

# Warrant, Summary, and Recommendations

## TOWN OF GROTON



## 2013 FALL TOWN MEETING

Groton-Dunstable Middle School Auditorium  
344 Main Street, Groton, Massachusetts 01450

Beginning Monday, October 21, 2013 @ 7:00 PM

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Attention – Voters and Taxpayers

Please bring this Report to Town Meeting

**FALL TOWN MEETING WARRANT  
OCTOBER 21, 2013**

Middlesex, ss.  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
To any Constable in the Town of Groton

Greetings:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby required to notify and warn said inhabitants of the Town of Groton qualified to vote on Town affairs to assemble in the Groton-Dunstable Middle School Auditorium in said Town on Monday, the twenty-first day of October, 2013 at Seven O'clock in the evening, to consider the following:

**ARTICLE 1: PRIOR YEAR BILLS**

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds a sum or sums of money for the payment of unpaid bills from prior fiscal years, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Board of Selectmen: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Summary:** *Town Meeting approval is required to pay bills from a prior fiscal year. A list of unpaid bills will be provided at Town Meeting.*

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**ARTICLE 2: AMEND THE FISCAL YEAR 2014 TOWN OPERATING BUDGET**

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Fiscal Year 2014 Operating Budget as adopted under Article 5 of the April 29, 2013 Spring Town Meeting, and vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds a sum or sums of money as may be necessary to defray the expenses of the Town for Fiscal Year 2014, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
TOWN MANAGER**

**Board of Selectmen: *See Town Manager's Report in Back of Warrant for Recommendations***

**Finance Committee: *See Town Manager's Report in Back of Warrant for Recommendations***

**Summary:** *The Fiscal Year 2014 Town Operating Budget was approved at the 2013 Spring Town Meeting in April, 2013. Any changes to this Budget would have to be made prior to setting the tax rate. The purpose of this article is to make any necessary changes to balance the FY 2014 Operating Budget. Please see the Town Manager's Report contained in the back of this Warrant for an explanation outlining the proposed changes.*

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**ARTICLE 3: TRANSFER MONEY INTO THE CAPITAL STABILIZATION FUND**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds a sum or sums of money to be added to the sum already on deposit in the Capital Stabilization Fund, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended Unanimously*  
**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*

**Summary:** *The Fund has a balance of \$143,000. The financial management goal is to achieve and maintain a balance in the Capital Stabilization Fund equal to 1.5% of the total annual budget. Any balance beyond the 1.5% level should be added to the Capital Stabilization Fund in conjunction with the Capital Plan to reduce overall borrowing and associated costs. The target amount for the Capital Stabilization Fund will be provided at Town Meeting.*

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**ARTICLE 4: TRANSFER MONEY INTO THE STABILIZATION FUND**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds a sum or sums of money to be added to the sum already on deposit in the Stabilization Fund, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended Unanimously*  
**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*

**Summary:** *The balance in this fund is \$1.13 million. The financial management goal is to achieve and maintain a balance in the Stabilization Fund equal to 5% of the total annual budget. The target amount for the Stabilization Fund will be provided at Town Meeting.*

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**ARTICLE 5: OFFSET THE TAX RATE**

To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from the General Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash) or from other available funds for the purpose of affecting the tax rate for the period beginning July 1, 2013, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommendation Unanimously*  
**Finance Committee:** *Recommendation Deferred Until Town Meeting*

**Summary:** *The intent of this article is to use a portion of Free Cash or General Stabilization Fund monies as a funding source for the FY 2014 Budget in order to lower the amount of money required to be raised from taxes or to balance a deficit budget. The amount of Free Cash and General Stabilization Fund monies available for appropriation will be provided at Town Meeting.*

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**ARTICLE 6: PURCHASE CRUISERS FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds and/or borrow a sum or sums of money to be expended by the Town Manager to purchase and equip two new police cruisers for the Groton Police Department, and for all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Board of Selectmen: *Recommended Unanimously***  
**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Summary:** *This is an off-cycle request for additional police cruisers to replace one (2007) un-marked cruiser and one (2010) marked cruiser that was totaled in an accident. The un-marked cruiser is in serious need of repair and needs to be replaced. It has been pulled from service due to its condition. A quote to repair this vehicle is estimated at \$5,000. This cruiser is used by the Police detectives and as a back-up cruiser when the need arises. Cruiser vehicles start off as line cars that are painted and equipped as marked police vehicles. They generally stay as line cars for three years. Each year the Town purchases two new line cruisers, trades in the oldest vehicles and converts the best remaining vehicles to unmarked cruisers. Due to delays in receiving new line vehicles, the Town has been forced to keep existing line vehicles in service longer, lessening their value and making them less reliable as unmarked cruisers. Insurance reimbursement will cover a portion of the cost of the new marked vehicle, with an appropriation from this article covering the remaining expense. The purpose of this article is to replace the oldest vehicles in the fleet with two new line cruisers and convert the best remaining line vehicles to unmarked cruisers.*

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**ARTICLE 7: IMPROVEMENTS TO VARIOUS TOWN PROPERTIES**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow a sum or sums of money to be expended by the Park Commission to make various improvements to, and pay all related costs for, several fields and properties operated and controlled by the Groton Park Commission, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**PARK COMMISSION**

**Board of Selectmen: *Recommended Unanimously***  
**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

**Summary:** *The Groton Park Commission is responsible for maintaining and improving all Town Fields and Commons. The current operating budget approved for the Park Commission only provides enough funding to pay for administrative services, supplies and limited improvements. An infusion of funding is needed to continue to maintain and improve Town property. Several projects under consideration for this funding would include replacing the Flag Pole on Firemen's Common, installing fence rails on the Town Common, purchase of solar compacting trash cans for the Hanson Playground, installation of fencing at Hazel Grove as well as improving and expanding parking at Cutler Field to support increased use. It is anticipated that these improvements will cost approximately \$50,000. A more complete list of improvements will be provided at Town Meeting.*

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**ARTICLE 8: CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS MOSQUITO CONTROL PROJECT**

To see if the Town will vote to become a member of the Central Massachusetts Mosquito Control Project for a minimum of three (3) years, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 252, Section 5A, chapter 583 of the Acts of 1973 and any other enabling authority, or take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF HEALTH**

**Board of Selectmen: Recommended - 4 In Favor, 1 At Town Meeting (Schulman)**  
**Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**Summary:** *The Central Massachusetts Mosquito Control Project (CMMCP) is a mosquito control project established by legislative act, Chapter 583 of the Acts of 1973. It operates under an assessment procedure and provides a year-round program of mosquito control in 39 cities and towns in both Middlesex and Worcester counties. Services offered include larval and adult mosquito surveillance, larval and adult mosquito control, public education, ditch cleaning and maintenance and research/control efficacy. The program is tailored to meet the specific needs of the member cities and towns, and residents can opt out of any part of the program. Spraying is done at residents' request. It is anticipated that the Town will be assessed an annual fee of \$73,000 on our Cherry Sheet for a minimum of three (3) years for a total of \$219,000.*

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**ARTICLE 9: DESIGN AND BID COSTS, WATER MAIN EXTENSION FOR FIRE PROTECTION**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager, for the design of, and solicitation of bids for, a water main extension on Lost Lake Drive and Pine Trail for fire protection purposes, and all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**TOWN MANAGER**

**Board of Selectmen: Recommended – 4 In Favor, 1 Against (Petropoulos)**  
**Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**Summary:** *This article seeks an appropriation for design and bidding costs for extension of a 12" ductile iron water main approximately 2,700 linear feet on Lost Lake Drive and Pine Trail for fire protection purposes. Fire Protection deficiencies have been identified in the report from the Lost Lake Fire Protection Study Committee appointed by the Town Manager to review and recommend improvements for Fire Protection in the Lost Lake Area. The funding to be requested under this article, estimated to be \$37,000, will be for the design and bidding services. The appropriation to construct the extension of the town water line will be requested at the 2014 Spring Town Meeting once the construction cost is known.*

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**ARTICLE 10: DESIGN AND BID COSTS, WATER MAIN EXTENSION FOR FIRE PROTECTION**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager, for the design of, and solicitation of bids for a water main extension on Boston Road, Summit Drive and Lakeside Drive for fire protection purposes, and all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**TOWN MANAGER**

**Board of Selectmen: Recommended – 4 In Favor, 1 Against (Petropoulos)**  
**Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**Summary:** *This article seeks an appropriation for design and bidding costs for extension of a 12" ductile iron water main on Boston Road approximately 1,600 linear feet from the A.L. Prime Gas Station to the entrance to Groton Ridge Heights, and for 800 linear feet of 8" ductile iron water mains on Summit Drive and 1,000 linear feet of 8" ductile iron water mains on Lakeside Drive for fire protection purposes. Fire Protection deficiencies have been identified in the report from the Lost Lake Fire Protection Study Committee appointed by the Town Manager to review and recommend improvements for Fire Protection in the Lost Lake Area. The funding to be requested under this article, estimated to be \$33,850, will be for the design and bidding services. The appropriation to construct the town water lines will be requested at the 2014 Spring Town Meeting once the construction cost is known.*

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**ARTICLE 11: DESIGN COSTS, FIRE CISTERNS FOR FIRE PROTECTION**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager, for the design of, and solicitation of bids for the installation of, two (2) underground fire cisterns and one (1) "dry" fire hydrant on Knops Pond at the bridge to the island on Island Road, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**TOWN MANAGER**

**Board of Selectmen: Recommended – 4 In Favor, 1 Against (Petropoulos)**  
**Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**Summary:** *This article seeks an appropriation for design and bidding costs for two (2) 50,000 gallon underground cisterns. One would be installed at Prescott Street at the intersection of Off Prescott Street and the other at Weymisset Road at the intersection of Radio Road. The “dry” fire hydrant would be located at the bridge on Island Road. Fire Protection deficiencies have been identified in the report from the Lost Lake Fire Protection Study Committee appointed by the Town Manager to review and recommend improvements for Fire Protection in the Lost Lake Area. The funding to be requested under this article, estimated to be \$32,550, will be for the design and bidding services. The appropriation to install the two cisterns and “dry” fire hydrant will be requested at the 2014 Spring Town Meeting once the construction cost is known.*

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**ARTICLE 12: CONCEPT PLAN APPROVAL FOR 128 MAIN STREET**

To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to Section 218-18 of the Zoning Bylaw regarding Special Use Considerations and Section 218-27.C of the Zoning Bylaw regarding Planned Multi-Family Residential Development, to approve the Concept Plan for business development and Multi-Family use for the property owned by Pergantis Realty Trust, situated at 128 Main Street and shown on Assessors’ Map 113 as Parcel 10, which premises are described in a deed recorded at the South Middlesex Registry of Deeds in Book 13305, Page 254, being shown on a conceptual plan entitled “Concept Plan in Groton Mass. Prepared for 128 Main Street, LLC” prepared by David E. Ross Associates, Inc., dated August, 2013, a copy of which is on file with the Town Clerk, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**PLANNING BOARD**

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended Unanimously*

**Finance Committee:** *No Position*

**Planning Board:** *Recommended Unanimously*

**Summary:** *The article requests that voters approve a concept plan to redevelop the Groton Inn property as a three-story, twenty-four (24) room inn with a fifty (50) seat restaurant. The Applicant is also proposing to construct up to thirty (30) long and short term rental cottages, as well as a fitness area and caretaker’s residence on the Property. The proposed square footage of the buildings’ footprints would be 30,024 square feet with a total gross square footage of building area equal to approximately 51,208 square feet. The Property is the site of the former Groton Inn, and is serviced by Town sewer and water. The Property is zoned B-1.*

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**ARTICLE 13: REZONE PARCEL 101-22 FROM PUBLIC USE TO RESIDENTIAL – AGRICULTURAL “R-A”**

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Map established under Chapter 218 of the Code of the Town of Groton to rezone from Public Use (P) to Residential-Agricultural (R-A) a parcel of land located at 33 West Main Street consisting of approximately 0.28 acres, being shown on Assessors’ Map 101, Parcel 22, or take to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended Unanimously*

**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*

**Planning Board:** *Recommended Unanimously*

**Summary:** *Currently, Squannacook Hall is zoned for public use because it is owned by the Town and was used for municipal purposes. The Board of Selectmen has solicited proposals for the sale of Squannacook Hall and has received one proposal for its re-use (please see Article 17 for further explanation). Since the building will no longer be used for municipal purposes, it should be rezoned accordingly.*

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**ARTICLE 14: CONCEPT PLAN APPROVAL – 33 WEST MAIN STREET**

To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to Section 218-27.C of the Zoning Bylaw regarding Planned Multi-Family Residential Development, to approve the concept plan entitled “Re-Development of Squannacook Hall” for planned multi-family/residential development for the land owned by the Town of Groton located at 33 West Main Street, and shown on Assessors’ Map 101, Parcel 22, which plan is on file with the Town Clerk, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended Unanimously*  
**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*  
**Planning Board:** *Recommended Unanimously*

**Summary:** *As discussed in Articles 14 and 17, the Board of Selectmen has solicited proposals for the sale of Squannacook Hall through the Request for Proposals process and has received one proposal to convert the building into four (4) residential rental units. Pursuant to our Zoning Bylaw, this type of use requires concept plan approval at Town Meeting for a planned multi-family residential development.*

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**ARTICLE 15: REPAIR SEPTIC SYSTEM AT SQUANNACOOK HALL**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds and/or borrow a sum or sums of money to repair the septic system at Squannacook Hall located on West Main Street in West Groton, and for all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended Unanimously*  
**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*

**Summary:** *Please see the summary in Article 16. During the negotiations with the prospective buyer of Squannacook Hall, the Board of Selectmen has agreed to repair the Septic System as part of the purchase and sale agreement. The estimated cost of the repair is \$30,000. By selling this building and putting it on the tax rolls, the Town will receive an estimated \$10,000 a year in taxes. The Board of Selectmen believes it is reasonable to invest in a new system to allow the sale to move forward, with an anticipated three year period to recoup the cost of the system.*

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**ARTICLE 16: SALE OR LEASE OF SQUANNACOOK HALL**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to sell and/or lease, for a period not to exceed 99 years, the building known as Squannacook Hall, which comprises of approximately 4,402 square feet, and all or a portion of the 0.28 acre site on which it is located at 33 West Main Street, West Groton, Massachusetts, to take all necessary action to comply with the General Laws of the Commonwealth for the disposal of said building, and to petition the General Court for any necessary special legislation, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Board of Selectmen: Recommended Unanimously**

**Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**Summary:** *Squannacook Hall has been vacant for the past four years. A re-use study was completed four years ago for the future use of the Building. However, due to cost and lack of a viable septic system, no action was taken on the proposed rehabilitation. Last fall, the Town successfully designed a Title V septic system that was permitted by the Board of Health. Based on this, the Board of Selectmen issued a Request for Proposals for the disposition of the Building. The Town received one proposal to convert Squannacook Hall into four (4) residential rental units and rent the building for the next twenty (20) years. The purpose of this article will be to present the proposal in more detail to the Town Meeting for approval of the disposition of the Building. A full report will be made to the Fall Town Meeting.*

**ARTICLE 17: AMEND § 218-13 – ZONING – SCHEDULE OF USE REGULATIONS**

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Code of the Town of Groton, Chapter 218 Zoning, as follows:

Revise Article III Use Regulations, §218-13 Schedule of Use Regulations, by adding the following note no. 11 applicable to the following use entries in the B-1 District:

	R-A	R-B	B-1	M-1	C	O	P
Retail store or service establishment	N	N	Y <sup>11</sup>	N	N	N	N
Business or professional office building or bank	N	SP	Y <sup>11</sup>	N	N	N	N
Restaurant or other place for serving food	N	SP	Y <sup>11</sup>	N	N	N	N

<sup>11</sup>Except "PB" if the footprint of the new building or addition to an existing building exceeds 2500 square feet

or to take any other action relative thereto.

**PLANNING BOARD**

**Board of Selectmen: Not Recommended – 4 Against, 1 In Favor (Cunningham)**

**Finance Committee: No Position**

**Planning Board: Recommended Unanimously**

**Summary:** Currently all professional office, retail, and restaurant establishments are allowed by right under the Zoning By-Law. Other than Site Plan Review, which can only impose site-related conditions, the only discretionary review is through Concept Plan approval by Town Meeting (which does include a subsequent special permit by the Planning Board). The future of the Concept Plan process may be in question in light of recent court decisions. Therefore, the proposed zoning amendment seeks to explicitly codify the Special Permit portion of the Concept Plan process into the Zoning By-Law in the event the Concept Plan process is no longer operative. This article does not alter or remove the existing Concept Plan requirements. The Special Permit process would parallel Site Plan Review, which considers vehicular and pedestrian access, parking, traffic circulation, stormwater management, landscaping, lighting, utilities, and architectural design.

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**ARTICLE 18: AMEND § 218-13 – ZONING – SCHEDULE OF USE REGULATIONS**

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Code of the Town of Groton, Chapter 218 Zoning, as follows:

Revise Article III Use Regulations, §218-13 Schedule of Use Regulations, by changing the use entry for motel, hotel or inn from “SP” to “PB” in the Business District. The proposed change will read as follows:

	R-A	R-B	B-1	M-1	C	O	P
Motel, hotel or inn	N	N	PB	N	N	N	N

or to take any other action relative thereto.

**PLANNING BOARD**

**Board of Selectmen: Recommended Unanimously**

**Finance Committee: No Position**

**Planning Board: Recommended Unanimously**

**Summary:** The proposed zoning amendment will designate the Planning Board as Special Permit Granting Authority for motels, hotels, and inns located in a Business District. The Planning Board Special Permit process would be undertaken in conjunction with Site Plan Review which considers vehicular and pedestrian access, parking, traffic circulation, stormwater management, landscaping, lighting, utilities, and architectural design. The process would be more easily coordinated because the applicant would present plans to the Planning Board rather than both the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals. The abbreviations in Section 218-13 Schedule of Use Regulations are:

- R-A Residential-Agricultural District
- R-B Residential-Business District
- B-1 Business District.
- O Official Open-Space District
- M-1 Manufacturing District
- C Conservancy District
- P Public Use District

The notations in the table are as follows: Y (yes) Use permitted by right; SP Use allowed under a special permit to be acted upon by the Board of Appeals; PB Use allowed under a special permit to be acted upon by the Planning Board; N (no) Use prohibited

**ARTICLE 19: ACCEPT PROVISIONS OF M.G.L. CHAPTER 59, §5K**

To see if the Town will vote to adjust the exemption authorized under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 59, Section 5K, concerning the so-called "Senior Work-Off Program" under which seniors may reduce their property tax liability in exchange for services provided to the Town by allowing an approved representative, for persons physically unable, to provide such services to the city or town, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Board of Selectmen: *Recommended Unanimously***  
**Finance Committee: *No Position***

**Summary:** *The Town of Groton has been offering the Senior Tax-Work Off Program to our seniors for several years. The program allows seniors, based on their income level, the ability to work at Town Hall performing various functions while earning up to a \$500 credit towards their property tax bill. The program has been very successful. Recently, the Board of Selectmen voted to increase the tax credit to \$700 and would like to allow seniors who cannot perform the work to have a proxy fill in for them in order to earn the credit. Adopting this section of the law will allow for this to occur.*

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**ARTICLE 20: AMEND PERSONNEL BYLAW**

To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 48, "Personnel," of the Code of the Town of Groton by deleting the current Chapter 48 in its entirety, and replacing it with a new Chapter 48, "Personnel", a copy of which is on file in the Office of the Town Clerk, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Board of Selectmen: *Recommended - 4 In Favor, 1 Against (Petropoulos)***  
**Finance Committee: *No Position***

**Summary:** *At the request of the Board of Selectmen, the Bylaw Review Committee and the Personnel Board jointly reviewed the Personnel Bylaw, (Chapter 48). Town Meeting is asked to consider the recommendation from this joint study. These recommendations are intended to streamline the bylaw, invoke personnel expertise for management consideration and enable a more clear enforcement of personnel policy. Three significant changes are being recommended. The Personnel Board's powers and duties are revised to reflect the advisory and consultative nature of the Board, consistent with the Town Charter and effective practice of the Board. The Grievance Procedure is updated to allow bylaw employees the option to request an advisory opinion from the Personnel Board in the procedure. The bylaw which is currently in effect mandated that the Board issue a binding opinion, effectively overriding management's responsibilities. Lastly, administrative orders dealing with employee leave (vacation, sick time, holidays, etc.) are removed from the bylaw, and redrafted as policies of the Board of Selectmen. The Personnel Bylaw covers (non-union) employees of the Town. Recently, a majority of Town employees have unionized, leaving only three positions covered by the bylaw. Please see Appendix A for a summary comparison of the changes.*

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**ARTICLE 21: AMEND CHAPTER 153 OF THE CODE OF GROTON**

To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 153, "Historic Districts and Commission," of the Code of the Town of Groton by deleting the current Chapter 153 in its entirety, and replacing it with a new Chapter 153, "Historic Districts and Commission", a copy of which is on file in the Office of the Town Clerk, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION**

**Board of Selectmen: Recommendation Deferred Until Town Meeting**  
**Finance Committee: No Position**

**Summary:** *The article proposes revisions to Groton By-Law Chapter 153 to address the following: (1) to reflect that Groton has multiple Historic Districts; (2) to better align our by-law and duties of the Historic Districts Commission with Massachusetts General Laws chapter 40C, which governs Historic Districts and Historic Districts Commissions; and (3) to clarify the Commissions duties and responsibilities associated with protecting the Town's Historic Districts.*

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**ARTICLE 22: ACCEPT ALTERATION OF LAYOUT OF COW POND BROOK ROAD**

To see if the Town will vote to accept an alteration of the public way layout of Cow Pond Brook Road, as voted by the Board of Selectmen, a copy of which vote is on file in the office of the Town Clerk, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Board of Selectmen: Recommendation Deferred Until Town Meeting**  
**Finance Committee: No Position**

**Summary:** *By a conveyance to the Town in 2000, there are strips of land along Cow Pond Brook Road that belong to the Town. However, the official layout of the public way, which was adopted prior to that conveyance, did not include those strips of land within the layout. The intention of this article is to accept an alteration of the layout, which will include those strips of land within the public way.*

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**ARTICLE 23: ACCEPT ALTERATION AND RELOCATION OF RIDGEWOOD AVENUE**

To see if the Town will vote to accept the alteration and relocation of the public way layout of Ridgewood Avenue, as voted by the Board of Selectmen, a copy of which vote is on file in the office of the Town Clerk, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Board of Selectmen: *Recommendation Deferred Until Town Meeting***

**Finance Committee: *No Position***

**Summary:** *Following a survey, it has been determined that the on-the-ground location of Ridgewood Avenue is different from the location shown on the Ridgewood Estates subdivision plan. As a result, an existing house on Ridgewood Avenue is located partially within the public way layout. Alteration and relocation of the public way will eliminate the encroachment.*

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Hereof fail not and make return of your doings to the Town Clerk on or before time of said meeting.

Given under our hands this 30<sup>th</sup> Day of September in the year of our Lord Two Thousand Thirteen.

Peter S. Cunningham

Peter S. Cunningham, Chairman

Joshua A. Degen

Joshua A. Degen, Vice Chairman

Anna Eliot

Anna Eliot, Clerk

Stuart M. Schulman

Stuart M. Schulman, Member

John G. Petropoulos

John G. Petropoulos, Member

OFFICERS RETURN  
Groton, Middlesex

Pursuant to the within Warrant, I have this day notified the Inhabitants to assemble at the time, place, and for the purpose mentioned as within directed. Personally posted by Constable.

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Constable

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Date Duly Posted

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**Article 2: Budget Amendments**

**Amount Requested: \$198,904**

This proposed funding for this Article will come from taxation and will increase the Tax Rate (at the conclusion of the summary and explanation will be a chart showing the impact on the FY 2014 Tax Rate). The following is a breakdown of the request, followed by an explanation:

<u>Line Item</u>	<u>Original Appropriation</u>	<u>New Appropriation</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Town Manager Wages	\$ 80,785	\$ 82,060	\$ 1,275
Treasurer/Collector Wages	\$ 95,229	\$ 112,738	\$ 17,509
IT Salaries	\$ 90,780	\$ 115,080	\$ 24,300
IT Wages	\$ 57,605	\$ 33,305	\$ (24,300)
Town Clerk Wages	\$ 48,304	\$ 49,185	\$ 881
Telephone Expense	\$ 42,000	\$ 47,000	\$ 5,000
Police Salaries	\$ 270,340	\$ 275,140	\$ 4,800
Police Wages	\$1,318,025	\$1,398,025	\$ 80,000
Fire Wages	\$ 566,843	\$ 625,315	\$ 58,472
Municipal Buildings Wages	\$ 71,632	\$ 75,099	\$ 3,467
Council on Aging Salary	\$ 0	\$ 61,160	\$ 61,160
Council on Aging Wages	\$ 110,269	\$ 49,109	\$ (61,160)
Council on Aging Expenses	\$ 5,454	\$ 8,454	\$ 3,000
Senior Van Expenses	\$ 8,166	\$ 11,166	\$ 3,000
Library Salary	\$ 270,645	\$ 277,145	\$ 6,500
Water Safety Expenses	\$ 950	\$ 15,950	\$ 15,000
Total	\$3,037,027	\$3,235,931	\$198,904

Explanation of Requests:

**Town Manager Wages - \$1,275**

Three years ago, through a consolidation of operations and the development of the Land Use Department, the position of Land Use Assistant was created. At that time, the position was classified as a Grade 5 position and had the primary responsibility of providing administrative support to all Land Use Departments. Since that time, the position has evolved and taken on more responsibility, including overseeing the Form of Intent process and the issuance of passports, supporting the Town Manager's Office in various roles and implementing the permitting software. Recently, the Land Use Director/Town Planner approached the Town Manager and asked that the position's job description be amended to incorporate the added responsibility and be re-classified pursuant to Article 31 of the Agreement between the Town of Groton and SEIU, Local 888. Based on this review, the job has been renamed Interdepartmental Administrative Assistant and re-graded to Grade 7. The cost of the re-classification (effective November 4, 2013) in FY 2014 is \$1,275.

**Board of Selectmen: Recommended Unanimously**  
**Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**Treasurer/Collector Wages - \$17,509**

This request is based on the Assistant Treasurer/Collector In-Training program that was approved by the Board of Selectmen in May, 2013. The long-time Assistant Treasurer/Collector is retiring in April, 2014 and we have begun a program to train a current employee to assume the position upon the retirement of the current Assistant Treasurer/Collector. The cost of the program includes the salary of the employee serving in the training program, along with the additional salary of filling that employee's current position. The cost of this program is \$17,509.

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended Unanimously*  
**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*

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**IT Salaries - \$24,300**  
**IT Wages - \$(24,300)**

When the 2013 Spring Town Meeting approved the new Web Developer position, it was added to the IT Wage Account in error. When the position was proposed and approved, it was considered a salaried position and should have been added to the IT Salaries Account. This request is a simple transfer between the two accounts. There is no additional cost impact.

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended Unanimously*  
**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*

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**Town Clerk Wages - \$881**

Currently, in the Town Clerk's Office there are two part-time Assistant Town Clerk positions. One position is budgeted for 20 hours and one position is budgeted for 19 hours. The office is open for 40 hours and both these positions perform identical functions at different times. One position receives benefits and one does not. It is a matter of fairness to these two dedicated hardworking employees. Both positions are deserving of benefits and it is time for the Town to correct this inconsistency and provide benefits to both positions. Should this be approved at Town Meeting, the Town Clerk's Office will remain open one additional hour on Friday afternoons to provide additional services to our residents. The cost of the additional hour per week from November 4, 2013 to June 30, 2014 is \$881 (estimated year impact is \$1,200). As a benefited position, the Town has a potential exposure of an estimated \$6,000 to \$16,000 should the employee choose to take health insurance.

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended - 3 In Favor, 2 Against (Degen, Petropoulos)*  
**Finance Committee:** *Recommended - 3 In Favor, 1 Against (Prager)*

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**Telephone Expense - \$5,000**

In Fiscal Year 2012, the Town consolidated all telephone expense budgets into one account. This account pays for all telephone lines, including land lines, cell phones and air cards for the laptops in the various public safety vehicles. Last year, the Town added several new air cards and the budget was not adjusted accordingly to cover this additional expense. For the past two years, Town Meeting approved line item transfers at the end of the fiscal year to balance out the account. It appears that this budget has been averaging around \$46,000 in telephone expense. The Fiscal Year 2014 Budget contains \$42,000 for telephones. The additional \$5,000 should be sufficient to avoid a line item transfer at the end of the fiscal year.

**Board of Selectmen:**    *Recommended Unanimously*  
**Finance Committee:**   *Recommended Unanimously*

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**Police Salaries - \$4,800**

In Fiscal Year 2013, the Police Lieutenant's Salary was moved from the Wage Account to the Salary Account. Unfortunately, not all of the direct expenses were moved. As the Lieutenant, he gets most of the same benefits that the patrol officers receive through their Union Agreement even though he is not a member of the Union. Two of the benefits that he receives that were not budgeted for are vacation buy back (he is allowed to buy back one week of vacation if he is maxed out in accrual) and health insurance buy back if he does not take the Town's health insurance coverage. The total cost of these two benefits is \$4,800.

**Board of Selectmen:**    *Recommended Unanimously*  
**Finance Committee:**   *Recommended Unanimously*

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**Police Wages - \$80,000**

For the past two Fiscal Years, the Police Department has had to ask Town Meeting in the spring for a line item transfer or request from the Finance Committee a Reserve Fund Transfer to cover Police Wages. While the Town has been conservatively budgeting this line item, the Town Meeting should address the actual cost of funding the Police Department Wage Account. Last Spring, the Finance Committee asked that the Finance Team take a closer look at the actual cost and fund the account appropriately. During the past two fiscal years, the Department has consistently had to come back to Town Meeting and the Finance Committee for an average of \$125,000 in additional funding. Taking this into consideration, along with salary increases and the cost of having Reserve Officers cover various shifts, it appears that the budget will require an additional \$120,000 in wages in FY 2014. The Finance Committee has approved an appropriation of \$80,000 at this Town Meeting and requested that the Finance Team conduct an in depth review of police wage expenses and come back to the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen for any additional funding necessary at the 2014 Spring Town Meeting.

**Board of Selectmen:**    *Recommended Unanimously*  
**Finance Committee:**   *Recommended Unanimously*

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**Fire Wages - \$58,472**

In January 2012, the Town was notified by the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) that they would be representing the Professional Firefighters of Groton. For the past year and a half, the Town has been negotiating a new Collective Bargaining Agreement with the IAFF, Local 4879. The reason that this has been such a lengthy process is due to the difficulty of negotiating the initial contract and covering all the issues that may arise over the course of a three year agreement. The Town performed salary and benefit surveys of similar departments and tried to be as fair and equitable as possible to the Firefighters, while protecting the Town's interests. The Town and the Union have reached a tentative agreement on a three year contract that provides a seven percent (7%) wage adjustment (3% in FY 2013, 2% in FY 2014 and 2% in FY 2015) and runs from July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2015. This is consistent with all other Union Agreements. The Wage increase is retroactive to July 1, 2012. The requested appropriation of \$58,472 will cover the retro-active pay (including overtime), as well as provide enough funding in FY 2014.

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended Unanimously*  
**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*

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**Municipal Buildings Wages - \$3,467**

The new Center Fire Station is scheduled to be completed in May, 2014. Previous budget projections have contemplated the need for additional custodial coverage to perform janitorial services in the new building. Currently, there are two part-time custodians and one full time custodian. Both the part-timers work 17 hours per week. This funding will allow the Town to increase one of the part-time employees to 35 hours to cover this building, commencing on April 1, 2014. The Wage impact of this request in FY 2014 is \$3,467. In FY 2015, the estimated wage impact would be \$17,000.

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended Unanimously*  
**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*

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**Council on Aging Salary - \$ 61,160**  
**Council on Aging Wages - \$(61,160)**

The Town has always budgeted the COA Director in the Wage Account. This is a salaried position and should be budgeted in a salary account. This transfer between the Wage and Salary Account will fix this error at the Fall Town Meeting. This is a simple transfer from one account to the other and has no impact on the FY 2014 Budget.

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended Unanimously*  
**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*

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**Council on Aging Expenses - \$3,000**

The Town has recently hired a new COA Director. The new Director began work in May and has been a wonderful addition to the Town's Staff. The Director inherited a Fiscal Year 2014 Budget that was developed by the former Director. After a top to bottom review of the budget and programming, the Director would like to provide additional programming for our Seniors. To that end, the Director is requesting a budget adjustment of \$3,000 to provide this additional programming. Revenues will be collected from participation in these programs to offset two-thirds of this expense.

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended Unanimously*  
**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*

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**Senior Van Expenses - \$3,000**

The Fiscal Year 2014 budget doubles the amount of hours the Senior Van is available. While we increased the hours, we never increased the expense budget to cover gasoline and maintenance. After reviewing the budget and use, we believe these added hours will cost approximately \$3,000 in gas and maintenance expense. This appropriation is needed to cover the total FY 2014 operational expense and is reimbursed to the Town by the Commonwealth.

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended Unanimously*  
**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*

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**Library Salary - \$6,500**

The Library has four departmental librarians in addition to the Library Director. Three of the four work forty (40) hours per week, while the fourth (Young Adult Librarian) works 19. Three of the Librarians are classified as Grade 8 positions, while the Young Adult Librarian is classified as a Grade 7. The Library Director approached the Town and requested that this inequity in grading as well as benefits be reviewed. The Town reviewed the job description and determined that this position should be classified as Grade 8 since it had all the same duties, responsibilities and educational requirements of the other Librarians. In addition, similar to the issue we have in the Town Clerk's Office, three of the positions receive benefits, while one does not. The Library Trustees are looking to expand the programming offered by the Young Adult Librarian and are seeking an additional hour per week for this position. The cost of adjusting the current YA Librarian's pay rate to the appropriate level within Grade 8 and the cost of increasing the position to 20 hours effective November 4, 2013 would be \$3,500. Additionally, when the Board of Library Trustees hired the new Library Director last year, they provided the Director with a one (1) year agreement. The Trustees are negotiating a 3.5 year agreement with the Director that will align her salary with the Town's fiscal cycle for future budgets. This one-time request is to provide a salary increase at one year, rather than 18 months. The total amount requested for both these issues is \$6,500.

**Board of Selectmen:** *Recommended - 3 In Favor, 2 Against (Degen, Petropoulos)*  
**Finance Committee:** *Recommended Unanimously*

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**Water Safety Expenses - \$15,000**

The Board of Selectmen has made the re-opening of Sargisson Beach a top priority of in FY 2014. A committee has been formed to develop a plan to open the beach after Memorial Day, 2014. A review of the expense of operating the beach (life guards, ranger, etc.) when it was last opened in 2009 was conducted. It appears the annual expense in 2014 would be approximately \$55,000. The Town would need to provide funding for the month of June, 2014. This article requests \$15,000 to cover this expense in FY 2014.

**Board of Selectmen: *Recommended Unanimously***  
**Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously***

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This article requests that the \$198,904 requested come out of our excess levy capacity since almost all of these requests (with the exception of the Treasurer/Collector Wage Expense) will be recurring expenses in FY 2015. The impact on the FY 2014 Tax Rate is as follows:

Original Budget -	\$30,994,975
Original Levy Limit -	\$24,721,030
Amount Under the Levy Limit -	\$501,034
Original Proposed Tax Rate -	\$17.23
Average Tax Bill -	\$6,892 or \$152 increase over FY 2013
New Proposed Budget -	\$31,231,448
New Levy Limit (Additional New Growth)	\$24,805,711
Amount Under the Levy Limit -	\$439,653
New Proposed Tax Rate -	\$17.36
Average Tax Bill -	\$6,944 or \$204 increase over FY 2013

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**Article 3 – Capital Stabilization Fund** **Amount Requested: \$300,000**

The Fund has a balance of \$143,000. The financial management goal is to achieve and maintain a balance in the Capital Stabilization Fund equal to 1.5% of the total annual budget. To meet this level, the Town will need to add \$300,000 to the fund. This funding will come from Free Cash and not affect the Tax Rate.

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**Article 4 – Stabilization Fund** **Amount Requested: \$380,000**

The balance in this fund is \$1.13 million. The financial management goal is to achieve and maintain a balance in the Stabilization Fund equal to 5% of the total annual budget. To meet this level, the Town will need to add \$380,000 to the fund. This funding will come from Free Cash and not affect the Tax Rate.

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**Article 5 – Offset the Tax Rate**

**Amount Requested: \$100,000**

The Board of Selectmen is recommending that Town Meeting transfer \$100,000 from Free Cash to offset the tax rate in FY 2014. This will reduce the average tax bill (home valued at \$400,000) by \$28.00.

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**Article 6 – Police Cruiser Purchase**

**Amount Requested: \$58,000**

Please see the summary with the Article on page 3 of the Warrant. This funding will come from Free Cash and not affect the Tax Rate.

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**Article 7 – Improvements to Town Properties**

**Amount Requested: \$50,000**

Please see the summary with the Article on page 4 of the Warrant. This funding will come from Free Cash and not affect the Tax Rate.

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**Article 9 – Lost Lake Fire Protection**

**Amount Requested: \$37,000**

Please see the summary with the Article on page 5 of the Warrant. This funding will come from Free Cash and not affect the Tax Rate.

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**Article 10 – Lost Lake Fire Protection**

**Amount Requested: \$33,850**

Please see the summary with the Article on page 5 of the Warrant. This funding will come from Free Cash and not affect the Tax Rate.

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**Article 11 – Lost Lake Fire Protection**

**Amount Requested: \$32,550**

Please see the summary with the Article on page 6 of the Warrant. This funding will come from Free Cash and not affect the Tax Rate.

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**Article 15 – Squannacook Hall Septic System**

**Amount Requested: \$30,000**

Please see the summary with the Article on page 7 of the Warrant. This funding will come from Free Cash and not affect the Tax Rate.

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With the exception of Article 2 (\$198,904), all of the funding for the remaining money articles (\$1,022,961) will be appropriated from Surplus Revenue (“Free Cash”) and not impact the Fiscal Year 2014 Tax Rate. Should each of these articles pass, the Town will have a balance of \$293,448 in Free Cash.

Respectfully submitted,

*Mark W. Haddad*

Mark W. Haddad  
Town Manager

**APPENDIX A**  
**Summary of Changes – Chapter 48 Personnel Bylaw**

<b>PROCESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 Bylaw Review Committee Public Meetings</li> <li>• Interested parties invited to participate (Individuals who have stated opinions, Applicants for the Personnel Board, Members of the Personnel Board, Bylaw Employees, Members of the Public)</li> <li>• Note: During the process, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Personnel Board Members were appointed</li> <li>○ Bylaw Employees unionized, leaving 3 bylaw employees</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>2009 VERSION</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
48-1 Membership of Personnel Board	Restricted membership from anyone serving on any town board or employees EXCEPT the Finance Committee	No membership restriction	
48-2 Powers and Duties	A. Prepare and maintain the Wage and Classification Schedule	B. Advise in the preparation of the Wage and Classification Schedule	Purview of the Human Resources Director; Time commitment of Personnel Board members
	B. Establish and administer a grievance procedure	E. Participate in a grievance procedure	The Personnel Board, if invoked, is one step of four. Town Meeting establishes the grievance procedure.
48-9 Grievance Procedure	Step 1: Immediate Supervisor Step 2: Appeal to Town Manager Step 3: Appeal to Personnel Board Step 4: Appeal to Board of Selectmen <u>Note:</u> A decision must be appealed to the next step	Step 1: immediate Supervisor Step 2: Appeal to Town Manager Step 2A: (Optional) Request an advisory opinion from the Personnel Board Step 3: Appeal to the Board of Selectmen	If Town Manger is the immediate supervisor, then Step 2 does not apply.  Grievant has the option of appealing to the Personnel Board for an advisory opinion; OR Proceed to Step 3
Administrative Orders	AO1: Employee Classification AO2: Vacation AO3: Holidays AO4: Sick Leave AO5: Personnel records AO6: Grievance Procedure AO7: Wage and Classification Schedule AO8: Leave of Absence AO9: Personal Days	AO1: Employee Classification AO2: Personnel records AO3: Grievance Procedure AO4: Wage and Classification Schedule	Recommendation: Board of Selectmen Policies to address employee “leave” issues.  Employee leave issues are addressed in union contracts. Allows the BoS to address parity issues as needed.