

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, December 21st, 2021
Virtual Meeting using Zoom

Minutes

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

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

Continuation of the Public Hearing – Water Rates, Fees and miscellaneous charges

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to open the continued rate hearing from December 7th, 2021, Mr. McCaffrey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Crory reviewed the debt spreadsheet and updated the beginning balance and added a note that senior fee exemptions may result in a decrease of about \$2,500 of fee income per year. Mr. McCaffrey asked about the debt schedule still showing \$280,000 of fee income when we are striving for \$290,000. The board discussed and decided to leave the \$280,000 to leave a margin for past due bills etc.

Mrs. Crory reviewed various fee scenarios where different classes of Residential, Commercial, Schools, etc. were charged various fees. She noted that multi-family units would be charged at one commercial rate – not for each unit as previously discussed. Commercial accounts were broken out into small commercial (using less than 15 units per quarter in the past 12 months) and large commercial. Faculty housing was broken out of the school accounts to be charged at a residential rate.

A spreadsheet breaking out the categories into a small fee and large fee was reviewed. The small fee would be residential, small commercial, faculty housing, The large fee would then be large commercial, dorms, multi family homes, and school buildings. This would amount to about a \$36 small fee and \$85 large fee.

The next scenario broke of the small commercial into a “medium” fee in between residential and large users. Mr. Gmeiner asked what ‘school buildings’ means and Mrs. Crory said academic buildings, gyms, cafeterias, administrative buildings etc.

Mr. Fishbone asked about \$35, \$60, and \$90 that was on a different sheet so Mrs. Crory plugged in that scenario which came out to \$293,000. Mr. McCaffrey asked about putting the large to \$85 and it came out to \$290,000. The board liked this scenario where the fee increased in \$25 increments.

Mrs. Crory asked about reviewing a hybrid option with a lower fee and a small rate adjustment but the board did not like this idea. Mr. Gmeiner said it will be easier to reduce the manganese fee down the road if it is a fee only.

Mr. Gmeiner asked about affordable housing (16 accounts) and Mr. Orcutt explained which accounts those are and how they are metered. Mrs. Crory said there are six more affordable housing units that were large users and put under the large fee. Mr. Gmeiner confirmed that residential and commercial are split up. Mrs. Crory confirmed that accounts are classified as commercial in our system and the reports were pulled this way and fees will be assessed based on this. Some people may call if they think they are not classified correctly in our system.

Mr. Orcutt asked if municipal buildings were broken out into small and large commercial and Mrs. Crory said yes.

Mr. Orcutt presented revised System Development fees with a 12% increase which should produce an additional \$20,000 per year and contribute towards the new Whitney Well III and any extra can be used to pay down treatment plant debt. It will not be used to offset the operating funds.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to close the public hearing, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion for the Board of Water Commissioners to adjust the following system development fees based on service line size effective January 1st, 2022; 1" service line to be increased from \$4,250 to \$4,760, 1 ¼" from \$5,000 to \$5,600, 1 ½" from \$6,500 to \$7,280, 2" from \$10,000 to \$11,200, 3" from \$12,500 to \$14,000, 4" from \$17,500 to \$19,600, 8" 10" and 12" from \$45,000 to a minimum of \$50,400 and depending on the demand or use created by the service line the water commissioners may determine the system development fee to be higher and the collection of the said fees are to be used for the current capital projects, Mr. McCaffrey seconded and the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion that effective the Board of Water Commissioners adjust the minimum Manganese Capital Charge from \$20 per quarter to \$35 per quarter for single family residential, faculty housing, and single-metered affordable housing, Mr. McCaffrey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion that the Board of Water Commissioners adjust the minimum Manganese Capital Charge from \$20 per quarter to \$60 per quarter for tier 1 non-residential, non-faculty housing, and non- separately metered housing, Mr. McCaffrey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion that the Board of Water Commissioners adjust the minimum Manganese Capital Charge from \$20 per quarter to \$85 per quarter for large commercial, multi-family residential, dormitories, and school buildings, affordable housing complex which are multi-unit and single metered, Mr. McCaffrey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to leave our current water usage rates and all other fees are is, Mr. McCaffrey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion that all manganese charges previously voted at this meeting are effective January 1st, 2022, Mr. McCaffrey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Crory and Mr. Orcutt will create a memo on the new fees to post on the website.

Mrs. Crory asked if she should automatically exclude senior exemptions from the tax office or make them apply for a waiver. Mr. Fishbone thinks we should automatically waive those customers. Mr. Gmeiner asked how many customers and Mrs. Crory said about 20 customers and about \$2500 per year. Mr. Gmeiner is ok doing it automatically but we should cross reference with the assessor's list.

Other Business: budget, bills, minutes, meeting schedule

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to approve the minutes of December 7th, 2021 as amended, Mr. Gmeiner seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 8:15pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory