

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting
Of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, April 14th, 2020
Virtual Meeting using Zoom

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 7:01pm.

Fiscal Year 2020 Operating Budget Review & Year End Projections

Mrs. Crory reviewed the current financials which show income looks good overall. Rates are down a bit but construction income has exceeded our budget so the overall income is in good shape. Expenses also look good and we have not overspent. We do not have a need for an enterprise fund transfer at the spring town meeting. \$150,000 was transferred at the fall town meeting to pay for any manganese related expenses that we will begin to incur.

She forecasted the budget throughout the end of the year and reduced projected rate income by about \$30,000 to account for any Covid-19 related payment issues. Also, some business usage will be down and will have some effect on our rate income this year– although we won't see a large hit until July which will include schools and restaurants.

Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget – Continue Spending Freeze?

Mr. Orcutt said that we do have \$10,000 set aside to contribute to Baddacook Pond cleaning if the town contributes \$15,000. The town had removed the amount but then put it back in their budget. Mr. Fishbone wants to make sure our minutes state that we are only contributing \$10,000 if the town contributes \$15,000.

Manganese – Schedule, Piloting, Concept Plan, Finances, Consent Order

Mr. Orcutt said we remain on schedule and piloting will be starting soon. Mr. McCaffrey made a few changes to the concept plan regarding identifying PFAS treatment for the future and addressing capacity for Shattuck Well. Mr. Orcutt said that he and Mr. McCaffrey are working with Mr. Weaver on Baddacook backwash removal systems since our lagoons will not be a long-term plan.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to proceed with the concept plan for CEI in the amount of \$50,500, Mr. Fishbone seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. McCaffrey thought CEI's completion dates were vague and would like more concrete dates. Mr. Orcutt said MA DEP did not make any changes to dates in the consent order and piloting has been approved. Mr. McCaffrey said we should be sending MA DEP our concept plan by the end of June according to the schedule.

Mr. McCaffrey said the distribution system looks good and manganese levels are low. Mr. Orcutt agreed the manganese numbers are the lowest in about 5 months.

Superintendent Report: Well Cleaning, Flushing, Water Levels and Pumping, Staffing

Mr. Orcutt said that water main flushing has been going well and has been reduced by about an hour each day. Four corners looked great. Whitney Wells cleaned up very well. Mr. McCaffrey said the marsh levels are high and Mr. Orcutt agreed that ponds are overflowing and said the well levels remained unchanged even with extra pumping during flushing.

Mr. Orcutt asked the board to consider waiving late fees and penalties until June 30th, 2020 as the Select Board had voted to prohibit them. Mr. Gmeiner pointed out that the Select Board had waived the accrual of late fees and interest on amounts committed to the assessors and appearing on people's tax bills and that vote did not apply to water bills in general. He said if we wished to waive late fees and interest on water bills, we should vote on that. Mr. Gmeiner then made a motion to waive any late fees or interest from March 15th, 2020 to June 30th, 2020, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Orcutt said that Baddacook Well will be cleaned in May and it will cost about \$15,000. He also said a fuse blew and they discovered a ground wire has condensation in it which needs to be replaced and will run us about \$3,000. Mr. Fishbone asked what if the repair doesn't work and Mr. Orcutt said that some experienced linemen and the foreman and GELD had seen this problem before and knew how to best repair it and keep it water tight.

Other Business: Bills, Minutes, etc

Mr. Gmeiner asked how remote working is going and Mr. Orcutt said Mrs. Crory and Mrs. Livezey are doing well. He said the technicians are keeping distance from each other.

Mr. Orcutt asked if the invoice system is working for everyone and the board said it is fine.

Mr. McCaffrey approved the minutes of February 25th, 2020 as amended, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Next Meeting: May 12th, 2020

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 7:52pm, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory