

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, October 10th, 2023
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Minutes

Present are Chairman Jack McCaffrey, Member James Gmeiner, Superintendent Tom Orcutt, Business Manager Lauren Crory and Dave Patangia from Environmental Partners and Michael Ohl from CEI.

Mr. McCaffrey called the meeting to order at 7:02pm. He stated that the meeting is being recorded and everyone introduced themselves.

Manganese Treatment Plant – Update (EP)

Mr. Patangia said they are working on the chemical feed systems. They heard that the solar panels will be here at the end of the year. There has not been anything official from R.H. White, but they are expecting they will request a contract extension. They will probably ask for 4–8 week extension. Mr. Orcutt asked if there is justification for an extension. Mr. Orcutt asked if this will cost us more money. Mr. Patangia said the Solar Panels will be one reason for extension and maybe supply issues. Mr. Orcutt said they did not report any supply issues. Mr. Patangia said the amount of sequencing needed does not add up. Mr. Orcutt asked him to provide a weekly cost for engineering if there is an extension, as well as the cost to have a resident on site. Mr. Patangia will look into it.

Mr. Patangia thinks we should hear by the end of the month if they will be requesting. Mr. Orcutt asked about a change order on the solar panels and Mr. Patangia said that it will be arriving in the next couple of weeks. Mr. Orcutt will need the documentation to send to the state to make sure they are ok with the solar panel choices etc. Mr. Orcutt said field work and painting is being done. Mr. Orcutt said plumbing is moving along but the electrical work seems a little light.

Vice Chairman Greg Fishbone arrived at 7:10pm.

Mr. Schmidt arrived at 7:12pm.

Mr. Schmidt said the directive was issued to move forward and Fall River is preparing submittals for the solar panels.

Mr. Schmidt also thinks the contractor may request an extension based on Environmental Partner's experience. A 4-6 week schedule extension is likely. Mr. McCaffrey asked if they will request soon or wait until the last moment. Mr. Schmidt thinks they want to keep the deadline as long as possible.

Mr. Fishbone asked about the big picture schedule. Mr. Schmidt said startup is scheduled around October 23rd but they don't have active plant power. They are working on the chemical feed

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system and chemicals will be delivered in a few weeks. They will need to conduct the pressure testing but we do not expect many issues. Harbor Controls is to get all programming done in a 2-week time frame. The schedule completion date is December 11th with the October 23rd start up. They issued a field order changing sequence of connection using Whitney Well III for startup water. The Westford interconnection will happen for 2-week period when Whitney I and II need to be shut down for electrical tie in.

Mr. McCaffrey said it sounds like the building completion is delayed which is really the delay if no other issues arise with startup. Mr. Schmidt hopes DEP can still inspect before Christmas.

Mr. McCaffrey asked if Mr. Orcutt will work on Whitney I and II in January and Mr. Orcutt said the wells are typically cleaned in March. March is the best when the private schools are closed. Mr. Orcutt has activated the interconnection for 1-2 weeks. Whitney Well III results will be in next week and if it is online it will help. Mr. Orcutt needs to flush a portion of the system also. Lead and Copper sampling is next week so we cannot change drinking sources yet. We must run these samples again once the plant is up and running.

Mr. Patangia said they did issue the work change directive for the solar panels. Environmental Partners gave authority to proceed. The solar panel work and other change order work will be on one big change order. An extension of contract would be another change order. Mr. McCaffrey asked if R.H. White will stick around to make sure everything is up and running well. Mr. Schmidt said retainage is also held for that reason.

Mr. Patangia reminded Mr. Ohl that the decamp evaluation must be done by the OPM.

Mr. Schmidt will bring cost estimates for the PFAS remediation options to an upcoming meeting.

Whitney Pond Well #3 – Close Out

Mr. Orcutt said they pulled the pump out and Mahar examined it and steam cleaned it and reinstalled it last week. They made sure there is no tape. It was back in operation Thursday and took the new sample on Friday. The transfer switch order was cancelled as this won't be necessary once the Treatment Plant is online.

FY2023 Budget Update (Business Manager)

Mrs. Crory reviewed the summary of FY24 financials which she suspects will be an average or slightly below average income year. There will be additional expenses that will need to be paid for out of cash reserves or leftover capital project funds. She will be working on FY25 budget numbers.

Operational Updates (Superintendent)

Mr. Orcutt said a grant was awarded for Taylor Street work. The team will be working on Lead and Copper sampling next week. They will be flushing the system afterwards (condensed schedule).

Mr. Gmeiner asked if we hope there is not a lot of Westford use and Mr. Orcutt said they close a valve at Duck Pond so only that side will be using Westford water. The Lost Lake area stays on the center system.

Mr. Orcutt said we will get dirty water calls when the treatment plant goes online. Baddacook Well cannot keep up with the entire town alone.

Mr. Orcutt said if Whitney Well III comes back clean we do not need the Westford Connection. We will know next week.

Other Business

Mr. Orcutt said next week there will be High School PFAS discussion regarding Town Meeting. Mr. Orcutt can answer any questions.

Mr. Orcutt helped the sustainability commission with a PFAS Discussion at the Senior Center.

Mr. McCaffrey asked if the electric fee structure will change for us and Mr. Orcutt said our rate system will be unchanged.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the minutes of September 12th, 2023, as amended, Mr. Fishbone seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Fishbone made a motion to adjourn at 8:12pm, Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory