

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting
Of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, August 29th, 2017
Badacock Well

Minutes

Present are Chairman Jack McCaffrey, Vice Chairman Greg Fishbone, Member James Gmeiner, Superintendent Thomas Orcutt and Business Manager Lauren Crory.

Mr. McCaffrey called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

Financials

Mrs. Crory presented a summary of FY2017 financials. FY2017 was a profitable year for the water department. We spent more on meters than we originally budgeted for and Mr. McCaffrey would like to review our plan for meter purchases moving forward so that we don't run into that problem in the future. Mr. Orcutt reminded the commissioners that the larger meters (1" meters) are billed out to the customers. Mr. Fishbone asked how long it would be until all residents received new meters and Mr. Orcutt estimated 5-6 years.

Water Conservation Program – Well Levels & Pumping Levels

Mr. Orcutt said the well levels are good and the pumping levels for August are slightly below average. Mr. Orcutt thinks the levels will hold steady throughout the winter. Mr. McCaffrey asked if Whitney 1 and Whitney 2 have been run together yet and Mr. Orcutt said they had not but will do his best to try it before the next meeting.

Badacock Pond Update – Chairman

Mr. McCaffrey discussed the progress on the harvesting and what the upcoming work entails. Mr. Fishbone asked if they will be doing more hydro raking and less harvesting and Mr. McCaffrey is hoping this will happen. The commissioners discussed the costs associated with the project and brainstormed ideas about cutting costs, such as hiring someone different to do the work. Mr. Orcutt asked if the water department could hire anyone to help out and Mr. Gmeiner was concerned about a conflict of interest if Mr. Strickland was hired to harvest weeds. Mr. Gmeiner thought it would be beneficial to draft a memo in regards to what the water commissioners agreed to pay towards the project as there has been some confusion.

Whitney Pond Well Construction Update – Superintendent

Mr. Orcutt said that the Project Manager, Mr. Strenck, had a good meeting with everyone and start date should be in October or November. Mr. McCaffrey asked when they can expect to see the schedule and Mr. Orcutt assumes that it will be soon since they just had this meeting.

Capital Projects

Mr. McCaffrey asked the board to brainstorm ideas of capital projects that could be attainable at about \$200,000 per year. Mr. Orcutt discussed some ideas such as Badacock Well improvements, Skyfield Plant booster pump, Fitch's Bridge pressure regulator valve, and Chestnut Hill Tank improvements. Mr. Fishbone wants to make sure that there are quantifiable benefits to any projects we take on. Mr. Orcutt also discussed the possibilities of an interconnection with Ayer, Littleton, or Westford for emergencies. Mr. Fishbone

thinks that is a high priority over any projects that are strictly aesthetic. Mr. Orcutt feels it is a high priority to start at the plant and replace the pipe. He would also like to be able to clean and realign Main Street lines. Mr. McCaffrey thinks that water quality is also a top priority and Mr. Orcutt explained some projects that could help improve water quality at a cost. Mr. McCaffrey thinks we should try to get Badacock Well on the Whitney Well rate program with GELD. Mr. McCaffrey asked if we would need to raise rates in order to fund the \$200,000 per year for projects and Mr. Orcutt hopes not too. Mr. Gmeiner also does not want to increase rates but feels we need to review connection fees etc as they have been the same for a long time. Mr. McCaffrey asked Mr. Orcutt and Mr. Gmeiner to work on reviewing the development fees, adjusting as needed, and provide reasoning for adjusting.

Staffing Plan

The board discussed George Brackett’s upcoming retirement which is mostly likely going to be within the next 2 years. Mr. McCaffrey asked how we should go about replacing Mr. Brackett and Mr. Orcutt thinks we need to act soon and look for a new hire to begin training. Mr. Orcutt would like to find someone with at least 2-5 years relevant experience as well as a license. Mr. Fishbone asked if no license would be a deal breaker and Mr. Orcutt replied that it would not be a deal breaker for the right candidate. Mr. Orcutt is going to budget for this new hire on the FY2019 Budget. Mr. Gmeiner asked if any technical schools have a water and sewer program and Mr. Orcutt is going to look into this. Mr. McCaffrey asked if someone from other towns could help our department when one of our operators was out and Mr. Orcutt does not think this is possible because we do not have enough operators to reciprocate. Mr. Orcutt will entertain the idea of using a DPW employee during vacations or a possible shared employee between the Water & Sewer Department and DPW. Mr. Fishbone asked if we could get any staffing assistance from West Groton and Mr. Orcutt said they only have one operator but he will ask.

Other Business: Bills, Minutes, etc

Mr. Orcutt was approached by the DEP regarding a grant that could possibly be used for a \$48,000 pump. He also discussed a few other grants that we can try to pursue.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to accept the minutes of August 10th, 2017 and Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Invoices for EW6 were signed.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 9:10pm, Mr. Orcutt seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory
Business Manager

John McCaffrey _____ Date _____

James Gmeiner _____ Date _____

Greg Fishbone _____ Date _____