

Groton Water Commission
Regular Meeting of the
Board of Water Commissioners
Tuesday, May 14th, 2024
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Minutes

Present are Chairman Jack McCaffrey, Vice Chairman Greg Fishbone, Member James Gmeiner, Business Manager Lauren Crory, and technician Rob Maloney.

Mr. McCaffrey called the meeting to order at 7:32pm. He stated that the meeting is being recorded and everyone introduced themselves.

Manganese Treatment Plant

Mr. Maloney reported on the manganese treatment plant, noting that one of the gaskets on the vessels was leaking, and he and Mr. Knox would be resolving it temporarily until RH White could fix it permanently. He also mentioned that the system to track to the solar panel data was not complete and should be done on Thursday.

Mr. McCaffrey asked if the Groton Herald had any information about the ribbon cutting ceremony at the Treatment Plant. Mrs. Crory did send some photos and will also send a link to the Groton Channel footage.

Whitney Pond Well #3

Mr. Orcutt joined the meeting at 7:47pm to discuss the recent sampling results indicating that the blended Whitney Wells PFAS sample was within the new EPA specifications and rules, prompting he and Mr. Maloney to suggest running the new well into the system.

Mr. Gmeiner is not comfortable putting Whitney Well III into the system yet. Mr. Gmeiner asked if it could be run into the system at a lower level. Mr. McCaffrey said it is currently running 1:1:1. Mr. McCaffrey suggested running a different ratio to limit Whitney Well III but still allow some use, followed by reviewing the individual sample results in July. The other option would be to not run Whitney Well III at all. Mr. Fishbone clarified that they could run the wells at a different ratio, possibly 2:2:1. Mr. Maloney thinks it is a good time to start using Whitney Well III before the next sampling. Mr. Fishbone would like to get Whitney Well III online and flushed out, safely, so is in favor of diluting it with Whitney I and Whitney II by using a different ratio. Mr. Gmeiner is ok with the revised ratio and the plan to review the upcoming tests. Mr. McCaffrey said if Whitney Well III is above 4 ppt the well should be shut down until we decide what to do.

Mr. Orcutt said the individual sampling will be done in June. Mr. McCaffrey clarified that if Whitney Well III, by itself, is about 4 ppt, it should be shut down. Mr. Orcutt would suggest taking a combined sample at the same time as the individual. He reiterated that blending is an acceptable treatment by DEP. He believes that blended number should be the deciding factor.

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Mr. Gmeiner is not comfortable with Whitney Well III having its own level above 4 ppt. Mr. Fishbone is good with taking the extra data point and understands not being comfortable with Whitney Well III being out of compliance. Mr. Fishbone would like to see the numbers before committing to an action.

Operational Updates (Superintendent)

Mr. Maloney said the Planning Board agreed to let us move forward with the chlorine booster station for the high school. Mr. Maloney thinks there could be a shovel in the ground late summer. Mr. Gmeiner said they are still waiting on comments for endangered species so it may be fall.

Water Abatement - #2 Wintergreen Lane

Mrs. Crory explained the badger meter leak detection system, specifically instances where leaks were not detected or followed up on, due to the large number of meters to monitor. Mrs. Crory said they call customers if there is a large leak but cannot call everyone on the leak list each day. The commissioners would like Mrs. Crory to work on adding more people to the alert system. She will work on adding a bill insert in July to let people opt-in to the alert system.

Mrs. Crory reported that a customer's usage increased from 19 to 65 units, causing their water usage charge to rise from \$90.00 to \$411.00. The increase was due to a toilet leak issue. In this case, the leak would come and go (possibly a valve staying open then closing), so it took the customer a few weeks to identify and fix the issue. Mrs. Crory said that reducing the customer's excess usage to the lowest tier would save them \$116.00. Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to abate the excess usage to the lowest tier for an abatement of \$116.00, Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

The commissioners would like to encourage more customers to use the monitoring system, as it may affect future rebates.

Other Business

Mrs. Crory reviewed the budget and believes we will make our rate budget with help of the temporary deficit charge. She expects a possible \$50,000 shortfall in construction income. The manganese debt and capital fees will be reviewed in the fall and she believes there will be options to lower the Manganese Capital Charge for some customers.

Mr. Fishbone will be the acting Chairman until August when Mr. McCaffrey returns.

Mr. Gmeiner recommended a 7:45pm start time while Mr. McCaffrey is away, to ensure he and Mr. Fishbone will be there on time.

Mr. McCaffrey made a motion to adjourn at 8:14pm, Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory

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