

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, December 14th, 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, Dave Patangia and Bob Rafferty from Environmental Partners, and Michael Ohl of CEI.

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

Manganese Treatment Plant

Mr. Rafferty said we got the DEP permit with just a couple of comments but no big concerns so we are all set to go to bid. We can expect Town Counsel front end specs review within a week. The SCADA updates are still out to bid and we can get that person on board before other work begins. The plan is to submit to central registrar on December 23rd, the tentative date for the pre-bid meeting is January 6th, the final sub bids to be due on January 28th and final general contractor bids due February 15th. Mr. Ohl will get him the pump curve tomorrow.

Mr. Ohl said DEP was reviewing the permit application for the treatment plant and were confused about the requested capacity relative to the Water Management Act approval of the two existing wells and the proposed well. The Water Management Act permitted withdrawals are based on 24-hour operation so it comes down to a permitted volume of .57 million gallons for 1 & 2 and request is .54 million gallons for Whitney Well III. DEP asked why the treatment plant capacity wouldn't be a combined total of over 1 million and Mr. Ohl said you don't run the wells 24 hours per day and based on that explanation DEP did approve the request of 1.73 million gallons per day or 1200 gallons per minute (750 gpm at Whitney Well I & II and 450 at Whitney Well III).

Mr. Gmeiner is reading the DEP document as we don't have approval yet for the 1200 gpm by the way it is worded. Mr. Rafferty says they do discuss the withdrawal for Whitney Well III. Mr. Ohl explained that there are two parts; what you can pump at any instant and what you can take out of the ground in 24-hour period. The central office couldn't approve the full water withdrawal because the Boston office has to approve it first. We have the 1200 per minute we just don't have the Whitney Well III permit yet. Mr. Patangia said the 1200 gpm for the treatment plant is listed on Page 2/6 of the approval. Mr. Gmeiner said he is concerned about the wording of the approval of the flow under specific conditions. Mr. Ohl said the specific condition number 1 says it is

about what you can take out at the same time versus within the 24 hour period. The current Water Management act caps the existing wells at .576 million gallons per 24-hour period. That would be 400 gpm. We run it higher but for less time for are still under the .576 million gallons. The 400 gpm and the 750 gpm have nothing to do with the 1200 gpm. Specific condition 5 mentions Whitney Well III also. Mr. Orcutt said they were careful not to mention the new gpm approval until the Central Office approves.

Mr. McCaffrey asked if Whitney Well III was not in play would the treatment plant still work. Mr. Patangia said there are provisions for backwashes to work around Whitney Well III if you need to & there would only be esthetic issues not performance issues. Mr. McCaffrey asked about hiring the SCADA contractor and Mr. Rafferty said the contractor will hire the integrator and a separate town contract will be made to update Baddacook. Mr. Orcutt would like to get that started this spring and summer. Mr. Orcutt said we need software at Baddacook but doesn't know if we need to rebuild the entire SCADA. Mr. McCaffrey pointed out we didn't budget for the Baddacook SCADA upgrade and Mr. Orcutt said it will come out of borrowed funds.

Mr. Patangia said they will send out an addendum to postpone integrator interviews to early January.

Mr. McCaffrey asked if Mr. Orcutt sees any complexity with the next few months for both projects since they are on similar timelines and he does not think there will be a problem and Mr. Ohl thinks since due to the different size and scope of works there will be different types of contractors looking at each project.

Mr. Patangia said they use Project Dog electronic hosting site and all documents are uploaded and contractors are familiar with it. The contractors submit to the site. He also said there will be staggering when they go to central registrar. Mr. Patangia said that the contractors will be required to submit references and they have worked with most contractors that will bid. The contractors will need to be DECAMM certified.

Whitney Pond Well #3

Mr. Ohl will require the DECAMM certification for Whitney Well III also because knows of enough contractors that have it and will bid. Mr. McCaffrey asked about the Boston Office since there are 6 days left before Christmas and he said The Environmental Notification form through MEPA is still in the works and the Water Management Act approval which was just submitted. Getting the documents over to legal counsel to review for bidding purposes. The cost estimate for well screen is under \$10,000. We are still looking at January for DEP approval, MEPA approval, and Water Management Approval for the increase.

Mr. Orcutt does not foresee them denying our increased withdrawal because they see our growth potential and annual report data. Mr. Ohl doesn't see any environmental impact and there were no comments on the initial screening. We tested 350 gpm and are asking 375 gpm so feel very confident.

Mr. McCaffrey asked if they reduce the withdrawal request would they reduce the pump size and Mr. Ohl said no because the instantaneous flow may be the same.

Mr. Ohl said the grade of the facility was going to be grade T2 which would have changed operator requirements but we explained why it shouldn't and it remains T1.

Mr. Orcutt said the well screen will be worked on and will order by the 1st of the year. It is about \$10,000 and we will get three quotes. It may take 8-10 weeks to receive.

Mr. McCaffrey asked if the poles are up yet and Mr. Orcutt didn't see anything over the weekend but they may be out there this week.

Finances – Treatment Plant and Whitney Well III

Mrs. Crory had sent out final budget spreadsheets that were submitted to the Town. The manganese fee was updated. Mr. Orcutt said we are trying to keep residential fees at about \$35/quarter and make up the rest with Small Commercial, Large Commercial, and Schools. Multi-Family units will be charged a Large Commercial Rates. Mr. McCaffrey asked if the increased connection fees will help us achieve the manganese fee income and Mr. Orcutt said no it is to balance the budget. Mr. Orcutt said if we have a large influx in development and fees we could allocate that excess to Whitney Well III debt. Mr. McCaffrey said that hopefully the new customers and irrigation use will pay for the Whitney Well III. Mr. Orcutt said that is the goal because the general rate payers aren't in dire need of more capacity it is new customers and irrigators.

Other Business

Mr. Orcutt asked the technicians to document any amount of work we do for contractors that we can bill out in hopes to collect more income to help pay for their wages.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the minutes of November 9th, 2021 as amended, Mr. Fishbone seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the minutes of November 23rd, 2021 as amended, Mr. Fishbone seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner asked if PFAS results are posted for other areas and Mr. Orcutt said ours are up and is not sure about others.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 8:20pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lauren Crory