

City of Groton Council Public Safety/Public Works Committee Special Meeting  
Wednesday February 18, 2026 5:30PM Room C-10

I. Call to Order @ 5:32

In attendance:

Chair Ambrose

Councilor Norris

Mayor Rusk

Chief Tompkins

Kevin Price

Jeremiah Gilmour

Matt Parizo

Members of the Public

Brian Nieman

Quorum Declared

Arrived after meeting called to order: Councilor Piazza

II. Approval of Minutes

Approved by consensus as presented

III. Referred Items

A. Fire Department Staffing

IV. Old Business

A. West Pleasant Valley Fire Inspection Fees

Discussion continued on considering instituting fire marshal inspections in WPV. The signed document from 1962 was confirmed by Chief Tompkins. The only adjustment since was the amendment to include EMS coverage by the City of Groton Fire Department. No language in the document related to fire marshal fees.

Motion made by Councilor Norris

2nd by Councilor Ambrose

Recommendation to City Council to create an ordinance to institute fire marshal inspection fees in the West Pleasant Valley fire protection area.

Discussion on this motion was to generate revenue for fire marshal inspection fees to offset costs of increasing fire department staffing in the City of Groton in future years. This

ordinance would be similar to the previous committee recommendation to create ordinance in the City of Groton.

Motion Passes 2-0-0

B. Staffing Recommendation to Council

Discussion reiterated the need for increasing fire department staffing. The upcoming budget will include funding but the council will need to decide how many staff members will be budgeted. City of Groton FF Union representatives provided a document including several proposed staffing options. The Mayor has committed to have the expense of increasing the staff three FF in the upcoming budget with the assumption of applying for and being approved for the SAFER grant. Due to the current Fed Government shutdown, all is on hold and will be delayed indefinitely. Committee members agreed they would like to discuss this topic as a full city council group in an upcoming COW meeting including implementation of a plan to increase FF staffing over time and how many FFs council would like to include in this upcoming budget.

C. Five person minimum staffing discussion

The committee discussed this agenda item based on previous meetings the cost of overtime would exceed the fiscal year's budget by an estimated \$200,000 which would exceed the total municipal budget expenditures for the fiscal year ending June 2026. A freemans meeting would need to be called by Charter to approve any expenses greater than the total municipal budget expenditures at the previous freemen's meeting.

Committee members would like to discuss this topic at a future COW for more inclusive discussion and public input.

V. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Piazza  
2nd by Councilor Noris

Passes 3-0-0

Meeting Adjourned 6:47 PM



# Groton Firefighters Union Local 1964

140 BROAD STREET, GROTON, CT 06340

Phone (860)445-2456 – Fax (860)446-4176

## Principal Officers

Kevin Price, President

Jeremiah Gilmour, Vice President

Matthew Parizo, Secretary/Treasurer

February 18, 2026

To the City of Groton public safety committee,

This letter serves as a formal request for immediate action regarding minimum staffing levels within the City of Groton Fire Department.

The Union is seeking to implement a minimum five-person shift 24 hours per day, 7 days per week effective immediately, with the ultimate goal of achieving a seven-person shift 24/7 to ensure operational safety, adequate response capability, and protection of the public.

At present, the department operates three shifts of five personnel, with a four-firefighter minimum, for a total of 15 personnel. While we can temporarily accomplish the five-firefighter minimum using overtime with current staffing levels, this approach is not sustainable long-term.

To permanently achieve the seven fire fighters per shift without excessive overtime, the City of Groton fire department must add six new positions (two per shift).

Currently, the federal grant system through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is not operational due to the government shutdown, and there is no known timeline for when the SAFER grant program will open. Because of this uncertainty, we formally request that the City take immediate action by hiring three (3) firefighters effective July 1, 2026, while maintaining flexibility to add the remaining three positions through one of the structured options outlined below.

## Proposed Staffing Options:

### Option 1

- Hire three (3) firefighters July 1, 2026 – \$420,000
- Hire three (3) firefighters July 1, 2027 (SAFER) – \$105,000 (25% of \$420,000)

### Option 2

- Hire two (2) firefighters July 1, 2026 – \$280,000
- Apply for SAFER for four (4) firefighters in 2027 – \$140,000 (25% of \$560,000)

Option 3

- Hire two (2) firefighters July 1, 2026 – \$280,000
- Hire two (2) firefighters July 1, 2027 (SAFER) – \$70,000 (25% of \$280,000)
- Hire two (2) firefighters July 1, 2028 – \$280,000

Option 4

- Hire one (1) firefighter July 1, 2026 – \$140,000
- Apply for SAFER for four (4) firefighters in 2027 – \$140,000 (25% of \$560,000)
- Hire one (1) firefighter in 2028 – \$140,000

The costs associated with hiring the additional fire fighters will be partially covered by the proposed fees for Fire Marshal services meaning a low impact on taxes.

Maintaining appropriate staffing levels is critical to firefighter safety, response effectiveness, liability reduction, and the overall protection of the community. Continued delay increases operational risk and financial inefficiency through sustained overtime expenditures.

We respectfully request that the city formally commit to a hiring plan beginning July 1, 2026, and provide written confirmation of its intended course of action within a reasonable timeframe.

We remain available to meet and discuss implementation details immediately.

Sincerely,

Groton Fire Fighters Local 1964