

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting
Of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, August 28th, 2018
2nd Floor Lunch Room

Minutes

Present are Chairman Jack McCaffrey, Member James Gmeiner, Superintendent Thomas Orcutt, Business Manager Lauren Croy, and Michael P. Ohl, P.E., CFM from Comprehensive Environmental Inc.

Mr. McCaffrey called the meeting to order at 7:35pm.

CEI - Water Rate Study Presentation (Grant)

Through the use of an SWMI Grant, Comprehensive Environmental Inc conducted an evaluation of the impact of new water restrictions on revenues and rates. They also looked at the Groton Water Department's current rate structure versus desired income to determine the revenue during dry, average and wet years. They provided rate change scenarios that would help us reach our target revenue.

Mr. Ohl reviewed Groton's water supplies which are the Nashua, Squannacook and Merrimack basins in terms of where data is being collected for the evaluation. Mr. Ohl reviewed the current 2012 WMA Permit restrictions which would enforce no nonessential outdoor watering under extreme circumstances. He then reviewed the anticipated restrictions under the 2020 WMA Permit.

Mr. Ohl presented a graph which showed seasonal pumping impacts due to future permit requirements. Mr. McCaffrey noted that on a few of the dry years – the impact would have been substantial to our pumping and therefor our revenue. Mr. Ohl agreed and said that there would be an average of 10% reduction in duration of non-essential outdoor water use and an estimated loss of \$20,000 revenue annually.

Mr. Ohl then went on to review our past years' annual pumping and noted there is about a 20% difference between wet and dry years. Mr. McCaffrey pointed out that this data won't be relevant if the state enforces the anticipated 2020 WMA permit restrictions which would bring our pumping numbers down in the future.

Mr. Ohl's graph on total pumpage showed that only a small percentage is from irrigation accounts. Based on a projected income of \$975,000, Mr. Ohl reviewed various rate change options that would ensure we reached the projected revenue. The data is based on an "average" year in terms of being wet or dry. The board discussed the various options and reviewed a chart that showed the effects on customer bills if rates were changed. Mr. Gmeiner asked Mr. Ohl to run a few more scenarios.

Lastly, Mr. Ohl presented the impact of tiered service charges based on meter size, which Mr. Orcutt asked him to look into.

Whitney Pond Well Construction

Mr. Orcutt is going to schedule the DEP inspection of the well and will invite everyone involved in the project. Mr. McCaffrey asked if there are still any unresolved issues and Mr. Orcutt replied that there have been Scada issues that are being ironed out. Mr. McCaffrey wants to make sure that the temperature control issue is resolved. Mr. Orcutt agrees but noted that only very hot days could be problematic but we do have adequate air conditioning running to avoid any future issues. Mr. McCaffrey spoke about certain engineering that can help smooth out any blips to the power supply and Mr. Gmeiner agreed we should look into these filters.

Mr. Orcutt said that today or tomorrow will most likely be the summer peak. Mr. McCaffrey still wants to run both wells to see the maximum capability. Mr. Orcutt plans to do this in October during flushing.

Water Levels

Mr. Orcutt said that the recent water levels discussed were incorrect due to a bad probe; however the levels are still ok. He also explained that water levels are important but not everything since it's what you have left as the draw down number that is very important, and the draw numbers are very good.

Baddacook Pond

Mr. Orcutt said they are hydro raking and are expecting a \$10,000 contribution from the Water Department. Mr. McCaffrey asked if they will be spending all of the funds allocated to hydro raking for this year and Mr. Orcutt believes they will and told him that hydro raking costs about \$500/hour.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to contribute \$10,000 towards hydro raking at Baddacook Pond, Mr. McCaffrey seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Dunstable Water Operations

Mr. Orcutt explained that DEP is requiring the Town of Dunstable to do some large projects and upgrades to their water system and the town does not have adequate operators to move forward. They have reached out to Groton to see if our water department would work with their water department to assist with their projects and operations moving forward. Mr. Orcutt explained that their situation is currently problematic because the projects may cost over two million dollars and the town only has about 100 water customers. Mr. Orcutt is reluctant to assist them at this time since there is no plan in place. Mr. McCaffrey asked what their annual revenue is and Mr. Orcutt said it is about \$60,000. Mr. Orcutt said we would need to get a third operator to essentially split with Dunstable, if we were to come to an agreement. Mr. Gmeiner agreed that he would like to see a plan and funding in place before talking about getting involved. Mr. Orcutt gave them some recommendations such as looking into a private company to get the projects completed. Mr. McCaffrey asked if we would want access to Dunstable's water system and Mr. Orcutt said it is far away so would be challenging.

Town Meeting Transfers

Mr. Orcutt reviewed details of the new union contracts and concluded that \$30,000 needs to be transferred into our budget to cover our Department of Public Works Union employees and about \$5,000

is needed for the Supervisor's Union and Town Hall/Library Union employees. He suggested that we transfer \$40,000 at the fall town meeting.

Other Business

Mr. Orcutt said that he needs to submit an energy audit to the state regarding electric rates. Mr. McCaffrey would like to put Baddacook Well on the new rate plan and Mr. Orcutt will ask Kevin to make the change.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the minutes of July 24th, 2018 as amended, and Mr. McCaffrey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Invoices for Expense Warrant 6 were signed.

The next meetings will be scheduled for September 11th and September 25th.

Mrs. Crory and Mr. Orcutt left the meeting at 8:45pm.

Per Mr. McCaffrey, he made a motion to adjourn at 8:55pm, Mr. Gmeiner seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory
Business Manager