

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting
Of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, October 23rd, 2018
2nd Floor Lunch Room

Minutes

Present are Chairman Jack McCaffrey, Vice Chairman Greg Fishbone, Member James Gmeiner, Superintendent Thomas Orcutt, and Business Manager Lauren Crory.

Mr. McCaffrey called the meeting to order at 7:31pm.

Water Conservation Program – Well Levels & Pumping Levels

Mr. Orcutt said pumping is down and water main flushing is done. He presented a precipitation report which showed significant rainfall in September. The well is running about 5-6 hours per day. He plans to run Baddacook Well and Whitney Well II in November. In November, all wells will be on the Demand Management Rate Structure with GELD. Mr. McCaffrey would be interested to see the savings resulting from the new rates. He is also curious to see if running the two variable speed pumps has an effect on the energy use and therefore rate charges. Mr. Orcutt ran the two variable pumps during flushing. Mr. Gmeiner thinks GELD should be able to give us the energy data for this time period so that we can analyze against a comparable month where we did not use the two variable speed pumps.

Baddacook Pond Update

Mr. Orcutt said that they are waiting on a final invoice for this year's work and then will schedule a meeting with the neighbors. Mr. McCaffrey will ask Mr. Strickland to attend the neighbor meeting or to brief someone on his thoughts ahead of time.

Whitney Pond Well Construction Update

Mr. Orcutt will be meeting with the Groton Herald this week so they can write an article about the well upgrades. This article will also suffice as our final report that DEP has requested for our rate study grant.

Mr. McCaffrey asked if we have experienced any more issues or shut downs at the well and Mr. Orcutt said we have not had issues.

Financials / Budget 2020

Mrs. Crory presented financial showing our actual income and expenses versus our budget so far this year. The rates revenue is on track to meet the budget and is mirroring the previous fiscal year. The construction income is already at about 80% of budget and will most likely exceed our goal. All expenses look good at this point. Mr. Fishbone asked about the additional funds we have – other than our enterprise fund. Mrs. Crory explained that these are grants which the accountant keeps separate. He asked about the \$82,000 grant that we will soon be getting and Mr. Orcutt explained that we will be able

to pay down the \$400,000 debt with this amount, which will in turn decrease our debt payment down the road. Mr. Orcutt said that we did not spend the entire \$400,000 but he believes we will need to use up the entire amount and cannot change the note. Mr. McCaffrey noted that the board had discussed spending about \$100,000 per year on upgrades and Mr. Orcutt said he has plenty of ideas and projects that can be done. The board reviewed the Enterprise Fund balances which have not fluctuated much over the past few years. Mrs. Crory explained that even though we had extra expenses and had to transfer money out of our reserves, we were able to make extra income to replenish our withdrawals. Mr. McCaffrey wants to look into ways to save more money so that we can survive any wet years or economic downfalls. Mr. Orcutt said in 2008-2009 the Enterprise Fund was almost depleted due to these problems. We need to ensure we have enough saved in the enterprise fund to withstand another bad year. Mr. Orcutt suggested we add a seasonal variation bucket to our Enterprise Fund planning spreadsheet to ensure we keep enough in the fund to get us through wet years.

Other Business

Mr. Orcutt said that we received interest from 17 engineering companies. Wright Pierce came in to discuss what work we have on the horizon and CEI came in for a meeting to familiarize themselves with our system and operations. Mr. McCaffrey asked how we narrow down the list. Mr. Orcutt said that submissions are due by November 1st and he will make copies for the board. They can select about 3 companies to interview. He thinks the process will be complete by the first of the year.

Mr. McCaffrey told the board he read an article regarding a water department's software being hacked by ransomware. The affected water department has to pay the hackers in order to access their own software. He asked if our SCADA system could be susceptible to something like this happening. Mr. Orcutt was not sure and is going to look into it. Mr. McCaffrey thinks it is worth looking into because we could buy protection if necessary.

Mrs. Crory presented a newspaper clipping identifying that Thomas Pikol's estate at 37 Boathouse Road would be going through probate soon. The water department had made an agreement with Mr. Pikol that his water account would be paid off through his estate after death. Mr. Gmeiner suggested putting a property lien on the house to collect the past due amount of \$5363.31.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the minutes of October 16th, 2018, as amended, Mr. McCaffrey seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Invoices for Expense Warrant 10 were signed.

Next Meetings: November 13th and November 27th

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 8:20pm, Mr. Gmeiner seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory
Business Manager

October 23rd, 2018