

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, January 24th, 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, Dave Patangia, Bob Rafferty, and Tyler Schmidt from Environmental Partners, and Michael Ohl from CEI.

Mr. McCaffrey called the meeting to order at 7:33pm. He stated that we are being recorded and everyone introduced themselves.

Manganese Treatment Plant – progress update, schedule

Mr. Schmidt said that the footings have been installed, work is being done at the backwash pump station, much of the yard piping is done, steel has been delivered, steel erection will be done in the next two weeks, work is on schedule except weather delays and electrical in slab is taking a bit longer. The slab is to be poured in the next two weeks. Mr. McCaffrey asked if that put us behind and Mr. Schmidt thinks they will get caught up and hopefully the weather stays mild while they finish concrete work. Mr. Patangia said they could pour the slab then put up the steel or do it in reverse so it is ok that the slab is not poured yet. Mr. McCaffrey asked if the upcoming snow will affect the schedule and Mr. Schmidt said they will need to play it by ear. Mr. McCaffrey asked about long lead items and if we have a list and Mr. Schmidt said that most of them have been delivered including the generator and the pre-engineered building was delivered this week. They are still actively pursuing certain electrical items and checking in on any other items that may be a long lead. Mr. Schmidt said that temporary power is available at the site.

Mr. Schmidt said there have been 281 submittals 264 have been returned and 17 are open (one is high priority regarding water proofing). There have been 38 RFIs and 37 returned. There have been 6 change orders and 4 were accepted and 2 were rejected. All the change orders resulted in a \$17,000 credit. A draft pay requisition for \$550,000 (\$220,000 generator) will be coming for December. There will be an onsite meeting tomorrow for color selection for the building.

Mr. Schmidt shared drone photos of the progress so far.

Mr. McCaffrey asked Mr. Orcutt if DEP wants to check on any of the projects at this point and Mr. Orcutt said at some point they will be out regarding Whitney Well III. Mr. Orcutt said that one water connection will be made on Thursday (finished water to the plant). The raw water connections are to be done in the next few weeks.

Whitney Pond Well #3

Mr. Ohl said there has not been much activity because we are waiting on a few pieces of electrical equipment including the internals to the main distribution panel and the panel board for lighting and miscellaneous power. They do have the motor starter that was added by change order and they have come up with a meter socket. The completion date has stayed the same. The panel components are to be shipped February 8th from the U.S. and are to be delivered about five days after and then the electrician will be on site to do the internal building wiring. Mr. McCaffrey asked in March 1 it will be up and running and Mr. Ohl confirmed. Mr. Ohl said another long lead is the VFD for the well motor. The motor starter was received but the VFD will be needed by RH White's electrical sub because it will be installed in the treatment plant. The Whitney Well III contractor expects that to be shipped in May. Mr. McCaffrey said that meant that March will not be a variable speed operation. Mr. McCaffrey asked if they can use variable speed by May and Mr. Ohl said no but it can be operated similarly with a gate valve.

Mr. Ohl said on the Water Management Act side there has been a draft circulated and it is pending signature and issuance so will hopefully be completed in the next few weeks. Mr. Orcutt has not heard any differently and there is no need to push right now. Mr. Orcutt said there are new Water Management Act guidelines when there is a drought. He said we will not be stressing the three wells and will still have limits to abide by. However, the third well will make it easier to manage what we can do. Mr. McCaffrey asked that Whitney Well III will have a somewhat useful start this summer and Mr. Orcutt and Mr. Ohl agree.

Mr. Ohl said the central region drinking water program application was put on hold but they did share comments and they are holding out until we have the Water Management Act in hand and it will just be a few weeks afterwards. Mr. Ohl said we can nudge them as soon as we get the Water Management Act permit.

Mr. McCaffrey thanked the engineers and thinks the site is looking good.

ARPA Funds- Taylor and Main St Replacement Project – progress update

Mr. Schmidt said its in the permitting phase right now and they are finishing up specifications and hoping to have everything ready when DOT gives the all clear. Mr. Orcutt said that Mr. Schmidt and EP have been doing design work and permits and then the project will be put out to bid. Once we see the pricing, we will know how far we can go but the main goal is to get Taylor Street reconnected. Mr. Orcutt said all engineering bills have been paid by ARPA funds and does not expect the Water Budget to pay for anything to get the 8" loop to 500 Main St. Mr. Schmidt and Mr. Orcutt anticipate work being done in June and July and the work will be done at night to alleviate traffic concerns. Mr. Rafferty talked to the conductor lab and they anticipate closing out their whole site. Mr. McCaffrey said it sounds like the schedule is in our court and Mr. Orcutt said we have plenty of time to do what we need.

Other Business

Mr. Orcutt said the RFP is out to design and install a water connection to the High School. He said that currently Mr. Schmidt and Mr. Rafferty are working on determining an immediate water connection with Pepperell. Mr. Schmidt has spoken with Pepperell to make sure the temporary connection 1.5 miles down North Street would work hydraulically and it would. They also provided their water model that was updated in 2018. He has also spoken to two of the three bulk water vendors for potable water. They will get back to him on specific numbers based on about two years. Mr. Schmidt will need to know what the school wants to do in the summer and when schools are closed. They are essentially doing a cost assessment right now. Mr. Orcutt said that treatment for PFAS for Pepperell water will be included in the assessment. They are also looking at availability of materials. Mr. Rafferty said it depends on how much water the high school wants (drinking only or irrigation also). Mr. Orcutt would push to get drinking water first and then worry about irrigation. Mr. Schmidt said that trucking water in during the temporary connection installation would also be included in the assessment.

Mr. Fishbone asked about the conductor lab project and Mr. Rafferty said the site has contaminated water and soil but its finally low enough they can close out the site and no longer needs to be handled as hazardous material. Mr. McCaffrey said the pipe will be clean but the ground water would be an issue.

Mr. Gmeiner has been going to the meetings and asked if we will need to filter Pepperell's water if we use it and Mr. Schmidt said that Pepperell levels are just under the action level and regulations will be updated very soon and advised treatment. Mr. Orcutt and Mr. McCaffrey said that whatever we do for temporary water connection has to be PFAS "free". Mr. Gmeiner asked if we would be treating wastewater if it had PFAS. Mr. Gmeiner said these points have been made clear to Mr. Haddad and Mrs. Collette. Mr. McCaffrey said the commission doesn't have the primarily say but they do have the say to provide safe water to the town and Mr. Fishbone agreed.

Mr. Gmeiner reminded the commissioners that even our water system is not zero or completely "free" of PFAS and Mr. McCaffrey said we are hovering around non-detectable except for one 8 parts per million sample result at Whitney Well that was most likely due to a coating on a pump.

Mr. Orcutt said the School Superintendent would like to have something other than bottles water by fall.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the minutes of November 15th as amended, Mr. Fishbone seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the minutes of November 22nd as amended, Mr. Fishbone seconded and Mr. McCaffrey abstained.

EW15 was approved.

Mr. Orcutt said that propane tanks are needed for the Water Treatment Plant and he will be getting quotes and it should be about \$30,000. Mr. Gmeiner thinks we will end up being better

off buying them and need to look at inspection costs. Mr. Orcutt said that they will be 2000 gallon tanks and a pad will be built.

Mr. Orcutt said we receive a favorable grant for the solar panels (\$103,000) but nothing has been publicized yet. Once we get a Notice of Award we will get it engineered on the building. It will help utility costs. Mr. McCaffrey said that there could be some freestanding solar panels also at a later point. Mr. McCaffrey said our emergency generator will switch on in the case of an electrical blackout and Baddacook could be switched over by hand if needed.

Next Meeting is on February 14th.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 8:57pm, Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory