

Groton Water Commission

Regular Meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners

Tuesday, August 04, 2015

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Lunch Room – Town Hall

**Minutes**

Present are BOWC Vice Chair James Gmeiner, member John McCaffrey, Water Superintendent Thomas Orcutt and Business Manager April Iannacone. Chairman David Crocker was not in attendance.

Mr. Gmeiner called the regular BOWC meeting to order at 7:33 pm.

**Water Main Extension/License – Boathouse Rd**

Mr. Orcutt informed the Board that Mr. Brian Barbieri, the Highway mechanic that lives on Longley Rd. and owns the cottage at 49 Boathouse Rd., is looking to extend town water to his property on Boathouse Rd. The extension would be approximately 200 feet of 6" pipe which would go from the end of the line at Mr. Pickol's property at 37 Boathouse, and go past 1 property to his property. Mr. Orcutt stated that Mr. Barbieri had all permits with all necessary Town departments and that he was ready to go forward with the extension, but that a license agreement has been drafted for 2 years with a price of \$3,750 to recoup some cost from that 1 property that the line will go by. Mr. Gmeiner asked if it was typical to set the license term for 2 years. Mr. Orcutt replied that the departments regulations allow a year automatically, but they have done up to 5 years depending on the situation. Mr. Orcutt then asked the Commissioners if they should change this agreement to a 3 year term. Mr. Gmeiner replied that he believed it would be probably be better to change it to 3 years. Mr. McCaffrey asked if the home owner was paying for the extension in full. Mr. Orcutt replied that the homeowner would be paying for everything himself. The total cost the homeowner would pay would include the \$3,750 plus materials to the water department, in addition to the approximately \$15,000 for the construction and main line. Mr. Orcutt stated that he would need a motion to allow the extension and grant the 3 year warranty license for Mr. Barbieri. He anticipated that the work would begin by the end of August.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to allow the extension of the water main line 200 feet down Boathouse Rd and grant a 3 year warranty license to Mr. Brian Barbieri of 49 Boathouse Rd. Mr. McCaffrey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**Town Meeting Articles – Whitney Pond Pump & Electrical Upgrade**

Mr. Orcutt informed the Commissioners that there was no information in their packet to review at this time and he would just like to begin a brief discussion on the topic. Mr. Orcutt stated that Whitney Well #1 went online in 1989 and Whitney Well #2 went online about 15 years later. All of the electrical components are original to the first installation. Mr. Orcutt stated that at this time he would like to upgrade the electrical and change the pump over to a VFD. Wright Pierce was working on a proposal that the department would have soon to review costs. However at this time he was looking to put an article on the fall town meeting warrant for a transfer of \$100,000 from the Enterprise fund. He would like to have everything in place to try to go to bid in the fall after the transfer takes place in order to do the work in the winter. Mr. McCaffrey asked if Mr. Orcutt knew what the estimated savings or return on investment were for this change. Mr. Orcutt replied that he will look back into the files for the energy audit that took place a few years ago. He believed he remembered an approximate 10 year or slightly less payback from savings. Mr. Orcutt also stated that he would like to see if there were any grant possibilities for some of the funding. Mr. Gmeiner asked Mr. Orcutt if he could have Wright Pierce look in to grant options and the ROI. Mr. Orcutt replied that he would like to get the cost estimate first as soon as possible for the purpose of the

town meeting article to transfer the funds, but then would have them look into these other items to have before the town meeting for discussion then. Mr. Gmeiner asked if there was a need for a new pump for the well or if it was just the motor being replaced. Mr. Orcutt replied that it would just be the motor and the electrical panel. Mr. Orcutt stated that he was intending to have the numbers for the Commissioners at their next meeting, but requested that the next meeting be held on Thursday the 20<sup>th</sup> instead of Tuesday the 18<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Gmeiner and Mr. McCaffrey were both ok with the change to the meeting date.

### **Town Charter Review**

Mr. Orcutt stated that the Charter Review Committee was looking at the reporting structure for the Water Superintendent. He would like the Commissioners to take a position on their preference for the reporting structure. Mr. Orcutt stated that he has no issues with the reporting structure as it is now, where the Superintendent reports to the Town Manager for day to day activities. He has been hearing that some of the Charter Review Committee members believe that the Superintendent and the water department should be operating completely separate without reporting vacations or daily activity to the Town Manager. Mr. McCaffrey asked if there were any advantages that might be gained if the department were to be autonomous, or if Mr. Orcutt was seeing any disadvantages to answering to the Town Manager. Mr. Orcutt replied that he could not think of any reason why the current reporting structure was a disadvantage to the department operations, and he believed that there were actually some advantages to the open line of communication with the Town Manager. Mr. Orcutt requested that the Commissioners support that the reporting structure remains as is when asked or meeting with the Charter Review Committee. Mr. Orcutt then stated that the other issue that would be coming up with the Charter review would be the combining of the Water and Sewer Commissions to 1 Board. Mr. McCaffrey asked if the Boards were combined would there be 3 commissioners overseeing both Enterprises. Mr. Gmeiner replied that the initial discussions were that if the boards were to combine, 5 members would likely be too many and that it would be better to remain as a 3 member board. Mr. Gmeiner also stated that at this time he did not believe there was any economic benefit to combining the commissions. Mr. McCaffrey stated that if things were running smoothly as is, and there were really no known benefits to combining, he would prefer to leave the commissions separate. Mr. Orcutt stated that with the possibility of the 4 corners sewer district still unknown, and the likeliness that there would be a 3<sup>rd</sup> enterprise, it would probably be best to have 2 commissions for oversight as there would be 2 sewer enterprises to manage if that took place. The Commissioners consented to support remaining separate water and sewer commissions.

### **Other Business**

#### **Baddacook Pond Boat Ride**

Mr. Orcutt stated that Mr. Strickland was ok with working with the Commissioners for a boat ride and assessment of the pond. At this point Mr. Strickland was looking for specific dates/times that the Commissioners would be available in order to plan it. The Commissioners gave Mr. Orcutt a few days that would work for him to continue to discuss and plan with Mr. Strickland.

### **Minutes:**

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the minutes of June 30, 2015 as written. Mr. McCaffrey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

### **Bills:**

The bills presented to the Board were all signed and submitted for payment.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. Mr. McCaffrey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

April Iannacone  
Business Manager  
Water and Sewer Departments

James Gmeiner \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

David Crocker \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

John McCaffrey \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_