

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Wednesday, November 12th, 2025
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Minutes

Present are Chairman John McCaffrey, Member James Gmeiner, Superintendent Tom Orcutt, Business Manager Lauren Crory.

Mr. McCaffrey called the meeting to order at 7:41pm. He stated that the meeting is being recorded and everyone introduced themselves.

Fiscal Year 2027 Operation Budget – 1st Draft

Before reviewing the FY2027 Draft Budget, Mrs. Crory recapped some discussion points from the previous meeting such as the reduction in the reserve fund due to the delay of the Groton Farms project and the need to purchase a new truck as well as upcoming changes with the retirement of Mr. Orcutt and onboarding of Mr. Decker. She also noted that this draft does not capture increased rate revenue from the new water connections at the high school and affected homes or the debt that will be paid to the town for the water main connection. She also added that although this year and FY27 will be tough, there are some large projects on the horizon that will help strengthen our reserve fund as they trickle in. However, we will need to be weary of how we budget them according to the new Department of Revenue requirements.

Mrs. Crory reviewed the Payroll spreadsheet and made some adjustments given by Mr. Orcutt. She then reviewed the Expenses which should remain stable. The only large adjustment is to the intergovernmental bill due to increased costs, a new employee taking the health insurance, and paying out a portion of Mr. Orcutt's insurance. She also felt obligated to remove the Capital Fund expense line item since we cannot budget our full Construction Income potential under the new Department of Revenue guidance. This could be added back in the future when we are able to budget an increased construction income (if we know it is coming in by September or have a signed contract). Mr. Gmeiner agrees with removing this line item as we navigate the next few years.

Mrs. Crory reviewed the debt schedule which shows another reduction in old debt in FY27 before all old debt falls off in FY28. She reminded the Board that although the old debt is falling off, it is being repurposed to pay the manganese debt fee. If we keep the capital fees the same, we can recoup about \$50,000 of the old debt to the operating budget in FY28. We will monitor and decide later.

Mrs. Crory reviewed the income averages and decided to use the actual rate income from FY25. She said we are tracking slightly higher this year so feels the FY25 number is a bit more

conservative. This number does not include the new high school and home connections and we may factor this in as we add this data into the budget.

Mrs. Crory reviewed the connection fee schedule and Mr. Orcutt believes one of the items (Casella Meadows) should not be carried in FY27 because cannot be connected until Phase III of the water main extension is complete. He also recommended some minor adjustments and reviewed which projects were completed and now can be removed. The end result was about \$85,000 of construction income which should be a conservative estimate. Mrs. Crory will also take a look at the average number of residential connections in the past years.

Mrs. Crory then reviewed the revenue budget draft which carried forward the rate revenue and construction revenue as discussed. She reviewed her reserve fund transfers which she broke into three pieces; Operating Budget \$50,000, Whitney Well III \$24,970, and Manganese Treatment Plant \$24,380. She is ok with the \$50,000 operating budget transfer because said we will pick up \$50,000 of operating income in FY28 when all the old debt falls off (if we keep the fees the same). The Whitney Well III transfer is a supplement to the capital fee for the Whitney Well III debt payment, and this will be the last year of the Manganese Fund Transfer that we have tracked within our reserve fund. Moving forward, the manganese debt payment will be paid only from the operating income and capital fee. With all these items in place, the budget is was short about \$87,000 which was remedied by a rate increase line item.

Mr. McCaffrey wanted to discuss the debt payment that we will be making to the town to supplement their Chicopee Row Water Main SRF loan. Mr. Orcutt is estimating this amount to be about \$35,000 per year. Mrs. Crory's initial thought would be that the increased rate revenue would offset this debt payment. Mr. McCaffrey asked about using the 3M Settlement funds (received by the Water Department due to PFAS contamination) to pay this debt since it is related to PFAS. This would allow the operating budget to keep the increased rate revenue and strengthen the budget. Mrs. Crory will investigate this method and adjust the budget if we can go this route. Mr. Gmeiner added that we can pay the town the debt payment at the end of fiscal year if needed. Mr. Orcutt thinks they will be giving us an invoice at the time of the bond payment but can ask about delaying payment if needed.

Other Business

Mr. McCaffrey said the Groton Herald posted an article about the filter issue at the Manganese Treatment Plant. Mr. Orcutt said they made it out to sound like a very big issue. Mr. McCaffrey reiterated that this type of thing is common when a new process is put in to place and there are usually some hiccups that need to be worked out. Neither would consider the issue to be of detrimental concern and are confident it will be resolved in a costly and timely manner. Mr. Orcutt is going to speak with someone at the Herald to discuss some of the recent articles.

Next Meetings will be Tuesday, November 18th.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 8:42pm, Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

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Respectfully Submitted,
Lauren Crory

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