

Warrant, Summary, and Recommendations

TOWN OF GROTON



2025 FALL TOWN MEETING

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

Beginning Saturday, October 18, 2025 @ 9:00 AM

Attention Voters
Please bring this Document to Town Meeting

Introduction to Groton Town Meeting

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

What is Town Meeting?

The Town Meeting is the legislative body in the town form of government in Massachusetts. Town Meeting is a formal gathering of registered voters who propose, debate and vote on measures. Groton holds at least two Town Meetings per year.

What is a warrant?

The warrant is the official notice to voters that a Town Meeting is scheduled. The warrant includes the date, time, location and a description of each subject to be acted on at Town Meeting. In Groton, the warrant must be posted in two public places and mailed to each household 14 days in advance of Town Meeting. “The warrant must contain a sufficient description of what is proposed so as to constitute an adequate warning to all the inhabitants of the town.”¹ “Every action taken at the meeting must be pursuant to some article in the warrant and must be within the scope of such article.”²

How does Town Meeting proceed?

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

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

² *Id.*

Who can attend?

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

How long is Town Meeting?

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

Explanation of a Consent Agenda

A consent agenda is a procedure to group multiple main motions into a single motion for voting. A consent agenda saves time by eliminating the reading of multiple motions and explanations when there are no objections or questions. In Groton, a consent agenda generally consists of articles unanimously supported by the Select Board and Finance Committee. Articles that change by-laws or introduce new spending are typically not included. In this warrant, the Select Board has grouped articles in consent agendas and labeled them for easy reference.

How Consent Agendas Work

As the first step to act on a consent agenda, the Moderator will read the titles of the included articles. A voter who wishes to remove an article from the consent agenda for separate debate and vote should state “hold.” The held article will be set aside and acted on after the vote on the consent agenda. After the meeting agrees on the contents of the consent agenda, there will be no debate and the Moderator will immediately call for a vote. Every motion included in the consent agenda will either pass or fail as a group. Voters should read the warrant and review the proposed consent agendas to identify articles they wish to remove for separate consideration.

Electronic Voting at Town Meeting

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



Voter Check-In

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

Test Vote

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

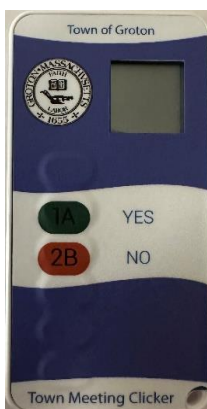
Proxy Voting Prohibited

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

Voting

When the Moderator announces it is time to vote:

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



Handset Display

The display on the handset:

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

Help Desk

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

Handset Return

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



Town Meeting Access for Voters with Disabilities

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**FALL TOWN MEETING WARRANT
OCTOBER 18, 2025**

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

Greetings:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby required to notify and warn said inhabitants of the Town of Groton qualified to vote on Town affairs to assemble in the Marion Stoddart Building Auditorium, 344 Main Street, Groton, Massachusetts in said Town on Saturday, the eighteenth day of October, 2025 at Nine O'clock in the morning, to consider the following:

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*Will be presented as one motion as a Consent Agenda

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. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 25 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 2: *Amend the Fiscal Year 2026 Town Operating Budget*

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget as adopted under Article 5 of the April 26, 2025 Spring Town Meeting and amended under Article 1 of the June 23, 2025 Special Town Meeting, and vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds a sum or sums of money as may be necessary to defray the expenses of the Town for Fiscal Year 2026, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Finance Committee

Select Board

Town Manager

Select Board: *See Select Board's Recommendations Beginning on Page 25*

Finance Committee: *See Finance Committee's Recommendations Beginning on Page 25*

Summary: *The Fiscal Year 2026 Town Operating Budget was approved at the April 26, 2025 Town Meeting and amended at the June 23, 2025 Special Town Meeting. 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 Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 25 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 3: *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 \$109,199. 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. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 25 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 4: *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: *Recommended Unanimously*

Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*

Summary: *As of the printing of this Warrant, the balance in this fund is \$2,728,838. 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. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 25 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 5: *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: *Recommended Unanimously*

Summary: *As of the printing of the Warrant, the balance in this fund is \$22,868. 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. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 25 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 6: *Transfer Within the 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 2026 Water Enterprise Budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Board of Water Commissioners

Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously*

Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*

Summary: *This Article will seek a transfer from the Water Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2026 Water Department's General Expense Budget to cover unanticipated expenses. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 25 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 7: *Transfer Within the Four Corners Sewer Enterprise Fund*

To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum or sums of money from the Four Corners Sewer Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2026 Four Corners Sewer Enterprise Department Budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Board of Sewer Commissioners

Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously*

Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*

Summary: *This article allows the Sewer Department to transfer money from its surplus account to cover any deficit in the Fiscal Year 2026 Four Corners Sewer Budget. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 25 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 8: *Transfer Within the Stormwater Enterprise Fund*

To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum or sums of money from the Stormwater Enterprise Fund Surplus to the Fiscal Year 2026 Stormwater Enterprise Budget, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Manager

Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously*

Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*

Summary: *This article allows the Stormwater Department to transfer money from its surplus account to cover any deficit in the Fiscal Year 2026 Stormwater Budget. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 25 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 9: Cable Department Equipment Grant

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 adding funds to the Cable Department Equipment Grant Fund for the Local Access Cable Department, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Manager

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

Summary: *The Town’s Cable Television License agreements with Verizon New England Inc. and Spectrum Northeast, LLC include Public, Educational, and Government (PEG) Grants to be used for capital funding (equipment) purposes. The Town currently collects all cable revenue in the “Cable Department Receipts Reserved for Appropriation Fund” that was established at the 2024 Special Town Meeting. When the Town closed the Cable Enterprise last year, funding designated for this equipment grant was returned to the General Fund and certified as Free Cash. It should have been set aside for equipment. This Article adds this funding to the Equipment Grant fund for these PEG Grant payments and transfers funds from Free Cash into it.*

Article 10: Assessors Quinquennial Certification

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 expended by the Town Manager, for the purpose of completing the five-year full certification program necessary to achieve full and fair cash value in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 40, Section 56, and Chapter 58, Sections 1, 1A, and 3, of the Massachusetts General Laws, and the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Board of Assessors

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

Summary: *Assessors in every city and town are responsible for developing a Revaluation program to completely analyze and revalue all property within its borders every year. Revaluation annually is required under Massachusetts law and is regulated by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue's Bureau of Local Assessment (BLA). The rationale for revaluation is to always maintain property at fair market or fair cash value to ensure equity for all classes of property. Every fifth year the Massachusetts Department of Revenue requires a full certification with BLA oversight. The Assessors are seeking \$34,900 to cover the cost for appraisal services of Real Property to be conducted by Vision Government Solutions.*

Article 11: Debt Service for Middle School Track

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds, a sum or sums of money, pursuant to Chapter 44B, Section 5, of the Massachusetts General Laws, for debt service for Fiscal Year 2026 for the Middle School Track Project, as authorized under Article 7 of the May 1, 2021 Spring Town Meeting, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Community Preservation Committee

Select Board: Recommended Unanimously

Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously

Summary: *The loan to cover the \$1,405,374 cost of the Middle School Track is being paid back in annual payments from Community Preservation Act Funds. This Article appropriates an additional payment in FY 2026, which will be paid by the Community Preservation Committee from the Community Preservation Fund Unallocated Reserve. All of the \$33,000 payment will be applied towards the principal.*

Article 12: Repairs to Fitch's Bridge Head Wall

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow, pursuant to any applicable statute, a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager, to repair the head wall at Fitch's Bridge, and all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Manager

Select Board: Recommended Unanimously

Finance Committee: Recommended Unanimously

Summary: *The head wall that supports the bridge abutment for Fitch's Bridge is collapsing and needs to be repaired. The Department of Public Works will oversee the repairs of this head wall in compliance with Massachusetts State Law with regards to procurement. This Article will authorize the funding for this repair. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 25 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 13: *Provide Funding to Maintain the Former Nod Road Landfill*

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow, pursuant to any applicable statute, a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager to maintain the former Nod Road Landfill in compliance with Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection requirements, and all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Town Manager
Department of Public Works Director***

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

Summary: *Recently the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) inspected the former Nod Road Landfill and has required the Town to begin mowing the Landfill. DEP is requesting that the Town conduct a third party inspection to ensure the Landfill was “capped” properly. The DPW Director has requested funds be put aside for maintenance, mowing, inspections and monitoring well installation, along with engineering and survey work. The purpose of this Article is to provide the necessary funding. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 25 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 14: *Repair Fire Alarm - Function Hall and Restaurant at the Country Club*

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow, pursuant to any applicable statute, a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager to repair and/or replace the Fire Alarm System at the Function Hall and Restaurant at the Groton Country Club, and all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Manager

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

Summary: *During a recent inspection, it was determined that the current Fire Alarm System at the Function Hall and Restaurant at the Groton Country Club needs to be replaced to provide proper fire protection at these facilities. The purpose of this Article is to provide the necessary funding for this purpose. Please see the Town Manager's Report starting on page 25 for additional information related to this Article.*

Article 15: *Engineering Funds for Complete Streets Grant Work*

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 paying engineering costs, and other related costs, for work associated with successfully receiving grant funding from the Commonwealth under the Complete Streets Grant Program, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Complete Streets Committee

Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously*

Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*

Summary: *The Complete Streets Committee has successfully received over \$750,000 in grant funding from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under their Complete Streets Program. Some of the projects covered by the funding have been sidewalks on West Main Street and Lowell Road, along with Pedestrian Crossing Devices along Main Street. The Committee is in the process of preparing another Grant Application this Fall. One of the requirements for this program is that the Town has to cover engineering costs for any approved project. The Committee is seeking \$30,000 for this purpose.*

Article 16: *Proposed Amendments to the Groton Charter*

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to petition the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for a special act to amend the Town Charter as set forth in Appendix A of this Warrant, provided, however, that the General Court may make clerical or editorial changes of form only to the bill, unless the Select Board approves amendments thereto before enactment by the General Court, which amendments shall be within the public purposes of said petition, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Charter Review Committee

Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously*

Finance Committee: *No Position*

Charter Review Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*

Summary: *This Article proposes amendments to the Town of Groton Charter that were previously brought before the Spring 2025 Town Meeting and narrowly defeated by a margin of three votes. The proposed amendments were developed through a public process and are intended to improve clarity, efficiency, and governance within the Charter. Due to the close vote and continued public interest, these amendments are being presented again in two motions for further discussion and vote at this Town Meeting, with some slight changes. Approval of the two motions in this article would authorize the submission of the revised Charter to the Legislature for enactment. The proposed changes are shown in Appendix A of this Warrant beginning on page 33.*

Article 17: *Provide Additional Funding for the Cow Pond Brook Fields Project*

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from the Community Preservation Act Funds Unallocated Reserve a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager, to supplement funding originally approved under Article 8D “Cow Pond Brook Fields Improvements” at the April 26, 2025 Spring Town Meeting for 100% design development to put the project out to bid, and all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Town Manager
Community Preservation Committee***

Select Board: *Recommendation Deferred Until Town Meeting*

Finance Committee: *Recommendation Deferred Until Town Meeting*

Summary: *The 2025 Spring Town Meeting appropriated \$100,000 for the continued design development of improvements to the Cow Pond Brook Fields. A Working Group formed by the Town Manager, with the support of the Park Commission has been working towards this goal. As part of the work, the Town applied for a Fiscal Year 2025 Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant. While a final decision on the Grant has not been made, the Town needs to be prepared to go out to bid and have the project ready to go by the Spring/Summer of 2026. To complete the drawings to go out to bid, an additional \$115,000 is needed to pay the consultant hired by the Town to assist them with this project. Funding will come from the Community Preservation Fund Unallocated Reserve. More information will be provided to the 2025 Fall Town Meeting.*

Article 18: *Replace Self Contained Breathing Apparatus for the Fire Department*

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow pursuant to any applicable statute, a sum or sums of money, to be expended by the Town Manager, to purchase and replace the Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus of the Fire Department and all costs associated and related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Manager

Select Board: *Recommended Unanimously*

Finance Committee: *Recommended Unanimously*

Summary: *Self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) is a critical component of the safety gear utilized by Fire Department personnel. The ability to breathe clean air and operate in hazardous atmospheres where smoke, heat, and toxic gases are present may make the difference between life or death during emergency incidents. The Groton Fire Department requires SCBA's to be worn by personnel on structure fires, vehicle fires, hazardous materials incidents, and other incidents deemed necessary by company officers. The Town had hoped that this purchase would be covered by a Federal Grant, but the Grant Funding has not been received. The existing SCBA equipment has reached the end of its useful life and needs to be replaced immediately. The cost of this replacement is approximately \$500,000. The Town Manager is recommending that these funds be borrowed and paid off over five (5) years.*

Article 19: Chapter 202 of the General Bylaws - “Door-to-Door Solicitation”

To see if the Town will vote to amend the General Bylaws of the Town of Groton by adding a new Chapter 202 entitled “ Door-to-Door Solicitation” as follows:

**Chapter 202
Door-to-Door Solicitation**

§ 202 - 1 Purpose

The purpose of this Chapter 202 is to provide for the regulation of door-to-door solicitation for commercial purposes in the Town of Groton, to promote public safety and consumer protection.

§ 202-2 Definitions

For the purpose of this Chapter, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated below:

PEDDLER/HAWKER — Any person who sells and makes immediate delivery of, or offers for sale and immediate delivery of, any goods, wares or merchandise, in possession of the seller, at any place within the Town of Groton other than from a fixed place of business.

PERSON — Includes the singular and the plural and shall also mean and include any person, firm or corporation, association, club, partnership or society, or any other organization.

SOLICITOR — Any person who sells or takes orders or offers to sell or take orders for goods, wares, or merchandise for future delivery, or for services to be performed, at any place within the Town of Groton other than a fixed place of business.

DOOR-TO-DOOR SOLICITATION — The transaction of any temporary business within the Town by moving from one place to another by foot, vehicle, or other conveyance, and selling or buying goods, wares, merchandise, foods, or services, or soliciting for orders, sales, subscriptions, or business of any kind, or soliciting for information or donations, including such conduct by peddlers, hawkers, and solicitors.

§ 202-3 License Required

No person may engage in door-to-door solicitation in the Town of Groton without a license issued by the Chief of Police, unless otherwise exempted under this Chapter 202.

§ 202-4 Exemptions

This Chapter shall not apply to:

- A. Persons, firms or corporations selling services, goods, wares, merchandise or materials at wholesale to dealers in such articles.
- B. Newspaper delivery.
- C. Persons vending and delivering goods, wares, or merchandise to regular customers on established routes in the regular course of business.
- D. Deliveries of products previously ordered or purchased.

- E. Sales on private property of the owner's or occupant's household goods and belongings.
- F. Any activity for religious, political, or public policy purposes or other noncommercial purposes, such as non-profit organizations and youth groups, regardless of whether such activity includes acts that would otherwise constitute door-to-door solicitation.
- G. Governmental officers or employees of the Town, county, state or federal government, or any subdivision thereof, when on official business.
- H. Insurance companies authorized to do business in Massachusetts.
- I. Persons under the age of 18 except in connection with a for-profit organization, newspaper carriers excepted.

§ 202-5 Application for License

- A. Each person seeking to conduct door-to-door solicitation shall obtain from and file with the Police Department an application for a license and accompany said application with an investigation fee to cover the cost of investigating the applicant in an amount set from time to time by the Town Manager.
- B. The written application shall contain the required information:
 - (1) Name, permanent address and telephone number, and temporary address if any, of the person seeking to conduct door-to-door solicitation.
 - (2) Applicant date of birth.
 - (3) Applicant height, weight, color of hair and eyes.
 - (4) Make, model and registration number and owner of any vehicle to be used by the applicant while conducting door-to-door solicitation.
 - (5) Period of time for which the license is needed.
 - (6) Brief description of nature of business and goods to be sold.
 - (7) Name, address and telephone number of the person or organization whom the applicant represents and the length of time the applicant has been associated with or employed by that person or organization.
- C. The applicant shall permit the Police Department to photograph said applicant for identification purposes.
- D. A license fee structure shall be issued for one day, one week, one month, or one year. The fees for each duration shall be set from time to time by the Town Manager. One-year duration licenses will be prorated from the set fee if not obtained in the month of January.

§ 202-6 Investigation of Applicant; Issuance or Denial of License

- A. Upon receipt of each such application, the Police Department shall initiate an investigation of the applicant as the Department deems necessary for the protection of the public good, subject to all applicable legal requirements, including authorized criminal history background checks.
- B. Not later than 10 calendar days after the filing of such application, the Chief of Police, or their designee, shall issue the applicant a license in the form of a photo license card

showing the name and address of the licensee and authorizing them to solicit for the purposes described in their application subject to this Chapter and the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Failure by the Chief of Police to act on an application within 10 calendar days shall constitute approval of said application.

C. Grounds for disapproval of an application shall be:

- (1) Applicant has a conviction in any state or federal court of the United States or any court of a territory of the United States for any of the following named offenses committed within the last seven years: murder/manslaughter, rape, arson, burglary, breaking and entering, larceny, robbery, receiving stolen property, assault, fraud, sexual misconduct as specified in M.G.L. c. 265, §§ 13B and 22 through 24, and M.G.L. c. 272, § 53A, unlawfully carrying weapons, or the attempt of any such offense, as such persons pose a substantial degree of danger to minors and other persons vulnerable to becoming victims of the violent crimes so listed;
- (2) Applicant is a person who is a sex offender required to register with the Sex Offenders Registry Board and who is finally classified as a Level 2 or Level 3 Sex Offender, as such person has been found to have a moderate to high risk of re-offense and pose a substantial degree of dangerousness to minors and other persons vulnerable to becoming victims of sex crimes;
- (3) Applicant has had a license revoked for violation of this Chapter within the previous two-year period; or
- (4) The failure to include any of the information requested in the application.

§ 202-7 License Requirements

- A. Licenses shall be issued, or denied, by the Chief no later than 10 business days after the application therefor is made in writing to the Police Department.
- B. All photo license cards shall clearly indicate the dates of issuance and expiration and the name and address of the licensee.
- C. All licenses issued under this Chapter are personal to the licensee and shall not be transferable. It shall be a violation of this Chapter for a licensee to allow a license to be used by any other person.
- D. Licensees under this Chapter shall carry their photo license card with them while engaged in authorized activities and must have such photo license card clearly visible while soliciting in the Town of Groton.
- E. Annual licenses shall expire on December 31 of the year issued.
- F. Ice creams trucks are required to print and post an 8 1/2 x 11 color copy of the photo license card in the window of vehicle, clearly visible to patrons.
- G. If while the application is pending or during the term of any license granted thereon there is a change in fact, policy, or method that would alter the information given in the application, the applicant or licensee, as the case may be, shall notify the Police Department in writing within 24 hours of such change.

- H. A license issued under this Chapter 202 does not constitute an endorsement by the Town of Groton nor by any of its departments or officers of the purpose or of the person conducting the solicitation.

§ 202-8 Time Limit for Operation

No licensee under this Chapter shall conduct door-to-door solicitation between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m. or on Sundays and legal holidays, unless invited to do so by the owner or occupant of any private residence in the Town.

§ 202-9 No Solicitation List

A No Solicitation List shall be established and maintained by the Groton Police Department to prohibit door-to-door solicitation at certain premises. Owners or occupants may submit their property for inclusion on the list without charge. Upon approval of the issuance of a license as provided herein, each such licensed entity or individual shall be provided with a copy of the No Solicitation List and may not conduct door-to-door solicitation at such property.

§ 202-10 Posted Premises

No person shall engage in door-to-door solicitation upon any premises without a prior invitation from the occupant if such premises is posted against such solicitation by means of a notice prominently displayed near the main entrance to the premises or on or near the main door bearing the phrase "no solicitors" or words of similar effect.

§ 202-11 Revocation of License; Appeals

- A. Licenses issued under this Chapter may be revoked by the Chief of Police for any of the following causes:
- (1) Fraud, misrepresentation, or false statements contained in the application for a license.
 - (2) Fraud, misrepresentation, or false statements in the course of carrying on door-to-door solicitation.
 - (3) Any violation of this Chapter.
 - (4) Commission or conviction of a felony.
 - (5) Commission or conviction of any crime or misdemeanor of moral turpitude.
 - (6) Conducting the business of door-to-door solicitation in a threatening, abusive or illegal fashion so as to constitute a menace to the health, safety, or general welfare of the public.
- B. Notice of the revocation of the license shall be given in writing, setting forth the grounds of complaint and the opportunity to appeal the decision of revocation. Such notice shall be made in person or mailed to the licensee at their last known address, or at an address contained in the application for a license.
- C. Any person who is denied a license or whose license has been revoked may appeal by filing a written notice of appeal with the Town Manager. Such appeal must be filed

within five days after receipt of the notice of denial or revocation. The Town Manager shall hear the appeal within one week of the written notice of appeal, provided, however, that if the Town Manager fails to make a determination within 30 days after the filing of the appeal, the license shall be deemed granted or reinstated as the case may be.

§ 202-12 Violations and Penalties

- A. Any person violating any provisions of this Chapter shall be subject to a fine of \$300 for each offense, except as otherwise provided herein; and a separate offense shall be deemed committed on each day during or on which a violation occurs or continues.
- B. Noncriminal disposition. As an alternative to criminal prosecution or civil action, the Town may elect to utilize the noncriminal disposition procedure set forth in M.G.L. c. 40, § 21D, which has been adopted by the Town in the Code of the Town of Groton, Chapter 1, § 1-4, Complaints, in which case the Police Department or authorized agent shall be the enforcing person.

§ 202-13 Severability

Invalidity of any individual provision of this Chapter shall not affect the validity of the Chapter as a whole.

And further, to authorize the Town Clerk to make any numbering or formatting edits necessary to conform to the publication conventions of the Town Bylaws;

or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Town Manager
Police Chief***

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

Summary: *The Door-to-Door Solicitation Bylaw will establish a process for Solicitors and other Transient Vendors to obtain a license from the town. The application process will include the following: a review of the background of the vendor and suitability of the applicant. This license will prohibit door-to-door solicitation from 7PM - 9AM and prohibit soliciting on Sunday and holidays. The bylaw will also establish a “No Solicitation List.” This will prohibit soliciting for any properties that are on the list, and solicitors will not be allowed to go in or on the private property or residence of such person(s) who are on the list. Residents may request to be placed on the “No Solicitation List” at any time. The bylaw establishes penalties for those who solicit in violation of the bylaw*

Article 20: Amend Chapter 161 – Licenses and Permits of the Groton Code

To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 161 “Licenses and Permits” of the General Bylaws of the Town by adding a New Article 2 entitled “Criminal History Background Checks” as follows:

**Chapter 161
Licenses and Permits**

Article 2. Criminal History Background Checks

§161-2 Purpose and Authority

- A. In order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the inhabitants of the Town of Groton, and as authorized by M.G.L. c. 6, § 172B 1/2, this Chapter shall require:
 - (1) Applicants for a license listed in §161-3 below to submit to fingerprinting by the Groton Police Department; and
 - (2) The Police Department to arrange for the conduct of fingerprint-based criminal record background checks.
- B. The Town authorizes the Massachusetts State Police, the Massachusetts Department of Criminal Justice Information Systems (DCJIS), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), as may be applicable, to conduct on the behalf of the Town and its Police Department fingerprint-based state and national criminal history records checks, including FBI records, consistent with this Chapter. The Town authorizes the Police Department to receive and utilize state and FBI records in connection with such background checks, consistent with this Chapter. The Town shall not disseminate criminal record information received from the state or FBI to unauthorized persons or entities.

§161-3 Licenses Subject to Fingerprinting

Any applicant for a license to engage in any of the following occupational activities shall have a full set of fingerprints taken by the Police Department for the purpose of conducting a state and national fingerprint-based criminal history records check:

- A. Manager of alcoholic beverage license.
- B. Hawkers, peddlers, and solicitors (door-to-door solicitation license).
- C. Ice cream truck vendor.
- D. Junk dealers.
- E. Owner or operator of a public conveyance.

§161-4 Police Department Procedure

- A. The Police Department will forward the full set of fingerprints obtained pursuant to this Chapter either electronically or manually to the State Identification Section of the Massachusetts State Police.

- B. The Police Department shall provide the applicant with a copy of the results of his or her fingerprint based criminal background check and supply the applicant with opportunity to complete, or challenge the accuracy of, the information contained in it, including the state and FBI identification record. Any applicant that wishes to challenge the accuracy or completeness of the record shall be advised that the procedures to change, correct, or update the record are set forth in 28 CFR 16.34 and any applicable DCJIS policy.
- C. The Police Department shall communicate the results of fingerprint-based criminal history records check to the applicable Town licensing authority (the "licensing authority"). The Police Department shall in addition render to the licensing authority its evaluation of the applicant's suitability for the proposed occupational activity based on the results of the criminal records background check and any other relevant information known to it. In rendering its evaluation, the Police Department shall indicate whether the applicant has been convicted of, or is under pending indictment for, a crime that bears upon his or her suitability for the proposed occupational activity, or any felony or misdemeanor that involved force or threat of force, controlled substances, or a sex-related offense.

§161-5 Reliance by Licensing Authority on Results of Background Check.

- A. The licensing authority may utilize the results of any fingerprint-based criminal records background check performed pursuant to this Chapter for the sole purpose of determining the applicant's suitability for the proposed occupational activity. The licensing authority may deny an application for any license specified herein, including renewals and transfers thereof, if it determines that the results of the fingerprint-based criminal records background check render the applicant unsuitable for the proposed occupational activity.
- B. No application shall be denied on the basis of information contained in a criminal record until the applicant has been afforded a reasonable time, as determined by the licensing authority, to correct or complete the information, or has declined to do so.

§161-6 Policies and Procedures

The Police Department, subject to the approval of the Town Manager, will develop and maintain written policies and procedures for its licensing-related criminal record background check system.

§161-7 Fees

Each applicant for a license listed in §161-3 shall pay a fee as set from time to time by the Town Manager.

And further, to authorize the Town Clerk to make any numbering or formatting edits necessary to conform to the publication conventions of the Town Bylaws;

or to take any other action relative thereto.

***Town Manager
Police Chief***

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

Summary: *The amendment will authorize the Town to require a fingerprint- based criminal background check of applicants of certain licenses to protect the safety of the inhabitants of the Town of Groton. The amendment will apply to applicants for the following licenses: Manager of alcoholic beverage license; Hawkers, peddlers, and solicitors; ice cream truck vendor; owner or operator of a public conveyance. The licensing authority shall utilize the results of any fingerprint-based criminal records background check for the sole purpose of determining the applicant's suitability for the proposed occupational activity.*

Article 21: Special Legislation - Prohibit Use of Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to petition the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for a special act as set forth below, provided, however, that the General Court may make clerical or editorial changes of form only to the bill, unless the Select Board approves amendments thereto before enactment by the General Court, which amendments shall be within the public purposes of said petition, or to take any other action relative thereto.

An Act Authorizing the Town of Groton To Prohibit the Use of Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding chapter 132B of the General Laws or any other general or special law to the contrary, the town of Groton may regulate through local bylaw or board of health regulation the use of second generation anticoagulant rodenticides within the town of Groton, including prohibiting the use of such pesticides by licensed commercial applicators as defined in 333 C.M.R. 10.00.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

or to take any other action relative thereto.

Select Board

Select Board: Recommended Unanimously
Finance Committee: No Position

Summary: *The passage of legislation - whether state-wide or local - authorizing the prohibition or restriction of so-called "second generation anticoagulant rodenticides", commonly referred to as "SGARs", is necessary for the following reasons: Despite the use of rodent poisons for generations, rodents continue to proliferate in communities that support their feeding habits; Trash control, rather than poison, is the most effective means of reducing rodent populations; SGARs have caused, and continue to cause, immense, prolonged suffering and death among natural rodent predators such as bald eagles, owls, hawks, coyotes, foxes, and in some cases, domestic pets; In May 2025, the Select Board adopted a policy prohibiting the use of SGARs on Town property; In order to prohibit or restrict the application of SGARs on private property in Groton, state-wide or local legislation is necessary; Many other communities, including Newton, Arlington, Billerica, Brookline and Newbury, have filed petitions in the General Court seeking similar special*

legislation; The extreme, unnecessary, and avoidable suffering of non-targeted species must be curtailed by adherence to a community-wide integrated pest management ("IPM") program that requires public education, enhanced trash management measures and that either prohibits or greatly restricts the use of SGARs; If enacted, the petitioned special legislation would permit the Town to determine the extent to which SGARs should be prohibited or restricted in Groton under a future bylaw approved by Town Meeting.

Article 22: *Accept Bluebird Lane as a Town Way*

To see if the Town will vote to accept Bluebird Lane as a public way, as recommended by the Planning Board and laid out by the Select Board and as shown on a plan entitled "Bluebird Lane Street Acceptance Plan, Groton, Massachusetts" Owned by R.D. Kanniard Homes, Ayer, MA, prepared by Dillis & Roy, Civil Design Group, dated May 15, 2025, 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 Bluebird Lane as a public way.*

Article 23: *Citizens’ Petition – Authorization to Create an Advisory Committee*

To see if the Town will vote to require the creation of an Advisory Committee to develop and recommend a process for delivering Major Initiative Cost - Benefit Reports to Town Meeting.

Citizens’ Petition

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>
John Petropoulos	18 Kemp Street	Mary A. Jennings	62 Blossom Lane
Kevin Lindemer	201 Boston Road	Diane Hewitt	57 Long Hill Road
Stephen Lane	86 Ridgewood Road	Deborah Busser	17 Broadmeadow Road
Bruce H. Easom	435 Martins Pond Road	Jonathan Strauss	38 Westview Street
Jay Prager	28 Star House Lane	Mark R. Presti	230 Fieldstone Drive

Select Board: *Not Recommended Unanimously*
Finance Committee: *Not Recommended Unanimously*

Summary: **The following summary was prepared by the petitioners and represents their view on the Article:** *Town Meeting would benefit from the provision of rigorous and independently created cost-benefit reports to Town Meeting for articles projected to add significant cost to taxpayers. Phase one (this article) authorizes the creation of a five (5) person Advisory Committee charged with developing the structure, protocols and membership for creating Major Initiative Cost - Benefit Reports. The Committee will present its recommendations to a future Town Meeting for consideration and adoption. The Advisory Committee would be appointed by an affirmative vote of this Town Meeting and would consist of the first five signatories of this Citizen's Petition. The Committee will engage members of the Select Board, Fin Com, School Committee and other subject matter experts in its work.*

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 29th Day of September in the year of our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Five.

Matthew F. Pisani

Matthew F. Pisani, Chair

Rebecca H. Pine

Rebecca H. Pine, Vice Chair

Alison S. Manugian

Alison S. Manugian, Clerk

John F. Reilly

John F. Reilly, Member

Peter S. Cunningham

Peter S. Cunningham, 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 2025 FALL TOWN MEETING

The 2025 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 2026 Tax Rate. In preparing for the Fall Town Meeting, the Select Board and Finance Committee reviewed the balances in the various reserve accounts. These accounts will either be used to fund the various articles, or money will be added to them to comply with the Town's Financial Policies. The balances as of September, 2025, are as follows:

FY 2026 Levy Capacity:	\$89,142*
Local Cable Receipts Reserved for Appropriation:	\$41,020
Certified Free Cash:	\$2,641,998
Stabilization Fund:	\$2,728,838
Capital Stabilization Fund:	\$109,199
Water Enterprise Excess and Deficiency:	\$457,406
Four Corner Sewer Excess and Deficiency:	\$434,092
GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund:	\$22,868
Stormwater Excess and Deficiency:	\$149,245

**The Board of Assessors is estimating that New Growth will come in at \$31.5 million, which will add an additional \$99,124 to the FY 2026 Anticipated Levy Limit. The Final State Aid allocation for Groton was reduced by \$9,982 from the last estimate, leaving \$89,142 in available Levy Capacity.*

The following is a summary of Warrant Articles requesting funding:

Article 1: Unpaid Bills **Requested Amount: \$2,573**

There are four unpaid bills. One is from UMass Memorial Health in the amount of \$85. Since this is a Water Department Bill, funding will come from the Water Department's Excess and Deficiency Fund. The second is from Boston Mutual in the amount of \$231, the third is from Snap-On Industrial in the amount of \$701 and the fourth is from Pete's Tire Barn in the amount of \$1,556. The funding for these two bills will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash)

Article 2: Amend Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Requested Amount: \$211,587

This Article will request the following adjustments in the Operating Budget:

- | | | |
|----|--|-------------------|
| 1. | <u>Line Item 1070 – Treasurer/Tax Collector Salaries</u> | Request: \$17,658 |
|----|--|-------------------|

This amount is needed to cover the vacation payout for the former Treasurer/Tax Collector. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).

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

2. Line Item 1070 – Treasurer/Tax Collector Salaries Request: \$39,334

As part of the transition to the new Treasurer/Collector and the retirement of the current part-time Assistant Treasurer/Collector, the position of Assistant Treasurer/Collector is being increased from 19 hours per week to 40 hours per week (full-time). Since this is a permanent increase in the Budget, funding will come from the FY 2026 Levy Capacity.

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

3. Line Item 1071 – Treasurer/Tax Collector Wages Request: \$16,086

The position of Assistant to the Treasurer/Collector/Payroll Coordinator position will increase to 40 hours (from the current 35 hours) to add additional duties to the position. Currently, the Human Resources Director is a Department of one. The office is very busy and in desperate need of administrative support to help with benefit administration, onboarding, recruitment, training, maintaining personnel records, etc. Initially, it was contemplated to create a fifteen hour per week Human Resources Generalist position. However, it was determined to add hours to existing staff and evaluate whether or not that makes a difference in the overall operation. This amount covers the additional five hours per week, plus a salary adjustment to reflect the added responsibilities. Since this is a permanent increase in the Budget, funding will come from the FY 2026 Levy Capacity.

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

4. Line Item 1130 – Town Clerk Salaries Request: \$19,040

This amount is needed to cover the vacation payout of the former Town Clerk. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).

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

5. Line Item 1160 – Insurance & Bonding Request: \$40,000

This amount is needed to cover the increase cost in the Town’s liability, property, auto and worker’s compensation premiums. The cost of insurance increased by approximately 9%, which was not known at the time the original Budget was set in May, 2025. Since this is a permanent increase in the Budget, funding will come from the FY 2026 Levy Capacity.

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

6. Line Item 1210 – Planning Board Salaries Request: \$21,808

Based on the outcome of the Collins Center Salary Study, it was determined that the Land Use Director/Town Planner is significantly below similar positions in comparable communities. To that end, the Salary of the current employee needs to be increased from \$93,192 to \$115,000. Since this is a permanent increase in the Budget, funding will come from the FY 2026 Levy Capacity.

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

7. Line Item 1310 – Fire Department Salaries Request: \$5,400

Due to the closure of the Nashoba Valley Medical Center and the shortfall in personnel within the Fire Department to deal with the additional travel times, the Fire Chief was unable to take vacation for over seven months, resulting in a loss of accrued time. To address this, the Select Board and Town Manager allowed the Chief to buy back two weeks of vacation time as a one-time adjustment. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).

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

8. Line Item 1500 – Highway Department Salaries Request: \$80,000

At the June 23, 2025 Special Town Meeting, one of the recommendations to balance the budget was to use Free Cash to cover the retiring DPW Director's FY 2026 Salary (\$55,000) since it was a one-time expenditure. Unfortunately, that expenditure was left off of the Town Meeting Transfer and has to be addressed this Fall. In addition, \$25,000 will be needed to cover the vacation payout of the retiring DPW Director. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).

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

9. Line Item 1710 – Local Access Cable Salaries Request: \$8,819

Similar to the issue with Land Use Director/Town Planner, the position of Cable Director is also below similar positions in comparable communities. To that end, the Salary of the current employee needs to be increased from \$73,181 to \$82,000. This Funding will come from the Local Access Cable Receipts Reserved for Appropriation since that funding is available to cover the cost of funding the Cable Department.

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

10. Line Item 1711 – Local Access Cable Wages Request: \$2,798

The final position that was below similar positions in comparable communities is the Cable Production Technician. The hourly wage of the current employee needs to be increased from \$23.66 to \$25.09 . As was the case with the Local Access Cable Director, . This Funding will come from the Local Access Cable Receipts Reserved for Appropriation since that funding is available to cover the cost of funding the Cable Department.

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

11. Line Item 3010 – Health Insurance/Employee Expenses Request: (\$36,000)

At the conclusion of the Open Enrollment Period in May/June, an audit was completed on the Health Insurance Account and it was determined that this line item can be reduced by \$36,000 to reflect actual enrollment in the Town’s Health Insurance program.

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

12. Line Item 2005B – Short Term Interest Debt – Excluded Request: (\$146,313 - <\$3,355 Levy>)

Due to the lower interest rate received on the Florence Roche Elementary School Construction Bond Anticipation Note (BAN) renewal in June, Excluded Debt can be reduced by \$142,958 and short term Non-Excluded Debt by \$3,356, for a total debt reduction of \$146,313.

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

The Total Amounts in this Article requested by category:	Free Cash:	\$122,098
	Tax Levy:	\$ 77,872
	Cable Receipts:	\$ 11,617
	Total	\$211,587

Article 3: Capital Stabilization Fund Requested Amount: \$900,000

The current balance in the Capital Stabilization Fund is \$109,199. The Town’s financial policies call for a balance in this fund of 1.5% of the total Operating Budget. Should Article 2 pass as presented, the total FY 2026 Operating Budget will be \$52,730,370, requiring a Capital Stabilization Fund Balance of \$790,956. Ordinarily, this would require a transfer of \$681,757. However, this Article seeks an additional \$218,243 for a total transfer of \$900,000 from Free Cash to fund the anticipated Fiscal Year 2027 Capital Budget.

Article 4: Stabilization Fund**Requested Amount: \$0**

The current balance in the Stabilization Fund is \$2,728,838. The Town's financial policies call for a balance in this fund of 5% of the total Operating Budget. Should Article 2 pass as presented, the total FY 2026 Operating Budget will be \$52,730,370 requiring a Stabilization Fund Balance of \$2,636,519. At this time, an additional appropriation to the Stabilization Fund is not needed.

Article 5: GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund**Requested Amount: \$250,000**

At this time, the Town has not received a preliminary capital budget from the School District. For now, this Article seeks an appropriation of \$250,000 to match what the Town paid last year for the Capital Assessment from the Groton Dunstable Regional School District. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).

Article 6: Water Enterprise Fund**Requested Amount: \$70,000**

The Water Department is requesting a transfer from Water Surplus of \$70,000 to replace one of their pick-up trucks that has over 125,000 miles and is in need of serious repair. This was included in the Water Department's Capital Plan and they are moving it up a year.

Article 7: Four Corner Sewer Enterprise Fund**Requested Amount: \$32,000**

The usage data at Four Corners has been volatile due to vacancies in the various lots. It is becoming more consistent, which will help with budgeting. In addition, funding will be used for bid preparation and the selection process to hire on-call services to handle emergencies with the Four Corners Sewer District. This Article seeks to transfer \$32,000 from the Four Corner Sewer Enterprise Excess and Deficiency Fund to balance the budget for FY 2025.

Article 8: Stormwater Enterprise**Requested Amount: \$50,000**

The Department of Public Works is requesting that \$50,000 be transferred from the Stormwater Excess and Deficiency Fund to pay for additional engineering assistance to meet State Reporting requirements.

Article 9: Cable Equipment Grant**Requested Amount: \$16,000**

From the Summary in the Warrant: *The Town's Cable Television License agreements with Verizon New England Inc. and Spectrum Northeast, LLC include Public, Educational, and Government (PEG) Grants to be used for capital funding (equipment) purposes. The Town currently collects all cable revenue in the "Cable Department Receipts Reserved for Appropriation Fund" that was established at the 2024 Special Town Meeting. When the Town closed the Cable Enterprise last year, funding designated for this equipment grant was returned to the General Fund and certified as Free Cash. It should have been set aside for equipment. This Article creates a new Equipment Grant fund for these PEG Grant payments and transfers funds from Free Cash into it. This Article will transfer \$16,000 from Free Cash to the Equipment Grant Fund.*

Article 10: Assessors Quinquennial Certification**Requested Amount: \$34,900**

From the Summary in the Warrant: *Assessors in every city and town are responsible for developing a Revaluation program to completely analyze and revalue all property within its borders every year. Revaluation annually is required under Massachusetts law and is regulated by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue's Bureau of Local Assessment (BLA). The rationale for revaluation is to always maintain property at fair market or fair cash value to ensure equity for all classes of property. Every fifth year the Massachusetts Department of Revenue requires a full certification with BLA oversight. The Assessors are seeking \$34,900 to cover the cost for appraisal services of Real Property to be conducted by Vision Government Solutions. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).*

Article 11: Debt Service for Middle School Track**Requested Amount: \$33,000**

From the Summary in the Warrant: *The loan to cover the \$1,405,374 cost of the Middle School Track is being paid back in annual payments from Community Preservation Act Funds. This Article appropriates an additional payment in FY 2026, which will be paid by the Community Preservation Committee from the Community Preservation Fund Unallocated Reserve. All of the \$33,000 payment will be applied towards the principal.*

Article 12: Repair Fitch's Bridge Headwall**Requested Amount: \$60,000**

From the Summary in the Warrant: *The head wall that supports the bridge abutment for Fitch's Bridge is collapsing and needs to be repaired. The Department of Public Works will oversee the repairs of this head wall in compliance with Massachusetts State Law with regards to procurement. This Article will authorize the funding for this repair. The Department of Public Works is estimating that this repair will cost approximately \$60,000. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).*

Article 13: Maintain Former Nod Road Landfill**Requested Amount: \$100,000**

From the Summary in the Warrant: *Recently the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) inspected the former Nod Road Landfill and has required the Town to begin mowing the Landfill. DEP is requesting that the Town conduct a third party inspection to ensure the Landfill was "capped" properly. The DPW Director has requested funds be put aside for maintenance, mowing, inspections and monitoring well installation, along with engineering and survey work. The purpose of this Article is to provide the necessary funding. The Department of Public Works is estimating that this work will cost approximately \$100,000. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).*

Article 14: Repair Fire Alarm**Requested Amount: \$60,000**

From the Summary in the Warrant: *During a recent inspection, it was determined that the current Fire Alarm System at the Function Hall and Restaurant at the Groton Country Club needs to be replaced to provide proper fire protection at these facilities. The purpose of this Article is to provide the necessary funding for this purpose. It is estimated that these repairs will cost \$60,000. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).*

Article 15: Engineering for Complete Streets

Requested Amount: \$30,000

From the Summary in the Warrant: *The Complete Streets Committee has successfully received over \$750,000 in grant funding from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under their Complete Streets Program. Some of the projects covered by the funding have been sidewalks on West Main Street and Lowell Road, along with Pedestrian Crossing Devices along Main Street. The Committee is in the process of preparing another Grant Application this Fall. One of the requirements for this program is that the Town has to cover engineering costs for any approved project. The Committee is seeking \$30,000 for this purpose. This funding, since it is a one-time expense, will come from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (Free Cash).*

Article 17: Cow Pond Brook Fields Project

Requested Amount: \$115,000

From the Summary in the Warrant: *The 2025 Spring Town Meeting appropriated \$100,000 for the continued design development of improvements to the Cow Pond Brook Fields. A Working Group formed by the Town Manager, with the support of the Park Commission, has been working towards this goal. As part of the work, the Town applied for a Fiscal Year 2025 Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant. While a final decision on the Grant has not been made, the Town needs to be prepared to go out to bid and have the project ready to go by the Spring/Summer of 2026. To complete the drawings to go out to bid, an additional \$115,000 is needed to pay the consultant hired by the Town to assist them with this project. Funding will come from the Community Preservation Fund Unallocated Reserve.*

Article 18: SCBA Equipment for the Fire Department

Requested Amount: \$500,000

From the Summary in the Warrant: *Self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) is a critical component of the safety gear utilized by Fire Department personnel. The ability to breathe clean air and operate in hazardous atmospheres where smoke, heat, and toxic gases are present may make the difference between life or death during emergency incidents. The Groton Fire Department requires SCBA's to be worn by personnel on structure fires, vehicle fires, hazardous materials incidents, and other incidents deemed necessary by company officers. The Town had hoped that this purchase would be covered by a Federal Grant, but the Grant Funding has not been received. The existing SCBA equipment has reached the end of its useful life and needs to be replaced immediately. The cost of this replacement is approximately \$500,000. The Town Manager is recommending that these funds be borrowed and paid off over five (5) years.*

If all Articles are approved as presented to the 2025 Fall Town Meeting, each account will have the following balances:

<u>Account</u>	<u>Beginning Balance</u>	<u>Requested Amount</u>	<u>Final Balance</u>
Levy Capacity	\$ 89,142	\$ 77,872	\$ 11,270
Local Cable Receipts	\$ 86,010	\$ 11,617	\$ 74,393
Anticipated Free Cash	\$ 2,641,998	\$ 1,575,486	\$ 1,066,512
Stabilization Fund	\$ 2,728,838	\$ -	\$ 2,728,838
Capital Stabilization Fund	\$ 109,199	\$ 900,000	\$ 1,009,199
Water Enterprise Excess and Deficiency	\$ 457,406	\$ 70,000	\$ 387,406
Four Corner Sewer Excess and Deficiency	\$ 434,092	\$ 32,000	\$ 402,092
GDRSD Capital Stabilization Fund	\$ 22,868	\$ 250,000	\$ 272,868
Stormwater Excess and Deficiency	\$ 149,245	\$ 50,000	\$ 99,245

As stated above, should the Town Meeting agree with these appropriations, \$1,575,486 will come from the Town's Free Cash Account, leaving a Free Cash balance of \$1,066,512. In the Spring of 2026, it is expected that \$300,000 in Free Cash will be required to cover Debt Service, OPEB Trust Fund and Department Head Performance Incentives, leaving a balance of \$766,512 in Free Cash. Based on final anticipated new Growth for FY 2026 and the Final Cherry Sheet Estimates received from the State, the Budget approved at Town Meeting is currently \$89,142 under the anticipated FY 2026 Levy Limit. For the line items that are reoccurring and will be funded through taxation, it is requested that \$77,872 come from this amount, which will leave the Town \$11,270 under the anticipated Levy Limit for Fiscal Year 2026. The following chart is a breakdown of the anticipated rate:

	<u>Actual FY 2025</u>	<u>Proposed FY 2026</u>	<u>Dollar Change</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Levy Capacity Used	\$ 38,052,807	\$ 39,557,852	\$ 1,505,045	3.96%
Tax Rate on Levy Capacity Used	\$ 13.55	\$ 13.09	\$ (0.46)	-3.39%
Average Tax Bill	\$ 9,592	\$ 9,965	\$ 374	3.89%
Excluded Debt	\$ 4,776,976	\$ 5,115,092	\$ 338,116	7.08%
Tax Rate on Excluded Debt	\$ 1.70	\$ 1.69	\$ (0.01)	-0.59%
Average Tax Bill	\$ 1,203	\$ 1,287	\$ 83	6.91%
Final Levy Used	\$ 42,829,783	\$ 44,672,944	\$ 1,843,161	4.30%
Final Tax Rate	\$ 15.25	\$ 14.78	\$ (0.47)	-3.08%
Average Tax Bill	\$ 10,795	\$ 11,252	\$ 457	4.23%

Respectfully submitted,

Mark W. Haddad

Mark W. Haddad
Town Manager

APPENDIX A

PROPOSED GROTON CHARTER

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CHARTER (2025~~2~~)

[HISTORY: Enacted by the General Court as Ch. 121 of the Acts of 2019.¹ Amendments noted where applicable.] [2022 Amendments enacted by the General Court as Chapter 41 of the Acts of 2022.]

ARTICLE 1: INCORPORATION, EXISTENCE AND AUTHORITY

Section 1.1: Incorporation

The inhabitants of the town of Groton, within the corporate limits established by law, shall continue to be a body corporate and politic with perpetual succession under the name "town of Groton."

Section 1.2: Short Title

This instrument shall be known and cited as the Groton charter.

Section 1.3: Powers of the Town

It is the intent and purpose of the voters of the town, through the adoption of this charter, to secure for the town all of the powers possible under the constitution and laws of the commonwealth as fully and as completely as though each power were specifically and individually enumerated in this charter.

Section 1.4: Division of Powers

The administration of all the fiscal, prudential and municipal affairs of the town shall be vested in an executive branch headed by a select board and a town manager. The legislative powers shall be exercised by an open town meeting.

Section 1.5: Interpretation of Powers

The powers reserved or granted to the town under this charter shall be construed liberally and interpreted broadly in the town's favor and the specific mention of any particular power shall not limit the general powers of the town under section 1.3.

Section 1.6: Intergovernmental Relations

The town may enter into agreements with any other unit of government to perform jointly or in cooperation, by contract or otherwise, any of the town's powers or functions.

Section 1.7: Precedence of Charter Provisions

All General Laws, special laws, by-laws, votes, rules and regulations of or pertaining to the town that are in force when the charter takes effect and that are not specifically or by implication repealed directly or indirectly hereby shall continue in full force and effect until amended or repealed or until they expire by their own terms.

Section 1.8: Ethical Standards and Conduct

Elected officers, appointed officials, employees and volunteers of the town shall demonstrate by their example, with their general conduct and in the performance of their duties and responsibilities the highest ethical standards so that the public may justifiably have trust and confidence in the integrity of the town's government. Such individuals shall recognize that they act always as agents for the public, that they hold their office or position for the benefit of the public, that the public interest is their primary concern and that they faithfully discharge the duties of their office regardless of personal considerations. Such an individual shall not use the individual's official position to secure or grant special consideration, treatment, advantage, privilege or exemption to themselves or to any other person beyond that which is available to every other person.

Section 1.9: Definitions

As used in this charter, the following words shall, unless the context clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:-

"Appointed official", an individual serving in appointed office who exercises the powers or duties of that office with authority derived from the General Laws, this charter, vote of town meeting or the town's by-laws.

"Charter", this charter and any amendments to it that may hereafter be adopted.

"Days", business days, not including Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays; provided, however, that when the time set is not less than 7 days, every day shall be included.

"Department head", an individual having administrative authority over a town department. "Elected officer", an individual serving in elected office who, in the exercise of the powers or duties of that office, exercises some portion of the sovereign power of the town.

"Emergency", a sudden, unexpected and unforeseen happening, occurrence, event or condition that necessitates immediate action.

"Local newspaper", a newspaper of general circulation in the town.

"Majority vote", a majority of those present and voting; provided, that a quorum is present when the vote is taken.

"Multiple-member body", a town body consisting of not less than 2 persons, whether called a board, commission, committee, subcommittee or otherwise and however elected, appointed or otherwise constituted.

["Publish", posting a document on the Town website and in a prominent and accessible location, with hard copies made available upon request.](#)

"Quorum", except for a town meeting and unless otherwise required by law or this charter, a majority of the members of a multiple member body then in office, not including any vacancies that may then exist.

"Town", the town of Groton.

"Town agency", a board, commission, committee, department or office of the town government.

"Town bulletin board", a bulletin board in the town hall on which official notices are posted and boards at other town buildings or facilities that may be designated by the town clerk as town bulletin boards.

"Town meeting", the open town meeting established in article 2, whether annual or special.

"Voters", registered voters of the town.

"Warrant", a document required to warn and notify residents and inhabitants of the town, who are qualified to vote in town affairs, to meet at a specific place to act on published articles relating to the governance of the town.

ARTICLE 2: LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Section 2.1: Town Meeting

The legislative powers of the town shall be exercised by a town meeting open to all voters. The annual town meeting shall meet in regular session twice in each calendar year. The first meeting, which shall be the spring town meeting, shall be held in March, April or May on a date fixed by by-law and shall be primarily concerned with the determination of matters involving the expenditure of town funds including, but not limited to, the adoption of an annual operating budget for all town agencies, electing officers and determining all other matters to be decided by ballot of the voters. The second meeting, which shall be the fall town meeting, shall be held in the last 4 months of the calendar year on a date fixed by by-law; provided, however, that the fall town meeting shall not include the election of officers.

Section 2.2: Presiding Officer

2.2.1 The moderator elected pursuant to section 3.4 shall preside at all sessions of the annual and special town meetings. The moderator at all town meetings shall regulate the proceedings, decide all questions of order and make public declaration of all votes and may exercise such additional powers and duties as may be authorized by law, this charter, by-law or other vote of the town meeting.

2.2.2 The moderator shall appoint a deputy moderator at the spring town meeting, subject to ratification of the town meeting, to serve at any session of an annual or special town meeting in the event of the moderator's absence or disability. The deputy moderator may also temporarily serve when the moderator has a conflict of interest or when the appearance of a conflict of interest arises, as determined by the moderator, with regard to a particular article or matter under consideration.

2.2.3 In the absence of the moderator and the deputy moderator at any session of a town meeting, the town clerk shall open the meeting and preside over the election of an acting moderator; provided, however, that if the moderator, the deputy moderator and the town clerk are absent, the presiding officer shall be determined as provided for by law.

Section 2.3: The Town Report

The select board shall publish an annual town report and make it available not less than 14 days before the spring town meeting; provided, however, that failure to comply with this section shall not prevent the town meeting from proceeding.

Section 2.4: Special Town Meetings

A special town meeting shall be held at the call of a majority of the full select board in order to transact the legislative business of the town in an orderly manner. A special town meeting shall also be held on the petition of not less than 200 voters or 20 per cent of the total number of voters, whichever is less.

Section 2.5: Warrants

Every town meeting shall be called by a warrant issued by the select board that shall state the time and place at which the meeting is to convene and, by separate articles, shall identify the subject matters to be acted upon. The publication of the warrant for every town meeting shall be in accordance with the General Laws and by-laws governing such matters.

Section 2.6: Initiation of Warrant Articles

2.6.1 Initiation - Subject to section 2.6.3, the select board shall receive petitions addressed to it that request the submission of any matter to the town meeting and that are filed by: (i) a department head; (ii) a multiple-member body acting by a majority of its members then in office; (iii) any 10 voters for a session of the annual town meeting; or (iv) any 100 voters for a special town meeting.

2.6.2 Inclusion on the Warrant - Spring and Fall Session of the Town Meeting - When a spring or fall session of the town meeting is to be called, notice shall be given by posting attested copies of the warrant in not less than 2 public places in the town and by publishing notice of the meeting in a local newspaper not less than 14 days before the day appointed for the meeting. The select board shall include in the warrant the subject matter of all petitions received by the board not less than 60 days before the date fixed by by-law for the session of the spring or fall session of the town meeting to convene. Unless specified otherwise in this charter, the content, scheduling and notice requirements for a spring or fall session of the town meeting shall be the same as provided for an annual town meeting pursuant to section 10 of chapter 39 of the General Laws.

2.6.3 Inclusion on the Warrant - Special Town Meeting - If a special town meeting is to be called, notice shall be given by posting attested copies of the warrant in not less than 2 public places in the town and by publishing notice of the meeting in a local newspaper not less than 14 days before the day appointed for the meeting. The select board shall include in the warrant the subject matter of all petitions received by the board not less than 20 days before the day appointed for the meeting. Unless specified otherwise in this charter, the content, scheduling and notice requirements for a special town meeting shall be the same as provided for a special town meeting pursuant to section 10 of chapter 39 of the General Laws.

Section 2.7: Availability of Town Officials at Town Meetings; Conflicting Meetings

2.7.1 Every chairperson of each multiple-member body and every department head shall attend all sessions of town meetings. If a chairperson of a multiple-member body or department head shall be absent from a town meeting due to illness or other reasonable cause, that person shall designate a deputy to attend the meeting and represent the multiple-member body or department. If a person designated to attend a town meeting under this section is not a voter, the person may, notwithstanding the person's voter status, address the meeting to fulfill the objectives of this section.

2.7.2 A meeting of a multiple-member body or town agency shall not be convened or be in session during a session of any town meeting except as part of the town meeting.

Section 2.8: Clerk of the Meeting

The town clerk shall serve as clerk of the town meeting, give public notice of all adjourned sessions of the town meeting, record its proceedings and perform such additional duties in connection therewith as may be provided by law, this charter, by-law or town meeting vote.

Section 2.9: Rules of Procedure

The town meeting may, by by-law, establish, amend, revise or repeal rules to govern the conduct of all town meetings.

Section 2.10: General Powers and Duties

The town meeting shall provide for the exercise of all of the powers of the town and for the performance of all duties and obligations imposed upon the town that are not otherwise provided for by law, this charter or by-law.

Section 2.11: Report to the Voters

There shall be published for every town meeting a copy of the warrant, together with its articles, and a report to the voters that shall contain the explanation and relevant data submitted by the proponents of each article; provided, however, that the town manager may direct that voluminous supporting material necessary for consideration of particular articles be made reasonably available for inspection at public locations before the town meeting in lieu of inclusion in the written report to the voters. The written report for each town meeting shall include: (i) the written report of the planning board setting forth its findings and recommendations as to all zoning articles; (ii) the written report of the finance committee, which shall set forth its findings, conclusions and recommendations and its reasons therefor regarding all of the monetary articles in the warrant; and (iii) with respect to each warrant article, in addition to the reports of the planning board and the finance committee, the written report of a proponent or sponsor of a warrant article and of a multiple-member body or town agency that is required to review, recommend or sponsor the warrant article by law, appointment or otherwise.

The report for the town meeting shall also include, as an appendix, the capital improvement plan defined in section 6.6 setting forth the proposed capital outlay program for the ensuing fiscal year for the information and guidance of town meeting. The select board shall have the opportunity to include in the report its conclusions and recommendations, including its reasons therefore, regarding articles in the warrant that relate to its general superintendence over the administration of town affairs.

~~There shall be published for every town meeting a copy of the warrant, together with its articles, and a report to the voters that shall contain the explanation and relevant data submitted by the proponents of each article; provided, however, that the town manager may direct that voluminous supporting material necessary for consideration of particular articles be made reasonably available for inspection at public locations before the town meeting in lieu of inclusion in the written report to the voters. The written report for each spring town meeting shall include: (i) the written report of the planning board setting forth its findings and recommendations as to all zoning articles; (ii) the written report of the finance committee, which shall set forth its findings, conclusions and recommendations and its reasons therefor regarding all of the monetary articles in the warrant; and (iii) with respect to each warrant article, in addition to the reports of the planning board and the finance committee, the written report of a proponent or sponsor of a warrant article and of a multiple-member body or town agency that is required to review, recommend or sponsor the warrant article by law, appointment or otherwise.~~

~~The report for the spring town meeting shall also include, as an appendix, the capital improvement plan defined in section 6.6 setting forth a five-year capital outlay program for the information and guidance of town meeting. The select board shall have the opportunity to include in the report its conclusions and recommendations, including its reasons therefor, regarding articles in the warrant that relate to its general superintendence over the administration of town affairs.~~

The report shall be made available to residents of the town by a method determined by the select board not later than 7 days before the date on which the opening session of the spring town

meeting is to be held; provided, however, that the failure to make the report available shall not prohibit a town meeting from acting upon any matters set forth in the warrant and shall not affect the validity of the proceedings at a town meeting.

ARTICLE 3: ELECTED OFFICERS

Section 3.1: General

3.1.1 Elective Town Offices - The town offices that the voters shall fill by ballot shall be: (i) the town moderator; (ii) the members of the select board; (iii) the town's component of the Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee; (iv) the commissioners of trust funds; (v) the elected members of the Groton Housing Authority; (vi) the members of the planning board, public library board of trustees, Groton electric light commission, Groton water commission, Groton sewer commission, park commission, board of health and board of assessors; and (vii) other officers or representatives to regional authorities or districts as may be established by law or by interlocal agreement that shall also be filled by ballot at a town election.

3.1.2 Town Election - The annual election by ballot of elective town officers and voting on any questions required by law to be placed upon the official ballot shall be held on a date fixed by by-law.

3.1.3 Eligibility - A voter shall be eligible to hold an elective town office unless prohibited by law; provided, however, that a select board member shall not simultaneously hold another elected position.

3.1.4 Compensation - Elected officers shall receive the compensation for their services that may be appropriated at the spring town meeting for such purpose.

3.1.5 Availability - Notwithstanding a town officer's election by the voters, a town officer under this section shall be subject to the call of the select board or the town manager at all reasonable times for consultation, conference and discussion on any matter related to the officer's respective office. Similarly, multiple-member bodies or other appointees shall be subject to the call of the select board or the town manager at all reasonable times for discussion on any matter related to their respective offices.

3.1.6 Filling of Vacancies

3.1.6.1 Moderator - If there is a failure to elect a town moderator or if a vacancy occurs in the office of town moderator, the select board shall appoint a suitable person to serve until the next town election.

3.1.6.2 Elected Multiple-Member Body - If there is a failure to elect a member of a multiple-member body or if a vacancy occurs in the membership of an elected multiple-member body, the remaining members of the multiple-member body shall give notice of the vacancy to the select board and to the public. The select board and the remaining members of the multiple-member body shall, at least 1 week after notice of the date on which the vote is to be taken, fill the vacancy until the next town election by a joint vote. The affirmative votes of the majority of the persons entitled to vote on the vacancy shall be necessary for the election.

3.1.6.3 Select Board - If there is a failure to elect a select board member or if a vacancy occurs in the membership of the select board, the remaining select board members may call a special election to fill the vacancy or shall call the special election upon the written request of not less than 200 voters.

3.1.7 Recall Provision for Elected Officers

3.1.7.1 Application - An elected officer may be recalled if the recall election occurs more than 6 months before the end of the officer's elective term.

3.1.7.2 Recall Petition - Two per cent of the voters may file with the town clerk an affidavit containing the name of the officer sought to be recalled and a statement of the grounds for the recall. Upon receiving the affidavit, the town clerk shall deliver to the voters making the affidavit copies of petition blanks demanding the recall. The petition blanks shall contain the following heading: "Initiating a recall is a serious process and should not be undertaken lightly." The blanks shall be issued by the town clerk with an official signature and official seal. The blanks shall be dated, addressed to the select board, contain the names of the first 10 signers of the affidavit, the name of the person whose recall is sought and the grounds for recall as stated in the affidavit and demand the election of a successor to the office. A copy of the affidavit and recall petition shall be entered in a record book to be kept in the office of the town clerk. The recall petitions shall be returned and filed with the town clerk not more than 45 days after the date of the filing of the affidavit and shall be signed by not less than 20 per cent of the voters as of the date the affidavit was filed with the town clerk.

The town clerk shall, within 1 business day of receipt of the petitions, submit the petitions to the registrars of voters in the town. The registrars shall, within 5 business days of the submission of the petitions, certify thereon the number of signatures that are names of voters.

3.1.7.3 Recall Election - If the petitions are certified by the registrars of voters to be sufficient, the town clerk shall submit the petitions with the certificate to the select board. Upon receipt of the certificate, the select board shall immediately give written notice of the petition and certificate by certified mail to the officer whose recall is sought. If the officer does not resign the office within 5 days after delivery of the notice, the select board shall immediately order an election to be held on a date fixed by them not less than 64 days nor more than 90 days after the date that the election is called; provided, however, that if another town election is to occur no more than 100 days after the date the election is called, the select board shall postpone the holding of the recall election to the date of the other election. If the officer resigns after a recall election has been ordered, the election shall nevertheless proceed as provided in this section.

3.1.7.4 Nomination of Candidates - An officer whose recall is sought may be a candidate to succeed to the office if the vote on the recall is in the affirmative. The nomination of other candidates, the publication of the warrant for the recall election and the conduct of the recall election shall be in accordance with the laws relating to elections unless otherwise provided in this section.

3.1.7.5 Office Holder - The incumbent shall continue to perform the duties of the office during the recall procedure. If the incumbent is not removed, the incumbent shall continue in the office for

the remainder of the unexpired term, subject to recall as before. If recalled at the recall election, the incumbent shall be removed.

3.1.7.6 Ballot Proposition - Ballots used in a recall election shall contain the following propositions in the order indicated:

Shall the town of Groton recall (name of officer) Yes No

Below the propositions shall appear the word "Candidates", the directions to the voters required by section 42 of chapter 54 of the General Laws and, below the directions, the names of candidates nominated in accordance with the laws relating to elections. If a majority of the votes cast on the question of recall is in the affirmative, the candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. If a majority of the votes on the recall question is in the negative, the ballots for the candidates shall not be counted.

3.1.7.7 Repeat of Recall Election - A recall shall not be filed against an officer subjected to a recall election and not recalled thereby until not less than 6 months after the election at which the recall was submitted to the voters.

3.1.7.8 Office Holder Recalled - A person who has been recalled from an office or who has resigned from an office while recall proceedings were pending against the person shall not be appointed to a town office within 2 years after the date of the recall vote or resignation.

Section 3.2: Select Board

3.2.1 Composition, Term of Office - There shall be a select board consisting of 5 members elected for terms of 3 years each, arranged so that the terms of office of as nearly an equal number of members as possible shall expire each year. A select board member shall not hold another position of the town that is compensated and eligible for medical benefits during the member's term of office.

3.2.2 Powers and Duties - The executive powers of the town shall be vested in the select board, which shall be the chief executive office of the town. The select board shall possess all of the executive powers that a select board may possess and exercise, except those powers and duties assigned by this charter, by-law or town meeting vote to the town manager. The select board shall:

- (i) serve as the principal goal-setting and policy-making town agency for matters within its statutory authority and for those matters for which the town meeting has directed the board to act;
- (ii) be responsible for the formulation and promulgation of policy to be followed by all town agencies serving under it;
- (iii) in conjunction with other elected officers and multiple-member bodies, develop and promulgate policy guidelines designed to bring all town agencies into harmony;
- (iv) award and execute all contracts for services and supplies for all departments and agencies of the town, other than the Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee; provided, however,

that the select board, at its sole discretion, may delegate this authority to any department head or agency by a vote of the board at a posted meeting; and

(v) One Member of the Select Board and the Town Manager shall sign all payroll and expense warrants.

~~sign all payroll and expense warrants; provided, however, that the select board, at its sole discretion, may delegate this authority for a period of not more than 30 days to a select board member and the town manager or a select board member and the acting town manager by a vote of the board at a posted meeting.~~

3.2.3 Licensing Authority - The select board shall be the licensing board of the town and may issue licenses, make reasonable rules and regulations regarding the issuance of licenses and attach to a license the conditions and restrictions that it deems to be in the public interest; provided, however, that such rules, regulations, conditions and restrictions shall not be incompatible with applicable law. The select board shall enforce the laws relating to all businesses for which it issues licenses. The select board may delegate its licensing authority unless specifically prohibited by law.

3.2.4 Appointing Authority - The select board shall appoint the town manager, town counsel, a zoning board of appeals, board of registrars, conservation commission, council on aging, housing partnership, local cultural council and other committees as required by law, by-law or town meeting vote.

~~The select board shall appoint the town manager, town counsel, a zoning board of appeals and a board of registrars. The select board shall appoint a police chief, fire chief and town clerk consistent with clause (v) of section 4.2; provided, however, that the police chief shall serve under section 97A of chapter 41 of the General Laws and the fire chief shall serve under section 42 of chapter 48 of the General Laws. The select board shall appoint a conservation commission, council on aging, housing partnership, local cultural council and other committees as required by law, by-law or town meeting vote.~~ **[Amended by Chapter 41 of the Acts of 2022]**

3.2.5 Investigations - The select board may investigate the affairs of the town and the conduct of any town agency, including any doubtful claims against the town. Copies of the full text of the report on the results of any such investigation shall be placed on file in the office of the select board, the office of the town clerk and the public library and a report summarizing the results of the investigation shall be printed in the next annual town report.

3.2.6 Day to Day Business - Except in the case of an emergency, this section shall not authorize a select board member or a majority of its members to become involved in the day-to-day administration of a town board, department or agency.

Section 3.3: Regional School Committee

3.3.1 Composition, Term of Office - The Groton-Dunstable Regional School District provides public education, pre-kindergarten to high school, inclusive, and related services to the towns of Groton and Dunstable under the terms of a regional agreement between the towns. Pursuant to the regional agreement, there is a Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee consisting of 7 members elected for 3-year terms, the terms being arranged so that the terms of office of as nearly an equal number of members as possible shall expire each year. The number of members elected by each town is governed by the terms of the regional agreement, as it may be amended.

3.3.2 Powers and Duties - The Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee shall have all of the powers and duties that are given to regional school committees under the constitution, laws and regulations of the commonwealth and such additional powers and duties as may be authorized by the regional agreement, by-law or other vote of the town meetings of both the towns of Groton and Dunstable.

Section 3.4: Town Moderator

3.4.1 Term of Office - There shall be a moderator elected for a 3-year term.

3.4.2 Powers and Duties - The moderator shall be the presiding officer of the town meeting, pursuant to section 2.2, and regulate its proceeding and perform other duties as may be provided by law, this charter, by-law or town meeting vote.

3.4.3 Appointments - The moderator shall make appointments provided for by law, this charter or by-law.

3.4.4 Deputy Moderator - At the opening of the spring town meeting, the moderator shall appoint a voter to serve as deputy moderator pursuant to section 2.2.

Section 3.5: Groton Housing Authority

3.5.1 Composition, Term of Office - There shall be a Groton Housing Authority that shall have the membership and terms of office prescribed in the General Laws.

3.5.2 Powers and Duties - The Groton Housing Authority shall conduct studies of the housing needs of the community and shall provide programs to make available housing for low- income families and elderly persons. The Groton Housing Authority shall have such other powers and duties as are assigned to housing authorities by law.

Section 3.6: Planning Board

3.6.1 Composition, Term of Office - There shall be a planning board that shall consist of 7 members, each elected for a 3-year term. The terms shall be arranged so that the terms of as nearly an equal number of members as possible shall expire each year.

3.6.2 Powers and Duties - The planning board shall have the powers and duties given to planning boards under the constitution and laws of the commonwealth and such additional powers and duties as may be authorized by this charter, by-law or town meeting vote.

Section 3.7: Groton Electric Light Commission

3.7.1 Composition, Term of Office - There shall be a Groton electric light commission that shall consist of 3 members, each serving for a 3-year term. The terms shall be arranged that the term of 1 member shall expire each year.

3.7.2 Powers and Duties - The Groton electric light commission shall set the policy direction of the Groton electric light department, which provides electric power to the town, consistent with chapter 164 of the General Laws; provided, however, that if a provision of this charter shall conflict with said chapter 164, said chapter 164 shall govern.

Section 3.8: Library Board of Trustees

3.8.1 Composition, Term of Office - There shall be a board of trustees of the public library that shall consist of 6 members, each serving for a 3-year term. The terms shall be arranged so that the terms of 2 members shall expire each year.

3.8.2 Powers and Duties - The trustees of the public library shall establish written policies governing library activities and services, engage in ongoing planning that assesses the needs and the role of the library in the community, ensure that the library meets the community's needs, work on preparation of the annual library budget and its adoption by the town, monitor and oversee maintenance of the buildings and grounds and regularly review facility needs, hire and evaluate the library director and work with the human resources director on job classifications for all staff, promote the library and act as library advocates in the community, study and support legislation that will benefit the library and the larger community and have such other powers and duties as provided for by law, this charter and by-law.

3.8.3 Appointments - The trustees of the public library shall appoint the library director and such other appointments as provided for by law, this charter or by-law.

Section 3.9: Board of Assessors

[Section 3.9 renumbered from Section 3.10 by Chapter 41 of the Acts of 2022]

3.9.1 Composition, Term of Office and Eligibility for Office - There shall be a board of assessors that shall consist of 3 members elected for 3-year terms. An employee in the assessors' office shall not simultaneously hold an elected position as a member of the board of assessors.

3.9.2 Powers and Duties - The board of assessors shall have the powers and duties given to boards of assessors under the constitution and laws of the commonwealth and directives of the commissioner of revenue and such additional powers and duties as may be authorized by this charter, by-law or town meeting vote that are not in conflict with laws of the commonwealth and regulations and directives of the department of revenue except as otherwise provided in this charter.

Section 3.10: Other Elected Officers

[Section 3.10 renumbered from Section 3.11 by Chapter 41 of the Acts of 2022]

3.10.1 Powers and Duties - All other elected officers shall have the powers and duties that have been conferred upon their offices by law, this charter, by-law or town meeting vote.

ARTICLE 4: TOWN MANAGER

Section 4.1: Appointment, Qualifications and Review Procedure

4.1.1 The select board shall, by an affirmative vote of the majority of the full board, appoint or reappoint a town manager for a term of not more than 3 years and fix the compensation of the town manager within the amount annually appropriated for that purpose. If a vacancy shall occur in the office of town manager, the select board shall appoint a town manager screening committee to identify qualified candidates for the position. The office of the town manager shall not be subject to the town's salary administration plan. The town manager shall be appointed solely on the basis of the town manager's executive and administrative qualifications. The town manager shall be a professionally qualified person of proven ability, especially fitted by education, training and previous experience to perform the duties of the office. The town manager shall not have served in an elective office in the town government for at least 1 year before being appointed. The town may establish additional qualifications for the town manager by by-law as necessary or appropriate.

4.1.2 The position of town manager shall be a full-time position. The town manager shall devote the town manager's best efforts to the office and shall not hold another public office, elective or appointive, or engage in any business or occupation during the town manager's term unless the action is fully disclosed and approved by the select board in advance and in writing.

4.1.3 The select board shall provide for an annual review of the job performance of the town manager that shall, at least in summary form, be a public record in accordance with the personnel by-laws or accepted evaluation process.

Section 4.2: Powers and Duties

The town manager shall be the chief administrator of the town and shall be responsible to the select board for the proper administration of all town affairs placed in the town manager's charge by this charter. The powers and duties of the town manager shall include, but not be limited to:

(i) ~~(i) ——— managing, supervising, and being responsible for the efficient and coordinated administration of all town functions as may be authorized by this Charter, by-law, town meeting vote or the select board, including all appointed officials, employees, department heads and their respective departments~~ managing, supervising and being responsible for the efficient and coordinated administration of all town functions under the town manager's control as may be authorized by this charter, by-law, town meeting vote or the select board, including all department heads and their respective departments;

(ii) ~~unless otherwise required by law, this charter or by-law, managing and coordinating the administrative activities of all town agencies; provided, however, that elected officers or their representatives shall be required to meet with the town manager at reasonable times to effect coordination and cooperation among all town agencies;~~

(iii) ~~——— appointing and removing a police chief, fire chief and town clerk pursuant to the policy established by the select board; provided, however, that the police chief shall serve under section 97A of chapter 41 of the General Laws and the fire chief shall serve under section 42 of chapter 48 of the General Laws; provided, however, that an appointment made by the town manager shall be~~

confirmed by the select board not more than 15 days after the date on which the town manager files notice of the action with the select board; and provided further, that failure by the select board to confirm an appointment in that 15-day period shall constitute rejection of the appointment.

(iv) appointing and removing department heads, officers and subordinates and employees and other appointed members of town government for whom no other method of appointment or removal is provided in this charter or by-law; provided, however, that an appointment made by the town manager shall be confirmed by the select board not more than 15 days after the date on which the town manager files notice of the action with the select board; and provided further, that failure by the select board to confirm an appointment in that 15-day period shall constitute rejection of the appointment;

appointing and removing department heads, other employees and paid members of town government for whom another method of appointment or removal is not provided in this charter or by-law; provided, however, that an appointment made by the town manager shall be confirmed by the select board not more than 15 days after the date on which the town manager files notice of the action with the select board; and provided further, that failure by the select board to confirm an appointment in that 15-day period shall constitute rejection of the appointment;

(iv) nominating for appointment or removal volunteer members of town government for whom another method of appointment or removal is not provided for in this charter or by-law; provided, however, that a nomination for appointment or removal made by the town manager shall be confirmed by the select board not more than 15 days after the date on which the town manager files notice of the action with the select board; and provided further, that failure by the select board to confirm a nomination in not more than 15 days shall constitute rejection of the nomination;

(v) if a vacancy occurs in the office of police chief, fire chief or town clerk, selecting and presenting not less than 2 qualified candidates to the select board for appointment by the board to the office pursuant to section 3.2.4; [Amended by Chapter 41 of the Acts of 2022]

(vii) acting as a negotiator for all collective bargaining agreements to which the select board is a party, subject to ratification by the select board;

(vii) conducting or reviewing annual performance evaluations of all employees subject to the town manager's or the select board's appointment and consulting with elected and appointed boards to contribute to the preparation of the evaluations of department heads associated with the boards;

(viii) fixing the compensation of all employees appointed by the town manager within the limits established by the overall approved budget, the personnel by-laws, the town's wage and classification schedule and collective bargaining or other agreements;

(viii) attending all regular and special meetings of the select board unless excused at the town manager's request and having a voice, but not a vote, in all discussions;

(ix) attending all sessions of the town meeting and answering all questions directed to the town manager that are related to the office of the town manager or concerning which the town manager possesses the relevant information;

- (xi) assuring that all laws, this charter, by-laws, town meeting votes and directives of the select board that require enforcement by the town manager or employees subject to the town manager's direction and supervision are faithfully carried out;
- (xii) preparing and submitting annual operating budgets and capital improvement programs pursuant to article 6;
- (xiii) coordinating the preparation of the town's annual report;
- (xiv) overseeing the preservation, management and administration of all town records so as to facilitate access to them; and
- (xv) performing such duties as necessary or as may be assigned by this charter, by-law, town meeting vote or the select board.

Section 4.3: Removal and Suspension

4.3.1 The select board may, by the affirmative vote of 4 of its members, terminate and remove or suspend the town manager from office in accordance with the procedure under this section.

4.3.1.1 The select board shall adopt a preliminary resolution of removal which shall state the reason for removal, by the affirmative vote of 4 members. The preliminary resolution may provide for the suspension of the town manager for not more than 45 days. A copy of the preliminary resolution shall be delivered to the town manager not more than 48 hours after its adoption.

4.3.1.2 Not more than 7 days after receipt of the preliminary resolution, the town manager may request a public hearing by filing a written request for it with the select board. The hearing shall be held at a meeting of the select board not more than 20 days, but not less than 3 days, after the request has been filed. The town manager may file a written statement with the select board responding to the reason stated in the preliminary resolution of removal; provided, however, that the statement shall be received at the office of the select board more than 48 hours before the public hearing.

4.3.1.3 If the town manager has not requested a hearing pursuant to paragraph 4.3.1.2, the select board may, by the affirmative vote of 4 of its members, adopt a final resolution of removal not less than 10 days, but not more than 21 days, after the date of delivery of a copy of the preliminary resolution to the town manager. If the town manager has requested a public hearing pursuant to paragraph 4.3.1.2, the select board may, by the affirmative vote of 4 of its members, adopt a final resolution of removal not more than 21 days after the close of the hearing unless the parties agree to a longer period. Failure to adopt a final resolution of removal within the time allowed in this section shall nullify the preliminary resolution of removal and the town manager shall, at the expiration of the time, resume the duties of the office.

4.3.1.4 Any action by the select board to terminate and remove or suspend the town manager shall be conducted pursuant to sections 18 to 25, inclusive, of chapter 30A of the General Laws.

4.3.2 The action of the select board in terminating and removing or suspending the town manager shall be final.

Section 4.4: Vacancy in the Office of the Town Manager

4.4.1 Permanent Vacancy - The select board shall fill a permanent vacancy in the office of the town manager pursuant to section 4.1.1 as soon as possible after a vacancy occurs. Pending the appointment of a town manager or the filling of a vacancy in the office of the town manager, the select board shall, within 14 days, appoint a person capable of temporarily performing the duties of the town manager until a permanent replacement is appointed.

4.4.2 Temporary Absence or Disability - The town manager may designate, by letter filed with the town clerk and select board, a capable person to perform the duties of town manager during a temporary absence or disability for a period of not less than 7 days. If the town manager fails to make such a designation or if the person so designated is unable to serve, the select board may designate some other capable person to perform the duties of the town manager. If the absence or disability lasts more than 30 days, a designation by the town manager shall be subject to approval by the select board.

4.4.3 Powers and Duties - The powers and duties of the acting town manager under paragraphs 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 shall be limited to matters not permitting of delay and shall include authority to make temporary, emergency appointments or designations to town offices or employment; provided, however, that an acting town manager shall not make permanent appointments or designations unless authorized by the select board.

Section 4.5: Screening Committee

4.5.1 If a vacancy shall occur in the office of town manager, a screening committee shall be established to solicit, receive and evaluate applications for the position of town manager. The screening committee shall consist of 7 persons, 3 of whom shall be designated by the select board, of which only 1 may be a select board member, 2 of whom shall be designated by the finance committee, of which only 1 may be a member of the finance committee, and 2 of whom shall be designated by the town moderator. A person chosen by an appointing authority may be a member of the appointing authority's agency; provided, however, that there shall not be more than 1 select board member and not more than 1 member of the finance committee on the screening committee. **[Amended by Chapter 41 of the Acts of 2022]**

4.5.2 Not more than 21 days after the notice of the vacancy or pending vacancy in the office of town manager, the town clerk shall call and convene a meeting of the screening committee. The screening committee shall meet to organize and plan a process to advertise the vacancy or pending vacancy and to solicit by other means candidates for the office. The committee shall proceed to meet, notwithstanding the failure of any town appointing authority to designate a representative to it.

4.5.3 The screening committee shall review all applications that are received by it, screen all such applicants by checking and verifying work records and other credentials and provide for interviews to be conducted with the number of candidates as it deems necessary, desirable or expedient.

4.5.4 Not more than 90 days after the date on which the screening committee meets to organize, the committee shall submit to the select board the names of not less than 3 persons and not more than 5 persons that the screening committee believes to be best suited to perform the duties of the town manager. The select board shall, not more than 60 days after the date of receipt of the list of nominees, choose 1 candidate from the list to fill the position of town manager or reject the nominees and direct that the committee resume its search.

4.5.5 Upon the appointment of a town manager, the screening committee shall be discharged.

ARTICLE 5: ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

Section 5.1: Organization of Town Agencies

The organization of the town into operating agencies for the provision of services and administration of government may be accomplished by any method consistent with law and this charter, including the adoption of by-laws, appropriation of funds or adoption of rules and regulations by appropriate entities. The town manager may, with the approval of the select board and consistent with law and this charter, establish, reorganize, consolidate or abolish any department or position under the town manager's direction and supervision.

Section 5.2: Merit Principle

All appointments and promotions of employees shall be made solely on the basis of merit and fitness demonstrated by examination or other evidence of competency and suitability.

Section 5.3: Department of Finance

5.3.1 There shall be a department of finance in the town that shall report to the town manager. There shall be within the department an appointed town accountant, an appointed treasurer-collector and an appointed principal—~~assistant~~ -assessor. The department shall be responsible for the performance of all the fiscal and financial activities of the town. The town manager shall serve as the finance director; provided, however, that the town manager may, at the town manager's discretion, appoint another person to serve as the finance director. The appointment shall be subject to confirmation by the select board in accordance with [clause subsection](#) (iii) of section 4.2.

5.3.2 The town manager and the department of finance shall assume all of the powers, duties and responsibilities related to municipal finance activities and the coordination of those activities with the activities of all other town agencies. The department of finance shall have such additional powers, duties and responsibilities with respect to municipal finance as the town may provide by by-law.

5.3.3 The department of finance shall assure that complete and full records of the financial and administrative activities of the town are maintained and shall render written reports, which shall include a full accounting of all town administrative and financial operations, to the select board and the finance committee at least once each calendar quarter. The quarterly reports shall be rendered not more than 30 days after the end of the calendar quarter to which they apply and shall be made available to the public in accordance with the requirements of section 10 of chapter 66 of the General Laws. Additional reports shall be rendered to the select board at the board's request.

5.3.4 The town manager and the department of finance shall collaborate with the finance committee to prepare, maintain and present to the select board and the town meeting a 5- year financial plan for the town.

5.3.5 Town Accountant - The town accountant shall be appointed by the town manager for a term of not more than 3 years, subject to confirmation by the select board pursuant to [clause subsection](#) (iii) of section 4.2. The town accountant shall have all of the powers and duties vested in the office of town accountant by law, this charter, by-law or town meeting vote.

5.3.6 Treasurer-Collector - The treasurer-collector shall be appointed by the town manager for a term of not more than 3 years, subject to confirmation by the select board pursuant to [clause subsection](#) (iii) of section 4.2. The treasurer- collector shall have all the powers and duties vested in the office of treasurer-collector by law, this charter, by-law or town meeting vote.

5.3.7 Principal ~~Assistant~~ Assessor - The principal ~~assistant~~ assessor shall be appointed by the town manager for a term of not more than 3 years, subject to confirmation by the select board pursuant to subsection (iii) of section 4.2. The principal assistant assessor shall have all of the powers and duties vested in the office of principal assistant assessor by this charter, by-law or town meeting vote and in the office of assistant assessor by law.

Section 5.4: Department of Public Works

5.4.1 There shall be a department of public works that shall be under the direction of a director. The director shall be appointed by the town manager, subject to confirmation by the select board pursuant to [clause subsection](#) (iii) of section 4.2. The director shall serve as and perform the duties of a highway surveyor as set forth in the General Laws.

5.4.2 The principal functions of the department of public works shall include:

- (i) construction, maintenance, repair and cleaning of town roads, sidewalks, storm drains, bridges, dikes and other public way related structures;
- (ii) maintenance, repair and cleaning of all buildings owned or leased by the town, except those of the regional school district;
- (iii) maintenance of the old cemetery, parks, parking areas and recreational and beach facilities, except those of the regional school district;

- (iv) snow removal, including the salting and sanding of roads, except those of the regional school district;
- (v) supervision of the collection and disposal of garbage and other refuse and the maintenance and operation of all facilities for the disposal of the same;
- (vi) supervision, care and replacement of trees;
- (vii) providing for, or causing to be provided for, the maintenance and repair of certain town-owned vehicles; and
- (viii) such other functions as may be prescribed by the town manager.

5.4.3 Powers and Duties - The department of public works shall work in close coordination with the necessary town boards and departments to enable the effective and efficient performance of its duties pursuant to the General Laws, this charter, the by-laws or by vote of the town meeting.

Section 5.5: Information Technology

There shall be a department of information technology that shall plan, coordinate and maintain the town's information assets.

~~Section 5.6: Personnel Board~~

~~5.6.1 Composition, Term of Office - There shall be a personnel board that shall consist of 3 members appointed by the select board. Members shall serve for 3-year terms; provided, however, that the terms shall be arranged in such a manner that the term of office of 1 member shall expire each year.~~

~~5.6.2 Powers and Duties - The personnel board shall function as an advisory board to the human resources director, town manager and select board in the management of human resources for the town.~~

ARTICLE 6: FINANCE AND FISCAL PROCEDURES

Section 6.1: Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the town shall begin on July 1 and shall end on June 30 unless another period is required by the General Laws.

Section 6.2: Finance Committee

6.2.1 Composition, Term of Office - There shall be a finance committee that shall consist of 7 voters appointed by a 3-person committee that shall consist of the chair of the select board, the chair of the finance committee and the town moderator; provided, however, that if the chair of the finance committee is being considered for reappointment, the finance committee shall select another member who is not being considered for reappointment. Members of the finance committee shall serve 3-year terms; provided, however, that the terms shall be so arranged that

the terms of office of as nearly an equal number of members as possible shall expire each year. The finance committee shall appoint a chair and a deputy chair to run meetings and present the finance committee's recommendations during the town budget process.

6.2.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The finance committee shall:

- (i) serve as the advisors to the town meeting, the select board, the town manager and the department of finance on all matters pertaining to the budget, including budgeting strategy and goals and the balancing of revenues and expenditures;
- (ii) together with the select board, town manager and department of finance, develop a budget strategy and set financial goals for each fiscal year;
- (iii) present the finance committee's annual budget at the spring town meeting;
- (iv) consult with the select board and the town manager prior to collective bargaining to develop a strategy aligning with the town's long-term budgetary strategy and goals;
- (v) review the preliminary results of collective bargaining to ensure alignment with long-term budgetary strategy and goals; and
- (vi) perform any other duties as may be required by law.

Section 6.3: Annual Review of Financial Policies

Annually, the select board and the finance committee shall review and update the town's overall financial management policy. When reviewing and updating the policy, the select board and the finance committee shall seek input from the town manager, the department of finance and other advisors.

Section 6.4: The Budget

6.4.1 Budget Process - The select board, the town manager, the department of finance and the finance committee shall meet annually not later than ~~October 31~~[November 30](#) to determine the budgetary goals for the subsequent fiscal year. The town manager shall, after that meeting but not later than January 31, submit to the finance committee and the select board a proposed budget for the next fiscal year that shall be accompanied by a budget message, a summary and supporting documents that follow the agreed-upon budget goals. The proposed budget shall be balanced.

6.4.2 Proposed Budget - The proposed budget shall provide a complete financial plan for all town funds and activities for the ensuing fiscal year. Unless otherwise required by the General Laws, the proposed budget shall be in the form that the town manager, the select board and the finance committee shall deem desirable. In the presentation of the proposed budget, the town manager shall furnish information in a complete, clear and concise manner and in accordance with best practices of financial reporting and control. The proposed budget shall

show, in detail, all estimated income from the proposed property tax levy and all other sources and all proposed expenditures, including debt service, for the following year. The proposed budget shall be arranged to show the actual and estimated income and expenditures for the previous, current and ensuing fiscal years and shall indicate in separate sections:

- (i) proposed expenditures for current operations during the ensuing fiscal year, detailed by town agency and position in terms of work programs, and the proposed method for financing each such expenditure; and
- (ii) proposed capital expenditures during the ensuing fiscal year, detailed by town agency, and the proposed method for financing each such capital expenditure.

6.4.3 Budget Summary - The summary of the proposed budget shall identify deviations from the current operating budget and outline the reasons for these changes. The town manager shall cause a summary of the operating budget to be published in a local newspaper and placed on the town's website contemporaneously with the submission to the finance committee. The publication shall indicate the times and places at which copies of the proposed budget with the accompanying documentation shall be available for examination by the public.

6.4.4 Budget Message - The budget message of the town manager shall: (i) explain the budget for all town agencies, both in fiscal terms and in terms of work programs; (ii) outline proposed financial policies of the town for the ensuing fiscal year; (iii) describe important features of the budget; (iv) indicate any major variations from the current year in financial policies, expenditures and revenues, together with the reasons for such changes; (v) summarize the town's debt position; and (vi) include any other material that the town manager deems desirable or that the select board may reasonably require.

Section 6.5: Action on the Budget

6.5.1 The finance committee shall, upon receipt of the proposed budget from the town manager, consider in public meetings detailed expenditures for each town department and agency and may confer with representatives of each town agency in connection with the committee's review and consideration. The finance committee may require the town manager or any town agency to furnish the committee with such additional information as the committee may deem necessary to assist the committee in its review and consideration of the proposed budget.

Not less than 14 days before the opening of the spring town meeting, the finance committee shall file with the town clerk a report containing the committee's proposed budget and comments or recommendations regarding differences between the committee's proposed budget and the proposed budget submitted by the town manager. Not less than 14 days before the opening of the spring town meeting the report shall be made available to voters of the town by publication on the town's website and by leaving copies of the report in not less than 2 public places in the town. Copies of the report shall be made available to voters at the opening of the spring town meeting. The failure to file the report with the town clerk in a timely manner or to publicize the report by posting on the town's website or in 2 public places in the town shall not prohibit the town meeting from voting on the budget and shall not affect the validity of any vote taken on the budget at town meeting.

~~The finance committee shall, upon receipt of the proposed budget from the town manager, consider in public meetings detailed expenditures for each town department and agency and may~~

~~confer with representatives of each town agency in connection with the committee's review and consideration. The finance committee may require the town manager or any town agency to furnish the committee with such additional information as the committee may deem necessary to assist the committee in its review and consideration of the proposed budget.~~

~~Not less than 14 days before the opening of the spring town meeting, the finance committee shall file with the town clerk a report containing the committee's proposed budget and comments or recommendations regarding differences between the committee's proposed budget and the proposed budget submitted by the town manager. Not less than 14 days before the opening of the spring town meeting the report shall be made available to voters of the town by publication on the town's website and by leaving copies of the report in not less than 3 public places in the town. Copies of the report shall be made available to voters at the opening of the spring town meeting. The failure to file the report with the town clerk in a timely manner or to publicize the report by posting on the town's website or in 3 public places in the town shall not prohibit the town meeting from voting on the budget and shall not affect the validity of any vote taken on the budget at town meeting.~~

6.5.2 The finance committee's proposed budget shall be presented to the town meeting by motion made by the committee; provided, however, the committee shall also present its comments and recommendations with respect to the budget. The town manager or the select board, or both, shall present their comments and recommendations with respect to the budget, if any, at the town meeting. The budget shall be voted upon in accordance with the by-laws.

Section 6.6: Capital Improvement Plan

The town manager shall annually submit a capital improvement plan to the select board and the finance committee not later than ~~December 31~~January 31. The plan shall include: (i) a clear, concise and general summary of its contents; (ii) a list of all capital improvements proposed to be undertaken during the ensuing 5 years along with supporting information as to the need for each capital improvement; (iii) cost estimates, methods of financing and recommended time schedules for each improvement; and (iv) the estimated annual cost of operating and maintaining each facility and piece of major equipment involved.

The information in the plan shall be revised annually by the town manager with regard to the capital improvements still pending or in the process of being acquired, improved or constructed.

Section 6.7: Audits

The select board shall provide annually for an independent audit of all financial books and records of the town and whenever it deems an audit of the whole town or of any particular town agency to be necessary. An audit of the town's financial books and records shall be conducted by a certified public accountant or a firm of certified public accountants; provided, however, that the accountant or firm shall not have a direct or indirect interest in the affairs of the town.

Section 6.8: Transparency of Financial Holdings

Not later than 90 days after the end of each fiscal year, the town accountant shall prepare a summary of all town funds in accordance with customary financial reporting. The summary shall include a snapshot balance as of the first day of the fiscal year, a summary of additions and deletions during the preceding 12 months and a final year-end balance. The information in the summary shall be provided to the town manager and the town manager shall disseminate the information to the finance committee and the select board. The information shall be made available to members of the public upon request and on the town's website.

ARTICLE 7: GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 7.1: Charter Changes

This charter may be replaced, revised or amended in accordance with any procedures made available under the constitution and laws of the commonwealth.

Section 7.2: Severability

The provisions of this charter shall be severable. If a provision of this charter is held to be invalid, the other provisions shall remain in full force and effect and shall not be affected by the invalidity. If the application of any provision of this charter to a person or circumstance is held to be invalid, the application of any such provision to any other person or circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

Section 7.3: Specific Provisions to Prevail

To the extent that a specific provision of this charter shall conflict with a provision expressed in general terms, the specific provision shall prevail.

Section 7.4: Number and Gender

Words importing the singular number may extend and be applied to several persons or things. Words importing the plural number may include the singular. Words importing the feminine or masculine gender shall include any gender.

Section 7.5: Rules and Regulations

A copy of all rules and regulations adopted by a town agency shall be filed in the office of the town clerk and the rule or regulation shall become effective on the date of such filing unless otherwise provided for by law or by-law. Copies of all such rules and regulations shall be made available for review by any person upon request pursuant to chapter 66 of the General Laws.

Section 7.6: Periodic Charter Review

Not less than once in every 10-year period after the effective date of this charter, a charter review committee shall, by an affirmative vote of the majority of the full select board, be established to review this charter and report its recommendations to an annual town meeting concerning any proposed amendments that the committee may determine to be necessary or desirable. The charter review committee shall consist of 7 members, 3 of whom shall be appointed by the select board, 2 of whom shall be appointed by the finance committee, 1 of whom shall be appointed by the Groton-Dunstable Regional District school committee and 1 of whom shall be appointed by the town moderator. An appointed person may be a member of the agency from which they are appointed; provided, however, that the charter review committee shall not include more than 1 select board member, more than 1 member of the finance committee or more than 1 member of the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District school committee. The charter review committee shall meet to organize immediately after the full charter review committee has been appointed. The charter review committee shall hold a public hearing not more than 60 days after the date on which it meets to organize and shall hold at least 1 additional public hearing before filing its final report.

Section 7.7: Removals

7.7.1 Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, an appointed official, appointed member of a multiple-member body or employee of the town not covered by the terms of a collective bargaining or other agreement addressing removal and, whether appointed for a fixed or an indefinite term, may be removed from office by the appointing authority.

7.7.2 When removing any such official, appointed member of a multiple-member body or employee of the town, the appointing authority shall act in accordance with the town's personnel by-laws or rules and regulations.

Section 7.8: Loss of Office

A person appointed to serve as a member of a multiple-member body may be removed from office by the appointing authority if the person does not take the person's oath of office at the beginning of the current appointment or if the person exhibits excessive absences from the properly-scheduled meetings of the multiple-member body.

Section 7.9: Notice of Vacancies

If a vacancy occurs in a town office, position or position of employment or, whenever by reason of a pending retirement or expiration of a fixed term, a vacancy can be anticipated, the appointing authority shall cause public notice of the vacancy to be posted on the town bulletin board for not less than 10 days. The notice shall contain a description of the duties of the office, position or position of employment and a listing of the necessary or desirable qualifications to fill the office, position or position of employment. A permanent appointment to fill the office, position or position of employment shall not be effective until 14 days after the date the notice was posted to permit reasonable consideration of all applicants. This section shall not apply to positions governed by a collective bargaining or other agreement.

Section 7.10: Waiver of Administrative Fees

Administrative fees, fines and penalties that may be charged by a town department shall not be waived unless the waiver is authorized by a written policy that is available to the public and adopted by that town department, official or board. A policy may be made on an individual basis or as part of a policy decision of uniform applicability.

ARTICLE 8: TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

Section 8.1: Continuation of Government

All persons appointed or elected to positions at town agencies shall continue to perform their duties until they are reappointed or reelected, successors to their respective positions are duly appointed or elected or their duties have been transferred and assumed by another town agency in accordance with this charter.

Section 8.2: Continuation of Administrative Personnel

A person holding a town office or a position in the administrative service of the town or a person holding full-time employment under the town shall retain that person's office, position or position of employment and shall continue to perform the duties of that person's office, position or position of employment until provision shall have been made for the performance of those duties by another person or agency; provided, however, that a person in the permanent full-time service of the town shall not forfeit their pay grade or time in the service of the town as a result of the adoption of this charter; provided further, that this section shall not provide a person holding an administrative office or position or a person serving in the employment of the town on the effective date of this charter with any greater rights or privileges with regard to that person's continued service or employment with the town than that person had before the effective date of this charter. Nothing in this paragraph shall impair the rights of any person under an individual employment contract or collective bargaining agreement.

Section 8.3: Transfer of Records and Property

All records, property and equipment of an office, department or agency or part thereof, the powers and duties of which are assigned in whole or in part to another office or agency, shall be transferred immediately to the office, department or agency to which the powers and duties are assigned.



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.**

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

**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**

Date: _____

Name _____
First M.I. Last

Mailing Address _____

Circle One GROTON, 01450 WEST GROTON, 01472

Telephone No. (home) _____ (cell) _____

Preferred e-mail Address _____

Occupation _____

Background _____

Specific committees in which you are interested:

Department Name	Vacancies
Agricultural Commission	1
Capital Planning Advisory Committee	1
Commission on Accessibility	1
Design Review Committee	1
Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee	1
Great Pond Advisory Committee	1
Greenway Committee	2
Housing Partnership	3
Invasive Species Committee	1
Local Cultural Council	2
Old Burying Ground Commission	2
Scholarship Committee	3
T.R.E.A.D Committee	2
Town Forest Committee	1
Weed Harvester Committee	2
Williams Barn Committee	2
Zoning Board of Appeals (1 Member, 1 Associate)	2

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

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