

Groton Water Commission  
Regular Meeting  
Of the  
Board of Water Commissioners  
Tuesday, April 23rd, 2019  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Lunch Room

**Minutes**

Present are Chairman Jack McCaffrey, Member James Gmeiner, Superintendent Thomas Orcutt, Business Manager Lauren Crory, and Don Black.

Mr. McCaffrey called the meeting to order at 7:33pm.

37 Boathouse Rd – Abatement Request

Mr. Black recapped the situation at 37 Boathouse Rd. In 2013, the late owner, Mr. Thomas Pikol, had to move his septic system and connect to town water. In 2015, Mr. Pikol was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer and was in the hospital when there was a leak in his basement. He was not home to see the leak was happening which is why it went on for so long. The Water Commission had previously abated this bill such that all water used had been billed at the lowest tier; and that collection of the balance due would be delayed until MR. Pikol had passed. Mr. Pikol has passed and a water lien had been placed upon the property. Mr. Pikol's sister, Patricia Grace, has inherited the property and is requesting the outstanding water bill and interest be abated. Mr. Black believes that Ms. Grace will be trying to fix up the property and will sell it.

Mr. Orcutt said that the water department did not charge interest and Mr. Black said that there is \$77.14 of interest that must have accrued since has been committed to the property lien. Mr. Gmeiner does not feel that the entire bill should be abated but would consider waiving the interest if Ms. Grace needs some time. Mr. McCaffrey agreed that it sounds like it cannot be paid right now, but thinks at some point it will be sold and could be paid at that time.

Mr. Orcutt said the bill had already been calculated using the lowest tier rate. Mr. Orcutt asked Mr. Black if 37 Boathouse Rd was Mr. Pikol's only property and Mr. Black said it was. Mr. Black added that Mr. Pikol also left behind Mass Health bills which have since been negotiated and ratified. Mr. Black also reiterated that if Mr. Pikol did not fall ill this wouldn't have happened. The water went into the basement and essentially ended up back in Lost Lake. He feels that it returned to the system and could be waived. He also noted that hydrant flushing involves a high usage of unbillable water so doesn't see why we couldn't waive this bill. Mr. Orcutt pointed out why hydrant flushing is done and does not think it is similar. Mr. Black understood the difference but noted that the water is not consumed in both cases.

Mr. McCaffrey tried to determine why the original decision to collect the bill upon death would be reversed now. Mr. Orcutt suggested revisiting in a year and believes it is a valuable piece of property that will sell. Mr. Gmeiner did not see how much has changed from the time of the original decision and

said he typically only sees abatements by lowering to the first rate tier, which has already been done. Mr. Gmeiner is willing to give extra time before the payment is due. Mr. Gmeiner added that if Ms. Grace does not sell and decides to live there, we will need to reconvene.

Mr. Black asked if the board would agree to write a letter regarding giving more time to Ms. Grace to pay the bill and to ensure interest will not accrue. Mr. Gmeiner said we will need to check with the Tax Collector regarding the interest accumulation. Mr. McCaffrey agreed that we could create a letter to take the pressure off of her subject to clarifying the interest with the Tax Collector.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to deny the abatement, Mr. McCaffrey seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to delay the collection of the property lien and interest and to provide a letter to that affect, Mr. Gmeiner seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

#### Water Conservation Program – Well Levels & Pumping Levels

Mr. Orcutt said the Water Conservation program was sent to the state. Well levels are about the same even with lots of pumping. Mr. McCaffrey would still like to see pumping data at various speeds and Mr. Orcutt will prepare this. Mr. McCaffrey would also like to look into how long pumping can last during a hot/dry summer.

#### 66 North Street- Croteau

Mr. Orcutt explained the subdivision being built at 66 North Street and said Mr. Croteau and his mother came to a sewer meeting to inquire about connecting to town sewer and town water. Both connections would be to Pepperell's system. Mr. Orcutt said if we agreed to this, we would want to maintain control of the water connection in case it leads to other connections in the future, such as the high school. Mr. McCaffrey asked if the high school would want to drink that water and Mr. Orcutt said it is potable water and Mr. Gmeiner added that there are no public health issues. Mr. McCaffrey would like to be able to get better water to the high school.

Mr. McCaffrey asked how it was left and Mr. Orcutt said that Mr. Croteau will be approaching Pepperell about permissions to connect. If Pepperell agrees, an Intermunicipal Agreement would need to be established.

Mr. Gmeiner asked if the entire high school would be connected to Pepperell's water system and Mr. Orcutt said that the high school has its own systems and wells in place for hydrants and sprinklers so it would be drinking water only. Mr. McCaffrey asked why we couldn't build a new well in North Groton and Mr. Orcutt said there is not a good source for us there.

#### Budget – 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Financials / FY Budget 2020 / Spring TM Transfers

Mrs. Crory presented a forecasted budget for the rest of fiscal year 2019. We transferred out a total of \$150,000 from the water enterprise fund and Mrs. Crory predicts we can put back about \$33,000. We will also be putting \$90,000 into the fund due to leftover Whitney Well funds and our Energy grant.

Other Business

Mr. Gmeiner asked if Mr. Orcutt went to Nashoba Technical School and Mr. Orcutt said he did go and they are going to look into working water treatment courses into other programs but cannot create an entire new program right now because they have too many programs and not enough students.

Invoices for Expense Warrant 23 were signed.

Next Meeting: May 7th

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 8:43pm, Mr. Gmeiner seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory  
Business Manager