

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, September 8th, 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 7:32pm followed by introductions.

Operational Updates – Water Superintendent

Mr. Stoneking reported .83 inches of rain in the past 30 days. He did not have well levels because wants to provide that data with all of the details of the well to capture the whole picture. SCADA is working on a report for the entire well and recovery. Mr. McCaffrey said they have compared previous years' well levels in the past and Mr. Stoneking will look into that.

Mr. Gmeiner asked about 117 Main Street and Mr. Stoneking said that the Fire Department is requiring them to have fire suppression and he will hold off on approving the permit until they comply with the new requirements.

Mr. Stoneking requested to invest in a new street map and water system map for about \$6000.00. It will also be put onto GIS for operators to use in the field. The current one is 10-12 years old. Mr. McCaffrey asked to get a quote and asked if the commissioners are in favor of this. Mr. Fishbone says it sounds useful, especially if it's tied into GIS.

Mr. Stoneking said the quote for customer service window about \$8800. Mr. Fishbone and Mr. Gmeiner said it seems reasonable and he did the procurement properly. Mr. Fishbone asked if the Sewer Department will be covering any of the cost. Mrs. Crory said the Sewer Department typically pays 1/3 of items shared among the two departments. Mr. Gmeiner said he would be in agreement with that but will need to discuss with the Sewer Commission.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the quote for \$8800.00 for the customer service window, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. Roll Call: Gmeiner-Aye, Fishbone-Aye, McCaffrey-Aye.

Grants – Water Superintendent

Mr. Stoneking said that the Water Management Act Grant deadline is coming up. He has asked both Apex and CEI to produce quotes. The grant would cover 80% - and the remaining 20% would need to be covered by the Water Department but could be covered by in house work that would be logged. This grant would address source availability and if we need to start looking in areas for other sources of water.

Mr. Stoneking said we will have to wait until next year to apply for fiber optics grant to run fiber optic between treatment plants and even to town hall. That grant can be up to \$250,000 grant 5% cash match. Mr. Fishbone asked what would that enable us to do. Mr. Stoneking said it is currently all cellular so could be more of a cyber security risk. The fiber optics would hardwire almost everything. Mr. Fishbone asked if it has a lifetime or is it a long-term solution. Mr. Stoneking does not know the lifetime but probably won't be much maintenance and should last a long time. Mr. Stoneking said it would be all above ground via telephone poles except at the driveway area. Mr. Stoneking said it would be a straight expense and not considered a capital item.

FY27 Budget – Business Manager

Mrs. Crory explained that the September bills were down about \$25,000, probably due to the water ban. The irrigation is still up by about \$45,000 more than last year. She explained that the October 1 bills will capture many of the large users so she will report back with those numbers and prepare a thorough budget review at that time.

Mrs. Crory reviewed an updated debt schedule and identified a few years where the total debt number would drop. These scenarios apply only if the capital charges remain the same. Historically, the operating budget has covered \$400,000 of debt. These scenarios show a reduction of that number and holding the capital charges steady. Various options will be reviewed at this year's rate hearing. Mr. Stoneking is working on an extensive spreadsheet to review many different options and structures for rates and fees.

Water Abatement Request – 195 Main St

Mrs. Crory explained that 195 Main St received an abnormally large bill in July. The property management company promptly called the office and checked the property for any leaks. They also asked the tenants if they noticed anything unusual. The one meter is shared by Brunos, Wink Hair Salon, and Moona Massage.

They were billed for 106 units and average only 19 units over the past 8 quarters.

Mr. Gmeiner noticed the past few quarters were also a bit higher and questioned if tenants have been there the entire time.

Mrs. Crory explained that they had an old meter and suggested installing a new badger meter to be able to identify any leaks or issues. The meter was changed out on August 20th (delayed due to schedule an excavation company to dig up the shut off valve). From July 1-August 20th, 26 units were used. Since the new meter was installed on August 20th, only 4 units have been used. It appears whatever the issue was has resolved itself for the time being. The admin of the property management company and the property manager are signed up for leak alerts on the new meter.

Mrs. Crory reviewed the abatement amount if the commission was to approve the excess usage to be billed at the lowest tier.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve an abatement of \$277.24, Mr. Fishbone seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Roll Call: Gmeiner-Aye, Fishbone-Aye, McCaffrey-Aye.

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

Mr. Gmeiner asked about the new water main extension. Mr. Stoneking said that Reedy Meadow is done and the contractor is now installing hydrants. The contractor will then move onto installing water main North St. Mr. Stoneking doesn't expect many residents along the new water main to opt in to connect, even with the \$2,000.00 discounted connection fee. He explained that many of these residents have long driveways and the service line installation will be very costly. They will also have to deal with decommissioning their wells or getting irrigation approval from the Board of Health.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the minutes of August 11th, 2026 as amended, Mr. Fishbone seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Roll Call: Gmeiner-Aye, Fishbone-Aye, McCaffrey-Aye.

Next Meeting is September 22nd, 2026.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory