

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

Minutes

Present are Chairman Jack McCaffrey, Vice Chairman Greg Fishbone, Member James Gmeiner, Superintendent Tom Orcutt, Bob Rafferty from Environmental Partners, and Michael Ohl from CEI, and resident Eric McGranahan.

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

Manganese Treatment Plant

Mr. Rafferty said there has been great progress and they have been doing a lot of work on lagoon. Mr. Rafferty said a heavier stone may need to be used in the lagoon.

Mr. Schmidt arrived at 7:33pm.

Mr. Schmidt said the walls have been installed and the roof should be complete this week. The architect will be on site and do a walk through of the building erection. Miller Engineering tested the structural steel and are having two pieces corrected. There will be clean up this week for DEP's Whitney Well III visit. R.H. White will mobilize to interior work and masonry in the next 2 weeks. There have been 306/314 submittals returned and 45/45 RFIs responded to. The Change Orders credit is currently at \$18,000 and it regarding the propane tank. The pay requisitions for February being are being processed. The march pay requisition is being reviewed for and is for \$242,000.

Mr. McCaffrey asked about the solar progress and Mr. Orcutt is waiting for signatures from the state before he can issue the notice to proceed.

Mr. McCaffrey asked if there has been any tie into Whitney I and II and Mr. Orcutt said that will be in the fall.

Mr. Gmeiner and Mr. Fishbone were able to visit the site and thought it looked good. Mr. Orcutt said the roof was completed this morning.

Whitney Pond Well #3

Mr. Ohl said the progress is continuing and the electrician, contractor and instrumentation supplier were there on Monday. The SCADA programmer (ITS) will be on site Thursday with the electrical subcontractor. The system should be able to be run at the end of the day. The formal startup and testing will be next week. The plan is to run to waste for the month of April before DEP approval and going online. There are a few change order items including a soft start motor starter because of the VFD's long lead time. Also, there is a portable generator with a long

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lead time so they will bypass around it for now. A ladder safety post was installed. A raw water sample tap was in the vault but they wanted the line running to the building and this may cost about \$1300. There are credits for the SCADA work (\$50,000) and for the direct purchase of chemical metering pumps so the total current credit is at \$42,000. DEP had a comment on the flow meter in terms of sizing and we need to work through logistics and costs and will report back in two weeks. This does not stop us from starting up the pump station.

Mr. McCaffrey asked how long to flush the system and Mr. Orcutt asked if 2-3 weeks would be ok and Mr. Ohl thinks that is ok. DEP probably needs a week to approve it. Mr. Ohl thinks mid-April they could do final water quality samples.

Mr. McCaffrey asked if the operators have been there and Mr. Orcutt said they have. Mr. Orcutt hopes to have it in the system the first week of May.

High School PFAS – Updates

Mr. Orcutt said they have a meeting tomorrow and Mr. Schmidt is working on hydraulics. Mr. Orcutt should have more information at the next meeting.

Mr. McCaffrey would like Mr. Orcutt to update the Groton Herald directly on the High School PFAS status (with his usual contacts).

Mr. Orcutt said they will continue to use bottled water until DEP says they cannot.

Water Operations Staffing/On-Call

Mr. Orcutt said there are a lot of opportunities out there and he wants to make sure there is a competitive edge to stay in Groton. A nearby community is paying \$20,000 more for a water foreman. Mr. McCaffrey asked what the technicians may not like about their situations and Mr. Orcutt said maybe health insurance or better hourly rates that are available. Mr. Orcutt said that on-call pay is something that can be reviewed although Mr. Orcutt has tried to set ours to be competitive. The license stipends are attractive also because not all communities do that but this could be reviewed. Mr. Orcutt said the work environment is good but will always come down to money. Mr. Orcutt said their vehicles are fine and it is a bonus they can use work vehicles to commute. Mr. Orcutt said nobody is complaining right now but he does not want someone to get pulled to a higher wage position. Mr. Gmeiner asked when the contracts open again and Mr. Orcutt said there is about 2 years left. Mr. Orcutt said the new treatment plant may start a conservation and trigger more overtime.

Mr. Orcutt said the technicians asked him to no longer be in the overtime rotation and it is a big financial hit for him, if the Board wants to discuss this further in private, and review salaries and/or wages.

64 Champney St- Abatement

Mr. McGranahan explained that he had no hot water and checked his basement to find that his hot water tank was leaking into his dirt basement. He had to replace his hot water heater. The

water department called him regarding the spike in usage and informed him of the abatement policy.

Mr. Orcutt said typically Mr. McGranahan is charged about 14 units per quarter. His last quarter was 144 units so 130 units were additional. Mr. Orcutt recommended abating the extra 130 units to be billed at the lowest water tier. Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to abate \$414.17, Mr. Fishbone seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Mr. McCaffrey asked if his water meter was replaced and Mr. McGranahan said the technicians did not change it yet because he has old valves in the house, but this will be scheduled soon.

38 Fairway St – Review Abatement

The Board reviewed the abatement request from the previous meeting. The owner was not happy with the abatement amount. Mr. Gmeiner suggested a credit of \$100 towards the purchase of her new low-flow toilet. Mr. Fishbone did not want to set that precedent for anyone buying low flow appliances. Mr. Gmeiner suggested an alternative idea to give the resident up to two years to pay off the additional balance. Mr. Gmeiner made the motion to grant two years to pay off the current balance, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Unkety Brook Well Site – Conservation Restriction

Stan Dillis drew a map to show the area that will be excluded from the conservation restrictions. Mr. Orcutt said they can vote on this at one of the next two meetings.

Other Business

Mr. Fishbone made a motion to approve the minutes of February 14th, 2023 as amended, Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to approve the minutes of

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 8:24pm, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory