

# **MINUTES**

**Warrant, Summary, and Recommendations**

## **TOWN OF GROTON**



## **SPECIAL TOWN MEETING JUNE 23, 2025**

**Marion Stoddart Building Auditorium  
344 Main Street, Groton, Massachusetts 01450**

**Beginning Monday, June 23, 2025 @ 7:00 PM**

# Introduction to Groton Town Meeting

Voters are familiar with casting ballots in local and state elections, but they have another important civic duty in towns, the Town Meeting.

## What is Town Meeting?

The Town Meeting is the legislative body in the town form of government in Massachusetts. Town Meeting is a formal gathering of registered voters who propose, debate and vote on measures. Groton holds at least two Town Meetings per year. As this is a Special Town Meeting, there is a quorum requirement of two (2%) percent of the Town's Registered Voters in order for the Meeting to commence.

## What is a warrant?

The warrant is the official notice to voters that a Town Meeting is scheduled. The warrant includes the date, time, location and a description of each subject to be acted on at Town Meeting. In Groton, the warrant must be posted in two public places 14 days in advance of Town Meeting. In Groton, every household is also notified of the meeting by postcard with a link to the Warrant. "[T]he warrant must contain a sufficient description of what is proposed so as to constitute an adequate warning to all the inhabitants of the town."<sup>1</sup> "Every action taken at the meeting must be pursuant to some article in the warrant and must be within the scope of such article."<sup>2</sup>

## How does Town Meeting proceed?

Voters attending Town Meeting must first check in with the clerks and receive an electronic voting handset which is required to vote. The meeting typically acts on the articles in the order that they are printed in the warrant. For each article, a main motion is made and seconded by voters and placed by the moderator on the floor for debate. Permission of the moderator is required to speak. The moderator presides and regulates the proceedings, decides all questions of order, and calls and declares all votes. After debate has ended, the moderator will call for a vote by use of the electronic voting handset. Please see page 3 of this Warrant for a full explanation of how Electronic Voting will work at Town Meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> *Town Meeting Time: A Handbook of Parliamentary Law* (page 19) Massachusetts Moderators Association, Fourth Edition, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

**Who can attend?**

Town Meeting is open to the public. Only Groton voters are entitled to attend, speak and vote. Non-voters may be required to sit in a separate section. Non-voters may ask the moderator to speak on the topic of the debate.

**How long is town meeting?**

Town Meeting concludes when all articles on the warrant have been acted upon. Town Meeting may conclude in one session or adjourn for subsequent sessions.

# Electronic Voting at Town Meeting

Voting at Town Meeting will be conducted using an electronic voting system purchased by the Town of Groton as authorized by Town Meeting in October, 2022. Instead of using placards to be raised and counted, voters will use wireless handsets to cast their vote quickly, accurately and privately.



## Voter Check-In

At check-in, voters will be given a handset. No record is made of which voter receives which handset. All handsets will be tested prior to the meeting. Voters physically unable to use a handset, will be seated in a manual-count section and their votes will be counted by tellers. For those with visual impairments, large handsets with braille are available.

## Test Vote

At the beginning of the meeting, the Moderator will conduct a test vote to get everyone comfortable with the voting procedures.

## Proxy Voting Prohibited

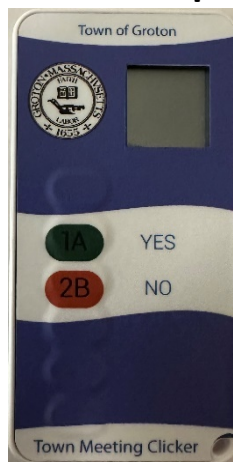
The handset given to a voter at check-in is for the exclusive use of that voter. Voting with a handset that has been issued to another individual is strictly forbidden.

## Voting

When the Moderator announces it is time to vote:

- Press 1A (green button) for YES →
- Press 2B (red button) for No →
- If you wish to not vote, press no buttons

## Handset Display



The display on the handset:

- OK means the system receiver has received your vote
- A "1" for Yes or "2" for No shows the vote the system received.
- The small "R" at the top of the screen indicates the handset is communicating with the receiver
- The icons in the top left indicate the WiFi signal strength.

## Help Desk

A Help Desk will be able to assist voters who have trouble with using the handset. If a handset malfunctions, a voter will receive a new handset.

## Handset Return

If you leave the meeting temporarily, please keep the handset with you. If the meeting ends or you leave, return the handset to the check-in table.



## **Town Meeting Access for Voters with Disabilities**

**Parking** – Universally accessible parking spaces are available in the parking lot in front of the Groton Dunstable Marion Stoddart Building. There is a ramp providing access from the parking lot to the front door of the Building.

**Wheelchair Accessible & Companion Seating** – Wheelchair spaces, seating for people with mobility issues and companion seats are available in the center aisle on both sides of the auditorium.

**Sign Language** – A Sign Language Interpreter will be provided for the hearing impaired, upon request, at least one week prior to the meeting.

**Speaking at Town Meeting** – There will be volunteers available to bring hand-held microphones to voters who have mobility issues or cannot stand in line and wait at the microphones.

**Restrooms** – Accessible restrooms are available near the entrance to the auditorium.

**Transportation to Town Meeting** - The Council on Aging van will be available to Groton residents attending Town Meetings at no charge. All riders will be at the meeting prior to the start. The van is wheelchair accessible. Your reservation can be made by calling the Senior Center at 978-448-1170. Seats will be filled on a first come, first serve basis.

**Questions or concerns** - If you or a member of your household has questions or would like to request a sign language interpreter, please contact the Select Board's Office at Town Hall at 978 448-1111 at least one week before the Town Meeting.

## **2025 SPECIAL TOWN MEETING OFFICIALS**

**MEETING DATE – JUNE 23, 2025**

### **Town Moderator:**

Jason Kauppi

### **Deputy Moderator:**

Ed McNierney

### **Board of Selectmen:**

Matt Pisani, Chair  
Becky Pine, Vice-Chair  
Alison Manugian, Clerk  
Peter Cunningham  
John R. Reilly

### **Finance Committee:**

Bud Robertson, Chair  
Mary Linskey, Vice Chair  
Gary Green  
Scott Whitefield  
David Manugian  
Michael Sulprizio  
Kristina Lengyel

### **Town Manager:**

Mark W. Haddad  
Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant

### **Town Clerk:**

Dawn Dunbar

### **Proceedings:**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM on June 23, 2025 at the Marion Stoddart Building Auditorium. Moderator Jason Kauppi presided. There were 285 voters present at 7:00 PM. The Select Board, in conjunction with the Moderator voted on June 16, 2025 to reduce the quorum to 125.

### **Announcements:**

The Moderator made some announcements relative to how Town Meeting operates, reviewed the warrant, the consent motions contained within the warrant.

The Moderator reviewed instructions for the use of the electronic voting handsets. A test of the handsets was conducted.

The Moderator called for a moment of silence. The Meeting took the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Moderator determined that the warrant was duly posted and entertained a motion to waive the reading of the warrant.

**A MOTION WAS MADE AND SECONDED TO WAIVE THE READING OF THE WARRANT.**

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: Majority**

**Vote on Motion to Waive the Reading of the Warrant: Yes – 294; No – 29; Motion Passed by Majority Vote**

**There were 399 voters present as of 7:14 PM.**

**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT  
JUNE 23, 2025**

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 Marion Stoddart Building Auditorium, 344 Main Street, Groton, Massachusetts on Monday, the twenty-third day of June, 2025 at Seven O'clock in the evening to consider the following:

**Article 1:     *Amend the Fiscal Year 2026 Town Operating Budget***

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget as adopted under Article 5 of the April 26, 2025 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 2026, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Finance Committee  
Select Board  
Town Manager***

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:**     *At the April 26, 2025 Spring Town Meeting, the Operating Assessment for the Groton Dunstable Regional School District was approved in two parts. The Town approved an Operating Assessment of \$27,777,948 that was part of the Balanced Budget. There was an additional appropriation of \$673,250 for the School District that was contingent on an override of Proposition 2½. The proposed override was defeated at the Annual Town Election and therefore the contingency was not met. The Select Board, Town Manager and Finance Committee do not want to see any more reductions to the School District and asked the Town Manager to work with the District to see how reductions can be made to the Municipal Budget, along with increasing revenue, to meet the needs of the School District in FY 2026. Proposed reductions to the Municipal Budget, along with proposals to increase revenues will be presented to Town Meeting to balance the Budget.*

**MOTION #1 - Article 1**

**Mover: Bud Robertson**

**MOTION:** I move that the Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget, as adopted pursuant to Article 5 of the April 26, 2025 Spring Town Meeting, be amended as follows, each line item to be considered as a separate appropriation for the purpose voted:

**Protections of Persons and Property:** By decreasing the Protection of Persons and Property Appropriation from \$4,864,896 to \$4,838,346 so as to decrease Line Item 1305 – “Police Department Minor Capital” by \$26,550 from \$26,550 to \$0.

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: Majority**

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**THE MOTION WAS MOVED BY BUD ROBERTSON AND SECONDED.**

Mr. Robertson made a presentation to the Town Meeting.

**DEBATE:** Mr. Alberghini asked if there was still a deficit. Mr. Robertson said that the school eliminated a position to cover the \$74K deficit.

There were 406 voters present at 7:29 PM.

Mr. Burnett asked what position was not being filled at the school district. Superintendent Bruno said that they were not filling a vacant position but could account for those students’ needs elsewhere as those students were transitioning to the high school.

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: Majority**

**Vote on Motion #1: Yes – 361; No - 37; Motion Passed by Majority Vote**

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**CONSENT MOTION #1 - Article 1**

**Mover: Bud Robertson**

**MOTION:** I move that the Town take affirmative action on Motion 2 through Motion 5, under Article 1, as set forth in the Town Meeting Information Handout for this Meeting, without debate and in accordance with the action proposed under each motion, provided, however, that if any voter requests the right to debate a specific budget motion, then said motion shall be debated and voted upon separately.

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: Majority**

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**THE MOTION WAS MOVED BY BUD ROBERTSON AND SECONDED.**

The Chair read the name of each motion under Article 1, Consent Motion #1.



**DEBATE:** There were no holds and no debate.

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: Majority**  
**Vote on Motion #1: Yes – 355; No - 34; Motion Passed by Majority Vote**

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**Article 2:     *Amend the Fiscal Year 2026 Capital Budget***

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow pursuant to any applicable statute, a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager, to amend the Fiscal Year 2026 Capital Budget that was approved under Article 6 of the April 26, 2025 Spring Town Meeting by increasing the appropriations for the Municipal Building Repairs and creating a new Police Department Capital Budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Town Manager***

**Select Board:**  
**Finance Committee:**

**Summary:**   *As part of balancing the Town’s Operating Budget as outlined in Article 1, the Town Manager is proposing to remove all minor Capital Items from the Operating Budget and move them to the Capital Budget. A detailed Report will be provided to the Special Town Meeting by the Town Manager.*

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**MOTION #2 – Article 2** **Mover: John Reilly**

**MOTION:**     I move that the Town vote amend the Fiscal Year 2026 Capital Budget that was approved under Article 6 of the April 26, 2025 Spring Town Meeting by transferring an additional \$66,550 from the Capital Stabilization Fund, to be expended by the Town Manager, to increase the appropriations for Municipal Building Repairs and create a new Police Department Capital Budget as follows:

Item	Original Appropriation	New Appropriation	Difference
Municipal Building Exterior Repairs	\$50,000	\$90,000	\$40,000
Police Department Capital	\$     0	\$26,550	\$26,550
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$116,550</b>	<b>\$66,550</b>

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: Majority**

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**THE MOTION WAS MOVED BY JOHN REILLY AND SECONDED.**

**DEBATE:** There was no debate.

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: Majority**

**Vote on Motion #2: Yes – 341; No - 46; Motion Passed by Majority Vote**

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**The Moderator asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded. The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 7:39 PM.**

***\*409 total voters were checked in at this Town Meeting.***

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 4<sup>th</sup> Day of June in the year of our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Five.

*Alison S. Manugian*

Alison S. Manugian, Chair

*Rebecca H. Pine*

Rebecca H. Pine, Vice-Chair

*Peter S. Cunningham*

Peter S. Cunningham, Clerk

*John F. Reilly*

John F. Reilly, Member

*Matthew F. Pisani*

Matthew F. Pisani, 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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Constable

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Duly Posted

Town of Groton  
Select Board  
173 Main Street  
Groton, MA 01450

PRSRT STD  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Groton, MA 01450  
PERMIT #3

# RESIDENTIAL POSTAL PATRON GROTON, MA