

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting
Of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, July 14th, 2020
Virtual Meeting using Zoom

Minutes

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

Mr. McCaffrey called the meeting to order at 7:44pm.

Manganese – Schedule, Piloting, Concept Plan, Finances, Consent Order

Mrs. Crory reviewed the revised manganese debt schedules which now include short term borrowing for the Baddacook Soon and Later options. The Board discussed the differences between each option. There is about a \$900 million difference between Baddacook versus Whitney. Overall, these debt schedules look good and could work with some minor adjustments. The next steps will be to check how the debt schedules will work within our budget as well as timing of payments. We will also look at the Manganese Capital Charge to determine when the fee could be reduced or eliminated in each option.

Mr. Ohl created a matrix with various weights for different factors related to the manganese treatment options. The factors included Capital Costs, Operations & Maintenance, Resilience, Ease of Future Expansion and others. Mr. McCaffrey asked the Board Members to think about which areas may need a higher weight.

The Board discussed pros and cons of each location and the various factors. They are concerned about future expansion and capabilities and each location. Mr. Ohl will prepare more information on these areas. Mr. Ohl noted that Shattuck Well is still an option but it would require an expensive pipeline. In terms of resilience, Mr. Fishbone asked if there is any scenario in which having one location (Baddacook only) would be more resilient. Mr. Ohl said that there is some redundancy but it is still separated overall. Mr. Fishbone noted that the capital cost is a big issue, but wants to keep in mind other factors such as how many years we would need the capital fee, O&M costs, what would happen to rates due to O&M costs, and how long the disruption would be on Lowell Rd.

Mr. McCaffrey wants Mrs. Crory to adjust the capital charge on the debt schedules to keep the reserve fund at about \$400-\$450K.

Mr. Orcutt would like a higher weight on capital costs, redundancy, and less on O&M costs. Mr. Fishbone is more concerned about O&M costs in terms of how they could affect rates. Mr. Gmeiner would like a higher weight on capital cost and future expansion.

Mr. Orcutt has two more visits this week to review other town's backwash processes and will have a discussion with Tom Weaver.

Mr. Orcutt would like to look at another Whitney Well scenario where we do not short term borrow the full amount to start.

Mr. Orcutt said the concept plan date has been pushed out two weeks from our original internal schedule. Mr. Orcutt said the warrant for Fall Town Meeting closes in August, so we will need to decide if we are asking to borrow. Mr. McCaffrey is in favor of dismissing the Baddacook Soon option at this point but Mr. Orcutt said let's wait until the next meeting to decide. Mr. Ohl agrees that the benefit of the accelerated option is marginal at best as it may not work 12 months out of the year. Mr. Fishbone asked if we would need to be on the accelerated plan to qualify for grant money and Mr. Orcutt said we would.

Mr. Fishbone asked Mrs. Crory to find out the exact amount of Manganese Capital Charge income came in for FY20.

Mrs. Crory asked Mr. Orcutt to create a placeholder Enterprise Fund Transfer for Fall Town Meeting. The department will most likely want to transfer the Manganese Capital Cost income out of the Enterprise Fund and into the operating budget.

Fiscal Year 2020 Operating Budget Review & Year End Projections

No updates

Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget – Continue Spending Freeze?

No updates

Superintendent's Report: Well Cleaning, Water Levels and Pumping, Staffing

Mr. Orcutt said there was some confusion regarding the fire line sizing and fee at the Prescott School. The contractor is working on it.

Mr. Orcutt said the water levels are staying about the same and have not dropped. Consumption has been about the same. Whitney Well is running consistently at about 12-14 hours per day.

Manganese Open Forum

Mr. Orcutt and Mr. Fishbone will meet to figure out how to proceed with the Manganese Open Forum, possibly on Groton Matters on the Groton Channel. Jack Petropoulos was on the call and spoke about his Groton Matters program. He thinks it would be a good platform for our open forum and said he would prepare questions ahead of time to give to the Board. Mr. Fishbone agrees that the more outreach, the better, but noted only one Board Member can attend because of open meeting law. Mr. Petropoulos said it can be more if you post a meeting for it. Mr. Orcutt said that he and Mr. Fishbone will discuss how to move forward. Mr. McCaffrey wants to make

sure we make our decision on treatment and speak with the Select Board before moving forward with this. Mr. Petropoulos agreed that timing is important so that is fine.

Other Business: Bills, Minutes, etc

Mr. McCaffrey approved the minutes of June 9th, 2020 as amended, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 9:14pm, Mr. Gmeiner seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory