

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, February 6th, 2024
2nd Floor Meeting Room

Minutes

Present are Chairman Jack McCaffrey, Vice Chairman Greg Fishbone, Member James Gmeiner, Superintendent Tom Orcutt, Business Manager Lauren Crory, and Groton Resident Judy Anderson.

Mr. McCaffrey called the meeting to order at 1:07pm.

Water Department Transition Plan – Superintendent

Mr. Orcutt said the Superintendent job description was decreased from a Masters Degree requirement to a Bachelors Degree or equivalent experience. The minimum requirement will be an Associates Degree. Any internal candidate will need to get their Associates Degree within a certain time frame. Mr. Orcutt said that the Town Manager supports transferring qualified employees internally.

Mr. Fishbone likes the idea of hiring internally if there is a strong candidate and he appreciates the town culture of doing this. Mr. Fishbone said the only sticking point is the education requirement but feels this can be accommodated.

Mr. Gmeiner said he knows many people that have been successful without a college degree. His concern would be dealing with the state regulations, which you don't need a degree to do, but can be challenging.

Mr. Orcutt said if the Board agrees, the candidate would start training an internal candidate immediately in an unofficial capacity. Mr. Orcutt would want the candidate to be able to begin classes in June of 2024 towards his Associate Degree.

Mr. McCaffrey asked if the Board agreed, will it definitely be this internal candidate. Mr. Orcutt believes so unless the internal candidate decides it is too much or doesn't want to take the courses for his Associates Degree.

Mr. McCaffrey noted that if we hired a Superintendent from another town, he or she would be qualified and ready. Mr. Orcutt said yes but then it is a matter of fit. Mr. Orcutt would want the staff to be involved in the process if it was an external candidate.

Mr. McCaffrey wants to make sure the candidate is confident to deal with the Selectboard and other departments. Mr. Orcutt said all of those relationships will come with time as he is involved in projects and meetings.

Mr. McCaffrey said it sounds like this is a probationary period for a few months and Mr. Orcutt said yes, he could back out by June. He also asked if the candidate can get a degree in any

February 6th, 2024

subject or if there will be stipulations. Mr. Orcutt said there will be stipulations and it will need to be a related field such as Business. Mr. Orcutt would ask the Board to cover 50% of the education cost which he estimates at about \$14,000. The candidate would need to maintain a grade point average.

Mr. Fishbone likes that we know the candidate and can invest in him and trust him and he may have loyalty to stick around awhile. Mr. Gmeiner is also on board with trying this internal candidate.

Mr. Orcutt said we have another zoom meeting next week. Mr. Orcutt said that in a few weeks, we should bring the internal candidate in to discuss the process. Mr. McCaffrey, Mr. Orcutt and Mr. Haddad will need to meet to discuss compensation with the internal candidate.

Mr. Orcutt suggested a motion that the Board is in favor of commencing discussions with the Town Manager to begin the Water Superintendent Training Program with the internal candidate, Mr. Gmeiner so moved, and Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. McCaffrey would like today's discussion to be written up by Human Resources for the candidate to make sure everything is clear.

Mrs. Anderson said she would just make sure the internal candidate has the confidence needed.

Other Business

Mrs. Crory told the Board the interest rate on the construction borrowing came in at 3.57% and will have an additional premium applied. She will work on getting updated debt schedules.

Mr. Orcutt distributed a map regarding the Groton High School water connection and reviewed the plan for Phase I and Phase II (East and West).

Mr. Fishbone asked if this plan will be altered and Mr. Orcutt said this is the final plan in agreement.

Mr. Gmeiner said the Kemp St Dunstable customers are not in the agreement. There are no rights for Groton to do anything in this area. There are about 27 homes. Mr. Orcutt will ask Mr. Haddad to add this clause. (It was later determined this clause was already outlined in the Phase I agreement).

Mr. Orcutt said the ribbon cutting at the Treatment Plant will be the first week in May.

Whitney Well III will be pumped to waste in two weeks once R.H. White to is done.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 2:00pm, Mr. Fishbone seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Next Meeting via Zoom on February 13th.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory

February 6th, 2024