

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting
Of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, September 8th, 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, Office Assistant Ann Livezey and Michael Ohl of CEI.

Mr. McCaffrey called the meeting to order at 7:31pm.

Abatement Request – 83 Westbrook

Mrs. Crory said the residents at 83 Westbrook contacted the office about a high water bill and said they had a hose burst over the summer. She told them they could file for an abatement but after further research, she was able to see their water usage over the summer months which appeared to show irrigation use. She sent the customer the data and said that the high bill appears to be from irrigation use, not a leak. Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to deny the abatement request for 3 Westbrook Lane, Mr. McCaffrey seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Manganese – Schedule, Piloting, Concept Plan, Finances, Consent Order, Milestones, #2

The Board reviewed the revised concept plan and Mr. Fishbone thought it looked good overall based on the suggested edits, and Mr. Gmeiner initially was concerned about the way the Baddacook option was outlined but after reviewing the entire document it all makes sense. Mr. Gmeiner said September 31st still needs to be changed to September 30th. Mr. Orcutt would like the cover letter to be clearer about choosing the Whitney option but the rest of the content looks good. He asked about Ph levels, suggested a table be in landscape view, and asked if design would start in 5 months. Mr. Ohl reviewed the Ph levels and said design work would start in about 5 months. Mr. Orcutt noted that funds for the design work will need to be transferred at the Spring Town Meeting. Mr. McCaffrey had some comments and edits on some areas; both Whitney Wells are being used simultaneously, putting the project plan closer to the front the main body; possibly removing SRF funding information that was for internal discussion only; pushing some of the Appendix items forward; questions about future expansion at Whitney; discussed the PFAS treatment plan if necessary; and clarified where the Whitney Well Expansion would be.

Mr. Ohl will make all of the edits and send another draft in about a week.

Mr. Orcutt updated the manganese timeline and schedule and asked the Board to carefully review. They carefully reviewed the schedule and edited dates for presentation to the Select

Board, Manganese Round Table Discussion, ACO internal and final submission dates, selecting a project manager, selecting a design firm and fee schedule, Spring Town Meeting article and submission, designing the water treatment facility. Revised schedule to be reviewed and posted with minutes at the next meeting.

Whitney Well – Expansion and Capacity

Mr. Orcutt would like to adopt a second meter policy to be implemented to help with the cost of the Whitney Well Expansion. Mr. McCaffrey asked that if in addition to requiring new homes and irrigation systems to have a second meter, if we could force existing irrigation systems to have a second meter and Mr. Orcutt does not think we can do that. Mr. McCaffrey would like to see us fund the expansion through rate income but wants to be sure we can leave Tier 1 alone to help keep costs down for low usage customers. Mr. Orcutt said we will need a Scope and Fee proposal to be done before town meeting. Mr. McCaffrey thinks it is smart to be looking at this now and doesn't think it will have a significant effect on the average rate payer, but will help with capacity during summer months.

Longley Road Project Update

Mr. Orcutt said that they have met with developers and are starting to design plans. Mr. McCaffrey would like Mr. Orcutt and Gmeiner to prepare a response. Mr. Gmeiner said they would ultimately need to justify why it is benefiting the town and we may consider a fee adjustment. We would need to have a hearing and make the decision.

Bayberry Road Water Main Extension – Approval

Mr. Orcutt said that a resident with a failing well on Bayberry Rd would like to connect to town water by extending an 8" water main 200 ft. down the road. The Water Department would supply a hydrant. Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the Bayberry Road Water Main Extension, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

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

Mr. Orcutt suggested leaving the water ban in place and said water levels are way down and even the quality at Baddacook is being affected. We will also have more demand on the system as schools open up. Mr. McCaffrey asked when usage drops and Mr. Orcutt said October or early November. Mr. Fishbone asked if we are putting off waivers for re-seeding. Mr. Gmeiner said residents on Facebook were saying they could get a waiver to re-seed their lawns and water. Mr. Orcutt said that is incorrect and waivers were only given to residents who had re-seeded prior to the ban. Mr. Fishbone suggested we post something on our Facebook page and website to clarify this. Mr. Orcutt will be going on the local cable channel to discuss the drought.

Manganese Open Forum

Mr. McCaffrey said that manganese levels remain stable. Resident, Robert Campbell, asked some questions regarding manganese and our water ban and Mr. McCaffrey answered.

Other Business: Bills, Minutes, etc

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to approve the minutes of August 25th, 2020, Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 9:02pm, Mr. Gmeiner seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory