

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, June 21st, 2022
Virtual Meeting using Zoom

Minutes

Present are Chairman Jack McCaffrey, Member James Gmeiner, Superintendent Tom Orcutt, Business Manager Lauren Crory, Dave Patangia, Bob Rafferty, and Alysa Longo from Environmental Partners, 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

Ms. Longo said they are up to 75 submittals and 66 resubmittals so far. She spoke to RH White about a few priorities. There have been 9 total RFIs and they have made 8 responses. RH White is aware of the building department requirements for trailers and porta potties. Mr. Orcutt asked how it is going with the building department and she said it going smoothly as far as she knows. They are aware the building permit fee will not be waived. Mr. Orcutt said that the commissioners have the option to vote to ask the Selectboard to waive the building permit fees because at a previous Selectboard meeting they had mentioned trying to help out somehow. Mr. McCaffrey would like to know how much we are talking about. Mr. Gmeiner doesn't mind asking them because they did offer to help. Mr. McCaffrey asked what trailers were on site and Ms. Longo said RH White had a trailer. She also said they will be marking out the wetland buffer, and they are coordinating with Groton Electric on temporary power. There are no changes to the schedule and they plan to mobilize by July 6th. Mr. Orcutt will try to get a press release in the paper next week. Ms. Longo said there will be a project sign and it will have a phone number to call with any questions. Mr. Orcutt said there will be no picture but there will be contact information.

Ms. Longo said they can have the first onsite meeting the 2nd week of July. Mr. Patangia thinks they might want to have the meeting on July 6th to remind them of everything at the pre-construction meeting. Ms. Longo and Mr. Rafferty are available to be present at that meeting. Ms. Longo said the contractor is aware that Dankris will be on site with them.

The first construction bill should be submitted sometime in June.

Mr. McCaffrey asked about Mr. Williamson who works on site and Ms. Longo said he works for Environmental Partners and reports to her and Mr. Patangia said he is eyes and ears on site and makes sure the contractor is on track and he will review bills etc.

Mr. Patangia asked for comments on the sign in the next few days to get that rolling.

Mr. McCaffrey asked if there is anything of concern and Ms. Longo said there is not and they will let us know.

Whitney Pond Well #3

Mr. Ohl said that DL Mahar was on site today and the well screen and 18 inch well casing was installed along with the packing and it will be developed this week into next. They should be finished by July 7th. Mr. Orcutt asked how many hours of pumping and developing and Mr. Ohl said pumping at about 500-550 gallons. They will discharge very close to the well and they will develop it and then have an additional performance pump test to verify that we are getting the yield that was reported from the test well work. They will also get samples for water quality. Mr. Ohl said everything is welded with no sealants. Mr. Orcutt said make sure nothing has PFAS.

Mr. Ohl said that Dankris is doing the tie-in next Tuesday and everything is staked out and looking just how we expected it to. Mr. McCaffrey asked if the main is sub surface and hasn't been opened yet and Mr. Ohl said that the plan is to open it before anything is shut down and get everything ready so they can quickly shut it down and get the new piece in which may take about 4 hours. Mr. Ohl said they will be onsite the month of July taking care the rest. That will be the overlap with RH White.

Mr. Ohl said there are three permits lingering. The WMA and the MA DEP Central Region are being held up by the ITA. The Merrimack to Nashua Interbasin Transfer is being reviewed. They talked to DEP specifically about Lost Lake and the approved amount immediately puts us out of the running for an insignificance and would need a detailed report done (lengthy). The Shattuck Wells are registered as a withdrawal out of the Merrimack Basin for a similar withdrawal amount. Asked them to consider shifting the registration from Shattuck to Whitney Well III. It seems favorable so far, but they are trying to resolve some lingering questions and are seeing if there will be any restrictions. They are still considering it as of this week. Mr. Orcutt asked how we should be applying pressure and Mr. Ohl said it wouldn't hurt for Mr. Orcutt or a commissioner to also reach out.

Mr. Orcutt said DEP is looking over shoulders given the drought status and he doesn't think it will get better anytime soon or have any recharge. Mr. Orcutt may have to reduce to one day a week. Mr. Orcutt knows we need revenue but it's a balance. Mr. McCaffrey said Whitney Well III will still help the situation if that's the case. Mr. Orcutt said yes and it can also take pressure off of Whitney I and II.

Fiscal Year 2022 & 2023

Mrs. Crory reviewed final year budget forecast which shows rate income meeting budget and construction income coming in slightly less than budget. Expenses are in line with the budget and some of the transferred money may be spent as we follow up on year end open invoices. She will bring updated financials and capital project information to the next meeting. Mr. McCaffrey said it will be good to have good capital project spreadsheets for the upcoming year as construction is underway.

Mr. Orcutt spoke about FY23 and said we will be seeing inflated costs and may need to transfer money into our budget. He expects an increase in electric rates as well as gas and chemical increases.

Other Business

Mr. McCaffrey asked about a potential new Solar grant and Mr. Orcutt said there is a new GAP grant that includes solar panels. Mr. Orcutt tried to get money for the generator but it did not work so solar panels could be the next best thing which would help heating and cooling expenses at the new facility. Mr. McCaffrey asked if a generator is better than batteries and Mr. Patangia said DEP wouldn't accept batteries.

Mr. Orcutt said that EPA has changed the advisory limit for PFAS but it doesn't leave much room to deflect questions from the public and bottled water companies don't test for PFAS. If it goes above 2 parts per trillion it would be an advisory. Mr. McCaffrey understands they want zero PFAS but how do you know have zero because there are non-detect numbers. Mr. Gmeiner said that EPA is giving a lower number than states and is wondering how ready we are for PFAS treatment at the new plant and if we should do it now or wait to see what the levels are and if funding is available. Mr. Orcutt said there are funds for PFAS treatment but not enough.

Mr. Orcutt said there are \$250,000 of ARPA funds for upgrades to the Main St/Taylor Water Main to help with Deluxe project and they received two bids that are being reviewed currently. Mr. Gmeiner said they are moving along and waiting for various approvals. Mr. McCaffrey asked if it would be homes or condos and Mr. Gmeiner believes it will be apartments. Mr. Orcutt said it would also need fire sprinklers. Mr. Gmeiner also noted this is a good upgrade since there have been breaks at the Taylor St water main but this will also help supply the fire flows. Mr. McCaffrey asked if we have many customers down there and Mr. Orcutt said most are connected and it wouldn't result in direct new connections but there a few parcels that could be extended and connected.

Mr. Orcutt discussed the water conservation program. The water levels are still very low and we don't see any precipitation that will change the aquifer anytime soon and we have warm temperatures coming. Mr. Orcutt recommends to impose watering to Saturdays and Sundays only right now. Mr. Gmeiner would be inclined to do this if we are able to.

Mr. Orcutt made a motion effective immediately to limit all irrigation to odd/even on Saturdays and Sundays until further notice, Mr. Gmeiner made a motion and the motion carried unanimously. There will be no ban to agriculture and Mr. Orcutt will speak with them. Mr. Orcutt will also speak to the schools. Mr. Fishbone to post on Facebook.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to vote Mr. Gmeiner to sign expense warrants while Mr. Orcutt is on vacation, Mr. fishbone seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Next Meeting June 28th.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 8:47pm, Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory