

Warrant, Summary, and Recommendations

TOWN OF GROTON



2019 FALL TOWN MEETING

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

Beginning Monday, October 21, 2019 @ 7:00 PM

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.

**FALL TOWN MEETING WARRANT
OCTOBER 21, 2019**

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, 344 Main Street, Groton, Massachusetts in said Town on Monday, the twenty-first day of October, 2019 at Seven O'clock in the evening, to consider the following:

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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.

SELECT BOARD

Select Board: *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.*

ARTICLE 2: AMEND THE FISCAL YEAR 2020 TOWN OPERATING BUDGET

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Fiscal Year 2020 Operating Budget as adopted under Article 4 of the 2019 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 2020, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE
SELECT BOARD
TOWN MANAGER**

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

Summary: *The Fiscal Year 2020 Town Operating Budget was approved at the 2019 Spring Town Meeting in April, 2019. 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 2020 Operating Budget. Please see the Town Manager's Report contained in the back of this Warrant for an explanation outlining the proposed changes.*

ARTICLE 3: TRANSFER WITHIN WATER ENTERPRISE FUND

To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum or sums of money from the Water Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2020 Water Department Operating Budget for general expenses, or to take any other action relative thereto.

BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS

Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously*
Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*
Water Commissioners: *Recommended Unanimously*

Summary: *This article will request a transfer of funds from Water Surplus to help fund the Fiscal Year 2020 Water Department's Operational Expenses.*

ARTICLE 4: TRANSFER WITHIN SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND

To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum or sums of money from the Sewer Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2020 Sewer Enterprise Department Budget for general expenses, or to take any other action relative thereto.

BOARD OF SEWER COMMISSIONERS

Select Board: *Recommendation Deferred Until Town Meeting*

Finance Committee: *Recommendation Deferred Until Town Meeting*

Sewer Commission: *Recommendation Deferred Until Town Meeting*

Summary: *This article will request a transfer of funds from Sewer Surplus to help fund the Fiscal Year 2020 Sewer Department's Operational Expenses.*

ARTICLE 5: TRANSFER MONEY INTO THE CAPITAL STABILIZATION FUND

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 added to the sum already on deposit in the Capital Stabilization Fund, or to take any other action relative thereto.

SELECT BOARD

Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously*

Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*

Summary: *As of the Printing of this Warrant, the Fund has a balance of \$171,958. 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.*

ARTICLE 6: TRANSFER MONEY INTO THE STABILIZATION FUND

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 added to the sum already on deposit in the Stabilization Fund, or to take any other action relative thereto.

SELECT BOARD

Select Board: *Recommendation Deferred Until Town Meeting*

Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*

Summary: *As of the printing of this Warrant, the balance in this fund is \$1,988,036. The financial management goal is to achieve and maintain a balance in the Fund equal to 5% of the total annual budget. The target amount for the Fund will be provided at Town Meeting.*

ARTICLE 7: TRANSFER MONEY INTO THE GDRSD CAPITAL STABILIZATION FUND

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 added to the sum already on deposit in the Town of Groton Capital Stabilization Fund for the Groton Dunstable Regional School District, or to take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER

Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously*
Finance Committee: *Recommendation Deferred Until Town Meeting*

Summary: *As of the printing of the Warrant, the balance in this fund is \$214,160. This fund covers the Town of Groton's share of the Groton Dunstable Regional School District Committee's long-range Capital Plan to address its capital needs. The target amount will be provided at Town Meeting.*

ARTICLE 8: INSTALL CROSSWALK SIGNAGE ON MAIN STREET

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, for the engineering and installation of lighted crosswalk signage, and all costs related and associated thereto at the crosswalk located at the Groton Dunstable Middle School on Main Street, or to take any other action relative thereto.

SELECT BOARD

Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously*
Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*

Summary: *The Town, through a grant from the Department of Transportation's Complete Streets Program, has installed lighted crosswalk signage at almost every crosswalk on Main Street. These lighted signs have dramatically improved pedestrian safety up and down Main Street. One Crosswalk that has not been addressed is the one located at the Florence Roche Elementary/Groton Dunstable Regional Middle School. The Select Board would like to install a lighted sign at this location as well. While the State is responsible for the maintenance of this section of Main Street, they will not pay for lighted crosswalk signs, therefore, if the Town wants them installed at this location, the Town will have to pay for them.*

ARTICLE 9: 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 2020, 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 Select Board, 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: Prescott School Sprinkler System To Be Determined

Summary: *The 2018 Spring Town Meeting appropriated funding from the Community Preservation Account to install a sprinkler system at the Prescott School. Bid specifications, asking for a "Design/Build" concept was adopted for the bidding strategy. Unfortunately, sprinkler installation companies were not interested on bidding on this kind of project. Based on this, the Friends of Prescott, with the support of the Town Manager, has gone back to the CPC and requested permission to expend some of the funds authorized for this project on the design of the system. The Friends have now designed the system and gone back out to bid. Bids were due on October 16th (after the Warrant went to Print). In the event that the bids come in higher than the remaining balance of the project (approximately \$225,000), this Article will seek the additional funding from Community Preservation Funding to pay for the entire project. This Article should be considered a placeholder for this purpose. Should bids come in under the remaining balance, this Article will be withdrawn.*

Select Board: Recommendation Deferred Until Town Meeting
Finance Committee: Recommendation Deferred Until Town Meeting
Community Preservation Committee: Recommendation Deferred Until Town Meeting

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

ARTICLE 10: ASSESSORS CYCLICAL INSPECTIONS

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 starting the cyclical inspection process of inspecting every property in town within the Department of Revenue's five year period guidelines, said inspections to commence in the Spring of 2020 and to continue every year thereafter, or to take any other action relative thereto.

BOARD OF ASSESSORS

Select Board: Recommended Unanimously
Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously

Summary: *The Assessors' Office is required to perform inspections of every property in Town to comply with Massachusetts Department of Revenue Guidelines. Cyclical inspections are required to be performed on a yearly basis to cover the entire Town in a five (5) year span.*

ARTICLE 11: FUNDING FOR STORMWATER STRATEGY

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, for the purpose of retaining consultants and engineers to assist the Town in developing a Stormwater funding strategy, and all costs associated and related thereto, to comply with Massachusetts Small Municipal Separate Storm Water Sewer System General Permit (MS4), or to take any other action relative thereto

**TOWN MANAGER
DPW DIRECTOR**

Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously*
Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*

Summary: *The Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System Permit (MS4) was created to address Stormwater sewer systems in Municipalities. Stormwater typically contains a number of pollutants, such as oil and grease from roadways and parking lots, pesticides and fertilizers from lawns, sediment from construction sites, sand and dirt from roadway maintenance practices, and carelessly discarded trash such as cigarette butts, wrappers, and plastic bottles. When these pollutants enter water bodies, they can contaminate drinking water supplies, hinder recreation activities, and harm aquatic and other wildlife habitats. In addition to washing pollutants into our surface waters, improperly managed storm water runoff can result in soil erosion and flooding. The purpose of the MS4 Permit is to ensure Municipalities are addressing this issue. To that end, the Town of Groton needs to develop a strategy to address the expense of stormwater runoff. The purpose of this article is to provide funding to hire consultants to help the Town develop a funding strategy.*

ARTICLE 12: AMEND BYLAWS – BAN SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS

To see if the Town will vote to amend the General Bylaws of the Town by creating a new Chapter 200 entitled “Single-Use Plastic Bags” as follows:

CHAPTER 200 – Single-Use Plastic Bags

§ 200-1. Purpose and intent.

- A. The production and use of thin-film, single-use plastic checkout bags have significant impacts on the environment, including but not limited to: contributing to the potential

death of marine animals through ingestion and entanglement, contributing to pollution of the land environment, creating a burden to solid waste collection and recycling facilities, clogging storm drainage systems. Single-Use plastic bags require the use of millions of barrels of crude oil nationally for their manufacture, and are not biodegradable. They gradually disintegrate into minute particles which absorb toxins contaminating the food chain including the food humans eat.

- B. The goal of this bylaw is to reduce the common use of plastic checkout bags and to encourage the use of reusable bags by consumers, thereby reducing local land and marine pollution, advancing solid waste reduction, protecting the Town's unique natural beauty and irreplaceable natural resources, and improving the quality of life for the citizens of the Town.

§ 200-2. Definitions.

As used in this article, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

ASTM D6400 — The American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) International Standard Specification for Compostable Plastics.

CHECKOUT BAG — A bag with or without handles provided by a store to a customer at the point of sale that is intended for the purpose of transporting food or merchandise out of the store.

COMPOSTABLE PLASTIC BAG — A plastic bag that conforms to the current ASTM D6400 standard specifications by a recognized verification entity.

PRODUCT BAG —

- A. A bag in which loose produce, bulk items, unwrapped baked goods or prepared food, or other products are placed by the consumer to deliver such items to the point of sale or checkout area of the store; or
- B. A bag that contains or wraps foods to retain moisture or to segregate foods (like meat or ice cream) or other items to prevent contamination or damage when the items are placed together in a recyclable bag or reusable bag. Bags without handles used to cover clothing such as a dry-cleaning bag are not included in this definition.

RECYCLABLE PAPER BAG — A paper bag that is 100% recyclable and contains at least 40% post-consumer recycled content, and displays in a visible manner on the outside of the bag:

- A. The word "recyclable" or a symbol identifying the bag as recyclable; and
- B. A label identifying the bag as being made from post-consumer recycled content and the percentage of post-consumer recycled content in the bag.

REUSABLE BAG — A bag that is either:

- A. Made of cloth or other machine-washable fabric; or

- B. Made of plastic other than polyethylene or polyvinyl chloride that is durable, non-toxic, and generally considered a food-grade material, and is more than four mils in thickness.

SINGLE-USE PLASTIC CHECKOUT BAG — A plastic checkout bag that is less than four mils thick and is not a compostable plastic bag.

STORE — Any commercial enterprise selling goods, food or services directly to the public, whether for or not for profit, including, but not limited to, convenience and grocery stores, markets, restaurants, pharmacies, liquor stores, take-out food purveyors, and merchandise retailers.

§ 200-3. Use regulations.

- A. No store in the Town shall provide to any customer a single-use plastic checkout bag. Existing stock should be phased out within six months of July 1, 2020, and any remaining stock should be disposed of properly.
- B. If a store provides checkout bags to customers, it may only provide reusable bags, recyclable paper bags or compostable plastic bags.
- C. If a store provides product bags to customers, the bag shall comply with the requirements of being either a reusable bag, recyclable paper bag or compostable bag.

§ 200-4. Administration and enforcement.

- A. This bylaw may be enforced by any Town police officer or agent of the Board of Health or other individuals appointed by the Town Manager.
- B. A person, individually or by his servant or agent, who violates any provision of this bylaw may be penalized by a noncriminal disposition pursuant to MGL c. 40, § 21D, and the Town's noncriminal disposition bylaw. The following penalties apply:

- [1] First violation: a written warning.
- [2] Second violation: fine of \$100.
- [3] Third violation: fine of \$200.
- [4] Fourth and subsequent violations: fine of \$300.

- C. Each day the violation continues constitutes a separate violation.

§ 200-5. Effective date.

This bylaw takes effect on July 1, 2020.

SELECT BOARD

Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously*
Finance Committee: *No Position*

Summary: *The purpose of this by-law is to promote the use of reusable bags by reducing the number of paper bags and eliminating the use of thin-film, single-use plastic checkout bags distributed in the Town of Groton. Reducing the use of paper bags and eliminating the use of thin-film, single-use plastic bags through a combined effort by citizens and businesses will have*

a positive impact on our environment including, but not limited to: reducing waste and unnecessary strains on recycling resources; minimizing litter, reducing the carbon footprint of Groton; protecting our ponds, lakes, and waterways; avoiding the waste of finite natural resources; protecting land and water based small animals; and preserving the unique natural beauty of our Town.

ARTICLE 13: PURCHASE TRIMPER PROPERTY

To see if the Town of Groton will vote to appropriate the sum of \$400,000 for the acquisition by gift, negotiated purchase or eminent domain a parcel of 36.21 acres and 5.85 acres owned by the Helen H. Trimper Investment Trust as shown as parcels labeled "Remaining Land of Helen H. Trimper, Trustee of the Helen H. Trimper Investment Trust" and "Parcel "A"" respectively on the plan entitled "Plan of Land in Groton, Mass." prepared by David E. Ross Associates, Inc., dated April 2, 2019, both parcels to be managed and controlled by the Conservation Commission of the Town of Groton for conservation and passive outdoor recreation purposes pursuant to M.G.L. Section 8C of Chapter 40; to transfer the sum of \$400,000 from the Conservation Fund therefor to authorize an application for a Massachusetts Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) Program grant, in the event that such a grant is awarded to the Town, then, to the extent permitted by the terms of the grant, said proceeds to be returned to the Conservation Fund; that the Town Manager or Select Board be authorized to file on behalf of the Town of Groton any and all applications deemed necessary under the Self-Help Act (M.G.L. Chapter 132A, Section 11) or any other applications for funds in any way connected with the scope of this acquisition, and that the Town Manager and the Select Board and the Conservation Commission be authorized, as they deem appropriate, to enter into all agreements and execute any and all instruments including the conveyance of a perpetual conservation restriction in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 184 as required by Section 12(a) of Chapter 44B or Chapter 293 Section 10 of the Acts of 1998 as amended, as may be necessary on behalf of the Town of Groton to affect said purchase, which conservation restriction may be granted to the Groton Conservation Trust or any other organization qualified and willing to hold such a restriction, or to take any other action relative thereto.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously*
Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*

Summary: *Applying for a state grant will enable the Town to leverage funds already set aside in the Conservation Fund for the acquisition of approximately 42 acres of conservation land. The Conservation Commission is able to spend from the Conservation Fund without Town Meeting approval; however, the Commission needs approval to apply for and receive reimbursement from the grant. The negotiated purchase price for this property is \$400,000 and the grant would reimburse approximately \$243,000 to the Conservation Fund. This land has frontage on Martins Pond Road and is adjacent to Williams Barn/Sorhaug Woods, which in turn connects across Chicopee Row to extensive acreage of conserved land extending north towards Reedy Meadow Road. To the east, Williams Barn/Sorhaug Woods connects to a number of conserved lands extending northeast into Dunstable. Acquiring this land will significantly increase the connectivity between these northern open spaces and the Town center*

via the Gibbet Hill/Scarlet Hill Conservation Restriction areas. The property itself includes approximately 7 acres of open meadow atop a drumlin and drops to the west nearly 170 feet through beautiful mixed woodland into a wetland, which drains into Martins Pond. Protecting large tracts of contiguous open space ensures a diversity of wildlife, habitats, and recreational opportunities for generations of Groton residents.

ARTICLE 14: ESTABLISHMENT OF REVOLVING FUNDS

To see if the Town will vote to amend Section 71-1 of the Town of Groton Bylaws (entitled "Funds Established", by inserting the following amendment establishing two new revolving funds, to follow after the "Access for Persons with Disabilities" revolving fund:

<u>Program or Purpose</u>	<u>Representative or Board Authorized to Spend</u>	<u>Departmental Receipts</u>
Transfer Station Glass	DPW Director	User fees received for use of Glass Plant
Senior Center Fitness Equipment	Council on Aging Director	User fees received from users of fitness equipment

and, further, to amend Section 71-2 (entitled "Limitation on or increase in expenditures) by adding the following text to the end of the existing text: "The second paragraph of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40, §3 is accepted to allow any balance in the Transfer Station Glass Plant Revolving Account and the Senior Center Fitness Equipment Revolving Account at the close of each fiscal year to remain available for expenditure, without appropriation for such purposes in future years."

or to take any other action relative thereto.

**DPW DIRECTOR
COUNCIL ON AGING DIRECTOR**

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

Summary: *This Article creates two new revolving funds. One will allow the DPW Director to collect fees from municipalities who utilize the new glass pulverizing plant at the Transfer Station, and then expend those fees for the purpose of general up-keep and maintenance on that equipment. The second one will allow the Council on Aging Director to collect fees from individuals who utilize the new fitness equipment at the Senior Center, and then expend those fees for the purpose of general up-keep and maintenance on that equipment. It is expected that the fund balance in this account will eventually accumulate to also cover replacement of equipment as this becomes necessary.*

ARTICLE 15: ANNUAL SPENDING LIMITS FOR REVOLVING FUNDS

To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 44 sec 53E½ and the Revolving Fund Bylaw, to set the FY 2020 spending limits on the following revolving funds as follows:

Program or Purpose	FY 2020 Spending Limit
Transfer Station Glass	\$10,000
Senior Center Fitness Equipment	\$10,000

or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER

Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously*
Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*

Summary: *The purpose of this Article is to set the annual spending limits on the two newly created Revolving Fund Accounts at \$10,000.*

ARTICLE 16: ACCEPTANCE OF AMELIA WAY AS A TOWN WAY

To see if the Town will vote to accept Amelia Way as a public way, as recommended by the Planning Board and laid out by the Select Board and as shown on a plan entitled "Amelia Way Street Acceptance Plan in Groton, Massachusetts," prepared by Hannigan Engineering, Inc., Leominster, MA for Grand Coast Capital Group, Hingham, Massachusetts, dated January 16, 2018, and on file with the Town Clerk; to authorize the Select Board to acquire, by gift, purchase or eminent domain such land and easements for the creation, maintenance and operation of a public way, including but not limited to easements for access, grading, drainage, sloping, construction and utilities, in all or any portions of such way and the parcels on such way, or to take any other action relative thereto.

SELECT BOARD

Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously*
Finance Committee: *No Position*

Summary: *To accept Amelia Way as a public way.*

ARTICLE 17: ACCEPTANCE OF MOCKINGBIRD HILL ROAD AS A TOWN WAY

To see if the Town will vote to accept Mockingbird Hill Road as a public way, as recommended by the Planning Board and laid out by the Select Board and shown on a plan entitled "Roadway As-Built for Mockingbird Hill Road, Sta. 0+00 – 16+13.23, in Groton, Massachusetts", prepared by R. Wilson Associates, dated July 12, 2019, recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds, and on file with the Town Clerk; to authorize the Select Board to acquire, by gift, purchase or eminent domain such land and easements for the creation, maintenance and operation of a public way, including but not limited to easements for access, grading, drainage, sloping, construction and utilities, in all or any portions of such way and the parcels on such way, or to take any other action relative thereto.

SELECT BOARD

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

Summary: *To accept Mockingbird Hill Road as a public way.*

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 30th Day of September in the year of our Lord Two Thousand Nineteen.

Alison S. Manugian

Alison S. Manugian, Chair

Joshua A. Degen

Joshua A. Degen, Vice Chair

John F. Reilly

John F. Reilly, Clerk

John R. Giger

John R. Giger, Member

Rebecca H. Pine

Rebecca H. Pine, 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 2019 FALL TOWN MEETING

The 2019 Fall Town Meeting Warrant contains several warrant articles that seek appropriations, some of which will 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 2020 Tax Rate.

As you will recall, the 2019 Spring Town Meeting voted a budget of \$39,721,234, which was \$197,995 under the levy limit based on our best estimate of revenues at that time. At that Town Meeting, we estimated that the Fiscal Year 2020 Tax Rate would be \$18.59. 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, it appears that our revenue estimates will be higher than what we anticipated in the Spring. The main reason for this increase is that New Growth will come in higher than estimated in the Spring due to the completion of the Full Measure and List conducted by the Board of Assessors. Every property in Town was inspected and various improvements to properties that had been previously unknown to the Town were discovered and property values were adjusted which added more Growth to the Levy Limit. 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	\$ 965,342	\$ 971,581	\$ 6,239
State Charges	\$ 93,692	\$ 93,392	\$ (300)
Off-Set Receipts	\$ 18,084	\$ 18,527	\$ (443)
Property Tax Levy	\$ 31,778,998	\$ 31,960,098	\$ 181,100
Excluded Debt	\$ 2,000,028	\$ 2,070,421	\$ 70,393
Allowance for Abatements	\$ 150,000	\$ 200,000	\$ (50,000)
Local Receipts	\$ 4,120,480	\$ 4,120,480	\$ -
		Difference	\$ 206,989

With these revised estimates and proposed expenditures at this Town Meeting, the budget will increase to \$39,857,627 and will be \$269,191 under the levy limit. Article 2 of the Warrant proposes to amend the original budget in some line items. With these expenditures and the increase in the overall value of the Town, the anticipated tax rate will remain at \$18.59, but the average tax bill will increase by an additional \$36.72 over the original estimated increase in the Spring (\$220), bringing a new anticipated increase in the average tax bill to \$257. In addition, the Department of Revenue has certified the Town's Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash) at \$1,335,762. "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 or average tax bill.

The following is a summary of Warrant Articles requesting funding:

Article 1: Prior Year Bills

Amount Requested: \$3,195

There are two unpaid bills for Town Meeting consideration in the amount of \$3,195. One bill is from A-1 Odd Jobs in the amount of \$150 and the second bill is from Waste-Zero in the amount of \$3,045. The funding would come from Free Cash.

Article 2: Amend the FY20 Operating Budget

Amount Requested: \$146,393

There are three proposed amendments to the budget, two of which will impact the average tax bill. The first amendment is to add \$10,000 to the Town Accountant's Budget to pay for additional licenses and software upgrades to our accounting software package. This funding will come from Free Cash and have no impact on the tax rate or average tax bill. The second amendment is to increase the Fire Department Budget by \$66,000 to pay for equipping and training eleven (11) new Call Firefighters. The Fire Department has ramped up its recruitment of Call Firefighters and their efforts have led to the largest recruit class of Call Firefighters since 2002. The Town Manager is proposing that this funding come from excess levy capacity as a certain amount of this funding will re-occur in FY 2021 as the Department continues its recruitment efforts. If approved, this will add \$18.36 to the average tax bill. The third amendment is to increase the debt service budget by \$70,393 to cover the interest payment in FY 2020 for the Bond Anticipation Notes on the DPW Project and Library Roof. These two projects were excluded from levy and will add \$18.36 to the average tax bill. The total increase in the average tax bill should this Article pass as proposed by the Town Manager will be \$36.72.

Article 3: Transfer - Water Enterprise Fund

Amount Requested: \$150,000

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

Article 4: Transfer - Sewer Enterprise Fund

Amount Requested: \$0

It is anticipated that this article will be withdrawn from consideration as no additional funding is needed at this time.

Article 5: Transfer into Capital Stabilization Fund

Amount Requested: \$500,000

As of the writing of this report, the balance in the Capital Stabilization Fund is \$171,958. The Town's Financial Policies states that the Capital Stabilization Fund should be 1.5% of the Town's Operating Budget (\$39,857,627), or \$597,864. To reach this level, it would require a minimum appropriation of \$425,906. The proposed Capital Plan for FY 2021 currently calls for \$901,240 in proposed requests. During the budget process it will be reduced to around \$500,000. Given the fact that we leave approximately \$200,000 in this fund annually, this Article will request that \$500,000 be transferred from Free Cash to add to the Capital Stabilization Fund. This will have no impact on the tax rate or average tax bill.

Article 6: *Transfer into the Stabilization Fund* *Amount Requested: \$4,845*

As of the writing of this report, the Stabilization Fund has a balance \$1,988,036. The Financial Policies state that the Stabilization Fund should be 5% of the Town's Operating Budget (\$39,857,627), or \$1,992,881. This would require a minimum appropriation of \$4,845. This appropriation would come from Free Cash and have no impact on the tax rate or average tax bill. Depending on the interest earned prior to Town Meeting, we may not need an appropriation to satisfy the Financial Policies.

Article 7: *Transfer into GDRSD Cap Stab Fund* *Amount Requested: \$261,000*

The current balance in this fund is \$214,160. The Fiscal Year 2021 District Capital Plan will require the Town to pay \$475,000 for its share of the Plan. This will require an appropriation of \$261,000 to cover the Town's expense in FY 2021. This funding will come from Free Cash and have no impact on the tax rate or average tax bill.

Article 8: *Install Crosswalk Signage* *Amount Requested: \$15,000*

From the Summary Contained in the Warrant: The Town, through a grant from the Department of Transportation's Complete Streets Program, has installed lighted crosswalk signage at almost every crosswalk on Main Street. These lighted signs have dramatically improved pedestrian safety up and down Main Street. One Crosswalk that has not been addressed is the one located at the Florence Roche Elementary/Groton Dunstable Regional Middle School. The Select Board would like to install a lighted sign at this location as well. While the State is responsible for the maintenance of this section of Main Street, they will not pay for lighted crosswalk signs, therefore, if the Town wants them installed at this location, the Town will have to pay for them. The anticipated cost of this lighted signage is \$15,000. This funding would come from Free Cash and have no impact on the tax rate or average tax bill.

Article 9: *CPA Funding* *Amount Requested: TBD*

From the Summary Contained in the Warrant: The 2018 Spring Town Meeting appropriated funding from the Community Preservation Account to install a sprinkler system at the Prescott School. Bid specifications, asking for a "Design/Build" concept was adopted for the bidding strategy. Unfortunately, sprinkler installation companies were not interested on bidding on this kind of project. Based on this, the Friends of Prescott, with the support of the Town Manager, has gone back to the CPC and requested permission to expend some of the funds authorized for this project on the design of the system. The Friends have now designed the system and gone back out to bid. Bids were due on October 16th (after the Warrant went to Print). In the event that the bids come in higher than the remaining balance of the project (approximately \$225,000), this Article will seek the additional funding from Community Preservation Funding to pay for the entire project. This Article should be considered a placeholder for this purpose.

Should bids come in under the remaining balance, this Article will be withdrawn. Since any funding under this Article will come from the Community Preservation Account, there will be no impact on the tax rate or average tax bill.

Article 10: Cyclical Inspections

Amount Requested: \$21,600

From the Summary Contained in the Warrant: The Assessors' Office is required to perform inspections of every property in Town to comply with Massachusetts Department of Revenue Guidelines. Cyclical inspections are required to be performed on a yearly basis to cover the entire Town in a five (5) year span. It is anticipated that the Annual Cost for these inspections will be \$21,600. In FY 2020, this funding will come from Free Cash and have no impact on the tax rate or average tax bill. The Finance Committee has recommended that since this will be an annual recurring expense, it should be added to the Operating Budget beginning in FY 2021.

Article 11: Funding for Stormwater Strategy

Amount Requested: \$15,000

The Town would like to hire a consultant to assist the Town in determining a funding strategy to cover the expenses required to comply with the Town's MS4 Permit. The proposed cost to retain these services is \$15,000 and it would come from Free Cash. It is anticipated that the expense for compliance could be anywhere from \$250,000 to \$500,000 annually. The purpose of hiring a consultant is to determine the best way to cover this expense on an annual basis. Once the strategy is determined, we will return to the Spring Town Meeting in 2020 for approval. This funding would come from Free Cash and have no impact on the tax rate or average tax bill.

As stated above, the Town's Free Cash has been certified at \$1,335,762. The above stated Articles are seeking appropriations from Free Cash in the amount of \$828,341. Should they all pass, the Town will have a remaining balance in Free Cash of \$507,421.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark W. Haddad
Mark W. Haddad
Town Manager



Groton Town Meeting Amendment Work Sheet

Select one sections ONLY by marking the box.
Please print neatly and cross through all words that do not apply.

I move to amend the {main motion | amendment}

by striking the words _____

and by substituting the words _____

I move to amend the {main motion | amendment}

by striking in its entirety {Section | Paragraph} # _____

and by substituting in its place the following: {Section | Paragraph} # _____

I move to amend the {main motion | amendment}

by adding the following {words | sentence | paragraph} _____

after the words _____

Name (printed): _____ Signature: _____

Street: _____ Date: _____

See instructions and information on reverse

Continuation

Instructions for using this form:

- Neatly print all information.
- Select the shaded section to be used by marking the check box.
- In the selected section, cross through all words that are not to be part of the amendment.
- Fill in the identification information and signature at the bottom of the form.
- Request to be recognized by the Moderator and then move the amendment by reading the completed form.
- Present the completed and signed form to the Moderator.

From the *Groton Town Meeting Procedures* booklet:

Amendments

If a voter wished to change a motion in some fashion, the procedure is to amend the motion. All motions to amend must be in writing and must state exactly how the voter wishes to change the motion so that the Moderator can know exactly what it is the voter wants to do before ruling on the motion or putting it to a vote. A voter who wishes to amend a *main motion* must have the amendment in writing and available to hand to the Moderator *before* rising to offer the amendment. The Moderator may refuse to put to the Meeting an amendment which is not immediately available in writing – the Moderator also will rule out of order an motion to amend which changes the original motion so drastically that, in the Moderator’s opinion, the motion is no longer within the “four corners” of the article.

An amendment may consist of adding, deleting, or substituting words in the motion. It may take the form of a “motion to substitute”: a different motion. Sometimes a speaker tries to amend “the article,” but this is improper language. It is the motion on the floor, not the article on the Warrant, that is to be amended.

A motion to amend requires only a majority vote, even though the motion to be amended may require two-thirds or more for final passage.

General Information:

- An amendment may be made to modify either the main motion already on the floor or another amendment that has been previously moved.
- All motions to amend must be presented to the Moderator in writing.
- All amendment must keep the amended motion within the general scope of the originally posted warrant article. This is referred to as “within the four corners” of the article.
- Town counsel may be asked to review an amendment and present an opinion on the legality of the amendment prior to being accepted by the Moderator for consideration by town meeting.
- Amendments should (if possible) be carefully written and reviewed prior to town meeting.
- It is strongly recommended that the Moderator be made aware of the intention to present an amendment well before the start of Town Meeting or as soon as possible within Town Meeting.**

**TOWN OF GROTON
COMMITTEE INTEREST FORM**

Town Government needs citizens who are willing to give time in the service of their community. If you are interested in serving, on a voluntary basis, on boards and committees within the Town, please complete this form and return to:

**TOWN OF GROTON
SELECT BOARD
173 MAIN STREET
GROTON, MA 01450-1237**

Date: _____

Name _____
First M.I. Last

Address _____

Mailing Address (if different) _____

Circle One GROTON, 01450 WEST GROTON, 01472

Telephone No. (home) _____ (cell) _____

Preferred e-mail Address _____

Occupation _____

Background _____

Town activities/issues, which interest you:

Specific committees or positions in which you are interested:

<u>Department Name</u>	<u>Vacancies</u>
Board of Registrars (Republican Seat)	1
Capital Planning Advisory Committee	5
Community Preservation Committee (At-Large Seat)	1
Great Ponds Advisory Committee	3
Historical Commission	1
Housing Partnership	2
Invasive Species Committee	5
Local Cultural Council	2
Old Burying Ground Commission	1
Personnel Board	1
Sustainability Commission	5
Weed Harvester Committee	1
Williams Barn Committee	1
Zoning Board of Appeals - Alternates	2

Town of Groton
Select Board
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Groton, MA 01450

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