

Groton Water Commission  
Regular Meeting of the  
Board of Water Commissioners  
Tuesday, August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021  
Virtual Meeting using Zoom

**Minutes**

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

Mr. McCaffrey called the meeting to order at 7:32pm.

Manganese Treatment Plant – progress update, revised schedule

Mr. Patangia said they have responded to the Board of Water Commissioners' questions. They received comments from Mr. Orcutt and Mr. Knox and are going through them and will meet later this week. They have coordinated the GELD power to the site and are passing this off to CEI now. They have prepared tight tank permit application to be submitted tomorrow or Thursday, the Planning Board and Stormwater Advisory meeting will be September 9<sup>th</sup>. The big news is the cost estimator gave an updated draft at \$8.7 million with 10% contingency. This is for bidding in January 2022 and 18-month construction. We continue to stay on schedule for the 100% design to MA DEP for November 15<sup>th</sup>. Mr. McCaffrey asked about the extension and Mr. Orcutt said we did not hear from MA DEP yet but expect to see something in the next week or two, if not we will reach out. Mr. McCaffrey asked what the revised date is and Mr. Patangia said the request is for November 15<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Ohl said it did not change the implementation of treatment end date.

Mr. McCaffrey said we need to be careful with an 18-month construction schedule. Mr. Orcutt said he spoke with Mr. Rafferty and said we have placeholders for the Fall Town Meeting for the Whitney Well III and Treatment Plant construction oversights using estimates provided by the engineers. We could wait for the treatment plant borrowing in the spring with a firm number. This could give time for prices to come down. Mr. Orcutt said we will not lose the Whitney sources during peak periods in June, July, and August and this will be written into the bid documents. Mr. McCaffrey thinks Fall Town Meeting borrowing may be better and give more flexibility to contractors. Mr. Rafferty said that contractors don't love to hold bid bonds for more than 30 days. He suggests bidding as early as we can to get some leeway and possibly a better pick of contractors. Mr. McCaffrey agrees. Mr. Fishbone thinks having more time in the schedule is advantage. Mr. Gmeiner agrees to go earlier because doesn't feel waiting will result in better pricing and would have no problem going back to town meeting if the bids are much different. Mr. Ohl agrees that given everything we have seen he is not convinced pricing will drop. Mr. Orcutt said January 31<sup>st</sup> will be the bid date.

Mr. Patangia said they can put it on central registrar beginning of January, due February, have number by end of February. Mr. Orcutt said he needs construction oversight number to ask for at Fall Town Meeting and would request Mr. Ohl and Mr. Rafferty to attend that meeting on September 13<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. McCaffrey asked about the integration of Whitney Well III with the Treatment Plant. Mr. Patangia said he has been talking to CEI about the integration and feels they are moving along possibly over 50%. The outstanding item is the pump for Whitney Well III. Environmental Partners will review CEI's bid documents when they are completed. Mr. Orcutt said Scada is an outstanding item also that will need to be discussed.

#### Whitney Pond Well #3 – progress update. Schedule

The pump tests have finished up since the last meeting. Mr. Simpson put together a presentation regarding the pump test results. Mr. Simpson displayed slides and showed where the pump test took place and the media looked great. They found a good location with even more depth. They looked at 350gpm during the pump test – max permitted would be 700gpm. It was also a dry August so shows a worst-case scenario which MA DEP likes to see. The pump test was supposed to be 5 days but Baddacook went offline so Whitney was cycling on and off more often which is why stability didn't occur on the 5<sup>th</sup> day so they continued 2 more days and when Baddacook was repaired, Whitney got stability. Mr. Gmeiner asked what stability is and Mr. Simpson said the well stops drawing down the water table. Mr. Simpson said it never rained during the pump test. Whitney I and II operated normally. Mr. McCaffrey asked if the bedrock is good or bad and Mr. Simpson said they would prefer sand and this is about as deep as they got.

Mr. Simpson said they are waiting on the full lab samples but Mr. Knox took some samples that looked good. The results show a permit request of 350gpm is favorable. Mr. Orcutt said if we go for the 700gpm MA DEP may slow down the process. We could get a streamflow trigger. Mr. Orcutt asked if 450gpm would be ok or is that too much of an ask. Mr. Simpson said they have not done full environmental impacts but believes 350-450gpm would be ok. Mr. Ohl says the source approval looks at it as worst case – you can't just promise them you won't do it. Mr. McCaffrey says it would be nice for backwashes and wouldn't be using that all of the time. Mr. Ohl said they can proceed with modeling at 450gpm and if anything looks troubling, we will scale back before submitting. Mr. McCaffrey asked how that would affect Mr. Patangia. Mr. Patangia said it will affect the electrical design and could get a larger motor. Mr. Gmeiner asked what Mr. McCaffrey was looking for and he said 300gpm was the original goal. Mr. McCaffrey said with Whitney Well II you get a deeper draw and can help with future capacity. Mr. Fishbone asked if we can't ever pump more than that amount in a minute or is it an average? Mr. Simpson said a day's worth of water – how much you can extract in one day. Mr. Fishbone said that you technically could do 700gpm for 12 hours and that statement is correct.

Mr. Patangia said the tanks are sized for 1300gpm right now – should we change it to 1200gpm and make the chemical tanks smaller? Mr. Orcutt said yes.

Mr. Ohl said they will have drawings for the shed at the next meeting. Mr. Orcutt said Nashoba Tech will come out for a site meeting next week and the Groton Water Department will transfer

money to pay for the shed materials. There is a 24-week lead time on the transformer and Mr. Orcutt told them to go ahead and order it. Mr. Ohl looked at a cost estimate and showed a total of \$580,000 for total construction estimate. It does not include construction oversight. Mr. McCaffrey asked if this includes integrating with the Treatment Plant and Mr. Ohl said a lot of that will just be opening and closing valves. Some equipment will get shifted over so it is not wasted and that will be coordinated so it will be accounted for in the bids to be moved. Mr. Gmeiner asked what costs are not included besides engineering and Mr. Ohl said any permitted costs. Mr. Ohl will add in the other costs (construction oversight etc) and will get us the number. It will be under 1 million.

#### Town Meeting Articles – Fall Town Meeting

Mr. Orcutt said there will be two articles one for transfer from reserve fund and one for borrowing. Mr. Orcutt said the Water Enterprise certified cash reserve came in at about \$580,000. Mr. Orcutt said we need to transfer money for some GELD work and about \$25,000 for the Nashoba Tech shed, we could transfer more if needed. Mrs. Crory asked if we want to put our \$136,000 Manganese Fee money to our manganese fund with our \$722,000 borrowed funds. Mr. Orcutt recommends not transferring all of it. We will need about \$31,000 to manganese spending fund for GELD work and \$25,000 for the Whitney Well III project for the shed. Mr. Orcutt said about \$50,000 total. Mrs. Crory asked if we could put the GELD funds into the Manganese or if that was for the Whitney Well III and Mr. Orcutt said it is related to the Treatment Plant. Mr. Gmeiner said if we do not transfer the manganese fee income, we need to keep it separate on a spreadsheet so it is spent appropriately. Mr. Orcutt said we will transfer \$50,000 out of our general fund. Mr. Gmeiner said the GELD line will power the treatment plant so that is ok. Mr. Orcutt said the other part of our transfer will be for the new employee \$75,000 for wages and \$23,000 for a total round number of \$95,000. Mr. Orcutt said this is a total of \$150,000 transfer and about \$30,000 of that will be from manganese funds. Mrs. Crory will track this on our end.

Mr. McCaffrey asked when we start paying debt will it be one bond. Mr. Orcutt said he and Mrs. Crory will be reviewing and assume with will short term borrow for as long as possible. Mr. Gmeiner said we will most likely be borrowing together but can figure out how to break out the different costs.

Mr. Orcutt said rates and the manganese fee may need to go up. We will get numbers from bond counsel to review.

#### Other Business: budget, bills, minutes, meeting schedule

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the minutes of July 22<sup>nd</sup> as written, Mr. McCaffrey seconded, and Mr. Fishbone abstained because was not in attendance.

Mr. Orcutt will send information as he receives it.

Next Meeting September 14<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully Submitted,

August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021

Lauren Crory