

Groton Water Commission  
Regular Meeting of the  
Board of Water Commissioners  
Tuesday, June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

**Minutes**

Present are Vice Chairman Greg Fishbone, Member James Gmeiner, Superintendent Tom Orcutt, Business Manager Lauren Crory, and Superintendent in Training Rob Maloney.

Mr. Fishbone called the meeting to order at 7:46pm. He stated that the meeting is being recorded and everyone introduced themselves.

**Manganese Treatment Plant**

Mr. Maloney said things are going well and they are running Whitney Well III into the system to keep the pH at the correct levels and the numbers look great. Mr. Fishbone asked about the ratio of the three Whitney wells and Mr. Maloney confirmed they are doing a 2:2:1 ratio so that Whitney Well III is being used less than the other two wells, and they will be doing the PFAS sampling within a few weeks. Mr. Orcutt said they did the second round of Lead & Copper sampling in May and the numbers were excellent and under federal thresholds. Mr. Maloney said the purity of the water is affecting the pH. Mr. Fishbone asked if that affects the amount of chemicals used and Mr. Orcutt said they will still be using the same chemicals and the treatment plant is affecting the pH and water purity.

Mr. Gmeiner asked if we are all done with R.H. White and Mr. Orcutt said they are not completely signed off and there are a few items on the punch list and warranty items. Mr. Fishbone asked if we have our certificate of occupancy and Mr. Orcutt said that do have it.

**Whitney Pond Well #3**

Mr. Orcutt said there is nothing to report.

**Operational Updates (Superintendent)**

Mr. Orcutt said the Ridgewood Water Main Extension is taking place and Florence Roche Construction. Mr. Maloney said a few services were added this week and backflow testing will begin soon.

Mr. Orcutt said the Taylor Street water main extension related to 500 Main St is out to bid. The GDRHS project is also in the works. Mr. Gmeiner asked about the Taylor St project, under the rail trail bridge where there is a depression in the road. Mr. Fishbone asked if the pipe will be replaced and Mr. Orcutt said that is part of the bid. Mr. Fishbone asked when shovels will be in the ground and Mr. Orcutt hopes for August. Mr. Gmeiner asked how dependent it is on the current property being demolished and Mr. Orcutt said that will be done soon.

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## **Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Review**

Mrs. Crory reviewed the FY2024 Budget Forecast. She expects to make our rate budget. Water sales increased and the temporary deficit fee helped to reach the budget goal. Construction income may be about \$50,000 short due to lack of projects. Interest exceeded our budgeted amount due to high rates. Overall, income may end up about \$15,000 short of the budget.

Mrs. Crory reviewed expenses. Mr. Orcutt would like to make salary and wage transfers and the next meeting due to some upcoming overtime. Our budget to our billing company exceeded budget because we purchased a new mobile work order module. Chemicals, electricity, and propane exceeded budget due to the new treatment plant coming online halfway through the fiscal year. Well testing exceeded budget as we have been doing extra sampling at the new well and treatment plant. The Groton Water Department also matched the town's contribution of \$10,000 to the Baddacook Weeds efforts. Overall, general expenses may be about \$18,000 over budget. Debt was estimated high, so there are remaining funds in the debt line item (about \$77,000 which will go back to the manganese fund).

Mr. Orcutt would like to see the construction income breakdown. Mr. Fishbone wants to be sure that the temporary deficit fee does not get lumped in with other parts of the budget. Mrs. Crory can add more detail to show the various fees and debt amounts.

## **GDRHS Water Main Project**

Mr. Orcutt said it makes sense that the Town Manager and Selectboard set the connection fee schedule and collect the fees to then split the revenue with the Water Department. Mr. Orcutt said that the Groton Water Department cannot legally charge a reduced connection fee to some customers but the Selectboard can, if they are in favor of doing so. Mr. Gmeiner thinks that people losing their well due to the HS PFAS problem should be made whole with the connection fee and meters and parts paid for by the town. He also is thinking about how to deal with irrigation for the new connections as this is more costly to meter and plumb. Mr. Gmeiner is thinking about not requiring irrigation meters in this area.

Mr. Orcutt explained that Environmental Partners thinks we should encourage people to connect to the water system as soon as possible for water quality purposes. This is a reason for a reduced rate. There are also people with contaminated wells directly related to the High School. Mr. Gmeiner asked what they did with Gratuity Rd and thinks they may have waived the connection fees. Mr. Orcutt recalls the Water Department receiving fees originally but then there were problems arising. Mr. Gmeiner recalls when the settlement money came in, the Water Department did not get any of the funds. The conductor lab water was flowing down to Gratuity Rd and contaminating the wells.

Mr. Gmeiner suggested putting together a water connection estimate including all costs and get someone to put a bid on the work. Mr. Fishbone asked what phase this is and Mr. Orcutt said it is Phase I.

**Other Business**

Next Meeting is June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the minutes of April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the minutes of May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to adjourn at 8:43pm, Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory