

Groton Water Commission

Regular Meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners

Tuesday, June 10, 2014

2nd Floor Lunch Room – Town Hall

Minutes

Present are BOWC Chairman James Gmeiner, Vice Chairman Hogleund, Member David Crocker, Water Superintendent Thomas Orcutt and Business Manager April Iannacone.

Mr. Gmeiner called the regular BOWC meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Re-organization of the Board of Water Commissioners

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to nominate Gary Hogleund as Chair of the Commission. Mr. Crocker seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hogleund made a motion to nominate David Crocker as Vice Chair of the Commission. Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hogleund made a motion for James Gmeiner to continue to be the payroll signatory and David Crocker to be the secondary payroll signatory. Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Open Meeting Laws Discussion

Mr. Gmeiner informed the Commissioners that he had been looking into the Open Meeting Laws and has some concern over the Talk About Groton and Groton Line chat groups. According to the Open Meeting Law, any topic that is currently under discussion/consideration/action by any Board/Committee/Commission, or expected to come before that Board/Committee/Commission for discussion/consideration/action, should not be discussed in any public forum, including the chat group. Any 1 Commissioner or Board member of any Town Committee or Commission even voicing their opinion or discussing a matter once is in violation of the Open Meeting Law. At this time in order to protect the Board of Water Commissioners from any action that may result in violation of the law, Mr. Gmeiner would like to request that the Commissioners use caution when participating in the group chats going forward.

Baddacook Treatment Facility Update

Mr. Orcutt informed the Commissioners that the Green Sand Filter Media replacement in both Baddacook filters had been completed. Some minor repairs had been made on some air nozzles and some screens that were clogged on the air relief valves. The filters are both back up and running and water testing is being done in order to ensure that all is functioning well before putting them completely back in full service. Mr. Orcutt stated that he and the Technicians are working to determine what might have been the cause for the filter media clogging the air nozzles in order to try to avoid the problem in the future. They believe that it was improper installation and over filling from the start of their use. Some valuable information has been learned and in the next few weeks the Technicians will be working with our vendor on some SCADA changes in how the permanganate is distributed into the system. There may be some minor cost involved, but Mr. Orcutt believes that it may create more efficiency within the system going forward.

Mr. Gmeiner asked how long the Baddacook Well was off line and running on just Whitney Wells. Mr. Orcutt replied that the whole process was almost 3 weeks. The department ran Whitney 2 mainly for 2 weeks and then Whitney 1 was run as lead for almost a week. Mr. Orcutt stated that the machine that was rented for \$2,500 that loaded the media into the filters was worthwhile and had saved at least 1 week of extra time off line, and labor cost from technicians being tied up longer.

Mr. Hoglund asked what the total cost of the project had been. Mr. Orcutt replied that the filter media/green sand itself had been \$20,000, and then labor and the repair change order were approximately \$10,000, so the total project was about \$30,000. Mr. Hoglund asked if Mr. Orcutt believed that the department would expect another 10 years out of this replacement. Mr. Orcutt stated that he believed it would have at least 10 years if not more of useful life because a better grade of media was used, and the technicians have more working knowledge of the system in order to determine problems with functioning and repairs sooner.

Baddacook Pond – Discussion on moving forward

Mr. Gmeiner informed the Commissioners that the CPC application for the fields had been withdrawn from this application cycle which means with money freed up from the CPC. There was a chance the Great Ponds Advisory Committee may look to apply for an off cycle grant to try to continue moving forward on the treatment study funds. At this time Mr. Gmeiner wanted to suggest the Commission have an open working session to discuss a plan for moving forward with the Baddacook Pond Sonar treatment studies. Mr. Gmeiner believed it would be best if the Commissioners had an open, posted public working session without public comment, input, or discussion to determine exactly what the Commission wanted to see take place and how involved/what involvement they wanted to maintain in the process.

Mr. Hoglund stated that he was concerned about the Commissioners or the department staff taking too much time to drive the process when he still believes there is no benefit to the Water rate payers. Mr. Gmeiner replied that this would all be part of the working session meeting discussion to determine what involvement the department would have.

Superintendent Report

Mr. Orcutt informed the Commissioners that the summer help would begin working on June 23rd. The Department has re-hired Dana Shea that had worked last summer. Mr. Orcutt planned to have Mr. Shea continue to clean/paint hydrants and mow lawns, but that the Technicians also had a few maintenance projects around Baddacook that they would like him to help with as well.

Mr. Orcutt informed the Commissioners that Town Meeting had approved the transfer of \$100,000 from the Departments E&D. The transfer had taken place and was placed into the expense line item of the budget. The Commissioners needed to vote the transfer from the expense line item to the wage line to cover the shortfall of wages and overtime due to staffing changes.

Mr. Gmeiner moved to transfer \$13,000 out of general expenses with \$10,000 going into the wage line and \$3,000 going into the overtime line for the Fiscal Year 2014 Operating Budget. Mr. Crocker seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Orcutt informed the Commissioners that a request had been made by the homeowner at 9, 11, 15, & 23 Whitewood Rd. to work out a payment plan for the \$3,750 system development charge in order to connect house #15 Whitewood Rd. to the system. The homeowner, Mr. John Scira currently has service connections at house #9 and house #23, with water from the connection at house #9 servicing the property at house #11. Mr. Orcutt has mandated that if Mr. Scira is going to incur construction charges to connect house #15 to the system, he is to separate the connection from #9 and #11 and create a separate service line for #11 with its own meter and billing.

Mr. Hoglund stated that he had a concern over allowing a payment plan and the precedence that it may set. He asked Mr. Orcutt if there were some kind of criteria that he is using to recommend this payment plan be approved. Mr. Orcutt replied that Mr. Scira was under order from the Board of Health for a failing system, so in order to facilitate a quick connection to remain in compliance he

would consider allowing the option of a payment plan. Mr. Orcutt also stated that it will be specifically included in a letter to Mr. Scira that will be signed, that at any point should the monthly payment not be made, the entire balance remaining of the \$3,750 would be due and the water could be shut off for non-payment. Ms. Iannacone gave the Commissioners a draft copy of the letter to Mr. Scira for their consideration and to vote on.

Mr. Crocker made a motion to approve the payment plan on the system development charge of \$3,750 for Mr. John Scira at 15 Whitewood Rd. under the conditions listed in the enclosed letter, with the condition added that the approval was only due to the public health and safety concern via the Board of Health enforcement to connect. Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Minutes:

There were no minutes submitted for approval at this meeting.

Bills:

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

Mr. Hogle made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 p.m. Mr. Crocker seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

April Iannacone
Business Manager
Water and Sewer Departments

James Gmeiner _____ Date _____

Gary Hogle _____ Date _____

David Crocker _____ Date _____