BUDGET PROCESS

This year's budget process followed a similar path as in prior years.

In late September, the Town's FY27 – FY31 Financial Forecast was developed and reviewed by the Select and Advisory Boards.

Once again, this year, the Town started its budget process early in FY26, to align Dunstable's process with the Groton Dunstable Regional School District and Town of Groton. By doing so, the Town ensured an open line of communication and that important financial decisions were being made at a time where all parties – Dunstable, Groton, and schools – were considered.

Strong collaboration between the Towns of Dunstable and Groton, and the Groton Dunstable Regional School District was once again a hallmark of the FY27 budget process. Similar to last year, regular budget meetings and check-ins with all stakeholders took place to help inform and finalize the FY27 budget.

During this process, the Town Administrator worked with the Select Board and Advisory Board to provide an updated financial forecast and worked with the Capital Planning Committee to finalize the FY26-FY31 Capital Improvement Plan. The Town Administrator worked closely with individual municipal departments to finalize departmental budgets. Through the budget process, numerous meetings of the Select Board, Advisory Board, and Groton Dunstable Regional School Committee have taken place.

At the beginning of the fiscal year, the Town Administrator created a budget calendar for the Town to follow as an estimated framework for the budget process. That framework is below:

BUDGET CALENDAR OUTLINE

- Early Fall – Town Administrator/Town Manager Tri-Comm meetings begin between the Towns of Dunstable and Groton, and Groton Dunstable Regional School District.
- Early Fall – Select Board, Town Administrator, and Departments establish goals and priorities.
- Early Fall – Advisory Board, Select Board, and Town Administrator develop and review Financial Forecast.
- Late Fall – Town Administrator distributes budget message and departmental budget worksheets.
- Late Fall – Town Administrator distributes capital improvement request sheets to departments.
- Early Winter - Staff develop budget requests and submit capital requests.

- Early Winter – Dunstable and Groton Select Boards, Dunstable Advisory Board, Groton Finance Committee, and Groton Dunstable Regional School Committee hold joint budget forum to review financial condition of the Towns and School District.
- Mid Winter - Departments budgets are submitted to Advisory Board and Select Board and are reviewed.
- Mid/Late Winter – Draft, proposed Capital Improvement Plan is submitted to the Capital Improvement Committee and is reviewed.
- Late Winter/Early Spring – Following a series of meetings and discussions, FY27 Budget and Capital Plan is finalized and approved by Advisory Board and Select Board.
- Early / Mid Spring – Before Annual Town Meeting, Town officials will host a briefing to review Town Meeting articles, including a review of the FY27 Operating Budget.
- Early / Mid Spring – Information and materials on each Town Meeting warrant article will be available and distributed, including materials and information on the FY27 budget.
- Spring - Annual Town Meeting takes place the second Monday of each May.

The chart below outlines the FY27 budget process:

FY27 BUDGET MEETINGS

Jul 1, 2025	Beginning of the new Fiscal Year 2026
Jul 31, 2025	Initial Budget Meeting with Groton Dunstable Regional School District, Town of Groton, and Town of Dunstable
Sep 22, 2025	Finalizes FY27-FY31 Financial Forecast
Sep 22, 2025	Budget Meeting with Groton Dunstable Regional School District, Town of Groton, and Town of Dunstable
Sep 30, 2025	Joint Meeting of Select Board, Advisory Board, and Groton Dunstable Regional School Committee on Operational Audit
Oct 10, 2025	Capital Improvement Projects Requests Sent to Departments

