

**Report of the Interim Administrative Officer
March 2008**

As a reminder, Annual Town Meeting will start on Monday, April 28th at 7:00p.m. There are twenty-five (25) articles in the Warrant, and there will be a Special Town Meeting held within the Annual starting at 8:00p.m. The Selectmen and Finance Committee have worked extremely well together to develop the Fiscal Year 2009 spending plan. Both Boards are in general agreement and are committed to presenting to the taxpayers of Groton one budget which is balanced; but also reflects a reduction in Town services currently being provided to the public.

Consistent with the Town's due diligence efforts to save money, several interviews were conducted during the month of March with three (3) different law firms. The Town has the option of hiring a new law firm or negotiating a more beneficial financial agreement with the Town's current law firm. Also during the month of March, we have met on several occasions with the Town's insurance carrier. Again, this is designed to make sure the Town is properly insured and in the strongest position possible to negotiate a strong premium that is most cost effective to the Town.

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation will be releasing to the Town \$125,000 for repairs to the Squannacook Dam in West Groton. The Groton Highway Department will start work in the Spring and it should be completed by the end of Summer.

The Board held a Public Hearing on Monday, March 31st to consider increasing fees currently being charged by the Building Department, Police Department, and Town Clerk. This internal review and adjustment to the standard fees for various permits and citations had not been undertaken in several years. Ultimately, the fee increases will help to off set existing overhead expenses for processing the permits and licenses.

The Selectmen are making steady progress in working toward a paperless Town Hall. The Board's correspondence and weekly Agenda materials are now being scanned electronically and sent to each member. As a result of these efforts, that Town is making measurable progress toward protecting the environment, saving money on the cost of paper and staff time, along with increasing the Board's effectiveness and efficiency. This approach is consistent with the Board's commitment toward being a "Sustainable Community," and the Town's participation in the EPA's "Community Energy Challenge," a program designed to reduce energy consumption.

The Annual Town Election will be held on Tuesday, May 20th please make every effort to vote. There are several very important ballot questions to consider. The Town Meeting Warrant will be posted to the Town's web page around April 7th and the Annual Town election ballot will be posted around the second week in May.

Respectfully,
J. Jeffrey Ritter
Interim Administrative Officer

