

Groton Water Commission  
Regular Meeting  
Of the  
Board of Water Commissioners  
Tuesday, February 25th, 2020  
Assessor's Meeting Room  
Minutes

Present are Chairman Jack McCaffrey, Vice Chairman Greg Fishbone, Member James Gmeiner, Superintendent Thomas Orcutt, Business Manager Lauren Crory, Selectboard Member John Giger, Resident Sharon Walsh.

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

Manganese – Open Public Forum

Mr. McCaffrey said we continue to monitor manganese levels in our distribution system around town. Ms. Walsh asked if we could publicly distribute the type of water filter installed at town hall for residents to use. Mrs. Crory has given people the information if they call but said the board can discuss distributing it publicly. Ms. Walsh will call the office so that Mrs. Crory can give her the information. She said she lives near Baddacook Well. Mr. Orcutt told her that her water should mostly be coming from Baddacook Well which has manganese levels below the recommended limit. Ms. Walsh asked how we have been informing customers about the manganese levels and Mr. Orcutt said there was a reverse 911 message, Annual Consumer Confidence Report in April, and we have sent letters to families with children under the age of one. Ms. Walsh asked if we expect levels to increase and Mr. Orcutt said we are using Baddacook Well as much as possible which should help keep levels stable. Mr. McCaffrey explained that we are working on treating the manganese and reviewed the two options on the table; building a new treatment plant at Whitney Pond or piping the Whitney Pond water to the existing Baddacook Treatment Plant. The MA DEP consent order was signed last week.

Manganese – Consent Order Update

Mr. Fishbone asked how we will communicate to the public about the consent order. Mr. Orcutt said we cannot release it until the Select Board releases their Executive Session minutes regarding the consent order. Mr. Giger said they will try to do this soon.

Mr. Orcutt reviewed the revised timeline that was created with Michael Ohl of CEI. He mentioned some items are concurrent which is why dates might not look chronological. Mr. Orcutt asked Mr. Ohl to create a scope and fee proposal for both options. Mr. Gmeiner asked what that is and Mr. Orcutt said it is a detailed outline of the project and costs. This is not related to DEP although they will be sent a copy. Mr. Fishbone asked what happens if MA DEP rejects our plan and Mr. Orcutt said the engineers would have to adjust the plan.

Mr. McCaffrey pointed out that this timeline is more directed to the piping water to Baddacook option, because if we are building a new plant at Whitney, we would not need the funds to be voted on at the Fall Town Meeting. Mr. Giger suggested having a Q & A Session at some point.

Mr. Orcutt introduced Tom Weaver, owner of Data Tech Water Systems. Mr. Orcutt explained that currently, our backwash water goes into lagoons. Lagoons can get clogged over time. He explained that there are other options such as bigger lagoons, wastewater treatment, and membranes. This could be an additional cost down the road so he thinks it is worth looking into now.

Mr. Weaver explained that he has a membrane system that oxidizes and then hardens the sludge, at which point it could be shipped out. He could set up pilot testing at Baddacook Well to try the process. Mr. Fishbone asked if this would be part of the Conceptual Plan and Mr. Orcutt said yes it could be built into the plan. Mr. Gmeiner said that DPW may be getting a vac truck so maybe that could be used to remove sludge.

#### Water Conservation Program – Water Levels, Precipitation

Mr. Orcutt reviewed the current pumping rates with the Water Technicians and they all decided to leave it as is because Baddacook Well is handling most of our needs currently. Mr. McCaffrey asked if we could bring down the draw on the pumps and Mr. Orcutt said we will not increase pumping at Whitney Well until we need to. Mr. McCaffrey suggesting pumping at a slower rate, for a longer period of time.

#### Baddacook Pond Weed Management Program

Mr. Orcutt said that the most important thing right now is getting documents together for putting it out to bid. Mr. Fishbone asked if they are getting bids for both weed harvesting and hydro raking and Mr. Orcutt is unsure about prevailing wages and there might not be enough funds. Mr. Fishbone asked about aeration and Mr. Orcutt said not this year. Mr. Fishbone is concerned that there isn't a good long-term maintenance plan in place.

Mr. Orcutt said that \$15,000 has been restored for GPAC in the FY21 town budget. Mr. Fishbone asked if that is for all of the ponds and Mr. Giger believes it is only for Baddacook Pond but will check with Mr. Haddad. If the BOWC gives \$10,000 they should have a total of \$25,000. Mr. Fishbone said that is only for one year, then what will happen. Mr. Giger said that if it needs to be maintained yearly, they will need to find a way to fund it.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to fund weed harvesting at Baddacook in the sum of \$10,000 for FY21 subject to the town contributing \$15,000, Mr. Gmeiner seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Fishbone added that he would like to make sure they have a plan to maintain.

Other Business: Bills, Minutes, etc

Mr. Fishbone asked if we can archive our meeting minutes on the town's website (under BOWC page). They are currently only on the Groton Water website. Mr. Orcutt and Mrs. Crory will discuss with IT and Town Clerk.

Mrs. Crory is working with our billing company to create a way to track all income from the Manganese Fee. We will keep this separate from regular rate/fee income.

Mr. McCaffrey approved the minutes of 12/21/19 as amended, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Invoices for EW19 were signed.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 9:25pm, Mr. Gmeiner seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory