

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, July 14th, 2026
Virtual Meeting using Zoom

Minutes

Present are Vice Chairman Greg Fishbone, Member James Gmeiner, Water Superintendent Dan Stoneking, Business Manager Lauren Crory.

Mr. Fishbone called the meeting to order at 7:32pm. He stated that we are being recorded and everyone introduced themselves.

Operational Updates – Water Superintendent

Mr. Stoneking presented a spreadsheet showing both static and ending pumping levels. He said that Senior Water Operator, Stephen Knox, does not want to get below 11 feet at Whitney Well III. He reported that precipitation in the past 30 days has been 2.02 inches.

Mr. Stoneking presented a map of Raddin Rd to show the progress on the Water Main Extension project. The Contractor is making good progress and is averaging about 250 ft per day.

Mr. Stoneking said the town received 15 applications for the Water Operator position (to replace Mr. Knox when he retires) and 2 were interviewed but were not going to be the right fit. He said that another posting will be made later this summer. He wants to be sure to find the right fit and does not want to rush into anything.

Mr. Stoneking reported that Mr. Maloney and Mr. Knox have been adjusting backwashing to address a filter media issue and have been successful.

Mr. Stoneking said the Water Department will be conducting a sanitary survey this year but they are waiting on DEP to schedule it. He said water main flushing is planned for the fall, as well as Lead and Copper sampling so he has begun the process of selecting sample sites.

Water Conservation (vote to be taken) – Water Superintendent

He asked if the commissioners want to vote to let Mr. Stoneking make changes to the Conservation Program in accordance with the state guidelines, as the changes occur, rather than waiting for a vote at a meeting which is only held every two weeks. Mr. Gmeiner feels comfortable with this but Mr. Fishbone would rather discuss and vote on any changes before releasing to the public. He said that a quick meeting to schedule the discussion vote could be scheduled if needed. Mr. Stoneking said the next update will be in early August.

Mr. Stoneking said he did not realize a vote was typically taken and had already released the Non-Essential Water Ban to residents in light of the state declaring a Level 3 Critical Drought. He also

said that if customers call and inform us of any gardening etc that would be costly to lose, he is ok being lenient on a case by case basis.

Mr. Stoneking said that we have been exceeding our withdrawal permit. He said it is important to have a strong conservation program in place when requesting a higher withdrawal permit from the state. He said the new high school irrigation connection has been using a significant amount of water and had to be spoken too regarding this. He said they complied for a few days but it appears they are now watering at extremely high volumes again. Mr. Gmeiner will reach out to Selectboard Liaison Peter Cunningham for assistance in communicating with the High School. Mr. Stoneking understands the fields cannot be destroyed but would still like them to limit their watering as much as possible. Mr. Stoneking said that Apex is working on a plan to install a valve that will give the Water Department more control over their watering.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to formally adopt the previously announced water restrictions and Mr. Fishbone seconded. Roll Call: Gmeiner-Aye, Fishbone-Aye

Common St Project (connection fee discussion) – Water Superintendent

Mr. Stoneking showed a map of Common Street and showed the lots that the developer is working on and would like to extend town water to. There is one lot in question due to wetlands and the buffer zone. Depending on that lot being buildable, the developer may need to extend the water main to complete the loop. If the lot is not buildable, the developer technically would not need to extend the water as far so would be doing so at the Water Department's request.

The Water Commission may ask him to extend the water to complete the loop, and if that is done, the Water Commission may need to hold a public hearing to discuss the benefits of this extension and consider waiving a portion of the connection fees.

Mr. Stoneking will continue to work with the developer regarding the lot in question and his timeline for this project.

Capital Improvements – Water Superintendent

Mr. Stoneking is working on an updated Capital Plan but will hold off on discussing until we review the FY26 and FY27 budgets. Mr. Stoneking said he did find some information in the previous Superintendent's files and will build a spreadsheet including those items and some new items.

Hemlock Park Dr. Letter – Business Manager

Mr. Gmeiner revised the letter sent from the neighbors. Their letter was thorough but he added a reference to the conservation restriction and its location. He said the purpose of the letter is to

authorize routine maintenance on the bypass road. Mrs. Crory will share a copy with the Conservation Commission and will mail certified copies to the residents.

FY26 Budget – Business Manager (revised line-item transfers)

Mrs. Crory reported that the budget improved since the last meeting due to a connection fee coming in on the last day of the fiscal year. There was also an accounting error which has improved the most recent forecast. She expects the Enterprise Fund to be certified in the low \$300,000s.

Mrs. Crory had revised the line-item transfers to preserve what was left in General Expenses. She said the original transfers ultimately would have worked but asked the Commissioners to vote on the revised transfers to match the Town Accountant's transfer list that was reviewed by the Finance Committee.

Mr. Gmeiner made a revised motion to transfer \$22,913 from salaries to wages, \$15,873 from debt to wages, and \$325 from general expenses to wages, Mr. Fishbone seconded. Roll Call: Gmeiner-Aye, Fishbone-Aye

Mr. Stoneking said that the first capital plan items will be for FY28 to allow some time to prepare. Mrs. Crory agrees that would be much better and we should try not to pull money out of our Enterprise Fund this year as it has gotten low with the delay of a large town project.

Mrs. Crory will work on a full review of the FY26 budget and FY27 budget and Mr. Stoneking will continue to work on the 10-year Capital Plan.

Other Business: budget, bills, minutes, meeting schedule etc.

Mr. Stoneking asked Mr. Fishbone if he could get access to the Groton Water Facebook page. He also may do some work on the website. Mr. Fishbone will try to send the Facebook credentials and said it is fine to edit the Water Department website also.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve Mr. Stoneking to sign water invoices, Mr. Fishbone seconded. Roll Call: Gmeiner-Aye, Fishbone-Aye

Mr. Stoneking said he or Mrs. Crory will send copies of any invoice over \$5,000.00 and will keep them in the know about any issues or large invoices that may be coming in.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve Mr. Stoneking using the town vehicle for commuting, Mr. Fishbone seconded. Roll Call: Gmeiner-Aye, Fishbone-Aye

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the minutes of June 23rd, 2026 as amended, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. Roll Call: Gmeiner-Aye, Fishbone-Aye

Next Meeting is July 28th, 2026.

Mr. Fishbone made a motion to adjourn at 8:34pm, Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Roll Call: Gmeiner-Aye, Fishbone-Aye

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory