

Groton Water Commission

Regular Meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners

Wednesday, September 26, 2012

2nd Floor Lunch Room – Town Hall

DRAFT Minutes

Present are BOWC Chair James Gmeiner, Vice-Chair Jessica Cajigas, Member Gary Hoglund, Water Superintendent, Tom Orcutt and Business Manager, April Iannacone.

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

Town Meeting Article - Lost Lake Sewer Project

Mr. Orcutt updated the Board on the Town Meeting Article for the Lost Lake Sewer project and informed them that the Board of Selectmen (BOS) had voted to contribute 25% of the project cost through tax dollars. Mr. Hoglund stated that the biggest question that he had with regards to the project and Water Department support was the statement about the septic systems polluting the public water supply and how they were making this determination. He stated that there was no data pulled to prove that the public water supply was in any danger or had changed any in the years the homes had already been at the lake. Mr. Orcutt replied that he had done some preliminary research himself going back through 10-11 years of Nitrate level testing at the Whitney Pond Well. Through his research he has not come up with any consistent pattern of change or uptrend, and the highest level the well has ever tested at was 1 ppm. The level of Nitrate concentration needs to be at a level of 5 ppm in order to be of concern and reportable to the state. Mr. Orcutt stated that if he were to be asked to make a statement on the Nitrate threat he would state that there was no significant Nitrate loading detected at the well and at this time the Water Commissioners could not quantify or qualify the level of threat at this time.

Ms. Carol Quinn from the Lost Lake Sewer Advisory Committee joined the Commission at this time. Ms. Quinn gave the board a 1 page summary of the presentation they have been using for information. She stated that the article on the Town Meeting warrant would require a 2/3 vote for approval. Ms. Quinn then stated that with the BOS vote of a 25% town contribution and the Four Corners area development being added, the cost to the individual homeowners had gone down to about 50% of their original estimates. Mr. Hoglund asked who would pay the portion of the cost for the Four Corners area if development did not take place. Mr. Gmeiner stated that because the project was being done on a betterment system, the current landowners of the properties would pay the betterment charges until they sell the property regardless of development.

Mr. Hoglund stated that though there was some common sense and logic to the possible threat to the well and the fear of the unknown, there was no uptrend on the current influence on the well at this time he had a hard time supporting the project. Mr. Orcutt stated that at this time the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has rated all of the department's wells as moderate risk for contamination.

Mr. Hoglund asked if any realistic cost estimates had been done to add public water to the area to solve the problems with the homeowner well contamination. Ms. Quinn replied that the general belief is that it would be almost as much as the sewer project and even if public water was added to the area it would only solve half of the issues in the area. She stated that there would still be

the threat and harm to the lake that is currently taking place due to septic system failures. Mr. Orcutt stated that the Water Department currently did not have the capacity to accommodate the whole area which would mean the cost of adding an additional well on top of running pipes through the area.

Mr. Hoglund stated that he did not believe that the cost of running pipes to the area where there is a water main running by the area already could cost as much as the new sewer system and infrastructure cost. He also stated that he had more concerns with the project going through than the problems that would remain if it did not. He believed that the inter-basin transfer that was required to send the water to Ayer for treatment could be detrimental to future development and water department pumping needs. Ms. Quinn stated that Woodard and Curran was working with the state to try to mitigate the inter-basin transfer as an insignificant impact to the area and the Water Department. She also stated that the reason that the inter-basin transfer was being allowed was because of the threat to the lake and the eventual threat to the public water supply.

Mr. Hoglund stated that his other concern is that Woodard and Curran, the engineering firm that is promoting and researching the project has a biased opinion because they stand to financially gain from the project moving forward as they would likely get the contract for the installation. Ms. Quinn stated that the Town had hired Woodard and Curran to research and develop the project, and that it was her belief that they were representing the town the best they could because regardless of whether they gain the contract for installation they are being paid to work and research the possibility to the best of their ability. Where the project is going to need a 2/3 vote which can be difficult at times, there is no guarantee that the project will move forward. Mr. Gmeiner stated that having dealt with Woodard and Curran on many projects with regard to the current Sewer Commission he did not believe that they would give an opinion just to push the town to give them more work. His only concern was the lack of evidence that the water was any closer to being a threat now than it has in the past.

Ms. Cajigas stated that as a resident she understood the concerns of the area and the benefits of having the sewer system, so she was not against the project, but as a Commissioner she did agree that there was not enough evidence for the Commissioners to need to support the project due to a threat to the Water Department well. Ms. Quinn asked if the Commissioners would like to have someone from DEP at their next meeting to discuss these concerns, or have something in writing from DEP stating why they are in support of the project.

Mr. Orcutt asked the Commissioners if they would be willing to support the article with concerns or if they would prefer to table the discussion to their next meeting and make a decision at their October 9th meeting.

Lost Lake – Sonar Aquatic Weed Control

Mr. Orcutt informed the Commissioners that the Great Ponds Advisory Committee would eventually be looking to come before the Commissioners to discuss the treatment of Lost Lake with the Sonar weed control chemical. They have submitted a notice of intent to apply. The purpose of this discussion was just to inform the Commissioners that it was something that they were continuing to move forward with.

Great Ponds Advisory Committee (GPAC) – GWD Representation

Mr. Orcutt informed the Commissioners that the GPAC was looking to see if any of the Commissioners were able to join the Committee as representation from the Water Department. The Commissioners informed Mr. Orcutt that at this time they were all too busy to take on an additional Committee.

Town Meeting Article – CPC Article for Conservation Commission

Mr. Orcutt informed the Commissioners that the Conservation Commission would be bringing an article to Town Meeting in order to obtain Community Preservation Committee funds for the purchase of land on Chicopee Row across from the Williams Barn. The Conservation Commission has received a reimbursable grant from the State for the purchase but they do not have enough funds in the Conservation Fund to front the money for the purchase and wait for reimbursement. Mr. Orcutt stated that the Conservation Commission was looking for the Water Commissioners to support their article. The Commissioners agreed that they were not willing to take a position on the article or write a letter of support at this time.

Surrenden Farms – Final Signatures

Mr. Orcutt informed the Commissioners that he had received the final documents for the parcel of land on Surrenden Farms that was to be given to the Water Commission. Mr. Orcutt was looking for the Commission to sign the final documents and Ms. Iannacone was able to notarize the document. Mr. Hoglund reviewed the documents having the background knowledge on the land transaction. Mr. Hoglund had concern that he was not seeing one of the conditions that was discussed in the past and would like further review of the documents before signing. Mr. Gmeiner and Mr. Orcutt would review the documents and bring back before the Commissioners at the next meeting.

Financials

Ms. Iannacone informed the Commissioners that at this time the department has been showing an increase in revenue and expenses were down compared to July and August of 2011. Ms. Iannacone explained that the differences in the Salary and Wage lines was due to the month of August having 3 pay periods as well as the approximately \$5,000 payout for Ms. Pellicchia in August. Ms. Iannacone stated that she had found some billing that had been missed for July and August so the bills were sent out in September and that she hoped to see some of that before the end of the week for the close of September financials. Mr. Orcutt informed the Commissioners that due to Ms. Iannacone going through the last 2 months financials extremely thoroughly, they were unable to get the close of the FY 2012 financials prepared for this meeting, but that they would work together on having that ready for the next meeting.

Water Superintendents Report (verbal)

Mr. Orcutt led a brief discussion of the topics on his Superintendent's Report. Please see attached copy of this report for the items discussed.

Minutes

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the minutes of August 28, 2012 as written. Ms. Cajigas seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Hoglund made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m. Cajigas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

April Iannacone
Business Manager

James Gmeiner _____ Date _____

Gary Hoglund _____ Date _____

Jessica Cajigas _____ Date _____

Superintendent's Report

September 26, 2012

1. Unkety Brook Well Site: DEP – CER0 has issued the permit for the Unkety Brook Well. I am reviewing the permit and have issues with some of the requirements (the offsets – thanks for the FYI Jessica!).
2. Forestry Management: Stan Dillis is out marking the Baddacook parcel(s). This site will be added to the Shattuck timber harvest, as they are both conventional harvests and this should provide a boost in revenue at the same time the markets rebound slightly.
3. Water Treatment Plants: Both the Baddacook and the Whitney Well #1 have been operating nicely. The Baddacook Cistern was chlorinated last week as run times on the filters were dropping (about 20 hours lost). The facility was off line for almost 2 days last week when it rained and consumption was low. At Whitney, a Hanna Technician installed a filter prior to the analyzer so it would not plug up and give poor output readings. A new probe was also installed on the analyzer. At Whitney #2, the shaft, pump and was removed due to a leak surfacing into Whitney #2. The problem was identified as leak at a coupling on the shaft. A new shaft is required and will be 6" versus 8" (that decision is not final yet). The pump and motor appeared to have operation issues and near the end of its life, but after cleaning the unit and a careful inspection, the pump and motor should be good until at least the next cleaning of the well. The well should be cleaned (last done in 2008), but the timing is not conducive to our Fall water demands unless another cleaning method can be done that does not impact the Whitney Well #1.

All Master Flow Meters have been calibrated. All Parco Valves have also been serviced in the plants.

The SCADA installation for the Whitney Well Facility has been completed. Some minor glitches occurred that were easily corrected. ITS will return in a few weeks for feedback from the operators I and make additional changes/ modifications if required/requested.

4. The Fall Flushing Program is scheduled to commence next Wednesday, October 3rd and be completed by October 16th, 2012 by staff.
5. Shirley Road Water: Working on the final figures as there was an error on one of the quotes submitted.
6. Energy Conservation Grant: The final report and recommendations have been documented. A round table forum is scheduled for October 11th, 2012.
7. Water Consumption: The July and August were very good months and September is looking promising as well.
8. Generator: The generator is operated once per week with load testing scheduled for once per month.
9. Fiscal Year 2014: A Preliminary Budget is being put together for internal discussion
The new Billing software is beginning and we should be live before the end of the calendar year.
10. Construction: Construction Projects are keeping the staff and I very busy including Town Paving initiatives.