

Groton Water Commission  
Regular Meeting  
Of the  
Board of Water Commissioners  
Tuesday, May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Virtual Meeting using Zoom

**Minutes**

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

Mr. McCaffrey called the meeting to order at 7:35pm.

Manganese Treatment Plant – progress update, revised schedule, scope and fee proposal

Mr. Patangia said we are on schedule and the current probable cost is \$8.6 million. The 30% design will be submitted to DEP and they have been in contact with the Groton Conservation Commission and Planning Board. He will also need to talk to the Board of Health for tight tank as well as the Fire Department. Mr. Orcutt would like to be involved in the Board of Health discussions and Mr. Patangia plans to handle that in September which is ok with Mr. Orcutt.

Mr. McCaffrey said since the current estimate is quite a bit higher than the original concept plan, could they break out how much of the additional cost is because of material increases etc. Mr. Ohl said some of this is detailed on the first page of the cost estimate but he can summarize in a Memo. Mr. McCaffrey wants to be able to easily answer why the cost appears to have gone up by about \$2 million dollars. Mr. Ohl and Mr. Patangia said the majority of this is due to material increases and the 15% contingency. Mr. Orcutt asked when we get to 75% design will the contingency number go down and Mr. Patangia said it should go down to 5%-10% at that time. The escalation may not change.

Mr. McCaffrey asked if the construction is it still prefabricated and Mr. Ohl said it is and the entire design is pretty bare bones construction. Mr. Fishbone is concerned about the increased cost and asked if there are any ways to get this number down. Mr. Orcutt said that electrical is a high number and the current plan is for underground electrical from Lowell Rd. He asked if there is another route to use overhead wires. He also said he is assuming we are retaining soft starts and motor controls that are currently in place. Mr. Patangia said they are leaving the current electrical and he said bringing electrical overhead could provide some cost savings but you do need to deal with storms etc. Mr. Orcutt said we have a great Electrical Department in town and wants them to explore that option. Mr. Ohl added that Groton Electric would do the overhead wire work also.

Mr. Orcutt asked if the cost of equipment so high because we have 3 vessels rather than 2. He also asked is the kind of vessels impact the cost. Mr. Patangia said the pricing is pretty much all

the same for the vessels but overall steel is up about 30%. The vessel cost of about \$250,000 each includes the filter media, filter valves, air scour blower, face piping on filters. Mr. Orcutt asked about the \$1 million construction cost and Mr. Patangia said that is for the lagoons.

Mr. Ohl said there is a cost for hauling of excess material and is wondering if that could be eliminated somehow. Mr. Orcutt said the materials could be hauled to DPW and he will speak with the DPW Director. Mr. Ohl also asked about the fence cost and Mr. Patangia said it will go around the lagoon. Mr. Orcutt thinks this is necessary because there is some foot traffic nearby.

#### Whitney Well III – progress update, schedule

Mr. Ohl has sent the current plans to DEP and they are reviewing it and sent him some questions this week. The questions were just due to not being clear of the alternative analysis process. Our next milestone is to get their approval by end of July. Mr. McCaffrey still wants to try to catch up a month on that schedule

Mr. Ohl said that he is also working on a draft layout for the treatment shed and it will be constructed by Nashoba Tech in the fall and will need to last until the treatment plant is up and running.

Mr. Orcutt said they are working on Baddacook backwash residuals and he will prepare letter to DEP and will have Mr. Ohl review it. He wants DEP to come out in next two weeks. Mr. Orcutt said that prior to the sludge tank being vacuumed, they took some samples of the sludge residual and they are running tests so we can apply for a permit to dispose those materials to DPW or another facility or on site.

Mr. Orcutt said the wells are currently pumping 900 gallons a minute from all sources.

Mr. Orcutt said the technicians are working on water main flushing this week, but it is an extremely limited schedule and they can only flush about 2-3 hrs at a time to keep water levels up. They are scheduled to do flow test with Mr. Patangia next week and will hopefully be able to make it.

Mr. Fishbone asked how the well levels are and Mr. Orcutt said they are very good and he will bring some data but first wants to check sensors are in the right place.

Mr. Gmeiner asked the engineers if either are familiar with Town of Pepperell treatment plant issues and they are not. Mr. Ohl will try to find out more information.

#### Rhonda Mullins – 197 Main St – New Water Connection

Mr. Orcutt recapped the situation at 197 Main St and said she has already been approved for her system so doesn't feel there is much we can do about her storage tanks for fire protection. We can get a policy in place for the future to prevent this from happening again. It will clarify what the Water Department requires for fire sprinklers.

#### Redskin Trail/Boathouse Rd Water Main Extensions- Discussion/Fact Sheet

Mr. Orcutt recapped the situation for the Board. The Highway department sent letters to all residents on Redskin and Boathouse Trail telling them to connect to town water soon if they are interested, because they will be paving the road this year and will not be able to dig it up for 5 years. Mr. Orcutt created a water connection fact sheet for the residents and asked Mrs. Crory to mail it to the residents along with a cover letter. We will then hold a round table discussion for each street to discuss further.

Mr. Orcutt said the department will not be able to fund these extensions because we are already borrowing funds for other projects this year. Mr. Gmeiner agreed that betterments would not be a good option in this case. Mr. McCaffrey asked what will happen if someone on the street sells their home and Board of Health requires them to connect to town water. Mr. Orcutt said this will need to be handled by the Board of Health and he is not sure what they will decide to do.

#### Other Business: Budget, Bills, Minutes, Meeting Schedule

Mr. Orcutt asked Mrs. Crory to run some rate and fee increase scenerios so the Board can start thinking about raising more funds for our upcoming projects as well as our new employee. Mr. Orcutt will continue to work on additional revenue sources such as a change to backflow device requirements and construction oversight.

Mr. McCaffrey asked if we should have good irrigation income this summer and Mr. Orcutt said things look dry and we can hope so because well levels still look ok.

Mrs. Crory will bring Salary and Wage transfer numbers to the next meeting, any encumbrance needed for FY22, and will prepare a end of year budget review.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to approve the minutes of March 16<sup>th</sup> as amended, Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

The next meeting will be June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The Board would like to continue to use Zoom if possible.

Mr. Fishbone made a motion to adjourn at 8:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory