

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting
Of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, December 10th, 2019
1st Floor Meeting 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 7:11pm.

Open Public Discussion – Manganese

Mr. Fishbone asked about getting system distribution manganese samples closer to the well and Mr. Orcutt said that Cravens Package store is the closest site. Mr. McCaffrey asked for a graph of manganese levels for future meetings. Mr. Fishbone asked for an update on the consent order and Mr. Orcutt said it was at MA DEP's Boston location being drafted.

Mr. Orcutt told the board that our PFAS testing results came in and although there are traces of PFAS, the results were below 20 parts per trillion which is the current discussion point. Mr. McCaffrey noted that since it was detectable, the amount could increase. Mr. McCaffrey asked what the non-detectable amount it and Mr. Orcutt will ask the lab. Mr. Fishbone asked how often we need to conduct this test and Mr. Orcutt said most likely every three years.

Baddacook Pond Restoration

Mr. Orcutt spoke with Mr. Haddad regarding Baddacook Pond contributions. Mr. Luening requested that, post CPC funding, that the water department contribute \$10,000 to the Baddacook Pond weed removal maintenance in FY2021. The board wants to know how the funds would be spent and would like to look into some alternative options such as Solar Bee which is a solar powered aeration mechanism. Mr. McCaffrey is open to the idea but would like more information before they make a decision. Mr. Gmeiner asked if the town is contributing and Mr. Orcutt believes they would be giving \$15,000.

Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget

Mr. Orcutt, Mrs. Crory and Mr. Gmeiner presented our proposed FY2021 budget to the Finance Committee last week. Mr. Haddad wanted to make sure we will have revenue coming in because we have began depleting our reserve fund and should build it back up. We don't want to risk needing to continue transferring funds out of reserves. Mr. Orcutt told Mr. Haddad we are trying to be conservative with our revenue projections for FY2021. Our proposed budget included

\$75,000 of Fire Protection from the town, but at the meeting Mr. Haddad said that this is not included in the town's balanced budget.

Continue the Public Hearing – Water Rates and Fees

Mr. McCaffrey opened the public hearing at 7:30.

Mr. Gmeiner read the Notice of Public Hearing: In accordance with Chapter 40, section 42-A to 42-I, of the Massachusetts General Laws and Town of Groton Usage Fee Regulations, the Board of Groton Water Commissioners will hold a Public Hearing, Tuesday, November 19, 2019 at 7:30pm in the first floor meeting room of the Town Hall, 173 Main St, Groton, MA in order to review and adjust accordingly the water rates, fees and miscellaneous charges per the Town of Groton Water regulations. -Board of Water Commissioners, John McCaffrey
11/8/19 & 11/15/19 A

To be continued later in the meeting.

Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget cont.

The board reviewed the manganese debt schedule drafts. Mr. McCaffrey pointed out that our rate increase wouldn't really show on the books until next fiscal year, but the capital charge would begin to hit the books almost immediately. He asked if we would need to discuss rate increases more because the current increase is just to balance our increasing budget but will not replenish the \$150,000 reserve transfer for manganese treatment planning. Mr. Fishbone reminded the board that we have a capital fund line item in our budget that should allow us to put money back into reserves if we have an average or good year.

Continued Rate Hearing:

Mr. Gmeiner said that the Select Board asked Mr. Haddad to request that the board hold off on beginning a capital charge until the consent order was completed. Mr. Gmeiner would like to get the capital charge moving so that we can begin to replenish our reserve fund since we have already started manganese treatment and bills will be coming in.

Mr. McCaffrey asked if the board was in favor of increasing all rates except domestic tier 1 by 10% beginning January 1, 2020. The board discussed pros and cons and ultimately decided they were in favor.

Mr. Gmeiner proposed starting a \$20 capital charge fee beginning February 1st, 2020. Mr. Fishbone would like it to start in January or April so that each book gets the same number of fees in the calendar year, based on quarterly billing. Mr. Orcutt said that is good for now but depends on when the fee ends, it may not be equal. Mr. Gmeiner proposed a new idea to start a \$10 capital charge January 1st and increase to a \$20 capital charge on April 1st. Mr. Orcutt thought that was a good middle ground proposal based on the department needing to begin raising funds but respecting the Select Board asking to wait on the capital charge. Mr. Gmeiner also noted that we would waive this capital charge for seniors on the tax exemption program.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to close the public hearing at 8:50pm.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to increase domestic tiers 2, 3, 4 and irrigation tiers 1, 2, 3, and 4 by 10% effective January 1st, 2020, Mr. McCaffrey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to institute at \$10 Capital Charge quarterly on all domestic accounts beginning January 1st, 2020, Mr. Fishbone seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to increase the \$10 Capital Charge by \$10 for a total of \$20 on all domestic accounts beginning April 1st, 2020, Mr. Fishbone seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to waive the Capital Charge for seniors who qualify for the property tax exemption under 41C ad chapter 59 section 5 clause 41C and 17D as determined by the Assessor's office, Mr. McCaffrey seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Orcutt will create a letter outlining these changes that we can post on our website etc.

Other Business: Bills, Minutes, etc

Invoices for EW13 were signed.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to approve the minutes of November 12th as amended, Greg seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. McCaffrey made motion to adjourn at 9:04, Mr. Gmeiner seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory