



TOWN OF GROTON

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Select Board

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Joshua A. Degen, *Vice Chair*
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John R. Giger, *Member*
Rebecca H. Pine, *Member*

Town Manager
Mark W. Haddad

To: *Select Board*

From: *Mark W. Haddad – Town Manager*

Subject: *Weekly Report*

Date: *September 23, 2019*

1. Please note that Monday's Meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m. The Board will be holding a workshop to discuss potential budget guidance for Fiscal Year 2021. The Tri-Board will be meeting Monday morning to review updated information on the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget. Depending on the outcome of that meeting, I will forward that information to the Board prior to your meeting Monday afternoon. The regular meeting will commence at 7:00 p.m. In addition to the Town Manager's Report and an update on the on-going issues list, the Board will continue to the public hearing on the 2019 Fall Town Meeting Warrant. The latest draft of the Warrant is enclosed with this report. At the conclusion of the public hearing, I will be requesting that the Board approve the Warrant for posting. The only additional item to be added to the Warrant will be the Town Manager's Report to the 2019 Fall Town Meeting. I will complete the report later this week and provide it to the Board under separate cover.
2. I am pleased to be making two appointments to the Groton Police Department. First, I have appointed Matthew Beal as a Police Officer. Mr. Beal lives in Townsend and graduated from North Middlesex Regional High School in 2015. He interned with the Groton Police Department in 2016 and was appointed as a Reserve Officer on January 16, 2018 after graduating from the Boylston Reserve and Intermittent Police Academy. He just graduated from Fitchburg State University's Criminal Justice Police Concentration Program with a Bachelors in Criminal Justice and full-time certification from the Municipal Police Training Committee. I am pleased to make this appointment and would respectfully request that the Board consider ratifying this appointment at Monday's meeting. I am also pleased to be appointing Bane as the new Groton Police Dog. Bane is 10 months old and comes highly recommended. He and his Training Officer, Greg Steward, will be attending training sessions for the next several months. I would respectfully request that the Board consider ratifying this appointment as well.
3. I would respectfully request that the Board consider taking positions on the various Warrant Articles contained in the 2019 Fall Town Meeting Warrant. To assist the Board in making your decisions, attached to this report is the latest draft of the Warrant. In addition, I am repeating my Town Manager's Report from last week in which I explained the various articles. I have updated this section to reflect recommendations from the Finance Committee:

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3. **Continued:**

Article 1 – Unpaid Bills - There are two unpaid bills for Town Meeting consideration in the amount of \$3,195. One bill is to A-1 Odd Jobs for three banners that were hung in June, 2019. The second bill is from Waste-Zero in the amount of \$3,045. The funding would come from Free Cash.

Article 2 – Amend the Fiscal Year 2020 Town Operating Budget – At this time, there are two proposed amendments (tax levy increase) to the budget. The first amendment is to add \$13,000 to the Town Accountant's Budget to pay for additional licenses and software upgrades to our accounting software package. The second amendment is to increase the debt service budget by \$70,393 to cover the interest payment in FY 2020 for the Bond Anticipation Notes on the DPW Project and Library Roof. The impact on the tax rate is as follows:

- Town Accountant Software Upgrade - \$13,000 will add \$0.01 to the tax rate and add \$4.59 to the average tax bill.
- Debt Service Increase - \$70,393 will add \$0.04 to the tax rate and add \$18.36 to the average tax bill.

The Finance Committee supports the debt service appropriation, but would like to see the Accounting Software reduced to \$10,000 and fund it from Free Cash. The remaining \$3,000 should be found in the operating budget. We can discuss this further at Monday's meeting.

Article 3 – Transfer within the Water Enterprise Fund – The Water Commission will be seeking a transfer from their Excess and Deficiency Fund of \$150,000 to pay for engineering costs to provide solutions to the Iron and Manganese issue.

Article 4 – Transfer Money within the Sewer Enterprise Fund – It is anticipated that this article will be withdrawn from consideration as no additional funding is needed at this time.

Article 5 – Transfer Money into the Capital Stabilization Fund – The current balance in the Capital Stabilization Fund is \$171,958. The Financial Policies states that the Capital Stabilization Fund should be 1.5% of the Town's Operating Budget (\$39,811,627), or \$597,175. To reach this level would require a minimum appropriation of \$425,217. The proposed Capital Plan for FY 2021 currently calls for \$901,240 in proposed requests. During the budget process it will be reduced to around \$500,000. Given the fact that we leave approximately \$200,000 in this fund annually, we will be requesting a transfer of \$500,000 from Free Cash to fund the FY 2021 Capital Budget. At this time, it is anticipated that the following will be requested (***please note that this will be subject to change during the development of the FY 2021 Operating and Capital Budgets***):

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3. Continued:

Highway	Pick-Up Trucks	\$	40,000
Highway	Intermediate Truck	\$	60,000
Highway	Dump Truck	\$	40,000
Town Facilities	IT Infrastructure/Computer Purchase	\$	40,000
Town Facilities	Municipal Building Exterior Repairs	\$	25,000
Town Facilities	Paint Police Station/Roof Repairs	\$	50,000
Town Facilities	Country Club Roof	\$	50,000
Transfer Station	Tractor Trailer Unit/Trash Trailer	\$	40,000
Park Department	Property Improvements	\$	25,000
Police	Police Cruisers	\$	113,140
Country Club	Golf Carts	\$	25,000
Country Club	Triplex - Greens Mower	\$	5,100
Total		\$	513,240

Article 6 – Transfer Money in the Stabilization Fund – The current balance in the Stabilization Fund is \$1,988,036. The Financial Policies state that the Stabilization Fund should be 5% of the Town’s Operating Budget (\$39,811,627), or \$1,990,582. This would require a minimum appropriation of \$2,546 from Free Cash. Depending on the interest earned over the next two months, we may not need an appropriation to satisfy the Financial Policies.

Article 7 – Transfer Money into the GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund – The current balance in this fund is \$214,160. The Fiscal Year 2021 District Capital Plan will require the Town to pay \$475,000 for its share of the Plan. This will require an appropriation of \$261,000 from Free Cash to cover the Town’s expense in FY 2021. I have provided the Board with a copy of the District’s FY 2021 Capital Budget under separate cover.

Article 8 – Install Crosswalk Signage on Main Street – The anticipated cost of this lighted signage is \$15,000. This funding would come from Free Cash.

Article 9 – Community Preservation Funding Recommendations – This Article is a placeholder in the event that additional funding is needed for the installation of the Sprinkler System at the Prescott School. Currently, we are anticipating that bids will be due the week before Town Meeting. We will update the Board as we get closer to Town Meeting.

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3. **Continued:**

Article 10 – Update Assessors’ Maps/Cyclical Inspections – The total amount requested under this Article has been amended to \$21,600 and it will come from Free Cash. We are no longer requesting funding to update the Assessors’ Maps. I have amended the Article to reflect this change. The Assessors’ need to start their cyclical inspections to comply with Massachusetts Department of Revenue requirements that requires every property in Town be inspected once every five years. The Finance Committee recommends that this funding come from Free Cash in FY 2020, but it should be added to the FY 2021 Operating Budget.

Article 11 – Funding for Stormwater Strategy – The Town would like to hire a consultant to assist the Town in determining a funding strategy to cover the expenses required to comply with the Town’s MS4 Permit. The proposed cost to retain these services is \$15,000 and it would come from Free Cash. It is anticipated that the annual expense for compliance could be anywhere from \$250,000 to \$500,000 annually. The purpose of hiring a consultant is to determine the best way to cover this expense on an annual basis. Once the strategy is determined, we will return to the Spring Town Meeting in 2020 for approval.

Article 12 – Amend Bylaws – Ban Single Use Plastic Bags – If approved, this Bylaw would ban the use of Single Use Plastic Bags by all commercial establishments in Groton effective July 1, 2020

Article 13 – Purchase Trimper Property – This Article authorizes the Conservation to apply for a Land Program Grant to offset the cost of acquiring this parcel. It is a 42-acre parcel with frontage on Martins Pond Road. The cost of acquisition is \$400,000, with an anticipated Grant Reimbursement (if approved) of approximately \$243,000.

Article 14 – Establish Transfer Station Revolving Fund – From the Warrant Summary: *“This Article will allow the DPW Director to collect fees from municipalities who utilize the new glass pulverizing plant at the transfer station, and then expend those fees for the purpose of general up-keep and maintenance on that equipment. A spending limitation of \$10,000 annually is suggested for this account, and expenses will be managed by the DPW Director.”*

Article 15 – Establish Senior Center Revolving Fund – From the Warrant Summary: *“This Article will allow the Council on Aging Director to collect fees from individuals who utilize the new fitness equipment at the Senior Center, and then expend those fees for the purpose of general up-keep and maintenance on that equipment. It is expected that the fund balance in this account will eventually accumulate to also cover replacement of equipment as this becomes necessary. A spending limitation of \$10,000 annually is suggested for this account, and expenses will be managed by the Council on Aging Director.”*

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3. **Continued:**

Article 16 – Acceptance of Amelia Way as a Town Way – The Select Board has held the public hearing on this Road and has accepted the layout and will recommend acceptance of the Roadway to the 2019 Fall Town Meeting.

Article 17 – Acceptance of Mockingbird Hill Road - The Select Board needs to conduct a public hearing to accept the layout of the Road as approved by the Planning Board and DPW Director. Once the layout is accepted, Town Meeting can formally adopt the Road as a Town Way.

Free Cash has been certified by the Department of Revenue at \$1,335,762. If every Article passes as proposed by the Town Manager, the total amount of Free Cash appropriated would be \$818,341, leaving a balance of \$517,421. Enclosed with this report is a spreadsheet showing the various appropriations for the various articles.

4. As discussed at your meeting on September 9th, Bud Robertson, Josh Degen and I have met to review and update the proposed Charge for the Capital Planning Advisory Committee. The final proposed Charge is attached to this report for your review and approval. Should the Board approve the Charge, we will advertise the vacancies and send it to the original applicants to see if they are still interested in serving on the revised Committee. In addition, Bud, Josh and I also discussed how to deal with Major Initiatives as discussed in the previous Charge. Bud Robertson had proposed a process to the Board that the Finance Committee thought was the best way to address this issue. Also attached to this report is a memorandum from me to the Select Board and Finance Committee outlining this process. We can discuss this in more detail at Monday's meeting.

MWH/rjb
enclosures