

**MINUTES
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
JANUARY 20, 1998**

The Special Town Meeting was called to order at 7:36 pm at the Groton-Dunstable Middle School auditorium. The overflow was seated in the cafeteria and the total number of voters in attendance was 225. The quorum requirement was 106 voters.

It was decided that the tellers would be called and sworn in order to avoid a delay at a later point in the meeting. Tellers sworn in were: John Biasi, Doris Chojnowski, Karl Johnson, Robert Johnson, Gail Lyons, Ron Peck, Karen Riggert and Michael Stephens.

At 8:15 the auditorium was filled to capacity. At that time, voters attempting to check in were instructed to the cafeteria, where a live video feed was in place. There were 847 voters in attendance.

A motion was made to advance article 6. Motion to advance passed.

ARTICLE 6: Moved and Seconded that the Town will vote to transfer from free cash \$8,000 for consulting services.

Article 6 passed by majority.

Moderator Robert Gosselin explained the manner in which a secret ballot, should it be called, would be accomplished. The Moderator spoke about the need to maintain impartiality. Due to a possible perceived conflict of interest on Articles 1 and 2, the Moderator called upon Attorney Thomas Lilly to moderate the discussions pertaining to said articles. Attorney Ray Lyons was appointed to moderate the meeting apportioned in the cafeteria. Both Assistant Moderators were sworn in by the Clerk.

At 8:25, discussion of Article 1 began with a presentation by School Committee Chair Patricia Harvigsen and member Patricia Dumont. Member Eric Wickfield and Superintendent Mary Athey Jennings presented a portion of the Committee's remarks. At 9:22 member Peter O'Sullivan presented a minority report. Selectman Richard Powell gave an additional minority report. At 9:55, resident Thomas Callahan was recognized to add to the opponents' report. At 10:05, Fincom representative Catherine Dulaney began presenting the financial impact of the articles presented.

At the conclusion of the Fincom's presentation, debate on Article 1 was open to debate on the floor. A motion was made by Frank Belitsky and William Miller that the main motion under article 1 be voted on by ballot. The motion was defeated. Further discussion and debate continued. After some time, Moderator Lilly asked citizens if they were ready to move the question. The response was affirmative. Alan Friot made a motion to move the question. The motion was seconded. The motion passed by a two-thirds majority. Tellers were called and two were sent to the cafeteria to count the vote. The main motion (Article 1) called for a two-thirds vote.

ARTICLE 1: Moved and seconded that the Town vote to approve, pursuant to Chapter 71, Section 16(c) of the General Laws, the acquisition by the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District of the land described generally as follows:

Property in the Town of Groton on Chicopee Row, in the estate of Helen Walker, portions of Map J Parcels 22 and 23 as shown on Groton Assessor's Map, approximately one mile northeast from the intersection of Longley Road and Chicopee Row.

The vote taken was 455 in favor, 293 opposed. The motion, failing to reach a two-thirds majority, was defeated.

ARTICLE 2: Moved and seconded that the Town vote to approve the amount of the \$1,060,000 debt authorized by vote of the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District on December 13, 1997, for the purpose of acquiring approximately one-hundred (100) acres of land in Groton as a site for new school facilities, such land being described generally as follows:

Property in the Town of Groton on Chicopee Row, in the estate of Helen Walker, portions of Map J Parcels 22 and 23 as shown on Groton Assessor's Map, approximately one mile northeast from the intersection of Longley Road and Chicopee Row.

including costs incidental and related thereto, provided, however, that no debt shall be incurred if the Town votes, at a town election, held within sixty (60) days from the date of the vote under this article, in the negative on a question to exempt the amounts required to pay for the bonds, or notes, authorized herein from the provisions of Proposition 2 1/2, so called (Mass. General Law, Chapter 59, Section 21C).

A motion was made and seconded to postpone the article indefinitely. The motion carried by majority.

ARTICLE 3: Moved and seconded that the Town vote to approve the amount of the \$23,140,000 debt authorized by vote of the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District on December 13, 1997, for the purpose of constructing and equipping a new high school at an estimated cost of \$23,140,000, including costs incidental and related thereto, provided, however, that no debt shall be incurred if the Town votes, at a town election, held within sixty (60) days from the date of the vote under this article, in the negative on a question to exempt the amounts required to pay for the bonds, or notes, authorized herein from the provisions of Proposition 2 1/2, so called (Mass. General Law, Chapter 59, Section 21C).

A motion was made and seconded to postpone the article indefinitely. The motion carried by majority.

ARTICLE 4: Moved and seconded that the Town vote to approve the amount of the \$7,888,614 debt authorized by vote of the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District on December 13, 1997, for the purpose of reconstructing, remodeling or making extraordinary repairs to the current Groton-Dunstable Regional School District High School for use as a middle school facility at an estimated cost of \$7,888,614, including costs incidental and related thereto, provided that this vote shall be of no effect if construction of a new high school, as provided for in Article 3 of this warrant is not approved; and provided further, that no debt shall be incurred under this vote if the Town votes, at a town election, held within sixty (60) days from the date this vote is adopted, in the negative on a question to exempt the amounts required to pay for the bonds, or notes, authorized herein from the provisions of Proposition 2 1/2, so called (Mass. General Law, Chapter 59, Section 21C).

A motion was made and seconded to postpone the article indefinitely. The motion carried by majority.

ARTICLE 5: Moved and seconded that the Town vote to approve the amount of the \$9,781,200 debt authorized by vote of the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District on December 13, 1997, for the purpose of constructing and equipping a new elementary school to be located on the site of the proposed new high school at an estimated cost of \$9,781,200, including costs incidental and related thereto, provided that this vote shall be of no effect if construction of a new high school, as provided for in Article 3 of this warrant is not approved; and provided further, that no debt shall be incurred under this vote if the Town votes, at a town election, held within sixty (60) days from the date this vote is adopted, in the negative on a question to exempt the amounts required to pay for the bonds, or notes, authorized herein from the provisions of Proposition 2 1/2, so called (Mass. General Law, Chapter 59, Section 21C).

Motion was made and seconded to postpone the article indefinitely. The motion carried by majority.

A motion to dissolve the meeting was made and seconded. The meeting was dissolved at 11:11 p.m.