

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting
Of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, November 12th, 2019
Assessor's Meeting Room – 1st Floor
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 7:34pm.

Open Public Discussion – Manganese

Mr. Orcutt presented a notice that Connie Sartino of the Groton Herald prepared to publish on behalf of the Water Department. The notice informed residents that the town installed a manganese filtration system on the kitchen sink in the Town Hall. Any residents are welcome to come to town hall to fill their own containers, if they have young children or any other concerns with the manganese levels.

Mr. Orcutt said that Mass DEP did not approve that our benchtop sample results could be published on our website.

Mr. McCaffrey said he reviewed the summary that Mr. Fishbone prepared for our customers. He feels it may be too lengthy to be considered a summary and believes it is more of a handbook with detailed information. Mr. Gmeiner wouldn't mind a summary going on our website, as well as Mr. Fishbone's detailed information. Mr. Orcutt thinks a summary only would be sufficient for now. Mr. McCaffrey has concerns that if any details in Mr. Fishbone's write-up are incorrect it could be problematic. Mr. Fishbone said he did provide hyperlinks to back up his data. Mr. McCaffrey would want Mass DEP approval before putting on the website and Mr. Gmeiner agreed that it would be ok to send it to Mass DEP for approval.

Mr. McCaffrey asked that we first work on the summary for Mass DEP approval. Mr. Orcutt will work with Mr. Fishbone on a final summary to submit for approval. Mr. Gmeiner would like to get actual data from surrounding towns to include in our summary.

Mr. Orcutt said that our PFAS results should be in this week. We need to be under 70 parts per trillion now and most likely 20 parts per trillion later on.

Water Conservation Program – Well Levels & Pumping Levels

Mr. Orcutt said that Baddacook is pumping at about 20 hour per day and Whitney at about 4 hours per day. This will continue until about May.

Whitney Pond – Manganese Planning

Mr. McCaffrey said that option 3C (piping Whitney water to Baddacook) would offer treated water sooner but 3B (treatment plant at Whitney) might cost less in the short term. Mr. Fishbone asked if SRF borrowing is cheaper and Mr. Orcutt said it depends and has other fees and restrictions associated with it.

Water Rates and Fees

Mr. McCaffrey said that our current and upcoming engineering costs for the manganese treatment will hurt our reserve fund and we could start a capital charge soon to help with these costs. He asked about the town reinstating hydrant fees (fire protection) as part of the tax rate. Mr. Fishbone said that the \$75,000 town paid fire protection would cover about half of a \$20 capital charge, possibly allowing us to reduce that number. Mr. Orcutt noted that many parties would need to be in agreement for this to move forward. Mrs. Crory asked how this is different from the customer paid fire protection which is \$5.21 per quarter per customer. Mr. Orcutt explained it does go towards the same thing but went over the history of the fire protection which used to be part of the tax rate. The current fire charges do not cover the same amount that we used to cover with the town. Mr. Orcutt said Mr. Haddad said we can include the \$75,000 town paid fire protection in our budget's revenue stream, for now.

Mr. Gmeiner asked if we will do anything to help seniors on fixed incomes with this additional capital charge fee. Mr. Orcutt said he will get a list of seniors who qualify for the tax exemption to start that discussion.

Other Business

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to approve the minutes of October 7th, 2019, as amended, Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to approve the minutes of October 22nd, 2019, as amended, Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Invoices for Expense Warrant 11 signed.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 9:45pm, Mr. Gmeiner seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory
Business Manager