

Groton Water Commission

Regular Meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners

Tuesday, July 14, 2015

2nd Floor Lunch Room – Town Hall

Minutes

Present are BOWC Chairman David Crocker, Vice Chair James Gmeiner, member John McCaffrey, Water Superintendent Thomas Orcutt and Business Manager April Iannacone. Also present were Water Operators George Brackett and Stephen Knox.

Mr. Gmeiner called the regular BOWC meeting to order at 7:33 pm.

Badger Representative for Fixed Network Demo Discussion

Mr. Ian Kasowitz was present from Stiles Company to inform the Commissioners about the Badger meter and reading system. Mr. Kasowitz gave technical background information with regard to the badger meters. He then went on to discuss the radio transmitters. The Badger radio read transmitters are fully submersible, collects reads every hour for 24 hours and can be wired to the water departments existing Hersey meter registers. Mr. Orcutt asked Mr. Kasowitz if the Badger system was set up to read as a fixed network or a drive by system. Mr. Kasowitz replied that the system could be set up either way. Mr. Orcutt then asked if we were to set up the infrastructure as drive by readings, would there be a way to change that setup down the road. Mr. Kasowitz replied that the system could be changed in that way if that was the way the department wanted to get things going. Mr. Orcutt asked how many gateways would be needed in order to capture reads for all of the water department's customers. Mr. Kasowitz replied that he would estimate that approximately 10 collectors would be needed at \$4,000 - \$6,000 each, but recommended going with the cellular transmitters that work with CDMA cell network coverage. He explained that with the cellular transmitter there were 2 options for pricing. One option was a subscription based in which you would pay a fixed cost of about \$10.69 per active transmitter in the system per year. The other option would be to purchase a fully loaded transmitter for approximately \$200, a small increase from the standard cost, but would cover the cellular service costs for 10 years. Mr. Gmeiner asked about the use of cellular transmitters and the amount of cellular service necessary to function. Mr. Kasowitz replied that the transmitters only needed a minute amount of signal, similar to being able to just send a text message when you don't have enough signal for an actual call. He also stated that the transmitters only need to reach the service one time a day which then sends 24 hours' worth of usage data. Mr. Kasowitz then stated that Stiles/Badger would do a study of where the existing cell towers are in town with relation to the department's customer base in order to determine if there would be sufficient coverage to move forward in this direction. Mr. Orcutt asked how the agreements with the cellular service provider would work. Mr. Kasowitz replied that when purchasing a fully loaded transmitter the department would only be dealing with Badger who would guarantee service for that transmitter for 10 years. Mr. Orcutt asked if there was a beta system with the cellular option. Mr. Kasowitz replied that there was a pilot option for \$1,800 that consisted of 10 endpoints and complete meters, the consumer portal for 4 months and software usage. Mr. Crocker asked if it was possible to get a price list for all of the meter parts and components. Mr. Kasowitz replied that he would email a list of information and costs to Mr. Orcutt and Ms. Iannacone. The Commissioners thanked Mr. Kasowitz for his time and information.

Vehicle Discussion

Mr. Orcutt stated that the highway department was still working on water truck #4, but it should be completed within the next week. He stated that water 4 was the spare 2002 truck which was being fixed with the engine from the 2004 truck that had been used by Mr. Orcutt. At this time Mr. Orcutt would like to get a replacement vehicle that he would use, in order for the water 4 to be

used by the summer help and go back to being a spare vehicle. Mr. Orcutt stated that because this purchase was off cycle for capital purchases, and he didn't want to set back the departments financials, he would prefer to stay under \$25,000 to go with a used vehicle and a quote process instead of a bid process. He looked into the state bid list and all options, but Ford no longer has a small truck option, and the Chevy Colorado is over \$25,000. Mr. Orcutt stated that he understands that the guys would prefer to order a new larger frontline vehicle, but at this time he believes that a second large truck is not completely necessary. He suggested making alterations and adding side saddle storage and tool boxes in order to make the newer vehicle already in service more appropriate and easier to work with. Mr. McCaffrey asked Mr. Orcutt if he was looking to have a decision made on the new vehicle this evening. Mr. Orcutt replied that he would like to get going as soon as possible, and would like the Board to take a vote to allow him to make a purchase. Mr. Gmeiner asked if Mr. Orcutt was planning on getting a used vehicle, and how many miles a year were typically put on the trucks we use. Mr. Orcutt replied that he would be looking to find a used vehicle with low mileage to keep the costs down, and that the vehicle he had been using only had approximately 45,000 miles on it for a truck that was over 10 years old, so department usage was extremely low. Mr. Gmeiner asked if there would be any advantage to having 2 large front line vehicles that were the same. Mr. Orcutt replied that there might be a slight advantage to having all necessary tools/equipment on it at all times, but he did not believe that it was a need or enough of an advantage to offset the cost where the 2nd truck is only a few years old. Mr. Crocker asked if the department had looked into putting a utility box/bed from Madigan on the F150 that was being used. Mr. Orcutt replied that they were looking into all options to ensure that the vehicle could handle the weight of that type of box. Mr. Orcutt suggested that the Board take 2 votes with regard to vehicles. The first vote would be to allow the Superintendent to purchase a new or used vehicle not to exceed \$25,000 in cost or 30,000 in mileage. The second vote would be to allow the Superintendent to purchase a utility body or tool boxes for water 3 for a sum not to exceed \$6,000 installed.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to allow the Superintendent to purchase a new or used vehicle with the conditions not to exceed \$25,000 in cost or 30,000 miles on the vehicle. Mr. McCaffrey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to allow the Superintendent to purchase a utility body for water 3 not to exceed \$6,000 installed. Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Financials/End of Year Updates

Ms. Iannacone informed the Commissioners that they would need to vote to move funds from the expense line item to the wages line item to cover a small shortfall at the end of the year. Upon review of the deficit at this time as well as the remaining payroll for the fiscal year, Ms. Iannacone recommended a transfer of \$3,000 from expenses to wages.

Other Business

Mr. McCaffrey stated that he would like to update Mr. Crocker on the discussion at the last Commission meeting with regard to the Baddacook Pond Weed situation. Mr. McCaffrey had requested that the Board take a ride on the pond in August sometime in order to assess the extent of the problem, and then make other suggestions as to what the Commissioners would prefer to see used to help the situation. Mr. Crocker stated that he understands that there is a problem with the pond, but at this time the problem doesn't affect the running of the water department. He stated that even if the pond were completely full of weeds, the department would still be able to pump water from the area. Mr. Orcutt suggested that the Commissioners make it clear that even though they are willing to be involved and give input on what is going on, they do not want to take the lead on the management of this project. Mr. Gmeiner stated that the Commission had already made it clear that chemicals were not a great solution for the weed problem. He had no problem taking the ride to see the extent of the problem, and then making it clear that there were a number of other options/solutions to help resolve the problem. Mr. Crocker stated that his other concern with the chemical herbicide treatment was that it was not going to be a one-time solution. That it was brought to the Commission that way by the Great Ponds Advisory Committee, but that

once one herbicide is in, the treatment cycle will continue year to year with the same or other treatments. The Commissioners agreed to have Mr. Orcutt contact Mr. Bill Strickland to schedule a boat ride in August for them and Mr. Orcutt only.

Minutes:

There were no minutes approved at this meeting.

Bills:

The bills presented to the Board were all signed and submitted for payment.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m. Mr. McCaffrey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

April Iannacone
Business Manager
Water and Sewer Departments

James Gmeiner _____ Date _____

David Crocker _____ Date _____

John McCaffrey _____ Date _____