

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, August 11th, 2026
Virtual Meeting using Zoom

Minutes

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

Mr. McCaffrey called the meeting to order at 7:30pm. He stated that we are not being recorded and everyone introduced themselves.

Operational Updates – Water Superintendent

Mr. Stoneking shared the well levels. He said it shows the static level and what we pumped down to. However, he is working on seeing how long it takes to recover. He is going to work with SCADA to try to start tracking this info. That information will help to identify if the pumps are having to work harder. Mr. McCaffrey would like to see that data.

Mr. Stoneking said we received 6.13 inches of rain in the last 30 days.

Water Conservation – Water Superintendent

Mr. Stoneking said that the state has updated to an improved drought status of Level II.

Mr. McCaffrey said we typically start the irrigation season with the odd/even program and then change to a mid-level plan or total water ban depending on the drought status. Mr. Stoneking would defer to a mid-level plan at this time.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion for the Water Superintendent and Business Manager to edit the Water Conservation Program to mid-level restrictions, Mr. Gmeiner seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. Roll Call: Gmeiner-Aye, Fishbone-Aye, McCaffrey-Aye.

Capital Improvements – Water Superintendent

Mr. Stoneking doesn't have a full plan in place but wants to have a discussion first. Mr. Stoneking said one area he would like to focus on would be water main replacement. His suggestion would be to try to replace a small amount each year because it is more feasible to do a small amount each year than wait too long and encounter a large expense at one time. He said that Groton has about 60 miles of water main and presented a breakdown of how much of the system is 10, 20, 50 years old etc.

Mr. McCaffrey asked how easily an old pipe can be connected to a new pipe and Mr. Stoneking said they make couplings for this.

Mr. Fishbone said he was under the assumption the pipes were meant to last a very long time and should consider the construction of the pipes rather than only age. Mr. Stoneking said that asbestos pipes are softer so would focus on those first. Mr. Stoneking said a mile of water main replacement each year would be a good place to start.

Mrs. Crory asked roughly how much a mile of water main replacement costs and Mr. Stoneking said roughly \$1,000,000 per mile.

He also said we may need another water tank as more water connections are on the horizon. The extra data he is working on regarding well levels and recovery times will tell us how much water we have and what the future holds.

Mr. McCaffrey asked Mrs. Crory to create an expanded debt schedule to see when some debt may be falling off to leave room for new capital expenditures.

Mr. McCaffrey said one source of funding can be grants and suggests talking to Mr. Orcutt about grants and how to get funding. Mr. Stoneking said he is familiar with the SRF loan program, a grant for up to \$250,000 for fiber optics that he will be looking into, as well as grants for an electric vehicle to possibly replace his current work vehicle which is beginning to age out.

Mrs. Crory added that when the 500 Main St project begins, we will begin collecting connection fees over the course of 5 years which could potentially be put towards capital improvements.

FY26 Budget – Business Manager

Mrs. Crory reviewed the current FY27 budget. She said rates look great, even with our increased rate budget number. She said after October 1st, the irrigation billing will be winding down and we will have a really good idea of what our rate income will look like for the year. She will plan to do a thorough review at that time.

She reviewed a few expense items that she expects to run over budget such as propane and electricity due to rate increases and increased usage. Chemicals may run slightly over due to fluctuating costs and increased usage. Well Testing may also run over budget as it has not been adjusted in a few years and the cost of the testing have gone up.

Mr. McCaffrey asked about the Capital Fund line item on expenses. This line item was added a few years ago to act as a buffer on the expense side for expense overages or as a way to recoup some funds into our Enterprise Fund for future capital expenditures. Mrs. Crory explained that it was decided to remove that line item in the FY27 budget to help fill the “gap” between income projections and expenses; rather than add \$50,000 to income through a rate increase or other avenue, it was decided to remove the expense line item. The budget has been playing “catch up” for few years since a large project was delayed so we didn’t want to add any excess expense items. We will try to add it back when creating the FY28 budget.

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

Mr. Stoneking told the commissioners that we are looking into quotes to install a service window at the Water Department office. Mrs. Crory said we are on the only Customer Service department without a service window so agrees it would be nice to have. The Commissioners said to move forward with quotes and they will review.

Mr. Gmeiner told Mr. Stoneking that 117 Main St is adding a few bedrooms and he may want to ask the fire chief or building inspector if fire sprinklers are now required. Mrs. Crory suggested asking Mr. Orcutt also because he had talked to potential buyers about this topic. Although Mr. Gmeiner said things may be different now that additional bedrooms are being created.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the minutes of July 28th as amended, Mr. Fishbone seconded, Mr. McCaffrey abstained. Roll Call: Gmeiner-Aye, Fishbone-Aye, McCaffrey-Abstained.

Next Meeting is August 25th, 2026.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 8:40pm, Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Roll Call: Gmeiner-Aye, Fishbone-Aye, McCaffrey-Aye.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory
Business Manager
Groton Water Department