

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, February 28th, 2023
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Minutes

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

Mr. McCaffrey called the meeting to order at 7:32pm. He stated that the meeting is being recorded and everyone introduced themselves.

Manganese Treatment Plant

Mr. Patangia said the contractor is currently concentrating on lagoons and site utilities. The backwash is complete and the tight tank has been set. There have been 305 submittals and have returned 296. He assumes we are about 75% through with submittals. They have received 42 RFIs and all have been responded to. Mr. Patangia said that the schedule looks ok in terms of no need to shut down Whitney I or II during peak demands. Work will be done inside the building during peak season and no shut downs should be needed until October. They told contractor Whitney Well I and II cannot go offline and they will work with us. Mr. McCaffrey asked about tie ins and Mr. Patangia said that the original schedule has tie ins later in the year but for convenience it may happen in the spring.

Mr. McCaffrey asked if the VFD will be moved from Whitney I and II to the treatment plant and Mr. Orcutt said no there will be a new VFD in the treatment plant. Mr. McCaffrey asked how we will use Whitney Well III and Mr. Orcutt said that we will need to run it through the soft start. Mr. McCaffrey asked when the roof will be on and Ms. Schenkel believes the roof will be coming up at the end of March. Mr. McCaffrey asked about the solar panel grant and Mr. Orcutt is waiting on signed documents to submit to the state. Mr. McCaffrey asked when RH White will get the solar panel information and Mr. Orcutt would think about four weeks. Mr. Rafferty said they will talk to Mr. McCaffrey about domestic suppliers when the time comes. Mr. McCaffrey said currently SunPower may be the best option or Sunrun.

Whitney Pond Well #3

Mr. Ohl has good news and said the electrical subcontractor has the internal components for the two panels. They had plans to be out there today through Thursday to get the building energized by the end of the week. Subsequently, the heat will be on and ITS has the panel fabricated and ready to go. Mr. Ohl said they will have a soft start instead of the VFD. They have bypassed a manual transfer switch that is not coming until June. Concurrently, the public final appeal period for the Water Management Act is just about up and nothing has been heard. Separately, they have been going back and forth with MA DEP Central on some lingering questions. Everything

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should be ready to run in mid-March. Mr. Orcutt said DEP will need to come out and review. Mr. McCaffrey asked how the pump will be run and Mr. Ohl said it should be able to be run through SCADA (just not the motor speed). Mr. McCaffrey asked if there is a manual gate valve and Mr. Ohl said there are some, but they are not really made for managing motor speed. Mr. Orcutt said they will need to find the correct pumping speed through trial and error. Mr. Ohl and Mr. Orcutt still wants to run Whitney Well III to waste for some time before its actively being used.

Mr. McCaffrey confirmed that we can use it by April 1st and Mr. Ohl said yes.

ARPA Funds – Taylor and Main St Replacement Project

Mr. Rafferty said we are waiting the MA DOT permit and that is the last piece. It's been internally reviewed and then they will be ready to go to bid. Mr. Rafferty said the bid will probably be in April or so. Mr. Rafferty said they will talk contractors about the availability of pipe and waiting for the conductor lab to be closed out.

Fiscal Year 2023 Operating Budget

Mrs. Crory reviewed the current and forecasted expenses and identified various line items that are exceeding their budget including Well Maintenance (due to extra well cleanings), Electricity (due to rate increases), Meters (due to accelerated meter changes this year), Chemicals due to inflation, System Parts and Equipment (due to new chemical pumps), among a few smaller items. Other line items should be under budget. The net shortfall is forecasted at about \$65,000.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to transfer \$75,000 from the Water Enterprise Fund at the spring town meeting, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Crory believes that the extra spending will be “made up” on the income side as income is forecasted to exceed out budget.

Other Business

Mr. McCaffrey asked if the short-term high school PFAS plan is to truck in water and Mr. Orcutt said it is. The long-term plan is to pipe Groton Water to the high school. Mr. McCaffrey asked if that is final and Mr. Orcutt said they still need to discuss Groton's plan with the other towns involved. Mr. McCaffrey asked if Environmental Partners is designing this pipe and Mr. Orcutt said that EP was the only engineer to bid and the money is coming from ARPA and the Town. There will not be Water Department funds used. Mr. Gmeiner asked if everyone is aware of Pepperell's latest proposal and Mr. Orcutt said no. Mr. Gmeiner asked if town is paying for this or the school district. Mr. Orcutt believes it will be the town but portioned out between Groton and Dunstable (after SRF loans and Grants). Mr. Gmeiner is concerned about the mechanism of how Groton will enforce Dunstable to pay their share.

Next Meeting is March 14th, 2023.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 8:36pm, Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

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Respectfully Submitted,
Lauren Crory

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