

Groton Water Commission  
Regular Meeting of the  
Board of Water Commissioners  
Tuesday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

**Minutes**

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

Mr. Fishbone called the meeting to order at 7:30pm. He stated that the meeting is being recorded and everyone introduced themselves.

**FY 2026 Budget Discussion**

Mrs. Crory and Mr. Orcutt reviewed the first draft of the FY26 Water Budget. Mr. Orcutt's salary was reduced because he will not be getting the Insurance Opt-Out when he joins the town's insurance. Due to his joining the town's insurance, the intergovernmental cost was increased. A 4-month overlap for the new superintendent was included. Chemicals and Electricity were adjusted to include increased costs for the new treatment plant. These changes resulted in a \$7700 increase in general expenses for FY26.

Mrs. Crory reviewed the income which includes a rate increase needed in the amount of about \$50,000. Mrs. Crory took the average of the last two summers of which one was wet and one was dry. This rate income amount was \$1,025,000. Mr. Gmeiner asked how much we would save by dropping the new Superintendent to 3 months which would be about a \$9,000 difference.

Mrs. Crory said we should not rely on our reserve fund too much because we must cover a \$144,000 shortfall this fiscal year for the delay in the Groton Farms project. Mr. Fishbone pointed out that this is a one-year problem where a rate increase would be reoccurring to use a rate increase is not apples to apples. Mr. Orcutt recommends keeping the rate increase in the budget but Mrs. Crory agrees it is a one-year problem and we could keep the rate increase out of the budget and review later. Mr. Gmeiner suggests reducing the new superintendent to 3 months and showing a reserve transfer rather than a rate increase for the remainder. He does not want to fix a one-time problem with a reoccurring solution. This resulted in adding a \$39,000 transfer and removing the rate increase line item.

**Other Business**

Mr. Orcutt discussed the Water Main Extension which is set to start in early December. The contract has been awarded but the winner has not yet been disclosed. Mr. Orcutt is working with Environmental Partners to inform residents with updates on the project. The town's website will have a link to information.

Mr. Orcutt reported that water levels have been in good shape.

Mr. Orcutt said the water testing at 500 Main St have passed water quality tests and they are working on one leak before making the final connection.

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Mr. McCaffrey discussed the letter in the Herald that criticized the Water Commission for reporting an increase in water pumping this summer. Mr. McCaffrey asked Mr. Orcutt to respond and reference the new well and emphasize that all pumping was within conservation requirements.

Next Meeting is December 2nd, 2024.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to approve the minutes of October 15<sup>th</sup> and October 29<sup>th</sup> as amended, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. McCaffery made a motion to adjourn at 8:22pm, Mr. Fishbone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Croy