously proposed that we schedule a joint meeting of all three Boards for Wednesday, May 18th as a placeholder meeting in the event the override is unsuccessful on May 17th. At this meeting, you can determine what action, if any, should be taken on the budget. I would still recommend that this take place, however, I have received input from several individuals that we should try and find another venue to hold the Town Meeting on May 23rd to give everyone more time to address amendments to the budget should the override fail. We have reached out to Lawrence Academy to use their facility as well as the Groton Dunstable Regional High School to use their gym. I will have an update for the Board at Monday's meeting. We can discuss this further then.
5. According to the Board's policy on Executive Session minutes, the Board is to conduct a periodic review on previous Executive Session minutes that have been approved but not released. The Policy requires a review by Town Counsel with an updated recommendation to the Board. Enclosed with this report is a memo from Dawn Dunbar that outlines Town Counsel's recommendations. Based on his latest review, he is not recommending the release of any additional minutes. We can discuss this further at Monday's meeting.
6. For my FY 2017 Budget update at this week's meeting, I want to concentrate on the Proposed Override Question. Since the Finance Committee has not made any additional changes to the budget, the Override Question approved last week is the Question that will appear on the Annual Election Ballot. I would ask the Board to consider recommending the budget as submitted by the Finance Committee, including the proposed budget of the Groton Dunstable Regional School Committee. In addition to that, the Town Clerk would like the Board to discuss the Ballot Question in a little more detail. As you know, in 2015, Town Meeting accepted M.G.L. Chapter 53, §18B, which authorizes the Board of Selectmen to print information relating to local ballot questions. In addition to the exact wording of the question, the information shall contain a "fair and concise" summary of the question, the effect of a "yes" or "no" vote and 150 word arguments for and against the question. The Board needs to solicit individuals or groups to participate in the process of developing arguments "for" and "against" the question. The Town Clerk would request that Proponent's and Opponent's provide arguments to the Town Clerk for delivery to Town Counsel. Town Counsel will determine the person or group best able to present an argument for and against the question and work with them to further refine. If no arguments are submitted, Counsel will prepare the argument. The final arguments will be mailed to each voter household, available in the office of the Town Clerk and at the polls. We can discuss this further at the Monday's meeting.