

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, June 27th, 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 Tyler Schmidt from Environmental Partners, and Michael Ohl from CEI.

Mr. McCaffrey called the meeting to order at 7:48pm. He stated that the meeting is being recorded and everyone introduced themselves.

Manganese Treatment Plant

Mr. Schmidt said a lot of progress is being made including windows, security screens, some areas are primed and painted, stones were poured into the lagoons, the barn door was installed, curbing installed, prepped the sidewalks for concrete pours, and overhead light work. There have been 345/350 submittals and 62/63 RFIs returned. There have been 10/11 change orders approved and the total change order has settled in at \$0. The last pay requisition was for May and was around \$450,000. The June pay requisition will be ready on about July 7th. The next on-site meeting is June 29th and the next virtual meeting is on July 19th.

Mr. McCaffrey toured the plant and asked about the concrete piers for the big tanks. Mr. Schmidt said they debating on reworking the spacing versus relocating the piers. Mr. Schmidt would prefer rework of the spacing. Mr. Schmidt hopes to have it resolved in the next two weeks. Mr. McCaffrey asked about any upcoming delays. Mr. Schmidt said the MCC was delayed until December and the problem was resolved with a change to the panel design.

Mr. Orcutt asked about the plastic spool pieces that were rejected and Mr. Schmidt said they are going back to ductile iron.

Mr. Fishbone asked about the solar panel change order and Mr. Rafferty said it was just received and will be worked on shortly.

Mr. Fishbone asked about the PFAS preparation design work and Mr. Rafferty said they will get the re-engineering back to Mr. Orcutt next week. Mr. McCaffrey asked what treatment design would be used for the PFAS re-engineering and Mr. Rafferty said they would layout the utilities for either option.

Whitney Pond Well #3

Mr. Ohl said the contractor and SCADA integrator were on site for some operational punch list items. He reported that DEP's follow up visit went well. The bugs were worked out with VFD

settings and integration with the SCADA system so things are running very well. Mr. Ohl said the crew is running it to waste currently. The next step will be to get formal written approval from DEP and then the decision to put it online.

Mr. Orcutt explained the original PFAS sample was 8.5 ppt when the well was developed. It was resampled a few weeks ago and was at 18 ppt and it was resampled again today. We will also get a sample done with another company. Mr. Orcutt assumes it is due to something in the equipment and not the aquifer itself. Mr. Orcutt needs it to be below 10 ppt before going online. Mr. Orcutt said that fortunately we have not had to use it yet and May was our best pumping for any May on record.

Fiscal Year 2023 Operating Budget

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to move \$30,000 from the Manganese Treatment Plant Capital Project back to the Water Enterprise Fund, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and upon a roll call vote the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to move \$15,780 from the Whitney Well III Capital Project back to the Water Enterprise Fund, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and upon a roll call vote the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to transfer \$3,000 from general expenses to Salaries, Mr. McCaffrey seconded and upon a roll call vote the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to transfer \$6,000 from general expenses to Wages, Mr. McCaffrey seconded and upon a roll call vote the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. McCaffrey asked Mrs. Crory about moving money around our Manganese Treatment Plant accounts. Mrs. Crory explained that the accounting department handles the borrowed money and pays invoices from that account. Mrs. Crory tracks the Manganese Fee income in her office, but it is essentially part of our general reserve fund. She said the Manganese Fee income has been built up for the past few years and we will begin to withdraw from it in FY24 and FY25 to supplement of Manganese Treatment Plant debt payments.

Mrs. Crory also reviewed her free cash estimate at a total of \$778,245 once our FY24 budget transfer is deducted. This will be split into a general reserve number and manganese fee total at the end of the fiscal year.

Operational Updates

Mr. McCaffrey asked about a high school PFAS update. Mr. Gmeiner said the Selectboard is looking into Option 1 and would tie into Pepperell and Option 4 is to bring Groton Water to the school and Dunstable. Mr. Orcutt said the Pepperell option would require PFAS treatment at the high school. Mr. McCaffrey said the cost appears low but we must treat it, at an additional cost. Mr. McCaffrey asked what the iron and manganese levels are at the Jersey Well. Mr. McCaffrey said if it has high iron and manganese, that will also need to be filtered out. We need to ask the Business Manager in Pepperell for Iron & Manganese levels in the water and things that could

clog a filter and then assess what treatment would be needed. Pre-treatment may be needed which would take years to construct. Mr. Orcutt said he will ask for the water quality profile of Jersey Well. Mr. McCaffrey said the Pepperell option is appearing to be less expensive but we need to get to the true cost. Mr. McCaffrey asked Mr. Schmidt to help with this. Mr. Schmidt said EP will prepare a technical memorandum and will look at the water chemistry, siting, pre-treatment, operational costs, construction, schedule, and implementation costs. They will also compare it to the Groton option. Mr. McCaffrey said Option 1A could be considered Pepperell to GDRHS and will clean it at the high school while Pepperell assumes they can operate at 13 ppt in a few years, which is unlikely. Mr. McCaffrey thinks this is not an option. A GDRHS treatment would be created and then Pepperell is going to have to make their own treatment plan in a year or so. Mr. Schmidt said it was presented as GDRHS getting temporary treatment until Pepperell creates their own. Mr. Gmeiner said they are talking about Groton kicking in money for Pepperell's PFAS treatment plant as a capital contribution. Mr. Schmidt said a temporary facility can be used with rental equipment but still would need to pilot. You can rent it quickly if needed but at a high cost. Mr. Orcutt said there is funding going around and we want to jump on it as soon as we can.

Mr. Orcutt said that the DEP Sanitary Survey went extremely well this year.

Mr. Orcutt reported that there is a new work order system in the works. Mrs. Crory will put together a cost spreadsheet for the new system for the Board to review.

Mr. Orcutt said the SCADA system is going to need to be updated at a cost of \$100,000+ in the middle of FY24.

Other Business

The Next Meeting is July 11th at 7:30pm and is a public hearing at town hall for 500 Main St. Mr. Gmeiner would like this to be a first hearing so that he can get up to speed and then make decisions at a continued hearing.

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

Mr. McCaffrey asked if he needed to take any action regarding the topic at the May 23rd Executive Session and Mr. Gmeiner and Mr. Fishbone said it has already been approved.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 9:02pm, Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory

June 27th, 2023