

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting
Of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, March 19th, 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, Michael Ohl and Kristin Berger from Comprehensive Environmental Inc (CEI).

Mr. McCaffrey called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

Water Quality – Mike Ohl of CEI

Mr. Orcutt said that we received a request from Mass DEP in December asking us to keep sampling manganese, but they now have requested that we take action to mediate the levels. The well was just cleaned and may help levels in the short term. Mass DEP would like a written plan by September. There are some strategies that could help, but inevitably we will need a treatment plan.

Mr. Ohl from CEI explained the history of manganese in water and explained that it was recently discovered that levels over .3 parts per million could be harmful, especially to children. Mr. Ohl said it can be removed from water through pressure filtration system, biological removal or membrane filtration. He also explained that we could prepare a plan and can include certain conditions such as continuing sampling and testing.

Mr. Orcutt asked how long we have until they will require a treatment plant because our current capital improvement debt will be paid off in 2025 so we would ideally like to wait until then before acquiring new debt. Ms. Berger said a town recently was given two years to start building their treatment plant and they typically do not like to wait too long.

Mr. McCaffrey spoke to Senior Technician, Mr. Brackett, who was concerned that pumping levels were down and he wants to make sure that Whitney Well is still a good well that is capable of doing what we need. Mr. Brackett thinks we may have plugged up some of the drains while pumping. Ms. Berger said that a replacement well or additional well would require much less permitting than a new source. Mr. Gmeiner asked how much a treatment plant would cost and Mr. Ohl estimated \$5,000,000. Mr. Fishbone asked how much another well would cost and Ms. Berger estimated \$1,000,000. Mr. McCaffrey said an additional well could be a way to buy time until we could afford the treatment plan.

Mr. McCaffrey asked how they find the best well site and Mr. Ohl would start with any prior test well reports. Mr. Orcutt will look for any old reports. Mr. Orcutt, Mr. Ohl, and Ms. Berger will report back in May with a better plan for an additional well at Whitney Pond. Mr. Orcutt asked Mr. Ohl for a work order estimate and he said \$10,000-\$20,000.

Mr. Ohl and Ms. Berger left at 8:13pm.

Mr. McCaffrey asked if the manganese levels have been hovering or gradually rising and Mr. Orcutt said rising. Mr. McCaffrey would also like to see plot graphs of the manganese data.

Water Conservation Program – Well Levels & Pumping Levels

Mr. McCaffrey asked for Mr. Orcutt to explain how he collects the data for the well level graphs and Mr. Orcutt explained the timing of his data which is collected on the 1st and 15th of the month. Mr. Orcutt pointed out a drop in levels right before the March 15th well cleaning began. This is possibly because pumping was up before taking it offline. Mr. McCaffrey asked if the both wells pump equally and Mr. Orcutt said no and that they have different pumps and pipes. Mr. Gmeiner said the level issue could have to do with the pumping. Mr. McCaffrey said we can look at the data to see if there may be a suction problem.

Baddacook Pond Update

Mr. Orcutt said that Mr. Luening is getting an extension on the notice of intent. They plan to have an informal discussion with vendors to see how to improve productivity and will be working on putting bid packets together.

Budget – FY Budget 2020 / Spring TM

Mr. Orcutt presented a letter that was given to Mr. Haddad requesting that the water department utilize a portion of the “unallocated” gift from Lawrence Academy’s PILOT to help purchase a Valve Box Vacuum system that costs \$19,063. The department will be using a \$10,000 grant from MIIA, but is requesting the remaining \$9,063 needed. Mr. Haddad will bring the letter to the Selectboard to discuss.

Mrs. Crory presented an explanation of extra expenses that have been or will be incurred during fiscal year 2019. These include changes from contract negotiations, our contribution to the Baddacook Weed project, extra well cleaning costs, and a new truck. Mrs. Crory recommends a spring Enterprise Fund transfer of \$110,000 based on these extra expenses that are not in the budget.

Mr. McCaffrey would like us to try to keep transfer amounts lower in the future. The board discussed the expenses and agreed that the transfer should be made.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to transfer \$110,000 from reserves to the fiscal year 2019 operating budget, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Other Business

Mr. Orcutt discussed some projects that are being planned such as 186 Main St, Lawrence Academy housing, and the old Donelans.

Mr. Orcutt will talk to Mr. Brackett to see if he will want to continue doing some work for the department after he retires.

Mr. Orcutt said that he will be working on the Annual Consumer Confidence Report.

Mr. Orcutt will be attending a meeting at Nashoba Technical School along with a few other towns to discuss the possibility of starting a Water Technician program.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the minutes of February 19th, 2019, as amended, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Invoices for Expense Warrant 12 were signed.

Next Meetings: April 9th, 2019

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 9:19pm, Mr. Gmeiner seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory
Business Manager