

Groton Water Commission  
Regular Meeting of the  
Board of Water Commissioners  
Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
Public Hearing – via Zoom

**Minutes**

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

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

**Public Hearing – Water Rates, Fees & Charges**

Mr. Gmeiner read the notice of public hearing - In accordance with Chapter 40, section 42-A to 42-I, of the Massachusetts General Laws and the Town of Groton Usage Fee Regulations, the Board of Groton Water Commissioners will hold a Public Hearing, in the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Meeting Room of the Town Hall on Tuesday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 8:00pm in order to review and adjust accordingly the water rates, fees and miscellaneous charges per the Town of Groton Water regulations. – Board of Water Commissioners, John J. McCaffrey.

**Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget**

Mrs. Crory reviewed the proposed changes discussed at the previous public hearing. The FY24 budget was submitted under the agreement that the Board of Water Commissioners would raise another \$100,000 in rates revenue to support increased operating budget costs, and well as a capital fee to pay for new Whitney Well III debt. The Manganese Capital Charge will be adjusted for the FY25 budget when we have our final debt estimates for that project.

Mrs. Crory pointed out that although the Whitney Well III fees we are looking at bring in \$71,000 when our goal was \$70,000-\$80,000, we are getting an extra 6 months of fee income that is not budgeted this fiscal year. Mrs. Crory noted that the current large fee description includes “multi-family” and Mr. Orcutt said we could now call the large fee “all other users”. Mr. Gmeiner and Mr. Fishbone agreed this is cleaner. Mrs. Crory noted that we did not separate out a “commercial irrigation” and Mr. Gmeiner said that is ok for this year.

Mr. Orcutt recommended a tapping fee of \$250.00. He would also like to propose an application fee for MA DOT permits so that if there is a contractor or developer that needs to file a MA DOT permit for street opening, we should apply a \$250.00 fee for this service. Only towns can apply for these or give permissions to the applicant and Mr. Orcutt thinks that we should do these ourselves (or our engineers). Mr. Orcutt is currently working on a permit that is taking a lot of time. Mr. Gmeiner asked if this is about sewer also and Mr. Orcutt said he is talking about water specifically and sewer could create their own fee. Mr. Fishbone asked if it was water and sewer work how it would work and Mr. Orcutt said sewer can put its own fee in place.

Mr. Fishbone asked if there were any comments from the public and Mr. O'Grady thinks that breaking out one family, two family, and multi-family was fair and appreciates that discussion.

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

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to set the domestic water rates at Tier 1 0-15 units at \$4.45 per unit, Tier 2 16-30 units at \$5.89 per unit, Tier 3 31-45 units at \$6.75 per unit, and Tier 4 46+ units at \$7.75 per unit, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to set the irrigation water rates at Tier 1 0-15 units at \$6.33 per unit, Tier 2 16-30 units at \$7.26 per unit, Tier 3 31-45 units at \$8.33 per unit, and Tier 4 46+ units at \$9.57 per unit, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to set the new Whitney Well Capital Charge at Residential \$7.00 per quarter, Small Commercial at \$15.00 per quarter (less than 15 units per quarter), Duplex at \$14.00 per quarter, all Irrigation meters at \$7.00 per quarter, and All Other Users at \$25.00 per quarter, Mr. Fishbone seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion that the Manganese Capital Charge is set at Residential at \$35 per quarter, Small Commercial at \$60.00 per quarter (less than 15 units per quarter), Duplex at \$70 per quarter, and All Other Users at \$85.00 per quarter, Mr. Fishbone seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to add a Tapping Fee of \$250.00 per tap plus labor and expenses incurred in the tapping process, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to add an application fee for MA DOT permits of \$250.00 plus all expenses incurred including possible engineering fees, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion that the effective date of all of these changes is January 1, 2023.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion that all other rates and fees remain the same, Mr. Fishbone seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Orcutt will inform the Town Manager of the rate changes to support the FY24 Budget.

### **GDRHS / PFAS**

Mr. Gmeiner said the PFAS group wanted to hear votes from the Water Commissioners on their most favorable choice. Mr. Orcutt does not know if Groton is a more expensive option because to make the Dunstable water work, it would need to be treated somewhere. Mr. Orcutt thinks it is in the best interest of the rate payers and tax payers to get Groton town water. Mr. Gmeiner agrees with this. Mr. Orcutt said that one Selectboard member asked about pipe route and Mr. Orcutt is looking into it. Mr. Fishbone asked if the recommendation is going to the Selectboard or school and Mr. Gmeiner said the Town Manager would like the input from various boards.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to support connecting Groton town water to Groton Dunstable Regional High School, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

**Other Business**

Mr. Orcutt gave a construction update to the Board for Whitney Well III and the Manganese Treatment Plant and the engineers will give an update at the next meeting.

Next Meeting is January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to adjourn at 8:21pm, Mr. Fishbone seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory