



GROVELAND WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENT



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Water Treatment Plant Frequently Asked Questions

What are PFAS?

PFAS are chemical components that break down very slowly over time, to the point where they are often referred to as “forever chemicals.” Often they are seen in food or water at low levels. High levels of PFAS are now understood to cause potential health issues in humans and animals; the extent of potential harm is still not known.

For more information: <https://www.epa.gov/pfas/pfas-explained>

PFAS is a global concern. Many kinds of PFAS are present in water and food. Virtually all water sources, including public water sources and many bottled water brands, have tested positive for elevated levels of PFAS.

Why can't we purchase water from another community?

The board has thoroughly researched all viable options in an effort to comply with the new state and federal PFAS regulations, including purchasing water from the neighboring community of Haverhill. After much consideration, including consulting with an outside engineering firm, Apex, it was determined that buying water from another community would not be cost-effective for the town for years to come and would significantly impact the price for consumers.

How will the Water Treatment Plant be operated/maintained?

The plant will use a two-stage treatment process to remove both naturally occurring iron and manganese as well as PFAS compounds. Water will first pass through greensand filters to remove iron and manganese, which would otherwise clog the Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) filters that are used to extract PFAS.

This water Filtration plant will be owned and operated by the Groveland Water Department. All of our existing employees are licensed to operate the type of facility that is being designed. One additional water operator is suggested to be hired to help spread the diverse workload of our Departments.

Our staff operate the Water Distribution system, the Water Treatment system, as well as our Sewer Collections system. Once the plant is online, it will require more dedicated time than our current water treatment process.

What is greensand technology, and how will it be used or disposed of?

Greensand technology is a filter media that will be used in the WTP to remove iron and Magnanes. This media attracts the minerals and removes them from the water. The media's expected lifespan is determined partly by how many minerals it is removing.

Part of our upcoming Treatment Pilot study will determine the best type of filtration media, as well as the volume of media required. The testing will also give us an expected lifespan, based on filter loading during the Pilot testing.

Part of the budget would include forward planning for media removal and replacement. This is a normal aspect of the operation of filter beds.

Is my water safe to drink?

Yes. Groveland's water is currently well within safety standards and is ranked among the cleanest in Essex County, accordingly to the Environmental Working Group (EWG).

During construction, will my water be affected? Including water pressure and discoloration?

The construction of the plant itself would have little effect on the water system in Town during construction.

Being located within the Pines Recreational Area, on land under the control of the Water and Sewer Department, minimal effects to residents will be seen.

Part of the plan does include water main work along Main Street. This would have the same effect as any other water main project. Traffic detours, temporary water shut-downs in order to facilitate the connection of new pipes, etc.

The Main Street water main portion of the project will be planned around the repaving of that section of roadway, also. Residents can expect new water pipes, as well as new pavement.

Generally, residents can also expect better pressure and volume, as the pipe replacement will increase both of those along the Main Street One-Way area.

What are the benefits of the treatment plant?

This Treatment plant will allow Groveland to be compliant with newly released Federal and State water regulations.

While the driving force of this project is the new PFAS regulations, it will also help the town's decades-old Iron and Manganese levels. Iron and Manganese levels have been documented to be high, going back to at least 1975.

Discolored water has long been an issue for some, but not all, areas in town, because of the lack of a filtration plant.

Once this plant is online and operational, the department will no longer face the risk of filling the pipes with minerals every time the wells are running. Phase 2, which will be happening concurrently, is to begin systematically replacing the aging infrastructure (water mains).

How much will this cost me?

It is also important to note that if you don't have Town water, you will not pay anything towards this project.

The first step in this process is conducting a Rate Study. This will happen during the design, engineering, and permitting phase. A third-party organization will come in to assist in establishing water rates that will cover the cost of the project. A timeline of these rates will also be established.

It would be easy to take the estimated total project cost (\$44.6 million) and divide it by the number of water customers per year, per bill. However, that is not realistically how the cost will be spread out to water customers.

Using the method above, you could expect an increase of \$185 per water bill. However, as mentioned, a rate study will need to be conducted in order to clarify how to spread this out amongst all water users, big and small.

For this year, we will be funding at a minimum the design, engineering, and permitting, at a cost of roughly \$3.5 million, a portion of the total \$44.6 million project. **This would equate to about \$32.50 per water bill. Residents can expect to see this increase as of their July Bill.**

We are currently accepted into a low-interest loan program with the State. For FY 2025, we are accepted for \$15,000,000 at 0-2% interest. We will need to apply each year during this project for more low-interest funding. PFAS projects receive priority within this loan program, so we hope to continue to score high in the program and receive funding.

We would also like to remind residents that we are part of a class action lawsuit with many of the chemical companies related to PFAS. We were told that we would be seeing checks very soon. While we do not know a dollar figure yet, we intend on applying those funds directly to this project to help offset the cost.

We plan to continue exploring all state and federal grants and other funding opportunities that may help alleviate the burden of costs for residents.

