

Groton Water Commission  
Regular Meeting  
Of the  
Board of Water Commissioners  
Tuesday, June 30th, 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, and Michael Ohl of CEI.

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

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

Mr. Gmeiner asked what our completion deadline is with MA DEP and Mr. Orcutt said it is December 2024. With that being said, Mr. Gmeiner suggested looking at a further starting date to help our debt schedules. He also suggested looking at short term borrowing for the Whitney Well option. Mr. McCaffrey asked why the \$20 Manganese Capital Charge seemed to work in the fall, but now the debt schedules fall short. Mrs. Crory explained that the debt schedules in the fall included short term borrowing in the early years and the updated schedules do not. Mr. Orcutt said construction costs are high right now because of many MA DEP consent orders.

Mr. Fishbone said the Whitney option debt schedule does not include O&M costs such as additional operator and Mr. McCaffrey agreed that the Board needs to look at the weights of various factors such as O&M costs. Mr. Ohl said that it is two different functions – regardless of location. Mr. McCaffrey said there is a lot more space available at Whitney Well and Mr. Ohl said construction would be easier there. Mr. Orcutt asked if we should be looking at smaller pieces such as chemicals, backwashes, lagoons, etc and Mr. Ohl said yes, those items can add up. Mr. Orcutt would like the complication of getting the water to Baddacook to be weighted, as well as PFAS.

Mr. McCaffrey asked about the backwash issue and Mr. Orcutt said he visiting a few locations to check out their processes. He has not looked at Tom Weaver’s process yet and wants to circle back to that. Mr. Ohl said we will want to have our backwash plan in the concept plan. Mr. Ohl doesn’t expect any surprises back from MA DEP due to the piloting results. Mr. McCaffrey asked for a backwash plan by July 28<sup>th</sup> and the weighted alternative options for the July 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

In addition to the manganese treatment, Mr. McCaffrey pointed out that Whitney Well isn’t doing great in terms of levels and pumping and wants to make sure we are not banking on Whitney to do too much. Mr. Ohl said it depends on many factors but we can look into this more. Mr. Gmeiner asked about permitting for an additional well and Mr. Ohl said it will depend on if it’s considered a replacement or new well. Mr. Orcutt pointed out there would be an issue with

our permit withdrawal limit if we added a third well. Mr. Ohl will review this for our next permit renewal. Mr. Gmeiner would also like to see the costs for Shattuck Well.

Mr. Ohl will get revised project costs to Mr. Orcutt tomorrow morning.

#### Fiscal Year 2020 Operating Budget Review & Year End Projections

Mrs. Crory went over the final FY2020 budget which shows a slightly profitable year. There are some moving parts with Manganese Income, but we should see a boost in our certified cash reserves. We will also be getting about \$62,000 transferred into our cash reserves that was leftover from our Whitney Well Project.

#### Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget – Continue Spending Freeze?

Mrs. Crory said that despite the pandemic, the July 1st billing was good and looked comparable to last year. Mr. Orcutt said we will still be cautious with spending. He also said we will be using our full budget, not the 1/12<sup>th</sup> budget, since there was a Spring Town Meeting.

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

Mr. Orcutt said the draw down numbers at the wells are staying level and starting to slightly increase. We have banned all outdoor irrigation but handheld watering or lawn watering by permit are ok, as well as agriculture.

#### Groton Matters: Manganese Discussion

Mr. Fishbone said that Jack Petropolis started a Groton Matters program on the Groton Channel. The Board discussed who would partake in our segment and Mr. Orcutt would like to table this for 2 weeks.

#### Other Business: Bills, Minutes, etc

**Mr. McCaffrey asked if the Board saw the letter in the herald regarding the water ban. Mr. Orcutt said he responded to it already. Mr. Gmeiner suggested referring people to GIS to see the different Water Resource Zones as it shows which areas have an impact on our wells. Mr. Fishbone said we can only speak on behalf of our department but it would be nice if there was a voice on behalf of the town. Mr. McCaffrey agreed that without talking to other departments it is difficult to give an adequate response. Mr. Orcutt agreed and said this is hard to do without a Water Resources Committee. Mr. McCaffrey asked if we should send information from the state to the Groton Herald and Mr. Orcutt said he will forward it to other entities. Mr. McCaffrey added that Whitney Well is running great this summer given the circumstances. Mr. Fishbone likes the idea of creating a Water Resource Committee in the future.**

Mr. McCaffrey approved the minutes of May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020 as written, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to nominate Mr. McCaffrey as Chairman, Mr. Fishbone seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to nominate Mr. Fishbone as Vice Chairman, Mr. McCaffrey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 9:08pm, Mr. Gmeiner seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory