

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting
Of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, October 24th, 2017
2nd Floor Lunch Room

Minutes

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

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

Water Conservation Program – Well Levels & Pumping Levels

Mr. Orcutt said we are back to moderate drought conditions but pumping levels will be trailing off. The commissioners reviewed the well level graphs and Mr. Orcutt pointed out that fall water main flushing may have affected levels. Mr. Fishbone expressed interest in seeing more data regarding well levels rather than just the colored lines. He wants to make sure we are proactive if we see a decline or issue occurring. Mr. Gmeiner stated that the graphs only show the general trends. Mr. Orcutt will look at alternative ways to view the data.

Badacock Pond Update – Chairman

Mr. McCaffrey said the Badacock Pond weed removal is done for the year and estimated 3-4 acres were hydro-raked but we are waiting for the final report. Mr. Strickland had purchased an extra day of hydro-raking to ensure his cove was cleared out. Mr. McCaffrey would like to form a team of five to determine the hydro-raking plan for year 2 and wants to meet within the next couple of weeks. Mr. Orcutt does not want any work done near the Water Department wells if it will take away from others. Mr. Fishbone asked what the Water Department contributed in Year 1 and Mr. McCaffrey said \$10,000 which provided hydro-raking for an estimated additional $\frac{3}{4}$ acre.

Whitney Pond Well Construction Update – Superintendent

Mr. Orcutt said we are still on schedule. He went to the DEP to discuss the most recent grant opportunity and will apply for an approximately \$80,000 grant by November 6th. Mr. Orcutt discussed the details of the grant and listed potential uses for the funds. Mr. McCaffrey would like Mr. Strenck to provide any critical path items that needs to be accomplished prior to the February/March start date.

Capital Projects

No new discussions.

Redskin Trail – License Agreement

Mr. Orcutt reviewed the water main extension agreement for Redskin Trail. The agreement states that other residents may connect to the water main by paying a fee to Snyder not to exceed \$3500.00 per residential dwelling (not including contractor cots and Groton Water Department's standard system development fees and charges). Mr. Gmeiner advised that the agreement be signed in front of a notary. Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to approve the water main extension agreement for Redskin Trail subject to notarization. Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Staffing Plans

Mr. Orcutt said there is nothing new to discuss and he was still waiting on George's formal retirement letter.

Budget – FY2017 Close Out and FY 2019 Overview

Mrs. Crory provided a spreadsheet outlining the budget expense line items for fiscal year 2017 along with the actual expenses paid. She then identified 5 line items that may need to be changed for fiscal year 2018. Mrs. Crory will research the line items in question and provide suggested budget for fiscal year 2019 and the next meeting.

Connection Fees

Mr. Orcutt and Mr. Gmeiner prepared a spreadsheet comparing Groton's connection fees to surrounding towns. Mr. Orcutt noted that it is hard to compare to towns with lower fees because this may mean they are not investing in the improvement and maintenance of their systems which we are. Mr. Gmeiner said if we left the 1" Connection fee alone we wouldn't see much of an overall increase in income. We would need to have a rate hearing in November to make any changes. Anyone that has a building permit in hand would be grandfathered to old rates if changes are made. Mr. McCaffrey wanted to make sure we have a reasonable and clear explanation if we raise fees. Mr. Orcutt explained that we need to raise capital for System Development. Our rate income is used to operating expenses. Mr. McCaffrey asked how long the 1" Connection fee has been \$3750 and Mr. Orcutt said about 10 years. Mr. Gmeiner noted that we want to increase it to raise funding but also don't want it too high; then people will be discouraged to connect. Mr. Orcutt noted that there is a regulation that can reduce the connection fee if a person has financial hardship, health reasons, or there is a substantial improvement to the system. Mr. Gmeiner said we can decide on a rate hearing date at the next meeting.

Other Business: Bills, Minutes, etc

Mr. Orcutt told the commissioners about a recent water main break at Taylor Road and said there has been multiple breaks in that area. He thinks we may need to replace at least a part of this pipe to avoid future breaks. The problem is the AC pipes and he will look into a resolution and try to keep costs down.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the minutes of October 10th as amended, Mr. McCaffrey seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Invoices for Expense Warrant 10 were signed.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory
Business Manager