

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting
Of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, June 25th, 2019
2nd Floor Lunch Room

Minutes

Present are Chairman Jack McCaffrey, Vice Chairman Greg Fishbone, Member James Gmeiner, Superintendent Thomas Orcutt, Business Manager Lauren Crory, and Michael Ohl of Comprehensive Environmental, and Joseph Bosick, Whitney Pond resident.

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

Whitney Well – Mike Ohl

Mr. Orcutt presented past data regarding the manganese levels and said there will be no silver bullet option to fix the levels. Short term mitigation by adding a third well may not be the best option.

Mr. Ohl presented a spreadsheet with various options to treat the manganese which were adding a new source at Shattuck Well or Unkety Well, an additional well at Whitney Pond, or a treatment facility at Whitney Wells. For each option he reviewed factors involving Supply/Demand Balance, Efficacy in Reduction of Manganese Levels, Project Costs, and Ease of Permitting.

The board discussed the pros and cons of each option. A replacement well would be a gamble on if it would reduce the manganese level below 0.3 parts per million. A new source would require more permitting and approval and would have higher ongoing annual costs among other hurdles. The treatment plant at Whitney Well appears to be the most efficient option although the cost to build the treatment plan is estimated to be around \$7.5 million.

They discussed how the treatment plant would be funded and believe they could get an SRF loan beginning around 2022.

Mr. McCaffrey asked about the possibility of another option which would be to run a pipe from Whitney Well to Baddacook Well. Mr. Ohl is going to look into the feasibility of this for the next meeting.

Mr. McCaffrey also asked about using West Groton's wells. Mr. Ohl said this was not a favorable option in the past. Mr. McCaffrey asked if they were under the manganese level and Mr. Ohl said they were currently. Mr. Orcutt said pulling more water could cause a problem down the road though.

Mr. Ohl said Mass DEP will want a draft plan by September 1st, 2019, which will require us to outline whichever option we choose. A final plan will be due February 1st, 2020.

Mr. Orcutt asked Mr. Ohl to expand the options to include alternative 4, pipe from Whitney Well to Baddacook Well, and alternative 5, using West Groton Water supply.

Mr. McCaffrey asked how many towns are experiencing the same issues and Mr. Orcutt said Pepperell is facing the same problem with a manganese level higher than ours.

Lastly, Mr. Ohl presented a potential timeline for the construction of a new water treatment plan at Whitney Wells. He will come to the next meeting on July 9th to further discuss.

Water Conservation Program – Well Levels & Pumping

Mr. Orcutt said there has been no change in well levels and have been pumping 6 hours per day. We usually are pumping two or three times this amount during this time of the year.

Whitney Pond Access

Mr. Orcutt introduced Mr. Bosick who is a resident of Whitney Pond. Mr. Bosick is trying to find an access point for a weed harvester. Mr. Bosick explained to the board that his family has lived on the pond since 1979 and it is now unsafe due to the number of weeds. He has done research and has found an access point at the Whitney Pond Well site. He contacted Mass DEP who explained that nothing but well related activity can occur within 400 feet of the wellhead. Mr. Bosick is looking for the water department to advocate for the access point at Whitney Pond Well.

Mr. McCaffrey suggested accessing through a fishing area and Mr. Bosick said the kayak path would need gravel etc and may not have enough clearance. Mr. McCaffrey also asked how many people are concerned about the weeds and Mr. Bosick said all residents would like to take action to reduce the weeds. Mr. Fishbone asked what is invasive and Mr. Bosick said 28% of the weeds were invasive on the last report. Aeration may or may not be an option also.

Mr. Orcutt concluded that there are two problems with using the well site. One, that you cannot use 400 feet around wellhead and two, there is a deed stating that a surrounding acquired parcel may only be used for water supply unless approved by the grantors.

Mr. Gmeiner asked why he could not use Valley Road and Mr. Bosick said it is a tough road with a sharp curve and a lot of sediment. Mr. Bosick said there would also be no where to dispose of the weeds which Mr. Orcutt noted as a separate issue.

Mr. Orcutt would like Mr. Bosick to pursue the Valley Rd area. Mr. Bosick asked if we would support trying to use area within 400 ft of the wellhead and Mr. Gmeiner said no. Mr. McCaffrey told him they would like to help him find solution and the board will look more into the deeds to see if there would be any way to use land around the well (beyond 400ft of the wellhead).

4th Quarter Financials

Mrs. Crory updated the board on her financial projection for fiscal year 2019. Our revenue went up more than expected and expenses were down so our profit will be higher than originally expected.

Other Business

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to move \$1,000 for a total of \$10,000 from general expenses to salaries, Mr. Fishbone seconded

Invoices for Expense Warrant 27 were signed.

Next Meetings: July 9th, 2019, July 23rd, 2019

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 9:10pm, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory
Business Manager