

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, March 29th, 2022
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 Alysa Longo from Environmental Partners and David Roman and Michael Ohl from CEI.

Mr. McCaffrey called the meeting to order at 7:30pm. He stated that we are being recorded and everyone introduced themselves.

Manganese Treatment Plant – progress update, schedule

Mr. Patangia introduced Ms. Longo who was the lead on the design for the treatment plant and will be the construction manager on the project. She will be attending the meetings and will be giving construction updates at BOWC meetings in the future. The pre-construction meeting was yesterday at Town Hall and minutes will be sent to the Board. The notice to proceed was issued yesterday so the calendar has started. They should break ground in July which is slightly later than anticipated but we should be fine. Mr. Orcutt asked about cash flow and Mr. Patangia said we do not have the cash schedule yet and it will be worked out probably within a month. Mr. Orcutt is requesting the Board to allow Mr. Haddad to sign the construction invoices along with Mr. Orcutt.

Mr. Gmeiner moved to authorize the Town Manager and Water Superintendent to sign construction pay records for the Water Treatment Plant, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously by roll call vote. Mr. McCaffrey asked they notify the Board sees anything out of the ordinary or any big changes.

Mr. Gmeiner asked how the site walk went and Mr. Orcutt said they were impressed and they have plenty of space. He is going to look into cold storage for them. Mr. Ohl said the Whitney Well III contractors should be off the site by July when they break ground for the Treatment Plant. Mr. Orcutt said the transformer is in.

Mr. McCaffrey asked if we will be putting something in the newspaper now and Mr. Orcutt said we may want to wait until they are really getting to the site. Mr. Orcutt said we could do something for Whitney Well III first and then the Treatment Plant closer to July.

Mr. Ohl asked if Scott Williamson could join virtually at one point and Mr. Patangia thinks having his report from Ms. Lagos would be sufficient. Mr. Ohl was thinking more along the lines of people meeting him so people know him at the site and he knows the Commissioners in case they make a site visit.

Ms. Lagos said RH White is a great contractor and hopes they will get some good work done before winter and they will keep up on supply chain issues.

Whitney Pond Well #3 – progress update, schedule

Mr. Ohl said the low bidder was DL Mahar and the contracts have been signed and the Notice to Proceed had been issued. They should be mobilizing early-mid April so will be wrapping up by the end of June. They will first do the excavation and then they will look at the soil materials to size the well screen and then can release it for fabrication (6-8 weeks to get the well screen). There will be on-site activity, then a pause, followed by the install. Mr. McCaffrey asked what happens to the excavated materials and Mr. Ohl said there is not much and it remains the town's property as long as its suitable. Mr. Orcutt said it can be used on site if needed or can give it to DPW.

Mr. Ohl said that the bidder for the chemical feed came in (one bid) from Dankris Builders. It's a perfect project for them and the bid amount was a total of \$579,000. Mr. Ohl got a call later that afternoon of another bidder but turns out they would have been a higher bid anyway. Mr. Orcutt said we have worked with them before. The cost is looking to be total construction of about \$700,000 plus engineering and contingencies costing another \$300,000 for a total cost of about one million.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to award the Whitney Well III building contract of the project to Dankris Builders in the amount of \$579,000, Mr. Fishbone seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Mr. Orcutt will send the Notice of Award paperwork tomorrow. Mr. McCaffrey asked when the connection will be made and if it will be in April and Mr. Ohl will need to check with Dankris but knows we will be before any peak demands.

Mr. Roman said he submitted the MA Wildlife MESA review at the end of last week so will hear by the end of June. They do not think there will be any issues and seems to be a formality. They have been working with the Interbasin Transfer Act staff on the insignificance of the transfer and looking at the documents from the 1980's. Mr. Roman is touching base with them every couple of days and is hoping for answers within the next week or so. There are a few other applications in the works WS19, WS20, and Water Management Act permit amendments WMA2. We should hear back by May.

Mr. McCaffrey asked if we can pump Whitney Well III at the current permitted withdrawals by the end of June. Mr. Roman said that is the best-case scenario. Mr. Roman said that to pump at our new level August would be the best case.

Fiscal Year 2022 & 2023

Mrs. Crory recapped our Spring Transfer amount of \$95,000 and said out construction income has picked up so we could adjust the amount if needed. Mr. McCaffrey would like to lower it to \$75,000 and Mr. Orcutt asked the Board to make a motion on that.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion for a Spring Town Meeting Enterprise fund transfer up to \$95,000, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Mr. Gmeiner reminded the Board even if our income exceeds our budget, we still need to transfer for any extra expenses to satisfy Enterprise Fund accounting principles.

Mrs. Crory reviewed the updated debt schedules which have been reduced \$10,000-\$20,000 per year with the actual bid data.

Mr. McCaffrey asked if that was based on reduced interest rates and Mrs. Crory said it is based on lower principal for the permanent borrowing and the rate projection was actually increased a bit to keep up with market changes.

Summer Water Conservation Program – 2022

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to institute the Odd/Even Conservation Program, during the hours of 12am-9am, 6pm-9pm, No Mondays, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Mr. McCaffrey is hoping we won't have a total water ban this summer. Mr. Orcutt is worried that there was no snow on the ground in March so let's hope for April rains.

Other Business

Mr. Orcutt was at the Selectboard meeting last night discussing the 58 parts per trillion PFAS levels at the High School, they have shut off the bubbles and use bottled water for drinking and cooking and a second sample confirmed the high levels. The raw water sample was closer to 500 parts per trillion. Mr. McCaffrey asked if DEP was aware and Mr. Orcutt said the lab results were submitted. There is discussion of using the water for irrigation purposes and Mr. Orcutt has concerns about spreading the water around. There were discussions about getting municipal water to the high school. Mr. Orcutt said the Selectboard is leading this issue at this point.

Mr. Gmeiner said, as suggested by Mr. Degen at the Selectboard meeting, that we may want a notice that people should not be using sewage sludge based fertilizers on their

properties. Mr. Orcutt will reach out to GELD about this because they send bills to the whole town.

Mr. McCaffrey asked if they hired anyone yet and Mr. Orcutt said they have not but are in talks with an engineering firm.

The next meeting will be April 12th.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the minutes of March 15th, 2022 as amended and subject to Mr. Fishbone's amendments, Mr. McCaffrey seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 8:23pm, Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory