

Groton Water Commission  
Regular Meeting  
Of the  
Board of Water Commissioners  
Tuesday, October 13th, 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 7:30pm.

Manganese – Concept Plan, Finances, Consent Order, Milestones, #2 (Final)

Mr. Orcutt spoke with the Town Manager and discussed meeting with the Select Board the first week of November. Mr. Orcutt will explain that our Spring Town Meeting Enterprise Fund transfer request will be for engineering and design work only, and the full construction cost will be requested at the Fall 2021 Town Meeting. This should not interfere with the Town's current borrowing requests. Mr. Ohl estimates the amount needed at the Spring Town Meeting for engineering and design will be \$300-\$400K.

Mr. Orcutt will prepare about five slides for the meeting with the Select Board. He also created the RFQ for the Owner's Project Manager which will be posted on COMM Buys, in the Groton Herald, and the Central Registrar. Ultimately, the Water Commissioners and Town Manager will meet with the Owner's Project Manager to negotiate the fee for the construction management. The Water Commission will review the RFQs when they come in. CEI will not be an option because they cannot oversee their own work.

Mr. Ohl said the Concept Plan was submitted to MA DEP and he has not heard back yet but we should receive a formal response by the end of the year.

Whitney Well – Expansion and Capacity

Mr. Ohl prepared a scope and fee schedule to begin the New Source Investigation at the Whitney site. The fee of \$74,000 consists of payment to CEI, a subconsultant (Northeast GeoScience), a driller, and Water Quality Analysis. He presented a map of potential well sites that will be tested.

He said we should start the surveying work to get it out of the way. CEI can prepare a scope and fee schedule to do the work themselves if the Board is ok with that. The Board agreed to have CEI prepare a scope and fee to conduct the surveying themselves. Mr. McCaffrey wants to make sure we won't be sucking up the current Whitney Well water with the new well and asked when this testing can be done. Mr. Ohl said now or the winter. Mr. Fishbone asked if the drought conditions will affect the testing and Mr. Ohl said it is actually good to conduct the testing in

these worst-case conditions. Mr. Fishbone asked if there were previous well site tests completed and Mr. Ohl said yes and they show underlying geology.

Mr. Orcutt said that \$160,000 was transferred out of the Enterprise Fund into this year's FY21 budget. The breakdown was \$50,000 for manganese mitigation, \$100,000 for Whitney Well Expansion, and \$10,000 for Skyfields SCADA connection.

Mr. Gmeiner asked if we are going to be testing for PFAS again. Mr. Orcutt said yes although it won't be required. Mr. McCaffrey thinks we should pick the well site first and then test for PFAS. Mr. Ohl agreed since PFAS testing is not cheap.

Mr. Orcutt asked what yield the Board is looking for at the new Whitney site and Mr. McCaffrey said at least 200 gallons per minute. Mr. Orcutt said if it is more, we will need to address during the permit process. Mr. McCaffrey would like permitted withdrawal for the extra capacity but said the goal is to be able to pump more in a dry summer.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to appoint CEI to conduct well test studies at the fee provided, by the end of the year, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

#### Longley Road Project Update

Mr. Orcutt said he got the fire flow test results from the engineer. He is hesitant to have CEI look at this project and thinks it should go through land use/ the town engineer so the liability does not fall on the Water Department or CEI. Mr. Gmeiner asked what kind of water background the town engineer has and Mr. Orcutt said they created the plans for Station Ave. Mr. Gmeiner asked who pays and Mr. Orcutt said the town would need to pay the town engineer and then bill the developer. Any internal reviews done by the Water Department would be our costs.

#### Superintendent's Report: Water Levels and Pumping, Summer Water Conservation Program & Current Restrictions and Conditions, Fall Flushing Program

Mr. Orcutt said we are in a severe drought, irrigation systems should be shutting down soon, if not already, and we are putting off flushing for about 2.5 weeks. Fall flushing will be limited this year.

Mr. Orcutt heard from Brad Harper who is concerned about boards being pulled and private wells getting dry. Mr. Fishbone noted this is another instance when a Water Resource Board would be useful. Mr. Orcutt said the state has a Water Resource Commission but locally could have committee with Planning Board, West Groton Water, Groton Water, DPW, Lakes Committee, Board of Health, NWRA, and GPAC. This committee wouldn't need a budget. He will talk to Mr. Haddad to see if there is any interest.

#### Manganese Open Forum

Mr. Orcutt said manganese samples will be taken tomorrow and will probably be similar to September. There was a fire in town on Sunday which stirred up the system.

Mr. Gmeiner said Consumer Reports has a big spread on PFAS and thinks the government limits are way too high. Mr. McCaffrey agrees we should come up with our PFAS comfort level and

take action when needed. He feels any detectable amount in concerning. Mr. Fishbone said other environmental groups are pushing for lower levels also. Mr. McCaffrey doesn't think blending our sources would be the best option. Mr. Orcutt reminded the Board that PFAS testing is not cheap so we should try to test in line with MA DEP's schedule. Mr. Orcutt said the technicians have been making sure there are no PFAS contaminants at the well such as plumbers' tape etc.

Other Business: Bills, Minutes, etc.

Mr. Orcutt asked Mrs. Crory to bring first quarter financials to our next meeting, and to separate out manganese funds.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the minutes of September 22, 2020 as amended, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to adjourn at 8:55pm, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory