

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting
Of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, January 21st, 2020
2nd Floor Meeting Room
Minutes

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

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

Manganese – Open Public Forum

Mr. Orcutt presented a draft of a manganese timeline that he created which dates back to 2012. This timeline addresses anything manganese related over the past 8 years. It includes manganese levels, flushing information, water levels, water ban information, DEP correspondence, and more. The board reviewed the timeline and suggested edits and additions. The final draft will be given to the Select board.

Mr. McCaffrey said he met with Select Board Chair Alison Manugian. She would like to understand all of the treatment options, the history of manganese at our wells (timeline), and wants to take a tour of Whitney Well.

Mr. McCaffrey asked what is currently done for water conservation, besides the conservation program, and Mr. Orcutt said we used to give out toilet leak tablets but don't have any credits in place or anything of that nature. Mr. Gmeiner said that for sewer customers, the higher tiers are costly so these customers may be more conservative to remain in tier 1. Mr. McCaffrey said many people that need new appliances buy more efficient versions now. He also added that we have more customers but have not seen a large increase in usage which could mean people are more conservative overall.

Mr. Orcutt created a line graph showing Whitney I and Whitney II pumping levels and precipitation levels since 2012 to see if there is any correlation. It was heard at the Select Board Meeting that Member Becky Pine asked if the manganese level will go down when water levels rise and Mr. Ohl said it unfortunately does not work like that. Mr. Ohl asked what our gallons per day per capita is and Mr. Orcutt said we are below the DEP standard of 65 gallons per day. Mr. Ohl thinks its worth adding this to the timeline to show we have been abiding by this state standard.

Manganese Project – Next Steps

Mr. McCaffrey asked if there was any update on the consent order from DEP and Mr. Orcutt said not yet and we are hoping to have it signed by February 1st. Mr. Orcutt said that Mr. Haddad is ok signing the latest draft but if DEP comes back with changes we will need to meet to review. Mr. Ohl suggested checking in with DEP tomorrow.

Pilot Proposal – CEI

Mr. Ohl said the Select Board wanted to know more about treatment options and he presented slides summarizing the various options which are pressure filtration, membrane filtration, biological filtration and ion exchange. Pressure filtration, or greensand filtration, is cost competitive since there are multiple vendors and treats up to 2 mg/L of manganese. Membrane filtration is for higher levels of manganese and only has a single vendor. Higher treatment licenses are also required. Biological filtration treats higher manganese levels, is more costly, and can take a month for treatment to kick in when biology is changed. Ion Exchange treats lower levels of manganese and is better suited for small facilities and private wells.

Mr. Ohl said their pilot testing will take 2 weeks (1 week at Baddacook and 1 week at Whitney). Mr. Ohl discussed all of the various testing that will take place including filter vessel capacity, facility design, loading rates, different filter vendors etc. Piloting will determine how many filters and feeds are needed.

Mr. McCaffrey would like to keep Shattuck Well in mind when looking at tank size. For an additional cost we could plan to expand the tank size to be ready for Shattuck Well. Mr. McCaffrey also added that the current wells are not running at full capacity so we want to make sure we are not building too big. Mr. Orcutt agreed and said we just need to be able to keep up with summer month's demand.

Mr. Fishbone made a motion to proceed with piloting not to exceed \$39,500, Mr. McCaffrey seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. McCaffrey would like our March and April dates on our manganese treatment schedule to be more concrete, as he would like to make sure we are staying on track.

Water Conservation Program – Water Levels

No updates.

Other Business: Bills, Minutes, etc

Mr. Orcutt and Mr. McCaffrey took a tour of one of Littleton's treatment facilities that uses membrane filtration. This is a cleaner process which doesn't fill lagoons and could be considered if we treat water at Baddacook Pond. Mr. Gmeiner asked what is wrong with putting water in lagoons and Mr. Ohl said nothing. Mr. Gmeiner added that we should talk to abutters to the well about buying land if they ever choose to sell.

Mr. Fishbone asked how often we use Westford's water and if they have tested for PFAS. Mr. Orcutt said maybe once every year or so, and Mr. McCaffrey said we should avoid using their water until we know if they have tested.

Mr. Fishbone thinks we should give the high school a heads up that they should test for PFAS soon.

Mr. Orcutt presented the annual report that will be submitted to the town.

Invoices for EW16 were signed.

Mr. Gmeiner approved minutes of November 19th, 2019 Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. McCaffrey made motion to adjourn at 10:00pm, Mr. Gmeiner seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory