

# MINUTES

## TOWN OF GROTON



## 2016 FALL TOWN MEETING

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

Beginning Monday, October 17, 2016 @ 7:00 PM

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Attention – Voters and Taxpayers

Please bring this Report to Town Meeting



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

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

**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. However, the van will depart the school at 10 PM regardless of the status of the meeting. 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 ADA Coordinator Michelle Collette at Town Hall at 978 448-1105 at least one week before the Town Meeting.

**2016 FALL TOWN MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 17, 2016**

**Town Moderator:**

Jason Kauppi

**Deputy Moderator**

Robert L. Gosselin, Sr.

**Board of Selectmen:**

Peter S. Cunningham  
Joshua A. Degen, Vice-Chair  
Anna Eliot  
Jack G. Petropoulos, Chair  
Barry A. Pease, Clerk

**Finance Committee:**

Lorraine Leonard  
Gary Green, Chairman  
Arthur Prest  
Robert Hargraves, Vice-Chair  
David Manugian  
Bud Robertson

**Town Manager:**

Mark W. Haddad  
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

**Town Clerk:**

Michael F. Bouchard

**The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM. Mr. Jason Kauppi presided as Moderator. 105 attendees were present at 7:02. Later in the meeting, 185 voters were in attendance.**

**Mr. Kauppi made several announcements regarding the upcoming November 8 Presidential Election.**

**The Charter Review Committee gave a status update on its progress to date, and proposed plans through Spring, 2017.**

**The Moderator deemed that the warrant was duly posted and asked for a motion to waive the reading of the warrant. The motion was passed by a unanimous vote.**

**MOTION**

**Mover:** Michelle Collette

I move that debate be limited to three (3) minutes for each speaker, with the exception of the main proponent and opponent of each article, and at the discretion of the Moderator.

**Moved and Seconded**

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote Required: 2/3rds Majority**

**Vote on Motion to Limit Debate: Passed by 2/3rds Majority**

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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 seventeenth day of October, 2016 at Seven O'clock in the evening, to consider the following:

**ARTICLE LISTINGS**

<b>Article 1:</b>	Prior Year Bills	3
<b>Article 2:</b>	Amend the Fiscal Year 2017 Town Operating Budget	3
<b>Article 3:</b>	Transfer Money into the Capital Stabilization Fund	3
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<b>Article 7:</b>	Accept M.G.L., Chapter 200A, §9A	5
<b>Article 8:</b>	Purchase Vehicle for Police Chief	6
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**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.*

**Mover: John Petropoulos**

**MOTION:** I move that the Town vote to transfer from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash) the sum of \$291 for the payment of the following bills of a prior fiscal year:

Stanley Elevator Company -	<u>\$291</u>
Total	\$291

**Moved and Seconded**

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: 4/5's Majority**

**Vote on Article 1 Main Motion: Passed by Unanimous Vote**

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**ARTICLE 2: AMEND THE FISCAL YEAR 2017 TOWN OPERATING BUDGET**

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Fiscal Year 2017 Operating Budget as adopted under Article 4 of the 2016 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 2017, 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 2017 Town Operating Budget was approved at the Second Adjourned Session of the 2016 Spring Town Meeting in June, 2016. 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 2017 Operating Budget. Please see the Town Manager's Report contained in the back of this Warrant for an explanation outlining the proposed changes.*

**Mover:** Joshua Degen

**MOTION:** I move that the Town vote to amend the Fiscal Year 2017 Operating Budget, as adopted under Article 4 of the April 25, 2016 Spring Town Meeting, as follows, each line item to be considered as a separate appropriation for the purposes voted:

**Article 2 – Motion 1 GENERAL GOVERNMENT:** By increasing the General Government Appropriation from \$1,874,183 to \$1,889,183 so as to: increase Line Item 1062 – “Board of Assessors Expenses” by \$5,000, from \$24,135 to \$29,135; and increase Line Item 1160 – “Insurance and Bonding” by \$10,000, from \$190,000 to \$200,000; And to raise and appropriate the sum of \$15,000 to fund said increases.

**Moved and Seconded**

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: Majority**

**Vote on Article 2 – Motion 1: Passed by Majority Vote**

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**Article 2 – Motion 2 PROTECTION OF PERSONS & PROPERTY:** By increasing the Protection of Persons and Property Appropriation from \$3,669,831 to \$3,677,815 so as to: increase Line Item 1300 – “Police Department Salaries” by \$7,984, from \$308,026 to \$316,010; And to raise and appropriate the sum of \$7,984 to fund said increase.

**Moved and Seconded**

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: Majority**

**Vote on Article 2 – Motion 2: Passed by Majority Vote**

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**Article 2 Motion 3 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS:** By increasing the Department of Public Works Appropriation from \$2,100,913 to \$2,114,413 so as to increase Line Item 1541 – “Municipal Building and Property Maintenance Expenses” by \$13,500, from \$267,350 to \$280,850; And to raise and appropriate the sum of \$13,500 to fund said increase.

**Moved and Seconded**  
**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: Majority**

**Discussion:**

- The purpose of this article was to fund a part time custodian contractor position. Some attendees thought this was to hire a custodian as an employee.
- It was clarified that the proposal in the FY 2017 Operating Budget to fund this position as an employee was part of the Proposition 2 ½ Override question, which was defeated.
- This article is asking to reinstate funding for the contract position.

**MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION of Article 2 Motion 3:**  
**Moved and Seconded**  
**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: 2/3rds Majority**  
**Vote on the Motion to Move the Question: Passed by 2/3rds Majority Vote**

**VOTE on Article 2 Motion 3: Passed by Majority Vote**

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**Article 2 Motion 4 LIBRARY AND CITIZEN SERVICES:** By increasing the Library and Citizen Services Appropriation from \$1,557,264 to \$1,565,030 so as to increase Line Item 1702 – “Country Club Expenses” by \$7,766, from \$123,789 to \$131,555; And to raise and appropriate the sum of \$7,766 to fund said increase.

**Moved and Seconded**  
**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: Majority**

**Discussion:**

- The current security system at the Country Club needs to be upgraded for insurance reasons.
- The Country Club is not paying for this because it is a Town building and a Town expense.
- Country Club revenues come directly to the general fund. Expenses do not come out of receipts. This item was not budgeted previously.

**Vote on Article 2 – Motion 4: Passed by Majority Vote**

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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 \$129,703. 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. The target amount for the Capital Stabilization Fund will be provided at Town Meeting.*

**Mover: Joshua Degen**

**MOTION:** I move that the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$400,000 from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash) to be added to the sum already on deposit in the Capital Stabilization Fund.

**Moved and Seconded**

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: 2/3's Majority**

**Vote on Article 3 Main Motion: Passed by 2/3rds Majority**

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**ARTICLE 4:           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, 2016, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Board of Selectmen: *Recommended (3 In Favor, 1 Against – Eliot)***  
**Finance Committee: *Not Recommended Unanimously (5-0-0); Finance Committee recommended a \$200,000 transfer***

**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 2017 Budget in order to lower the amount of money required to be raised from taxes or to balance a deficit budget. The Board of Selectmen has voted to recommend that \$400,000 be transferred from Free Cash to reduce the Fiscal Year 2017 tax rate.*

**Mover: Jack Petropoulos**

**MOTION:** I move that the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$400,000 from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash) for the purpose of affecting the tax rate for the period beginning July 1, 2016.

**Moved and Seconded**  
**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: Majority**

**MOTION to AMEND Article 4 Main Motion**

**Mover: Bud Robertson (Finance Committee)**

I move that the amount of money to be transferred from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash) for the purpose of affecting the tax rate for the period beginning July 1, 2016, be reduced from \$400,000 to \$200,000.

**Moved and Seconded**  
**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: Majority**

**Discussion:**

- Mr. Robertson of the Finance Committee argued that \$400,000 was too much to use to offset the tax rate. The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee are guardians of the Town's fiscal health, which includes looking at both long and short term issues. The Sustainable Budget Committee has concluded that, on the current path, annual overrides are likely. Until we see how the next few years play out, the Town should be building a cash reserve. A \$200,000 transfer to offset the tax rate better addresses long and short term.
- Mr. Petropoulos stated that this was somewhat a philosophical discussion, and expressed the viewpoint that the money in free cash belonged to the taxpayers and should be returned. If or when budget issues hit, taxpayers should be asked at that time to fund or cut.
- Individual attendees spoke to support both points of view.

**MOTION to Move the Question of Article 4 Amendment and Main Motion:**

**Moved and Seconded**

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: 2/3rds Majority**

**Vote on the Motion to Move the Question: Passed by 2/3rds Majority Vote**

**Tellers were sworn: Connie Sartini, Tim Leonard, Stuart Schulman, Gary Roy, Michael Manugian, Paul Funch**

**VOTE on Article 4 Motion to Amend: Motion passed - 102 in favor; 70 opposed**

**VOTE on Article 4 Main Motion as Amended: Motion failed – 85 in favor, 91 opposed**  
**(Ed. Note: result - No money was transferred from free cash to offset the tax rate.)**

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**ARTICLE 5: TRANSFER MONEY TO WATER ENTERPRISE FUND**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Groton Water Department to borrow or transfer a sum or sums of money from the Water Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2017 Water Department Operating Budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS**



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

**Summary:** *This article requests that the sum of \$110,000 be transferred from the Water Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2017 Water Department General Expenses for the mechanical cleaning of the Whitney Pond Well #1 and Whitney Pond Well #2, the mechanical cleaning of the Baddacook Well and for engineering services related to electrical upgrades and pump and motor improvements at the Whitney Pond Well. In addition, it further requests that the Board of Water Commissioners be authorized to borrow the sum of \$400,000, to be raised through water rates, for Electrical Upgrades and Pump and Motor improvements at the Whitney Pond Well.*

**Mover: Thomas Orcutt**

**MOTION A:** I move that the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$110,000 from the Water Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2017 Water Department Operating Budget for the mechanical cleaning of the Whitney Pond Well #1 and Whitney Pond Well #2, the mechanical cleaning of the Baddacook Well and for engineering services related to electrical upgrades and pump and motor improvements at the Whitney Pond Well.

**Moved and Seconded**

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: Majority**

**Vote on Article 5 Motion A: Passed by Majority Vote**

**MOTION B:** I move that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$400,000, to be expended by the Board of Water Commissioners, for Electrical Upgrades and Pump and Motor improvements at the Whitney Pond Well; that to meet this appropriation, the Treasurer, with the approval of the Selectmen, is authorized to borrow the sum of \$400,000 under and pursuant to Chapter 44, Section 8(7C) of the General Laws, or pursuant to any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the Town therefor, and that the Board of Water Commissioners be authorized to contract for the accomplishment of the foregoing purpose, including the expenditure of all appropriated funds and any funds received from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or other sources for such project.

**Moved and Seconded**

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: 2/3's Majority**

**Vote on Article 5 Motion B: Passed by 2/3rds Majority**

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**ARTICLE 6:                    *ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR SENIOR CENTER FEASIBILITY STUDY***

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow a sum or sums of money, in addition to the amount appropriated under Article 7 of the 2016 Spring Town Meeting, to be expended by the Town Manager, for the purpose of retaining a consultant(s) to conduct a feasibility/assessment study to determine the future needs of the Groton Senior Center, including whether a new facility is needed, and all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

## COUNCIL ON AGING

**Board of Selectmen: Recommended (3 In Favor, 1 Against – Petropoulos)**

**Finance Committee: Proposal for \$20,000 Recommended Unanimously (6-0-0)**

**Summary:** *The 2016 Spring Town Meeting appropriated funding to hire a consultant to conduct a feasibility study to determine the long term needs of Groton's Senior Center. At the completion of the initial study, it was determined that further study of the Prescott School is needed before making a final determination on the location of a new Senior Center. Specifically, the Council on Aging's Feasibility Oversight Committee has voted to seek further funding for the sole purpose of getting additional hard cost estimates on Prescott School, specifically for the renovation that meets the requirements of the Council on Aging's Senior Center plans as defined in the Site and Building Analysis and other related documents; study the possibility of secondary road access at the Prescott School; examine emergency shelter adaptability as defined by Groton's Fire and Police Chiefs respectively; and determine ADA universal adaptability. Once a determination is made, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee, a Special Town Meeting would be called in January, 2017 to appropriate the design/bid funding to bring bids in hand on the final solution for a new Senior Center to the 2017 Spring Town Meeting.*

**Mover: Peter Cunningham**

**MOTION:** I move that the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$20,000 from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash), in addition to the amount appropriated under Article 7 of the 2016 Spring Town Meeting, to be expended by the Town Manager, for the purpose of retaining a consultant(s) to conduct a feasibility/assessment study to determine the future needs of the Groton Senior Center, including whether a new facility is needed, and all costs associated and related thereto.

**Moved and Seconded**

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: Majority**

### **Discussion:**

- Mihran Keoseian, Chair of the CoA Feasibility Oversight Committee, presented a status of the committee and how the requested money would be used.
- Individual attendees commented on the following topics:
  - Q: This project refers to a physical plant. What can be done for seniors "outside" of a physical plant?
    - R: Plans to address this in public sessions.
  - Q: Does the study being requested apply to any use of the Prescott School Building?
    - R: This funding is specifically to address needs of seniors. Public Safety officials are urging an access road for any use of the building that increases activity.
  - Q: What percentage of the senior population uses the Senior Center?
    - R: Groton's senior population is approximately 2400. Approximately 800 seniors were served in the building last year, and approximately 1200 seniors were serviced in some way.
  - Q: Why is this article coming up now?
    - R: This is in response to input from people who wanted more study done at the Prescott School building.

- Q: Could this have waited until the Spring Town Meeting where it could be evaluated along with other project requests?
- It was noted that a potential senior center will also have a capability to be used as an emergency center.
- It was commented that the Prescott School building, the Senior Center and the Country Club are all in disrepair, some underutilized and need rehabilitation or replacement. These are potentially three expensive projects. It would make sense to leverage an investment and combine uses in a single building if possible.

**MOTION to AMEND Article 6 Main Motion**

**Mover:** Halsey Platt offered an amended motion, to read:

I move that the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$20,000 from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash), in addition to the amount appropriated under Article 7 of the 2016 Spring Town Meeting, to be expended by the Town Manager, for the purpose of retaining a consultant(s) who will work with a seven member committee appointed by the Town Manager consisting of three members of the prior Municipal Building Committee for Prescott School and four members of the Council on Aging's Feasibility Oversight Committee, to conduct a feasibility/assessment study to determine the future needs of the Groton Senior Center, including whether a new facility is needed, and all costs associated and related thereto.

**Moved and Seconded**  
**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: Majority**

**Further discussion:**

- If Prescott is not looked at in this study, we will make an uninformed decision.

**MOTION to MOVE the Question of the Article 6 Amendment and Main Motion**

**Moved and Seconded**  
**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s Majority**  
**VOTE on Motion to Move the Question: Passed by 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s Majority**

**Vote on Motion to Amend Article 6 Main Motion: Passed by Majority Vote**

**Vote of Article 6 Main Motion as Amended: Passed by Majority Vote**

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**ARTICLE 7: ACCEPT M.G.L. CHAPTER 200A, §9A**

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 200A, §9A, to establish a procedure that would allow the Town Treasurer to dispose of abandoned funds held in the custody of the Town, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**TOWN TREASURER**

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

**Summary:** *This article pertains to the process under which the Town Treasurer is allowed to search for the rightful owners of uncashed accounts payable and payroll checks issued by the*

*Town. The prior process was amended and improved as part of the 2010 Municipal Relief Act. Accepting this provision will put in place these amended steps and allow for return of unclaimed funds to their rightful owner, or otherwise allow the funds to revert back to the Town upon completion of the process.*

**Mover: Anna Eliot**

**MOTION:** I move that the Town vote to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 200A, §9A, to establish a procedure that would allow the Town Treasurer to dispose of abandoned funds held in the custody of the Town.

**Moved and Seconded**

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: Majority**

**Vote on Article 7 Main Motion: Passed by Unanimous Vote**

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**ARTICLE 8: PURCHASE VEHICLE FOR THE POLICE CHIEF**

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 purpose of purchasing and equipping a new vehicle for the Police Chief, and all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

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

**Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**Summary:** *This is a scheduled replacement for a new fully equipped vehicle for the Chief of Police. The current Chief's vehicle will be used to replace an older cruiser that will be removed from the fleet.*

**Mover: Peter Cunningham**

**MOTION:** I move that the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$50,000 from the Stabilization Fund, to be expended by the Town Manager, for the purpose of purchasing and equipping a new vehicle for the Police Chief, and all costs associated and related thereto.

**Moved and Seconded**

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: 2/3's Majority**

**Vote on Article 8 Main Motion: Passed by 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s Majority**

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**ARTICLE 9: INSTALL AUTOMATIC DOOR OPENERS AT TOWN 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 be expended by the Town Manager, to install automatic door openers at the Groton Town Hall, and all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

## COMMISSION ON ACCESSIBILITY

**Board of Selectmen: Recommended Unanimously**

**Finance Committee: Recommended (3 In Favor, 2 Against – Green, Manugian)**

**Summary:** *The Commission on Accessibility has completed a town wide study of municipal properties to determine deficiencies in accessibility. Due to the fact that both the front and rear doors of the Town Hall are heavy and difficult for people to open, especially for individuals with walkers or in wheelchairs, the Commission on Accessibility is recommending that the Town install automatic door openers on both doors. Automatic door openers were installed at the Library last year and have been very successful in addressing this concern.*

**Mover: Barry Pease**

**MOTION:** I move that the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$5,000 from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash), to be expended by the Town Manager, to install automatic door openers at the Groton Town Hall, and all costs associated and related thereto.

**Moved and Seconded**

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: Majority**

**Discussion:**

- Michelle Collette, ADA Coordinator, reported that the Commission on Accessibility supports this article.

**VOTE on Article 8 Main Motion: Passed by Majority Vote**

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## **ARTICLE 10: FUNDING FOR OPERATIONAL AUDIT OF TOWN OPERATIONS**

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 pay for the cost of conducting an audit of Town operations and all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

## BOARD OF SELECTMEN

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

**Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**Summary:** *In May, the Board of Selectmen appointed a Sustainable Budget Study Committee to look at the long range sustainability of the Town's Operating Budget. One of the outcomes of this Committee's work was to recommend a top to bottom audit of the Town's operations. The purpose of the Audit will be to identify the strengths and opportunities of the Town's organizational structure, including an assessment of the allocation of personnel, monetary and equipment resources, culminating in recommendations that will improve the organizational effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of Town services.*

**Mover: Barry Pease**

**MOTION:** I move that the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$45,500 from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash), to be expended by the Town Manager, to pay for the cost of conducting an audit of Town operations and all costs associated and related thereto.

**Moved and Seconded**

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: Majority**

**VOTE on Article 10 Main Motion: Passed by Majority Vote**

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**ARTICLE 11: FUNDING FOR OPERATIONAL AUDIT OF GDRSD OPERATIONS**

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 pay for Groton's share of the cost of conducting an audit of the Groton Dunstable Regional School District's operations and all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**GDRSD COMMITTEE**

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

**Finance Committee: Recommendation Deferred Until Town Meeting**

**Summary:** *Similar to the proposed Audit of Town Operations, the Groton Dunstable Regional School Committee will be conducting an audit of their operations with the intent of achieving the same outcome. This article will cover the cost of Groton's share of the Audit.*

**Mover: Anna Eliot**

**MOTION A:** I move that the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$0 from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash), to pay for Groton's share of the cost of conducting an audit of the Groton Dunstable Regional School District's operations and all costs associated and related thereto.

**Moved and Seconded**

**MOTION B:** I move that Article 11 be indefinitely postponed.

**Moved and Seconded**

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: Majority**

**VOTE on Article 11 Motion to Indefinitely Postpone: Passed by Unanimous Vote**

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**ARTICLE 12: REPLACE BOILER AT FLORENCE ROCHE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

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 replace the boiler at the Florence Roche Elementary School, and 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:** *There are two boilers at the Florence Roche School. The oil-fired forced hot water boiler, which was manufactured in 1995, is in good operating condition. The Weil McLain gas-fired steam boiler that was manufactured in 1988 needs to be replaced this fall. It continues to leak and it is doubtful that the boiler will operate satisfactorily throughout the winter months. The estimated cost of replacement is \$80,000. The Groton Dunstable Regional School District is in the process of soliciting bids for this replacement and should have exact costs at Town Meeting. Should Town Meeting approve funding for this replacement, it is expected to be installed by November 4, 2016.*

**Mover: Joshua Degen**

**MOTION:** I move that the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$80,000 from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash), to be expended by the Town Manager, to replace the boiler at the Florence Roche Elementary School, and all costs associated and related thereto.

**MOVED AND Seconded**

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: Majority**

**VOTE on Article 12 Main Motion: Passed by Unanimous Vote**

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**ARTICLE 13: *INSTALL SCALE AT THE TRANSFER STATION***

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 install a scale at the Transfer Station that will be used to weigh bulk items brought into the Transfer Station for disposal, and all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**DPW DIRECTOR**

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

**Summary:** *The purpose of this article is to fund the purchase of a used scale from a local business that is closing down. It is a truck scale that will weigh up to 100,000 pounds. The Town charges customers to dump material at the Transfer Station by weight and right now weights are estimated and are not very accurate. With a scale the DPW will be able to charge appropriately and be guaranteed not to be shorted any revenue. The DPW will also be able to weigh trucks going out with recyclables and ensure the Town is getting the right payment for materials. There is also potential for revenue by charging people to weigh at a certified scale, which is something the current owner of the item does. This is something the Town has been looking to do for years.*

**Mover: Peter Cunningham**

**MOTION:** I move that the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$15,000 from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash), to be expended by the Town Manager, to install a scale at the

Transfer Station that will be used to weigh bulk items brought into the Transfer Station for disposal, and all costs associated and related thereto.

**Moved and Seconded**

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: Majority**

**VOTE on Article 13 Main Motion: Passed by Majority Vote**

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**ARTICLE 14: COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS**

To see if the Town will vote to adopt and approve the recommendations of the Community Preservation Committee for Fiscal Year 2017, and vote to implement such recommendations by appropriating a sum or sums of money from the Community Preservation Fund established pursuant to Chapter 44B of the General Laws, and by authorizing the Board of Selectmen, with the approval of the Community Preservation Committee, to acquire, by purchase, gift or eminent domain, such real property interests in the name of the Town, or enforceable by the Town, including real property interests in the form of permanent affordable housing restrictions and historical preservation restrictions that will meet the requirements of Chapter 184 of the General Laws, as may be necessary or proper to carry out the foregoing, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**CPC Proposal A: Williams Barn Improvement \$45,000**

**Summary:** *The Williams Barn is a historic Town-owned building on Chicopee Row dating from about 1840. In early 2016, it was noticed that a portion of the northern basement stone wall of the Williams Barn had collapsed. A structural engineer was brought in to determine the best repair method. It is recommended the existing stones be removed and additional structural features be added. Once completed, the stone wall will be re-installed as close to original as possible. Providing these additional elements to the wall will make the repair last longer.*

**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE**

**Board of Selectmen: Recommended Unanimously**

**Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**Community Preservation Committee: Recommended Unanimously**

**Mover: Tom Delaney**

**MOTION 3: Williams Barn Improvement**

I move that the Town vote, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44B, Section 5, to appropriate the sum of \$20,000 from the Community Preservation Fund Historic Reserve and to appropriate the sum of \$25,000 from the Community Preservation Fund Unallocated Reserve for a total of \$45,000 to fund Community Preservation Application 2017-07 "William Barn Improvement".

**Moved and Seconded**

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: Majority**

**VOTE on Article 14 Main Motion: Passed by Unanimous Vote**



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**ARTICLE 15: ACCEPTANCE OF CRYSTAL SPRING LANE AS A TOWN WAY**

To see if the Town will vote to accept as a public way the roadway known as Crystal Spring Lane, as heretofore laid out by the Board of Selectmen and as shown on a plan entitled "Street Acceptance Plan, Crystal Spring Estates, Groton, Mass, prepared for High Oaks Realty Trust" dated December 23, 2014, Revised February 2, 2016, prepared by Ducharme & Dillis, Bolton, MA, a copy of which is on file with the Town Clerk, and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire, by gift, purchase, or eminent domain, the fee to or lesser interests in said roadway and all related easements, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

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

**Summary:** *To accept Crystal Spring Lane as a public way.*

**Mover: Anna Eliot**

**MOTION A:** I move that the Town vote to accept as a public way the roadway known as Crystal Spring Lane, as heretofore laid out by the Board of Selectmen and as shown on a plan entitled "Street Acceptance Plan, Crystal Spring Estates, Groton, Mass, prepared for High Oaks Realty Trust" dated December 23, 2014, Revised February 2, 2016, prepared by Ducharme & Dillis, Bolton, MA, a copy of which is on file with the Town Clerk, and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire, by gift, purchase, or eminent domain, the fee to or lesser interests in said roadway and all related easements, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**MOTION B:** I move that Article 11 be indefinitely postponed.

**Moved and Seconded**

**Quantum of Town Meeting Vote: Majority**

**Vote on Article 15 Motion to Indefinitely Postpone: Passed by Unanimous Vote**

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**MOTION to Dissolve the 2016 Fall Town Meeting**

**Moved and Seconded**

**VOTE on Motion to Dissolve: Passed by Unanimous Vote**

**The Meeting was dissolved at 10:00 PM**

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 26<sup>th</sup> Day of September in the year of our Lord Two Thousand Sixteen.

John G. Petropoulos  
John G. Petropoulos, Chairman

Joshua A. Degen  
Joshua A. Degen, Vice Chairman

Barry A. Pease  
Barry A. Pease, Clerk

Peter S. Cunningham  
Peter S. Cunningham, Member

Anna Eliot  
Anna Eliot, 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

## REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER TO THE 2016 FALL TOWN MEETING

The 2016 Fall Town Meeting Warrant contains several warrant articles that seek appropriations, some of which may affect the Tax Rate and some of which will have no further impact on taxes. The purpose of this report is to provide the residents and taxpayers with a summary of these articles and what impact they will have on the Fiscal Year 2017 Tax Rate.

As you will recall, the 2016 Spring Town Meeting voted a budget of \$34,615,738, which was right at the levy limit based on our best estimate of revenues at that time. Since that time, we have begun to get a better picture of our estimates. Most importantly, in July, the Commonwealth finalized its budget and provided the Town with its final State Aid Estimates. Further, the Assessors continue to work toward the finalization of the Town's new growth figure. They should have it certified by the end of October. At this time, I am pleased to say that both of these amounts have come in essentially on budget, with slight increases in overall anticipated revenues. The following chart provides the difference between what was originally estimated and what we are estimating at this time:

	<u>Original</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Difference</u>
State Aid	\$ 863,722	\$ 860,020	\$ (3,702)
State Charges	\$ 100,000	\$ 87,303	\$12,697
Snow & Ice Deficit	\$ 100,000	\$ 79,418	\$20,582
Off-Set Receipts	\$ 21,000	\$ 18,147	\$ 2,853
Property Tax Levy	\$30,257,066	\$30,257,066	\$ 0
Local Receipts	\$ 3,715,950	\$ 3,727,770	<u>\$11,820</u>
<b>Additional Revenues</b>			<b>\$ 44,250</b>

With these revised estimates, the approved budget is now \$44,250 under the levy limit. Since the original budget was voted, there are a few issues that require attention. Article 2 of the Warrant proposes to amend the original budget in some line items. These amendments will have no impact on the Tax Rate for Fiscal Year 2017, since the additional revenues come from reductions in State Aid Offsets, a lower Snow and Ice Deficit than originally estimated and an increase in estimated receipts. The overall levy limit will remain the same. In addition, the Department of Revenue has certified the Town's Free Cash at \$1,219,850. Free Cash is proposed to fund several of the Articles contained in the Warrant. The use of "Free Cash" will not impact the tax rate.

The following is a summary of Warrant Articles requesting funding:

<b>Article 1:</b>	<b>Unpaid Bills</b>	<b>Amount Requested: \$291</b>
	Stanley Elevator Company -	\$291
	Total	\$291

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**Article 2: Budget Amendments**

**Amount Requested: \$44,250**

The proposed funding for this Article will come from taxation and may impact the Tax Rate (at the conclusion of the summary and explanation will be a chart showing the impact on the FY 2017 Tax Rate). The following is a breakdown of the requests, followed by an explanation:

<u>Line Item</u>	<u>Original Appropriation</u>	<u>New Appropriation</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Board of Assessor Expenses	\$ 24,135	\$ 29,135	\$ 5,000
Insurance and Bonding	\$190,000	\$200,000	\$10,000
Police Salaries	\$308,026	\$316,010	\$ 7,984
Municipal Buildings Expenses	\$267,350	\$280,850	\$13,500
Country Club Expenses	<u>\$123,789</u>	<u>\$131,555</u>	<u>\$ 7,766</u>
Total	\$913,300	\$957,550	\$44,250

**Explanation of Requests**

**Board of Assessor Expenses - \$5,000**

The Town is required to complete a full revaluation of all real and personal property every three years. The Town is required to conduct this revaluation in Fiscal Year 2017. The Board of Assessors and their staff complete the residential property revaluation without any outside assistance. An outside consultant is hired to assist in the revaluation of commercial and industrial property. An earlier appropriation of \$16,000 provided the funding for this portion of the revaluation. Due to the technicalities associated with the Personal Property Revaluation, the Principal Assessor has requested that a consultant be brought in to assist with this revaluation as well. Due to an error in calculating the Fiscal Year 2017 Board of Assessors Expense Budget, the amount needed for this (\$5,000) was inadvertently left out of the budget. The purpose of this appropriation is to provide the necessary funding to retain the consultant's services for the revaluation of Personal Property.

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

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**Insurance and Bonding - \$10,000**

The Town's Insurance Budget, which covers Workers' Compensation and Property and Casualty Insurance, is set in December and voted at the Spring Town Meeting in April. The final rates are not known until June. When the budget is developed an estimate from the insurance carrier of the actual cost is used. This year, the workers' compensation rates and property insurance came in higher than anticipated. To meet the Town's insurance premiums, an additional \$10,000 is needed.

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

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**Police Salaries - \$7,984**

In July, 2016, the Board of Selectmen voted to renew the Employment Agreement with the Police Chief for an additional three (3) year term effective from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2019. The Board agreed to a salary of \$137,000 in Fiscal Year 2017. In order to meet this salary, an additional \$7,984 is needed in the Police Salary Line Item. This appropriation will provide the necessary funding to meet the first year of the new Agreement.

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

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**Municipal Building Expenses - \$13,500**

During the development of the Fiscal Year 2017 Operating Budget, the DPW Director had requested the creation of another full time custodian position to help maintain Town buildings and provide additional coverage at the Transfer Station. This work had been accomplished in the past by a private contractor. In Fiscal Year 2016, the private contractor was paid from a variety of funds, including funding from Building Maintenance Expenses. When the position was added to the FY 2017 Budget, the funding from the expense line was eliminated and transferred to the Building Maintenance Wage Line to offset the cost of the new position. While Town Meeting approved the creation of the new position, it was made contingent on the successful approval of a Proposition 2½ Override. With the defeat of the override, funding for the full time custodian was eliminated from the budget. However, the work done by the private contractor to maintain Town Buildings and provide additional support at the Transfer Station is still needed. This funding request would restore money needed to keep the private contractor in the budget for FY 2017.

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

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**Country Club Expenses - \$7,766**

In May, 2016, the Country Club had its annual inspection and test of the fire alarm system in the Function Hall. The testing company found several issues with the system and has recommended that it be replaced. The fire alarm is having a problem syncing up to the strobe light system and a random NAC (based signal trouble) error that cannot be cleared correctly. The cost to replace the system is \$7,766 and will assure that it passes future inspections. Due to its use, the Function Hall must have a properly working fire alarm system. The new system, once installed, will use a cellular signal which will allow the Town to cancel the dedicated phone line currently used to communicate with the Communications Center. This will save the Town \$500 annually.

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

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The funding for the requests (\$44,250) under this Article come from the overall tax levy. However, since there was no increase in the overall levy limit, there will be no impact on the FY 2017 Tax Rate. The impact on the FY 2017 Tax Rate is as follows:

Original Budget -	\$34,615,738
Original Levy Capacity Used -	\$30,257,066
Amount Under the Levy Limit -	\$0
Original Proposed Tax Rate -	\$19.35
Average Tax Bill -	\$7,740 or \$228 increase over FY 2016
New Proposed Budget -	\$34,659,988
New Levy Capacity Used	\$30,257,066
Amount Under the Levy Limit -	\$0
New Proposed Tax Rate -	\$19.35
Average Tax Bill -	\$7,740 or \$228 increase over FY 2016

**Article 3 – Capital Stabilization Fund**

**Amount Requested: \$400,000**

The Fund has a balance of \$129,704. 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 and provide adequate funding to meet the anticipated Fiscal Year 2018 Capital Budget, the Town will need to add \$400,000 to the fund. This funding will come from Free Cash and not affect the Tax Rate.

**Article 4 – Offset the Tax Rate**

**Amount Requested: \$400,000**

After reviewing all of the other financial commitments contained in the Warrant for the 2016 Fall Town Meeting, the Board of Selectmen has voted to recommend that the Town Meeting vote to transfer \$400,000 from Free Cash to offset the Fiscal Year 2017 Tax Rate. This amount will reduce the tax rate by \$0.26 and reduce the average tax bill (a home valued at \$400,000) by \$104.

**Article 5 – Transfer Money to Water Enterprise**

**Amount Requested: \$510,000**

From the Summary in the Warrant: This article requests that the sum of \$110,000 be transferred from the Water Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2017 Water Department’s General Expense for the mechanical cleaning of the Whitney Pond Well #1 and Whitney Pond Well #2, the mechanical cleaning of the Baddacook Well and for engineering services related to electrical upgrades and pump and motor improvements at the Whitney Pond Well. In addition, it further requests that the Board of Water Commissioners be authorized to borrow the sum of \$400,000, to be raised through water rates, for Electrical Upgrades and Pump and Motor improvements at the Whitney Pond Well.

**Article 6 – Design Funding for a New Senior Center      Amount Requested: TBD**

From the Summary in the Warrant: The 2016 Spring Town Meeting appropriated funding to hire a consultant to conduct a feasibility study to determine the long term needs of Groton's Senior Center. At the completion of the initial study, it was determined that further study of the Prescott School is needed before making a final determination on the location of a new Senior Center. Specifically, the Council on Aging's Feasibility Oversight Committee has voted to seek further funding for the sole purpose of getting additional hard cost estimates on Prescott School, specifically for the renovation that meets the requirements of the Council on Aging's Senior Center plans as defined in the Site and Building Analysis and other related documents; study the possibility of secondary road access at the Prescott School; examine emergency shelter adaptability as defined by Groton's Fire and Police Chiefs respectively; and determine ADA universal adaptability. Once a determination is made, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee, a Special Town Meeting would be called in January, 2017 to appropriate the design/bid funding to bring bids in hand on the final solution for a new Senior Center to the 2017 Spring Town Meeting. The amount requested under this Article will be presented to the Spring Town Meeting. The funding will come from Free Cash and not affect the Tax Rate.

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**Article 8 – Purchase New Vehicle for Police Chief      Amount Requested: \$50,000**

From the Summary in the Warrant: This is a scheduled replacement for a new fully equipped vehicle for the Chief of Police. The current Chief's vehicle will be used to replace an older cruiser that will be removed from the fleet. This funding will come from the Stabilization Fund and not affect the Tax Rate.

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**Article 9 – Install Automatic Door Openers      Amount Requested: \$5,000**

From the Summary in the Warrant: The Commission on Accessibility has completed a town wide study of municipal properties to determine deficiencies in accessibility. Due to the fact that both the front and rear doors of the Town Hall are heavy and difficult for people to open, especially for individuals with walkers or in wheelchairs, the Commission on Accessibility is recommending that the Town install automatic door openers on both doors. Automatic door openers were installed at the Library last year and have been very successful on addressing this concern. This funding will come from Free Cash and not affect the Tax Rate.

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**Article 10 – Funding for Town Operations Audit      Amount Requested: \$45,000**

From the Summary in the Warrant: In May, the Board of Selectmen appointed a Sustainable Budget Study Committee to look at the long range sustainability of the Town's Operating Budget. One of the outcomes of this Committee's work was to recommend a top to bottom audit of the Town's operations. The purpose of the Audit will be to identify the strengths and opportunities of the Town's organizational structure, including an assessment of the allocation of personnel, monetary and equipment resources culminating in recommendations that will improve the organizational effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of Town services. This funding will come from Free Cash and not affect the Tax Rate.

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**Article 11 – Funding for GDRSD Operations Audit**

**Amount Requested: TBD**

This Article was originally placed on the Warrant as a place holder in the event funding from the Town of Groton was needed to pay for the Audit. Recently it has been brought to the Town’s attention that the Regional School District would cover the entirety of this cost and no additional funding would be needed. This article may be removed from the Warrant prior to publication.

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**Article 12 – New Boiler at Florence Roche School**

**Amount Requested: \$80,000**

From the Summary in the Warrant: There are two boilers at the Florence Roche School. The oil-fired forced hot water boiler, which was manufactured in 1995, is in good operating condition. The Weil McLain gas-fired steam boiler that was manufactured in 1988 needs to be replaced this fall. It continues to leak and it is doubtful that the boiler will operate satisfactorily throughout the winter months. The estimated cost of replacement is \$80,000. The School District is in the process of soliciting bids for this replacement and should have exact costs at Town Meeting. Should Town Meeting approve funding for this replacement, it is expected to be installed by November 4, 2016. This funding will come from Free Cash and not affect the Tax Rate.

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**Article 13 – Install Scale at Transfer Station**

**Amount Requested: \$15,000**

From the Summary in the Warrant: The purpose of this article is to purchase a used scale from a local business that is closing down. It is a truck scale that will weigh up to 100,000 pounds. The Town charges customers to dump material at the transfer station by weight and right now weights are estimated and are not very accurate. With a scale the DPW will be able to charge appropriately and be guaranteed not to be shorted any revenue. The DPW will also be able to weigh trucks going out with recyclables and ensure the Town is getting the right payment for materials. There is also potential for revenue by charging people to weigh at a certified scale, which is something the current owner of the item does. This is something the Town has been looking at for years. This funding will come from Free Cash and not affect the Tax Rate.

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**Article 14 – Community Preservation Funding**

**Amount Requested: \$45,000**

From the Summary in the Warrant: The Williams Barn is a historic Town-owned building on Chicopee Row dating from about 1840. In early 2016, it was noticed that a portion of the northern basement stone wall of the Williams Barn had collapsed. A structural engineer was brought in to determine the best repair method. It is recommended the existing stones be removed and additional structural features be added. Once completed, the stone wall will be re-installed as close to original as possible. Providing these additional elements to the wall will make the repair last longer. This funding will come from the Historic Preservation Reserve of the Community Preservation Act and not affect the Tax Rate.

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Respectfully submitted,

*Mark W. Haddad*  
Mark W. Haddad



Town Manager