

GROVELAND WATER & SEWER BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
July 22nd, 2024

A Regular Meeting of the Groveland Water & Sewer Board was held on Monday, July 22nd, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. The meeting was held in the Main Meeting Room at the Groveland Town Hall, 183 Main Street, Groveland.

Board Members Present

Sarah Sheehan-McGrath, Chairperson
Terry Grim

Staff Members Present

Colin Stokes, W/S Superintendent
Kimberly Bourque, Office Manager

OPENING

Commissioner Grim made a motion to open the meeting at 5:16 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Sheehan-McGrath. All in favor.

NEW WATER SOURCE UPDATE

Superintendent Stokes discusses the Pilot Study and what the treatment plant would need to consist of because of the grant that the Water & Sewer Department would be receiving. Ryan and Superintendent Stokes reached out to the DEP to see when the money would be received, but they declined to answer that question. They will inquire about getting on the schedule to have the mini trailer come in to run our water through it to see how much media we would need in a filter and what type of filter would be needed, among other things.

STATE DROUGHT TASKFORCE UPDATE

Superintendent Stokes explains that this group meets about every other week and that they just met and did not change the level at all, but they were contemplating putting it at a level 1 for Western Massachusetts and were not concerned about the rest of the state. Our levels that we monitor here are fine. Commissioner Grim inquires about sending something out saying that there is not a restriction but possibly some sort of PR info about the right things to do during a drought, proper watering techniques, etc. He states West Newbury already has a voluntary water ban and possibly Georgetown.

FEDERAL FUNDING UPDATE

Superintendent Stokes explains that this is the money that we will be receiving from Seth Moulton. He states that they have reached out to inquire about a timeline when we would be receiving approximately \$960,000.00 and that we cannot spend it until they “do their thing”. They told us that they just finished finalizing the money they gave away for FY23 and they alluded to the fact that we will be assigned a person that will work with us. We would show them what the projects are and they will help us with the paperwork to help us receive the monies. Superintendent Stokes anticipates that it will happen around the end of this fiscal year, since they seem to be a fiscal year behind and he will keep everyone updated as things happen. Chairperson Sheehan-McGrath states that we should keep it on our schedule to discuss where we need and want to spend it, so that when the time comes, we are ready. Washington Street was discussed, but it seems that is further out, unless there are some deals made with the state about tying other projects into it. Superintendent Stokes explains that looking at the water system part of it, it would not be his first choice of a project, but it will be talked about more as more things progress.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Bourque presented the minutes from the June 17th, 2024, Water & Sewer Board meeting. **Commissioner Grim made a motion to approve the minutes, with one change of i.e. to e.g. from June 17th, 2024, as submitted. Chairperson Sheehan-McGrath seconded. No further discussion. All were in favor.**

OLD OR UNFINISHED BUSINESS

King Street

Superintendent Stokes opens the floor for any discussions. Chairperson Sheehan-McGrath inquires about King Street. Stokes explains that King Street has not yet started because we do not have the personnel we need for that right now, due to vacations and Matt's father passing away unexpectedly, as we are being very flexible with him and giving him what he needs during this time. He is aiming for the end of July to be out on King Street doing water services.

Center Street Break

Commissioner Grim inquires about the broken pipe on Center Street. Superintendent Stokes explains that the house is going to be torn down and the process for the W & S Department is to cut the service line before to protect the system. As soon as the pipe was touched, the actual shut off broke. That section of road was shut down to dig back to the main to shut the water there. All and all it went very well and was completely fixed in one and a half hours. Commissioner Grim asks if things like this are covered by insurance and Superintendent Stokes explained that this was on the homeowner and that we do not recoup any of the water loss during the break.

Washington/Main Street House

Chairperson Sheehan-McGrath discusses the Washington Street/Main Street house and that she spoke to Matt about it. Apparently, he had been in there awhile ago and saw that the water line is teed off before the meter. Stokes explains that nobody is living there currently, but Chairperson Sheehan-McGrath is concerned about fixing it before it sells, since it should not be the new owners' problem. Stokes explains that we can shut it off at the road until it is fixed if it came to that, but we will get in there and address it.

Administrative Assistant Position

Superintendent Stokes informs the board that we have offered a job to a woman who is coming from a dental surgery office, but that it is not official until the Selectboard appoints her and that it was on their agenda tonight. If she is appointed, her start date is August 12th, 2024 to align with starting after Kim's vacation.

Sewer Pump Station Roof

Superintendent Stokes explains that the bids are coming in to fix the roof at the sewer pump station. They came in a little under what was appropriated at the Town Meeting. We have a company that the town uses for all roof related things and they handle all the bidding processes through the state. Stokes will reach out to the contact person since he has never used this company. We got two bids and one no bid, which is legally all we needed and we will be going with the lowest bid. Superintendent Stokes will reach out to get on their schedule.

City of Haverhill Sewer Bills

Superintendent Stokes explains that we pay the City of Haverhill two things; Capital Loans and based on flow and volume. He states that we were \$3,700.62 short and asks the board to approve that amount out of our emergency sewer fund monies.

Commissioner Grim moves to appropriate \$3,700.62 from the emergency sewer account to pay the balance to The City of Haverhill Sewer. Chairperson Sheehan-McGrath seconded. No further discussion. All in favor.

Superintendent Stokes states that they did get rid of the interest and that we have increased each of those money lines for the current fiscal year to not run into a similar situation next year. Commissioner Grim inquires how we

bill by the amount of water used and we are billed by the amount we pump, metered on the way out and anything lost along the way, we do not pay for.

36 Garrison Street

Chairperson Sheehan-McGrath opens the floor about receiving an email from Rebecca about 36 Garrison Street and if any departments had any concerns about the situation. It was also discussed that Commissioner Grim and Commissioner Dunn would not be able to discuss the matter because Commissioner Grim is an abutter and Commissioner Dunn lives on Garrison Street. Commissioner Grim states he spoke with Annie and she informed him that he is NOT an abutter, which would allow him to speak on the matter. Superintendent Stokes explains that there were questions about the infrastructure in the area and that the pipes are what he would consider as “new.” Commissioner Grim states that we cannot say we are going to need to replace this section of pipes in this area because of this project. Stokes says the oldest pipe in that area is from the 1930’s in a section of King Street and would not affect the project area. Everything else in the area is from the 2000’s and newer. He explains that the sewer in the area is from 2004 and is basically brand new in the “sewer world.” The sewer structure in town was sized to take away more than we will ever build out. Superintendent Stokes states that with or without this project, we must spend a ton of money to either build a treatment plant or buy water from Haverhill. The concerns of taxing the aquifer or creating more dirty water, in his opinion, are not valid because once we do one of those two things, we will be able to buy as much water as we need from Haverhill or clean as much water that is needed by the treatment plant. Commissioner Grim inquires about the number of people, not accounts, on water in town and with our aquifer how many people can we feed water to. Superintendent Stokes explains that we base it from the state allowing us to take “X” amount of water out of the ground and that we are nowhere near that number. It is based on satellite wells, draw down, how far out it goes, distance, and other scientific factors. Historically we are trending down on how much water we sell because people are more conservation oriented and appliances being more cognizant of water output.

WATER SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT FEE STRUCTURE

Superintendent Stokes talks about how our fee structure to tie into our system is based off single-family homes. This structure should be looked at to generate more revenue to help pay for many of the projects we need to do soon. As of now, the fee is \$3,750.00 for a single-family home and anything other than that, the fee is based on the size of the pipe that feeds the building. The research Stokes has done in other communities is that they have a connection fee and then a lesser fee per unit. For example: You are building a twenty-unit building, it is an initial “x” amount and then a lesser “y” amount per unit. We currently do not have this structure because we do not have these types of buildings and have not needed it, but if we start having multi-unit buildings in town, it is a good opportunity to generate revenue and the single-family home fee will remain the same. Commissioner Grim states that it would be good to get this new fee structure established long before any multi-unit buildings are built. Superintendent Stokes explains that ninety single family homes with two people living in them will tax the system in the same way ninety units in a building with two people living in each unit would do. He states that they should pay comparable to single-family homes to be able to use the funds to improve the system, so that it does not negatively affect their neighbor down the street. Stokes will reach out to Ryan and get something put together about looking at this fee structure.

COMMISSIONERS TIME

Chairperson Sheehan-McGrath states she was asked a question “Will the Capital Fee go away once all the work is complete.” Superintendent Stokes explains that it will be many, many years before the work is complete. Another question presented was about relining the water lines and Stokes explains that we have not relined pipes here before and he is not saying we should or should not, but in a lot of cases it would not fix the problem completely. He states that there are some areas where pipes are too small for the volume issue, so relining something like that would not fix the problem. In other areas, if there were to be no houses ever to be added and the pipe size was sufficient, in that case, relining and cleaning that main would work. Superintendent Stokes explains that most of the mains are undersized. Chairperson Sheehan-McGrath inquires about possibly putting out a PR using these frequently asked questions with information about why we can do something or cannot do something, what the new fees will be used

for, etc. She states it will be nice to be able to inform people about why we do the things we do and not seem like we are being dismissive.

Commissioner Grim inquires about National Grid and the pump station. Superintendent Stokes informs the board that the engineering firm for National Grid has sent plans, Dig-Safed the area, and will submit their plans to the Conservation Board for a parking area for the rail trail. It will need to be brought to the Selectboard and Town Administrator, as the land is town owned.

NEXT MEETING

Monday, August 19th, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room at Groveland Town Hall, 183 Main Street, Groveland.

CLOSING

Commissioner Grim made a motion to close the meeting at 5:52 p.m. Seconded by Chairperson Sheehan-McGrath. No further discussion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Bourque

Water & Sewer Office Manager