

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, August 8th, 2023
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Minutes

Present are Chairman Jack McCaffrey, Vice Chairman Greg Fishbone, Superintendent Tom Orcutt, Business Manager Lauren Crory and Dave Patangia, and Tyler Schmidt from Environmental Partners, and Michael Ohl from CEI. Mr. Gmeiner joined at 8:02pm.

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

Manganese Treatment Plant

Mr. Schmidt said RH White installed pedestals, backwash waste pumps, prepped chemical rooms, installed plumbing and gas piping, HVAC equipment, overhead lighting, switches, conduit, ceiling panels, door frames, performed work on lagoon slopes, buttoning up sitework, will be finishing pedestals, and fire sprinklers. They have returned 366/374 submittals and 66/67 RFIs. The changes to the contract value are still around zero. The next pay requisition is for July and is around \$545,000.

Mr. Schmidt said that the solar panels are being worked on and researched at this point. They are also discussing solar with Harbor Controls so it will be visible on Scada. Mr. McCaffrey suggested looking into Mission Solar in San Antonio, Texas. Mr. Schmidt has not talked to them yet.

Mr. Patangia said they are a bit frustrated with a few US based solar companies that will not supply for this project. He is concerned about time. Mr. Schmidt said they are working with installers with SunPower locally, who said SunPower and they are pushing and the lead times are 4-6 months. Mr. Patangia said this could push the project past the end of the year if the lead time is that long.

Mr. Schmidt said they could release the change order to get RH White to get vendor quotes and add a specification for no Chinese Manufacturing of the panels.

Whitney Pond Well #3

Mr. Ohl said the big news is that we received DEP approval to put the well online. We are still running it to waste with a slightly modified discharge. A few pay requisitions are coming in and we will still hold retainage until the job is completed to satisfaction. Mr. Orcutt said in the DEP letter, there are a few things we need to address, and Mr. Ohl said those are in Mr. Orcutt's court to modify some sample schedules etc.

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Mr. Ohl thinks the PFAS results will continue to go down and it is due to construction contamination.

Fiscal Year 2023 Operating Budget

Mrs. Crory did not have a budget update and said we will review once the Certified Free Cash is released.

Superintendents Update

Mr. Orcutt said that the calendar year pumping looks good, but June and July were very bad. We will need to watch the revenue as the first fiscal year months are not looking good for pumping. The technicians have been busy with backflow device testing. New work order software will be in place in a few weeks. We will be finalizing the 500 Main St documents by the end of the month. They have a few more zoning boards of appeals meeting and Waiting on Massworks application should know by October.

Mr. Orcutt said that there were no bidders for the Taylor St project at bid opening probably because it is a small project \$150,000. We will take the Taylor St project and lump it with the Massworks project. We will use ARPA funds, and then put one big package out to bid for the Taylor St and Deluxe property. This was already the plan for the Deluxe property but now will include Taylor St.

Mr. Schmidt said Mass DOT put restrictions on the work due to it being on and near 119. The project became less desirable. Mr. Schmidt said the hydraulic analysis is being worked on and he will check in with his colleague on the status. Mr. Schmidt will reach out to the contractors on the plan holder list when it is time to rebid.

PFAS

Mr. McCaffrey recapped that the Selectboard originally was in favor of connecting the High School water to Pepperell, then voted for Groton, and now is interested in Pepperell again. Mr. McCaffrey spoke with Selectboard Member Pine and she had many questions including the Interbasin Transfer issue. They want water to the ballfields and the highschool. Mr. McCaffrey asked if Mr. Orcutt and Mr. Schmidt can put together a schedule. Mr. Schmidt agrees Groton water could be irrigating ballfields in the Spring of 2025. Mr. McCaffrey asked if they could create a schedule to prove this date. Mr. Fishbone asked about the interbasin issue. Mr. Schmidt said that it will take effect when you transfer water between basins and leave town boundaries. So, it is ok to transfer water in town but if sewerage it is not part of it. The sewerage customers fall under the ITA because the sewage goes to Pepperell. In theory, we could extend a water main from Groton to the High School just for IRR. The domestic flow to the school would trigger the ITA issue.

Mr. Gmeiner joined at 8:02pm.

Mr. Schmidt said we would be looking at Fall 2024 with the Pepperell option and Spring 2025 for Groton. Mr. Orcutt thinks that is tight for Pepperell due to SRF funding timeline. Mr. Schmidt

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said that if you need state funding, you would need to file two separate applications of funding. Mr. McCaffrey wants them to create these realistic schedules.

Mr. McCaffrey said the second part is when can they get drinking water. Mr. Schmidt said EP prepared a letter to the state requesting to transfer the Lost Lake Allocation to benefit this project. This would enable 323,000 gallons on a max day basis. It would put this plan under significance on ITA and would no longer need two phases. Mr. McCaffrey said the Pepperell Treatment Plant would be 3-5 years and wants to know how long it would be for Groton. Mr. Schmidt said if state allows them to forfeit the Lost Lake volume, they would anticipate permitting by June of next year. Otherwise, we would need a year before we can even speak with them and that would delay would force the project to be split into two.

Mr. Gmeiner asked if they are giving up Lost Lake, will it affect Four Corners and Mr. Schmidt said it will not. Mr. Gmeiner asked if Mr. Schimdt needs a vote and he said that it does not matter to EP but Mr. Gmeiner said they will vote on it anyways. Mr. Schmidt said they will not move forward until Sewer officially votes to release it.

Mr. Fishbone said Selectboard Member Pine asked about chlorine booster, rates, and when the million would be received. Mr. McCaffrey reiterated that we expect to bring in around \$50,000 a year from the High School domestic and irrigation revenue.

Mr. Orcutt will post the meeting in case the members want to come to the Selectboard meeting on Monday. Mr. Gmeiner thinks they will be talking about finances and overrides.

Other Business

The Next Meeting is August 22nd.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the minutes of July 18th, 2023 as amended, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 8:32pm, Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory