

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting
Of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, March 16th, 2021
Virtual Meeting using Zoom

Minutes

Present are Chairman Jack McCaffrey, Vice Chairman Greg Fishbone, Member James Gmeiner, Thomas Orcutt, Water Superintendent, Business Manager Lauren Crory, Robert Rafferty and Dave Patangia of Environmental Partners and Michael Ohl of Comprehensive Environmental.

Mr. McCaffrey called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

Manganese Treatment Plant

Mr. Orcutt asked Mr. Rafferty not to bill us until after Spring Town Meeting. Mr. McCaffrey asked the Board if they reviewed the design scope & fee schedule. Mr. Gmeiner and Mr. Fishbone had no issues with the amendments. The engineers answered questions about the filters and backwash processes at the new treatment plant. Mr. McCaffrey asked what manganese level is being used in the design work and Mr. Rafferty said just over .3 ppm. Mr. McCaffrey said that we are a bit higher now so to keep that in mind. Mr. Orcutt said the levels are between 0.4-0.6 ppm now.

Mr. McCaffrey asked about installing solar panels at the treatment plant and the Board discussed this possibility, outside of the Treatment Plant project. Mr. Rafferty will help research options. Mr. Orcutt said their may be Energy Grants for this sort of thing.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to approve the fees submitted by Environmental Partners for the Manganese Treatment plant design work, Mr. Gmeiner seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Whitney Pond Well #3

Mr. Ohl said the driller has been on site and found a favorable spot. The Board reviewed the schedule and upcoming milestones for the project. Mr. Gmeiner asked when we will find out if we can withdraw more water and Mr. Ohl said we first need to make sure we physically can, and then need to check with DEP regarding the Water Management Act to see if it is allowable. Mr. McCaffrey asked about the water quality results and Mr. Ohl said that all have been fine and similar. Mr. McCaffrey asked if they tested for PFAS and Mr. Ohl said they did not but would recommend it.

Summer Conservation Program

Mr. Orcutt said that winter was not great and we will want to institute the Odd/Even Conservation Program again. Mr. Orcutt said the Western part of the state is in a mild drought.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to institute the Odd/Even Summer Conservation program as we have in the past, May 1st-September 30th, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Transfer of Funds

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to transfer \$285 from general expenses to debt, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Crory reviewed the FY21 budget and said income will be down by about \$72,000, but expenses are also looking to be down. Mr. Orcutt was planning on transferring \$50,000 from the Water Enterprise Fund at Spring Town Meeting, but will increase it to \$100,000 to cover some of the rate income shortfall. The Fall Town Meeting transfer of \$160,000 will not all be spent- but for a cleaner paper trail we will have the Spring Transfer for the rate shortfall and well work.

Mr. Orcutt said we will submit articles to Spring Town Meeting to borrow funds for the Manganese Treatment Plant and Whitney Well #3 projects. Mr. McCaffrey asked why wouldn't use the \$140,000/year being brought in by the Capital Charge. Mr. Orcutt said he would rather borrow it and Mr. Gmeiner added that we need to save the \$140,000/year Capital Charge income for our tough debt years when the old debt and new debt payments overlap.

Mr. McCaffrey asked if we will see rate income go up due to the recent rate increase and Mrs. Crory said we will only be billing out 3 full months of rate increase this fiscal year but may see a small increase.

Mr. Gmeiner noted that the cost of the Treatment Plant has gone up and Mrs. Crory said it went from \$6.6 million to \$7.5 million. Mr. Orcutt said that we will need to adjust our FY22 budget in the fall. Mr. McCaffrey noted that Mr. Rafferty said \$7.5 million but we will hope it is less. Mr. Fishbone asked if it is probably about the same estimate as CEI, but with a larger contingency, and Mr. McCaffrey said yes.

Mr. McCaffrey asked if we need to change our Manganese Capital Charge and Mr. Orcutt said we will review at our rate hearing in November.

Other Business: Bills, Minutes, etc.

Mr. McCaffrey asked about Spring Water Main Flushing and Mr. Orcutt said that they would plan to flush the normal schedule in April.

Mr. McCaffrey asked about the Baddacook Weeds Project and Mr. Orcutt said we agreed to give \$10,000 this year and possible \$10,000 next year. Mr. Fishbone said that our contribution is subject to the town's contribution. Mr. Orcutt agreed but said there has been no formal vote yet to give them the \$10,000 for next year.

There were no minutes to approve at this meeting

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to adjourn at 8:58pm, Mr. McCaffrey seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory

Business Manager