

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting
Of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, August 25th, 2020
Virtual Meeting using Zoom

Minutes

Present are Chairman Jack McCaffrey, Vice Chairman Greg Fishbone, Member James Gmeiner, Superintendent Thomas Orcutt, Business Manager Lauren Crory, and Michael Ohl of CEI.

Mr. McCaffrey called the meeting to order at 7:38pm.

Mr. Fishbone made a motion to approve the minutes of July 28th, 2020, as amended, Mr. McCaffrey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to approve the minutes of August 11th, 2020, as amended, Mr. Fishbone seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

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

The Board reviewed the Concept Plan draft. Mr. McCaffrey asked why both options were in the concept plan and Mr. Ohl said he wanted to document the overall decision-making process. Mr. Gmeiner asked if MA DEP requires that and Mr. Ohl said they do not. The draft touches upon a new Whitney Well and the Board discussed if we should include that now or bring it up later on. Mr. Orcutt thinks we should leave it in there and get ahead of any questions MA DEP may have about the expansion. Other details were discussed such as needing HVAC in the control room, looking at alternatives to propane fuel, and back up generators.

Mr. Ohl had sent MA DEP explanatory letters answering their questions from the Pilot Study. Mr. Fishbone said the Concept Plan will be for both compliance purposes and can be used for planning purposes with contractors. Mr. Fishbone asked if the backwash information should be included for contractors to review and Mr. Ohl said that it will get pulled in down the road. Mr. McCaffrey said the Concept Plan does touch upon the backwash issues. Mr. Ohl said he could create a memo of “additional items”. Mr. Orcutt would like to make sure we only have one document.

Mr. McCaffrey was concerned about including information on both options and does not want to be sending too much information. Mr. Ohl said he could include a summary at the beginning that outlines why both options are included. Mr. McCaffrey suggested instead of that, maybe an Appendix at the end about the Baddacook option. Mr. Orcutt and Mr. Fishbone liked that idea. Mr. Orcutt said we will resume at our next meeting in two weeks, and we will approve the plan and get it submitted. Mr. McCaffrey asked Mr. Orcutt to update our internal milestones and said September 31st doesn't exist and needs to be changed to September 30th.

Whitney Well – Expansion and Capacity

Mr. Ohl said that the first step will be to go through MA DEP's process and to test well sites, then we will need to go through the permitting process and get site approval. Mr. McCaffrey asked if the cost will be about \$1 million and Mr. Ohl said it should actually come out to less, about \$600,000-\$700,000. Mr. Orcutt said we should consider transferring money in the fall to get the expansion process rolling. Mr. Orcutt said the new well could supply the town with an additional 6 million gallons of water. Mrs. Crory calculated this to be about \$48,000 in additional irrigation revenue. Mr. McCaffrey said we will need about \$70,000 a year to pay back a 10-year loan and everyone thinks this will be attainable.

Town Meeting Articles – Transfer of Funds

Mr. Orcutt will request \$40,000 be transferred from the Water Enterprise Fund to our Manganese Project at the Fall Town Meeting.

Connection Fees – Longley Road Project

Julie Dickinson and Larry Smith are working on a project on Longley Road that will be 14 buildings with 28 condominiums. To connect to town water, they will need to invest in a decent amount of infrastructure, so are asking that the water connection fees be waived as the extension will benefit the town. Mr. Orcutt said the department's policy is to not waive connection fees, but the applicant can request a waiver if the town is significantly benefiting from the extension. Mr. Orcutt explained why we charge connection fees (in general to help maintain and expand our water system), but also agrees we will benefit from a 12" pipe. Mr. Gmeiner wants to review the regulations and set up a hearing to discuss, if necessary. Mr. McCaffrey asked how many incidental customers there will be and Mr. Smith believes it is about 13 homes on Longley Rd that will have the potential to connect. Mr. Smith said they are working on the plans now and should have them done in a few weeks. Ms. Dickinson said they are delayed because they are re-engineering with the 12" pipe and Breakneck Rd connection. Mr. Orcutt would like to see their cost estimate to install the pipe. Mr. Smith added that the cost to install a 12" pipe rather than an 8" pipe is 60-70% more.

Superintendent's Report: Water Levels and Pumping, Summer Water Conservation Program & Current Restrictions and Conditions, 2nd Water Meter Policy

Mr. Orcutt said the well levels are unchanged and the ban is still in place and he would not change it right now. The state has raised the drought level to significant. He plans to do a modified/reduced fall water main flushing because there is not enough for a full flush. Mr. McCaffrey asked if there is any chance of lifting the ban at all and Mr. Orcutt said they will continue to review at each meeting.

Mr. Fishbone asked when the manganese plan will be presented to the Select Board and Mr. Orcutt said we can schedule something once we approve the Concept Plan. It should be before Town Meeting. Mr. Gmeiner wants to re-visit the impact to an average rate payer because the Select Board will be wanting to see this.

Mr. Orcutt said the MVP grant is still on the table. We are next in line to apply and could receive a maximum of \$2 million.

Mr. Orcutt will work on an outline for the Select Board meeting.

Manganese Open Forum

Mr. Fishbone said they can't do much for a public open forum until we review the Concept Plan with the Select Board. Mr. McCaffrey said the manganese levels have been remaining pretty low. Mr. Fishbone asked if flushing in the fall will impact the levels and Mr. Orcutt does not think so.

Other Business: Bills, Minutes, etc

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 9:14pm, Mr. McCaffrey seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory