

Groton Water Commission  
Regular Meeting of the  
Board of Water Commissioners  
Tuesday, December 19th, 2023  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

**Minutes**

Present are Vice Chairman (acting Chairman) Greg Fishbone, Member James Gmeiner, Superintendent Tom Orcutt, Business Manager Lauren Crory.

Mr. Fishbone called the meeting to order at 7:30pm. He announced that the meeting was being recorded and everyone introduced themselves.

Public Hearing Continued – Water Rates, Fees and Charges

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to reopen the continued public hearing, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Crory updated the budget based on the previous discussions. The temporary PFAS Treatment line item for \$100,000 was removed. A \$50,000 capital fund line item was added in. It can be used as insurance for another bad summer or to help replenish some funds being used for this year's deficit. This brought the expense side down by \$50,000. Mrs. Crory then decreased the revenue projections by reducing the temporary deficit fee from \$100,000 to \$50,000. Mr. Gmeiner suggested naming it, Deficit Fee (temporary), for clarity.

Mrs. Crory reviewed the rate spreadsheet to show what various deficit fees should bring in, and also split it into Domestic and Irrigation accounts. She expects to see a \$150,000-\$200,000 deficit in FY24 due to income shortage. There was a \$150,000 fall transfer that can now be used to offset the deficit as well as the new \$50,000 from Deficit Fee. Mr. Fishbone clarified that we are hoping to bring in an extra \$50,000 in FY24 and in FY25.

Mr. Orcutt does not want to charge the fee to both Domestic and Irrigation meters. They already get charged two capital fees for the Whitney Well III capital charge. Mr. Fishbone feels comfortable with a \$13 quarterly fee on domestic accounts only, temporarily. Mr. Gmeiner asked what a \$15 fee would look like and it would bring in another \$7,000.

Mr. Gmeiner asked to review the FY25 revenue budget again. Mrs. Crory said construction income is very low/conservative around \$30,000. Mr. Orcutt hopes that more will come in but he is not sure about many upcoming projects. Mr. Gmeiner asked if we are getting funds from the 500 Main St (Groton Farms) project and Mrs. Crory said it is listed separately but we do expect the first of five payments. Mr. Gmeiner said ideally, we will save these funds or put towards a project but understands for FY25 this is not possible.

Mrs. Crory asked if we will charge this fee to the Senior Tax Exemption list (they do not get charged capital fees). Mr. Gmeiner and Mr. Fishbone are ok waiving this fee for those customers. Mrs. Crory estimates there are about 25 customers.

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Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to close the rate hearing, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to adopt a deficit fee for \$13 per quarter for domestic customers only, starting January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 and ending December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024 unless otherwise changed by the Board at a subsequent rate hearing, Mr. Fishbone seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to offer a waiver of the deficit fee to seniors that qualify for the property tax exemptions, Mr. Fishbone seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Crory will send the revised budget to Mr. Haddad.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approved the minutes of November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023 as written, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to adjourn at 7:54pm, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory