



TOWN OF GROTON

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Board of Selectmen

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Anna Eliot, *Member*

Town Manager
Mark W. Haddad

To: *Board of Selectmen*

From: *Mark W. Haddad – Town Manager*

Subject: *Weekly Report*

Date: *January 23, 2017*

1. Please note that Monday's meeting will commence at 5:45 p.m. with two Executive Sessions prior to the regularly scheduled meeting that will begin at 7:00 p.m. Enclosed in the packet is a copy of the letters that went to the subjects of the Executive Session, along with a copy of the complaint. Scheduled on Monday's Agenda are two items. First, as discussed at your last meeting, I have invited members of the Groton Dunstable Regional School Committee to Monday's meeting to discuss their future at the Prescott School. For the Board's information, I have enclosed a copy of the current lease between the Town and the School District. Second, the Complete Streets Committee will be in attendance at Monday's meeting to provide the Board with an update of their progress and provide the Board with their annual report.
2. I have invited the Town Moderator to Monday's meeting to discuss the proposal to institute a lottery at Town Meeting to determine how Warrant Articles are voted. The Town would need to amend the Town Meeting Bylaw by adopting such a procedure. The 2017 Spring Town Meeting would have to adopt the Bylaw and have it approved by the Attorney General. The earliest that this could be implemented would be the 2017 Fall Town Meeting. In order to draft the Bylaw, I looked at the Town of Hull which has such a Bylaw in place. I have taken the Hull Bylaw and tailored it to Groton. The following is a proposal for the Board to review and consider:

ARTICLE: ORDER OF CONSIDERATION OF ARTICLES AT TOWN MEETING

To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 81, "Town Meeting", of the Code of the Town of Groton by adding a new Section 81-7, entitled "Order of Consideration of Articles" to read as follows:

§81-7 - Order of Consideration of Articles.

- (a) With the exception of the general budget article, the order for consideration of all town meeting articles shall be chosen in lottery fashion by the Town Clerk, assisted by the Town Moderator. After an article has been drawn for consideration, subsequent articles shall not be drawn until the meeting has acted upon the drawn article. All articles affecting the budget, including Elected Officials Compensation and the Wage and Classification Schedule must be acted upon before action is taken on the general budget article. The general budget article shall be considered immediately upon completion of all wage and classification articles.

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2. **Continued:**

- (b) The Moderator may declare that certain articles, due to legal requirements, must be considered before or after articles or at a certain time. In such a situation those articles shall be considered when directed by the Moderator.

or to take any other action relative thereto.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

**Board of Selectmen:
Finance Committee:**

Summary: *In an effort to potentially increase and maintain attendance at Town Meeting, the Board of Selectmen is proposing a lottery system to select articles for consideration by the Town Meeting. After the budget is voted, the Town Clerk will randomly draw articles to be considered by the Town Meeting.*

We can discuss this further at Monday's meeting.

3. The Board of Selectmen had voted to request that all Committees appointed by either the Board of Selectmen or Town Manager consider developing annual goals and objectives. The Board requested that I draft a memorandum to them requesting that they consider developing annual goals. As directed, enclosed with this report is a draft memorandum for the Board's consideration. I would ask the Board to approve the draft for distribution.
4. We have received \$20,000 in invoices from MIIA, our insurance carrier, for our deductibles for the lawsuit filed by the four former call firefighters. Each claim is considered separate and subject to the deductible of \$5,000. I called Lenny Kesten to discuss this with him. He told me that there has been no settlement in the case, but once we pay these deductibles, we have satisfied our responsibility to the insurance company. I have attached copies of the invoices to this report for your review. I am seeking your advice on how to pay these invoices. Right now, we have no money left in the insurance account. We have two choices to pay these invoices. We could either wait for Town Meeting and transfer money from available funds to our insurance account, or we can request a reserve fund transfer from the Finance Committee. I believe this qualifies as an unforeseen emergency expense because I did not expect any invoices from our insurance carrier until such time as the case was settled. These invoices certainly came as a surprise. Please let me know how you would like me to proceed. We can discuss this further at Monday's meeting.

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5. The Friends of Prescott have completed a draft of their FY 2018 Prescott School CPA application. According to the Community Preservation Plan, a first draft of this application is due on the Community Preservation Committee's desk by 4:00 PM on Thursday, January 26, 2017. At a meeting with the Board of Selectmen in December, the Friends had promised to provide the Board with a draft application prior to submission. I have enclosed a copy of the draft application for your review and comment. Please note that the Friends have reduced the scope of work and amount requested to that agreed upon at the meeting. I would ask the Board to provide me with any proposed changes so that I can get them to the Friends so that they can incorporate the changes prior to the application submittal deadline.

6. As has been my practice, I have set aside time on the Agenda to update the Board on the FY 2018 Proposed Budget. Please remember that we will be meeting in Joint Session with the Finance Committee on Saturday, January 28, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. In addition, I have received many questions concerning the way the Finance Team and I developed the FY 2018 Proposed Operating Budget and how we conform to the 2.4% guidance. I want to reiterate that the Budget we presented to you provides for an increase of 2.29% total spending over the approved Fiscal Year 2017 Budget. Some believe that this is not a true reflection of the growth because excluded debt is included in the calculation. This is similar to the same concern raised last year. That said, I have developed a couple of more spreadsheets that further breaks down the budget into categories and have enclosed them with this report. The first sheet shows the budget growth of wages and expenses in one subtotal and debt and benefits in another. The total growth in wages and expenses is 1.6%. The second spreadsheet shows the budget with excluded debt separated out. The budget increase with this scenario is 2.86%. The third spreadsheet shows the municipal budget with employee benefits disbursed throughout the various line items, with debt and enterprise benefits separated. The budget increase in this scenario is 3.27%. Finally, I have provided you with two charts showing "Where The Money Goes" in two ways, one with benefits separate, and one with benefits disbursed. With regard to the budget growth at 2.86% with excluded debt removed, I would call to your attention that the 2.4% budget growth figure was based on annual revenue growth at 3.4%. Please note that we anticipate revenue growth in FY 2018 at 3.9%. In addition, we were able to fund the increase in the Groton Dunstable Operational Assessment at 4.08% and Nashoba Tech at 7.27%, with a total school increase (including excluded debt) at 3.90%. I firmly believe the Municipal Budget is lean and sustainable as presented and look forward to discussing this in more detail with the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee on January 28, 2017. We can discuss this in more detail at Monday's meeting.

MWH/rjb
enclosures