

2025 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

The meeting comes to order at 9:00 AM, March 15, 2025

At the Groton Town Hall Community Room

754 North Groton Road, Groton, NH

Moderator: Amy Prive-Hardy

Select Board Members: Ron Madan, John Rescigno, Tony Albert

Supervisors of the Checklist: Pamela Hamel, Virginia Parker, Gina Rescigno

Town Administrator: Sara Smith

Town Clerk/Tax Collector: Ruth Millett

Groton Police Chief: Michael Bagan

Approximately 35 registered voters in attendance.

There were 62 registered voters who voted in the 2025 Groton Town Elections on
March 11, 2025

The Moderator calls the meeting to order and leads with the

Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag.

Moderator goes through the Moderator's Rules of Procedure for the Meeting as listed in the
2024 Town Report, pages 2,3.

Ballot Article 1

To choose all necessary Town Officers for the year ensuing.

The Moderator introduces the new Town Officials who were elected to office on March 11, 2025

Select Board Member for 3 years.....Ronald A Madan

Planning Board Members for 3 years.....David Madden

Jonathan Beliveau

Library Trustee for 3 years.....Hilary Coles

Local Auditor for 1 year..... Ann M Joyce

Thank you to all of these who have chosen to serve our Town.

Moderator reads Warrant Article 2:

Warrant Article 2

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **one million, fifty-two thousand, six hundred fifty-six dollars (\$1,052,656)** which represents the **Operating Budget** for the ensuing year. Said sum does not include special or individual articles addressed.

The Select Board Recommends This Article 3-0

John Rescigno makes a motion to accept the article as written; Tony Albert seconds the motion.

John Rescigno: We've had a hearing on this budget. If anyone has any questions, feel free to ask, otherwise we will vote.

Bill Jolly: What happened with the Fire Department budget. This is a pretty significant increase.

Tony Albert: For Rumney we have a one-time payment and they just bought a new half million-dollar fire truck. We met with the Selectmen down there and they requested we help off-set the cost of the new fire truck between us and Dorchester. We were 50,000 and Dorchester was 40 something, I forget the exact figure. The truck was over \$500,000 dollars. On the Hebron side the increase is due to an increase in the EMT line for per diem work. I've requested this as their Fire Chief, but their Town Meeting isn't until May. The ambulance as it sits right now is unsustainable, we have 4 people doing most all the calls so we are trying to start a per diem program there to hire other EMTs, just temporary, no full-time, to staff the ambulance 24 hours per day. They would be on-call, not a wage.

Bill Jolly: So, you'd have people sitting at home and waiting rather than sit at the fire house.

Tony Albert: I will need to pay them to do that. That's a model that all the towns around are using. My goal is to have two people for 8 hours per day, five days per week and I need 4 people to do that because I can not have anyone over 24 hours per week because of retirement. They cannot be full-time employees. My recommendation is a \$4.00 off-hour to stay within 10 minutes of the station. That's for week end and all off hours. The way it is right now, the four of us that are doing most of the calls and at 62 years old, I'm the baby on the crew. It's unsustainable right now. We're all going to age out eventually.

Bill Jolly: So that's if Hebron approves it. If they don't approve it how will that play out.

Tony Albert: I'm pretty confident they will, but I will go make that pitch to them.

Bill Jolly: My question is, if they don't, how much will we be paying?

Tony Albert: This will go, because that's not the only thing. The ambulance they just purchased was \$360,000 and all future purchases, this will be for the fire and EMS coverage we're paying for and any future purchases. I think this is a fair amount that they are asking for. I know Warren and Wentworth are looking at \$300,000 apiece just for their ambulance this year which is a major increase for them. The cost is going up. There are no more volunteers, we must pay for everything now.

Bill Jolly: So, you're saying the cost of maintaining the ambulance service, not the cost of the ambulance.

Tony Albert: The service, but all things are considered in that.

Bill Jolly: They also charge per call?

Tony Albert: Hebron does not charge per call, Rumney does. We pay the contract with Hebron.

Bill Jolly: I mean the person that is picked up by the ambulance, that's thousands sometimes, so there is revenue from that.

Tony Albert: It's possibly \$50,000 or \$60,000 per year for all the calls we do. We are not paid for non-transport and out of the calls last year, 94 were non transports and 53 were transports. We answer a lot of calls that we don't get paid for. I don't look at the ambulance as a revenue source. It will never cover itself, ever. Everything costs so much, everything we touch is so expensive.

Ann Joyce asks to move the article. Seconded.

Moderator reads Article 2 as written and asks for a vote.

Article 2 passes.

Moderator reads Article 3:

Article 3

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000)** for the purpose of the North Groton Road culvert project with the amount of **four hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$450,000) (90%)** being offset by a Federal Hazard Mitigation Grant the Town applied for and the remaining Town's share of **fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) (10%)** to come from general taxation. (Majority vote required).

The Select Board Recommends This Article 3-0

Ron Madan makes a motion to accept the article as written; Tony Albert seconds the motion.

John Rescigno: This is another grant that Sara found for the Town, saving the Town \$450,000 on a culvert that is in need of replacing. This is the one on North Groton Road down by the Cemetery. It's very rare that you will find a grant with a 90-10 split with the Town only paying 10%, so this is a great value to the Town, she worked hard to find it and process the paperwork. Bubba also puts a lot of effort into these grants. It's a great benefit for the Town.

Pam Hamel: Is this for just one culvert?

John Rescigno: Yes.

Pam Hamel: Is there a problem with the culvert right now?

John Rescigno: It is in an area that does flood and eventually it would be washed out, yes.

Pam Hamel: This is the culvert by the Cemetery?

John Rescigno: Correct.

Pam Hamel: I don't remember that culvert ever being flooded.

John Rescigno: It is somewhat undersized for what's there. That area has flooded and eventually at some point it will not function and it will destroy the road there. The Town only having to pay \$50,000 is good. Otherwise, we could wait 5 years down the road and then pay \$750,000 to replace it.

Pam Hamel: This grant is guaranteed?

John Rescigno: Yes, it is already passed.

Janet Wallace moves the vote on article 3; Bill Jolly seconded.

Moderator reads Article 3 again as written and asks for a vote.

Article 3 passes.

Moderator reads Article 4:

Article 4

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **one hundred thirty-two thousand five hundred dollars (\$132,500)** to be added to the previously established Capital Reserve Funds. (Majority vote required)

Public Works CR Fund (Dec. 31, 2024 balance: \$3.38): \$50,000
Disaster Relief CR Fund (Dec. 31, 2024 balance: \$191,441.90): \$25,000
Truck/Sander CR Fund (Dec. 31, 2024 balance: \$32,751.72): \$20,000
Heavy Equipment CR Fund (Dec. 31, 2024 balance: \$22,079.17): \$10,000
Police Cruiser CR Fund (Dec. 31, 2024 balance: \$37,955.47) \$10,000
Town House CR Fund (Dec. 31, 2024 balance: \$26,715.06) \$10,000.
Assessing Reval CR Fund (Dec. 31, 2024 balance: \$27,032.28) \$7,500

Total Capital Reserve Funds \$132,500

The Select Board Recommends This Article 3-0

Tony Albert makes a motion to accept Article 4 as written; John Rescigno seconds the motion.

Tony Albert: This is just our Capital Reserve Funds that we do every year. We added \$50,000 to the Public Works CR Fund and we're expecting some additional costs. We will need to come up with money to build the salt/sand shed too. We're trying to apply for grants for that to help out.

Pam Hamel moves that vote. Bubba seconds.

Moderator reads Article 4 again as written and asks for a vote.

Article 4 passes.

Moderator reads Article 5.

Article 5

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **one hundred thirty-nine thousand dollars (\$139,000)** for chip sealing. (submitted by the Highway Department).

The Select Board Recommends this Article 3-0

Ron Madan makes a motion to accept Article 5 as written; Tony Albert seconds the motion.

Robert (Bubba) Ellis: This is to chip seal the rest of the road from the MIT parking lot down to the Town line to hopefully preserve the asphalt a little bit longer.

David Leone: We spent money last year to chip seal one section of the road and the roads all cracking and falling apart. The chip sealing hasn't appeared to make any difference whatsoever. I don't think chip sealing is a good thing to do on our roads in the Town of Groton and I won't vote for this.

Pam Hamel moves the article. Ann seconds.

Moderator read the Article again as written and asks for a vote.

Article passes.

Moderator reads Article 6

Article 6

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **five hundred twenty-nine dollars (\$529)** for deposit in the Conservation Fund, with said amount to come from the unassigned fund balance. This sum represents 3% of the Timber Tax revenue received in 2024. (submitted by the Conservation Commission) (Majority vote required)

The Select Board Recommends This Article 3-0

Tony Albert makes a motion to accept Article 6 as written; Ron Maden seconds the motion.

John Rescigno: This is money gleaned from logging taxation which we give to the Conservation Commission over the years.

Janet Wallace moves the article. And is seconded.

Moderator reads the Article again as written and asks for a vote.

Article 6 passes.

Moderator reads Article 7

Article 7

To see if the Town will vote to allow the Selectmen to transact any other business that may legally come before the Town.

John Rescigno makes a motion to accept the Article as written; Tony Albert seconds the motion.

Janet Wallace moves the Article. Ann seconds.

Moderator reads the Article again as written and asks for a vote.

Article 7 passes.

Town Meeting is concluded after 26 minutes at 9:30 AM may be the shortest Town Meeting in the history of Groton.

Respectfully Submitted,



Ruth Millett, Town Clerk