Oct 30, 2025	Capital Project Request Submissions Due
Nov 6, 2025	Budget Meeting with Groton Dunstable Regional School District, Town of Groton, and Town of Dunstable
Nov 7, 2025	Budget Message and Department Budget Requests Sent
Nov 20, 2025	Education and Chapter 70 Funding Forum
Nov 21, 2025	Department Budget Submissions Due
Nov 24, 2025	Budget and Capital Project Submissions Review Meetings with Senior Services, Planning, and Building
Nov 25, 2025	Budget and Capital Project Submissions Review Meetings with Police and Roads/Highway
Nov 26, 2025	Budget and Capital Project Submissions Review Meetings with Assessors, Cemetery, and Parks
Dec 1, 2025	Budget and Capital Project Submissions Review Meetings with Board of Health
Dec 8, 2025	Budget and Capital Project Submissions Review Meetings with Town Clerk
Dec 15, 2025	Budget Meeting with Groton Dunstable Regional School District, Town of Groton, and Town of Dunstable
Dec 16, 2026	Email sent to all departments requesting 15% budget reductions
Dec 22, 2025	Budget and Capital Project Submissions Review Meetings with Fire and Library
Dec 22, 2026	Final Draft of FY26-FY31 Capital Improvement Plan sent to all stakeholders for review
Jan 2, 2026	15% budget reduction submittal due

Jan 6, 2026	Budget Meeting with Groton Dunstable Regional School District, Town of Groton, and Town of Dunstable
Jan 7, 2026	Joint Meeting with the Select Board, Advisory Board and Groton Dunstable Regional School Committee to discuss the FY27 Budget
Feb 2, 2026	Follow-up Budget Meetings with Highway, Library, and Water
Feb 3, 2026	Follow-up Budget Meetings with Health, Police, and Fire
Feb 11, 2026	Advisory Board Meeting on FY27 Budget
Feb 25, 2026	Groton Dunstable Regional School Committee FY27 Budget Hearing
Mar 4, 2026	Capital Planning Committee Meeting and Approval of FY26-FY31 Capital Improvement Plan
Mar 11, 2026	Groton Dunstable Regional School Committee Initial FY27 Budget Certification
Mar 25, 2026	Advisory Board Meeting on FY27 Budget
Apr 8, 2026	Groton Dunstable Regional School Committee Updated and Final FY27 Budget Certification
Apr 15, 2026	Advisory Board Meeting on FY27 Budget
Apr 30, 2026	Advisory Board Annual Town Meeting Warrant Hearing
May 11, 2026	Annual Town Meeting
May 19, 2026	Annual Town Election
Jun 30, 2026	End of Fiscal Year 2026
Jul 1, 2026	Beginning of the new Fiscal Year 2027

STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

The development of this budget was a collaborative effort and would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the Dunstable Select Board, Advisory Board, Dunstable Department Heads and Boards/Committees, Groton Dunstable Regional School Committee and District officials, and officials of the Town of Groton. The Town is grateful for their thoughtful input, partnership, and shared commitment to serving our community. Their engagement and collaboration are responsible in shaping a balanced and responsible FY27 budget.

Select Board
Leah Basbanes, Chair
Kieran Meehan, Vice Chair
Ron Mikol

Advisory Board
Jacob Lewon, Chair
Harold K. Simmons, Vice Chair
Tim Stewart
Matthew Naughton
Clinton Keeney

Dunstable Town Staff
Jodee Coke, Animal Control
Vicki Tidman, Assessing
William Farrell, Fire
Joan Ferrari, Health
Dave Tully, Highway
Dana Barnes, Inspections
Maureen Strauss, Library
Carol Rock, Planning and Conservation
Erik Hoar, Police
Chuck Raffoni, Senior Services
Susan Bresnick, Accounting and Water
Jason Silva, Town Administrator
Brynn Durno, Town Clerk
Theresa O'Leary, Treasurer/Collector
Joe Dean, Veterans

Town Volunteers, Board and Committees
Board of Assessors
Board of Health
Capital Planning Committee
Cemetery Commission

Town Volunteers, Board and Committees (continued)
Community Preservation Committee
Library Trustees
Parks Commission
Planning Board
Recreation Commission
Roads Commission
Tree Warden, Mike Martin
Water Commission

Groton Dunstable Regional School Committee
Lacey McCabe, Chair
Catherine Awa, Vice Chair
Christine Andriole, Secretary
Rohit Bhasin
Rosanna Casavecchia
An Hee Foley
Fay Raynor

Groton Dunstable Regional School District
Geoff Bruno, Superintendent
Sherry Kersey, Finance and Administration

Town of Groton
Mark Haddad, Town Manager
Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant
Patricia Dufresne, Town Accountant
Groton Select Board
Groton Finance Committee