

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, February 14th, 2023
Virtual Meeting using Zoom

Minutes

Present are Chairman Jack McCaffrey, Vice Chairman Greg Fishbone, Member James Gmeiner, Superintendent Tom Orcutt, Business Manager Lauren Crory.

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

Manganese

Mr. Orcutt said things are progressing very well. The slab was poured last week and will be tested tomorrow to make sure it is at 75% strength. This week, the vessels will be placed in the facility. Monday, they will commence framing of the building. Most of the piping has been completed on the infield (east of the driveway). One raw water pipe is across the driveway to Whitney I and II. Once the building starts going up next week, it will go fast to become enclosed. Mr. McCaffrey asked what he meant by putting the vessels inside and Mr. Orcutt said the crane will set them on their footings but there won't be a roof for a few weeks. Mr. Orcutt has reflective vests and hardhats for everybody that goes on site. You must check in with the RH White trailer when visiting the site. The next section of underground piping will be for the wastewater backflow from the backwash to the lagoon. Mr. Orcutt said the plan is to try to get the raw water connection to Whitney Well I and II in the next couple of weeks rather than put it off until September, since it is low volume right now. Mr. McCaffrey asked that Mr. Orcutt consult Mr. Schmidt from Environmental Partners to review all activities in the next 6 months that will affect any normal operations of Whitney Well I and II. Mr. Orcutt thinks we should be able to get an update for the next meeting. Mr. McCaffrey asked about driving vehicles around the area and Mr. Orcutt has been staying on this regarding environmental impacts and access to the well. Mr. Orcutt said they have been in touch when there have been access issues. Mr. Fishbone asked if they want to go to the site do they need pre arraignments and Mr. Orcutt said just to go to the second trailer (RH White's trailer) to check in. You need a vest, hardhat, and glasses.

Mr. McCaffrey asked about the solar panels and Mr. Orcutt needs to reach out to the state to get the contract moving. Mr. McCaffrey would prefer US made solar panels. Mr. Orcutt said that's fine unless the state doesn't let us specify.

Whitney

Mr. Ohl told Mr. Orcutt that everything is in, except for one breaker. We are still waiting for the 21 day lapse period to end and should be pumping to waste hopefully the first week of March. Mr. McCaffrey asked if we can pump Whitney Well III into our water supply in March and Mr.

Orcutt said there are many tests that need to be run. Mr. Orcutt wants to run it to waste for a week or two because there could be additional water quality sampling required. Mr. Orcutt would also like to take another PFAS test sometime this spring. Mr. McCaffrey asked where that water will be pushed and Mr. Orcutt said there is a swale, or they can put a hose and run it to route 40. The swale may be better for recharge purposes. Mr. Gmeiner asked if they have the variable drive and Mr. Orcutt said they do. Mr. McCaffrey asked if they are putting the variable drive in and Mr. Orcutt said no it will be a soft start at Whitney Well III and the variable drive will be going into the treatment facility in June. Mr. Orcutt said you can run Whitney Well III from Baddacook when the SCADA panel is done which should be done by April. Mr. Orcutt confirmed we should be able to pump more water this summer.

ARPA

Mr. Orcutt said Taylor St is not out to bid yet. The money is still set aside for the project. Mr. Orcutt put Taylor St into other grant programs along with other projects and we will see what comes in.

Operating Budget

Mrs. Crory recapped the current debt plan for the new capital projects. The engineering funds (a total of about \$1 million) will be permanently borrowed this June. The remaining funds will be permanently borrowed in FY24. Although a portion of that (\$4.5 million could be permanently borrowed the following year if it makes sense to do so).

Conservation Program

Mr. Orcutt said the state requires us to have a water conservation program and said if we are under our current permit and there are no restrictions by the state then we will have the ability to pump up to our permit. Mr. Orcutt would ask the Board to vote the summer conservation from May 1st to October 1st like past years. Mr. McCaffrey said it would be nice if we could set up the odd/even conservation program and hopefully operate that way the entire summer. Mr. Orcutt would like to work with the public a bit more and educate more on when people are watering their lawns. Mr. McCaffrey asked if we should have a new conservation plan and Mr. Orcutt said no and that three days a week should be plenty for maintaining lawns. Mr. McCaffrey said we typically must tighten the restrictions mid-summer and Mr. Orcutt said that is correct and will probably be the case this summer without much snow pack. Once the state says we are in a moderate drought, we must tighten restrictions.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion for the odd/even conservation program May 1-Oct 1 between the hours of 12am-9am and 6pm-9pm on odd or even days depending on house numbers (no watering on Mondays), Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Superintendent Operations Overview: Thomas Orcutt

Mr. Orcutt said the Metro West Water Supply connection will be pumped from Framingham to Westford, Littleton, Ayer etc. He said we are in the loop and the plan is evolving. It is a 15–20-year plan. Mr. Gmeiner asked about how they get the capacity number and they took the average

from the annual statistical report. Mr. Orcutt thought that was low and he is going to come up with a number based on growth. Mr. Gmeiner asked if this would be supplemental to our system and Mr. Orcutt said yes and is attractive because of capacity and it is PFAS free. Mr. McCaffrey asked if this includes West Groton and Mr. Orcutt said they were not interested. Mr. Fishbone asked if there is a cost estimate and Mr. Orcutt said there are no numbers yet.

Other Business

Mr. Orcutt said that he is working on a short-term plan to truck in water to the High School as a short-term fix. MA DEP will want the Groton Water Department to manage this. Mr. McCaffrey asked about getting a PFAS clean tanker truck. Mr. Schmidt said this tanker truck will remain at the high school and will remain sanitized and it needs to be off MA DEP's approved list. Mr. Orcutt said that this is for drinking water only. They are working on their own plan for irrigation.

No Expense Warrant approved.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the minutes of December 6th as amended, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and Mr. McCaffrey abstained.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the minutes of December 13th as amended, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and Mr. McCaffrey abstained.

Next Meeting February 28th, 2023.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 8:40pm, Mr. Fishbone seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory