

Groton Water Commission

Regular Meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners

Tuesday, September 08, 2015

2nd Floor Lunch Room – Town Hall

Minutes

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

Mr. Gmeiner called the regular BOWC meeting to order at 7:37 pm.

25 A Blacksmith Row Billing Concern

Ms. Iannacone gave the Commissioners the background information with regard to the property and the homeowners concern. Ms. Iannacone explained that Mrs. Brogan had been in touch after receiving what she believed to be an extremely high bill for the 2 people living in the unit. Ms. Iannacone explained that she along with George and Steve had been working with Ms. Brogan to determine leaks or anything else that might be causing an unexpected issue. Steve Knox had been to the unit 2 weeks after the billing quarter had been read and determined that the 6.5 units used in 2 weeks did seem slightly high for 2 people, however there were no leaks detected at the time. The following week, George Brackett visited the location to change the meter to be tested and noticed that only 1 unit had been used in that week. The meter was tested by Littleton and was determined to be functioning at the proper rate.

Mrs. Brogan explained that at their old property in New York, they had one meter for inside and outside water use, and that her water bill had always been between \$78 and \$109 per quarter with outdoor watering. She explained that she was extremely surprised by a water bill of \$140 and then sewer on top of that. Mr. Orcutt explained that in order to do any kind of comparison to where they were in New York, the department would need to know the average units/gallons of water used in a quarter. He explained that the rates where they were looked like they were almost half of what Groton charged per unit so it was difficult to compare based on billing cost. Mr. Crocker also noticed that the structure for the water charges in New York went down the more units were used, where the rate structure in Groton was more about conservation and increased the more units were used.

Mrs. Brogan stated that she had checked the master bedroom toilet with the leak detector tablets given to her in the office, because there had been a problem with that toilet when they moved in. Mrs. Brogan stated that the builder's plumber would be going to the unit to do some more checking into any other issues and would like more of the tablets to look at the other toilets. Mr. Brogan stated that he is always traveling for work and that the 2 of them appeared to be using more than most of the units in the complex that had more people living in them.

The Water Commissioners requested that Ms. Iannacone gather a comparison chart of whatever could be pulled for usage history for the other units in the complex. They then informed Mr. & Mrs. Brogan that when the plumber came to check everything in the house, they have him check the washer and dishwasher run times as well as all of the toilets to be sure something small and intermittent isn't going on. The Commissioners agreed to revisit

the discussion at the next meeting once informed of the plumber's findings and the usage comparison was completed.

Water Use Restriction - Irrigation

Mr. Orcutt informed the Commissioners that he had put an outdoor watering restriction in place the previous week. The high summer usage along with the extremely low precipitation this year had caused the Whitney Well to shut down twice due to low water levels. Mr. Orcutt stated that Maher Services was currently pumping and surging the aquifer to break things up and hopefully help the water levels to recuperate. Mr. Orcutt was hoping to have the well back up before the weekend, but would keep the Commissioners informed of the progress. He also stated that once Whitney was back online he would then look to remove the watering ban and go back to the odd/even usage restrictions.

Whitney Well Electrical Improvements

Mr. Orcutt informed the Commissioners that Mr. Rick Davee of Wright Pierce was looking into the possibility of grants, but that the options were not looking good. He believed that there would be a more definite idea of what was available by late September or early October in order to determine if the Commissioners would like to move forward with the Town Meeting Article to transfer money for the project. Mr. Orcutt stated that if there was no grant money available, then there was definitely no way the department could make things work and pay for the whole job at this time. He did state that there was a good possibility that the department would get a grant for half of the money needed for the emergency generator connection which would help things down there a little if that was done.

Other Business

Baddacook Lagoon Update

Mr. Orcutt stated that the trees had been cut down and that the stumps were set to be removed within the next week or two. Once the stumps were removed and the land was clear, Mr. Orcutt would work to put the project out to bid for construction as they would be able to quote based on the completely cleared land and less work.

Town Charter

Mr. Orcutt stated that with the Town Charter Review Committee looking into the reporting structure of the Water Superintendent, there was question as to who would officially hire/appoint a new Superintendent down the road if he were to leave. When Mr. Orcutt was hired it was before the Town Manager structure of government and the Water Commissioners completed the process from start to finish. The Commissioners were in agreement that they were ok with the Town Manager doing the official hiring and firing of the Water Superintendent, however they would like to make sure that the Commission was involved in both processes and decisions. Mr. Orcutt stated that he would draft something with wording to bring to the Charter Review Committee.

Minutes:

There were no minutes approved at this meeting.

Bills:

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

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. Mr. Crocker 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 _____