

GROVELAND WATER & SEWER BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
August 19th, 2024

A Regular Meeting of the Groveland Water & Sewer Board was held on Monday, August 19th, 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
Bill Dunn

Staff Members Present

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

OPENING

Chairperson Sheehan-McGrath made a motion to open the meeting at 5:01 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Grim. All in favor.

STATE DROUGHT TASKFORCE UPDATE

Superintendent Stokes states that we are not in a drought and that the only area in a drought currently is the Parker River basin communities. He also went onto the DEP website to find water conservation tips to create a PR to send out to the community. The ideas presented were about leaking toilets, faucet aerators, and lawn irrigation. Commissioner Grim would like to add something about shower heads.

DEPARTMENTAL PAPERWORK

Superintendent Stokes presented the contract from Environmental Partners for the treatment trailer discussed at the previous meeting. He states that once it is signed, we can get on the schedule, which is important. Chairperson Sheehan-McGrath states that there are three phases and it would be complete in April.

PROJECT UPDATES

Treatment Plant/Haverhill Water

Stokes informed the board that Ryan, the engineer, wanted to be present at this meeting but he was unable to do so. He is hoping he will be able to attend the meeting next month. Ryan put together a timeline that Superintendent Stokes presented to the board for the route of building a plant. He explains that the deadline for compliance is slated for April 2029. The two “schedules” were presented as if we went to town meeting this fall for funding and the other is if we went to the “Annual Town Meeting” in April or May of 2025. It was discussed that, either way, it will be “tight” timeline wise. Commissioner Dunn asks if we have received any more information from Haverhill. Stokes explains that he is still waiting upon more information and will push more, but states that they are not willing to talk money until the very end. This becomes tough timeline wise; Stokes is adamant that we cannot miss the April 2029 deadline. Commissioner Dunn wants to make sure the residents are aware of the options and that they were both fully explored. Commissioner Grim and Chairperson Sheehan-McGrath both explain that the people do not necessarily have a vote in the matter, but as the Commissioners, we have done our duty to find the best option.

Commissioner Dunn inquires about what it would cost for each option. Stokes explains that the Mayor of Haverhill has already said that we will not be able to buy water cheaper than their own people pay. At their rate and the amount of water we sold last year, it would be, at minimum, approximately \$800,000 per year, plus a Capital Fee towards their infrastructure, and system improvements. These improvements would include the main that feeds Groveland from Haverhill at a minimum of \$1,000,000 and a chemical control building at the town line to make

our water chemistries agree, which Ryan estimates costing between \$1,000,000 - \$2,000,000. Commissioner Dunn asks what it would cost Groveland a year to run a new plant. Stokes elaborates on the costs being the loan payment, approximately \$1,000,000 per year, and an additional \$150,000 to \$200,000 operational costs.

Chairperson Sheehan-McGrath discusses the fact that since this is federally mandated, she would anticipate some kind of federal or state funding. Stokes explains that we already know we would get the state revolving fund of low to no interest on the loan, which would be a huge savings. He states that if its \$800,000 vs. \$1,000,000, is it worth \$200,000 to have no control over what you are getting for water. Chairperson Sheehan-McGrath informs the board that people that she has spoken to about this matter would rather go the treatment plant route rather than buying from Haverhill, even knowing it would cost a little more money. Stokes reiterates that Haverhill will not talk money until the very end and that he is very worried the very end will be too late. He also states his concern if we get to the very end, we would have no choice but to buy water from Haverhill and we will be at their mercy. Commissioner Dunn expresses that he wants to make sure both avenues are investigated fully to avoid any complaints from the towns' people. Superintendent Stokes states that it needs to be known that there are deadlines that need to be met and if they are not met, there will be many fines, since it is a federal mandate. Commissioner Dunn wants Stokes to press the Mayor of Haverhill and their engineer more to try and get more answers because of the tight timeline, but at the end of the day, they do not work for us. Stokes does state that we are not at the point of panic, but we will get as much information we can before deciding of which avenue will be the best for the town. Ryan will be able to explain more of the process next meeting.

Commissioner Dunn also asks if we do go the plant route, will we need to hire more people to run the plant? Stokes states that we would probably have to hire one more person that would be at the plant all day, while the other workers are out doing "normal" work. Dunn also asks about how many years down the road would the plant need updating. Stokes explains that everything has a "shelf life" and he is not sure off the top of his head but that Georgetown is doing work to theirs now and that it went in in the 1970's. Commissioner Grim explains that it could be a more sensitive system or it could be a more robust system, so that we really do not know until we get closer to deciding and after meeting with Ryan. Commissioner Dunn explains that no matter what, it will be costly to run and inquires about the location of it. Stokes responds that if we go that route, it would go down at the Pines on the land that we own. He states that we will get all the information we need and that if we did end up going with the plant, we would have all the information we needed in case of an emergency to be able to connect to Haverhill in the future.

Sewer Station Roof

Superintendent Stokes starts with discussion about the sewer roof project. He states that we accepted the bid and the contract has been sent out. Once we get that back, we can get on the schedule and that we are hoping to get it done well before the winter.

King Street

Stokes states that this has been pushed back slightly due to a death in the family of a crew member and crew members' vacations. He is hoping in the next couple of weeks that we will be out there starting the water services. Commissioner Dunn inquires how long it will take and Stokes explains that we can usually get a couple done per day. He states there are about twenty and that it should be a couple weeks' worth of work.

181R School Street

Superintendent Stokes explains that this is not our project, but there is a proposed sub division going in with approximately six lots; four single family homes and two duplexes. He states that it has some funky sewer forced main work because the property goes downhill. Stokes says that he will be looking to enact our option to have peer review. This means that they will have to pay our engineer to review the plans to make sure they look good. Stokes states that we do not deal with sewer forced mains a lot and would rather have someone with expertise in that area look at the plans. When the time comes, the plans will be sent to our engineers and they will review them and sign off on them with any changes that they feel need to be made. Stokes explains that this takes the burden off us looking at plans for something that we are not super familiar with. Commissioner Grim states that down the road, if there is an issue, there is an engineering firm that lawyers can talk to. Superintendent Stokes also states that we

will do something similar when 36 Garrison Street applies for something, which will take the review off our shoulders and it will come down to just the facts and nobody's personal opinions.

PFAS

Superintendent Stokes states we are still working on the PFAS lawsuit monies. Also, as required by the state and federal governments, we must sample quarterly and monthly for PFAS. He informs the board that one of our samples in July came back higher than normal, which requires us to have to send out a public education PR about the levels and what we are doing to correct it. Stokes explains that we have not violated anything because that requires three months of sampling. Commissioner Grim asks about the level of the high sample and Stokes states it 22.3ppm and that the threshold is 20ppm. He explains that this specific sample is usually between 10-12ppm and that there was work done at the well, which he speculates something was stirred up or that it was on the equipment that they were using. Grim also states it also could be a mistake on the chemical company's part as well. Stokes explains that it was retested in August and that it was back down below the threshold. Commissioner Grim asks about how this PR will be sent out and Stokes explains that it must go out by August 29th, 2024, so it will be going out as its own mailer.

Superintendent Stokes explains that we were part of the nationwide study UCMR 5 which includes PFAS testing. Because we were part of this study, we need to inform the people of the testing and results via their website. This needs to be sent out within twelve months and Stokes explains that it can be part of the Consumer Confidence Report that we send out every year. Commissioner Grim states that this information will be good for people in town to read about because it supports the fact that we must build a plant or buy water from Haverhill. Stokes explains that it is not because of the dirty water, but, in fact, it is because of these new PFAS regulations.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Bourque presented the minutes from the July 22nd, 2024, Water & Sewer Board meeting. **Commissioner Grim made a motion to approve the minutes from July 22nd, 2024, as submitted. Chairperson Sheehan-McGrath seconded. No further discussion. All in favor. One extension.**

OLD OR UNFINISHED BUSINESS

FAQ

Superintendent Stokes explains that he and Chairperson Sheehan-McGrath have collaborated on creating these. Commissioner Grim also presented another question he would like added. They will be put on the website once they are complete. Commissioner Dunn expresses concern of sending out too much information at once, but also wanting to send out information on our timeline as well.

Commissioner Grim inquires about the number of towns/cities in Massachusetts that are compliant for PFAS currently. Stokes states that currently, approximately fifty water departments treat for PFAS and with the new regulation, it will go up to one hundred and twenty-seven. Commissioner Dunn asks if Superintendent Stokes knows of any other towns nearby that will be buying water from another town that Stokes could talk to about the process. Stokes explains that he will put some feelers out and that Bob from Haverhill did state that they went through something similar with Plaistow.

Service Lines

Superintendent Stokes states that we are in the very early stages of compiling our list of lead service lines. He believes that we do not have any actual lead pipes, but the way the EPA classifies things is if there was a lead pipe connected to, for example, a steal pipe, even though that lead pipe was removed in the 1980's, the EPA considers that steal pipe "lead" since it was once connected to a lead pipe. Stokes also explains that if a pipe is "unknown" the EPA considers it lead, if it is steal that once had a lead pigtail on it, it is considered lead, and if it is galvanized, which we do not have, it is considered lead. After the list is complete, we will then have to go out and confirm a certain percentage of our list, and the last step is going out and fixing the ones that need to be replaced to the curb. Stokes explains that this is also going to be a nationwide mandate.

Administrative Assistant Position

Chairperson Sheehan-McGrath inquires about inviting our new employee to our next meeting for the board to meet. Stokes states that he will have her come to the beginning so that she is not obligated to stay the entire meeting. He explains that her name is Meray and that she started last Monday and is doing a great job getting acclimated to the phones, learning how to deal with the customers for various reasons.

Washington/Main Street House

Chairperson Sheehan-McGrath inquires about this house and Stokes explains that we are going out there this Thursday August 22nd, 2024 to get it squared away.

System Development Fee Structure

Superintendent Stokes explains that he spoke to Ryan about this matter and that he had been interpreting it wrong. He states that our system is set up for mainly single-family homes. If you want to build a house, you pay us \$3,750.00. If you build a building that has six-inch pipe that feeds it, our fee structure is no longer based upon the size of the pipe, it is based upon the anticipated flow that will go in, multiply that number by 2.3, then multiply that by \$7,400.00 and that becomes the system development fee.

NEXT MEETING

Monday, September 23rd, 2024, at 5:15 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 5:41 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Dunn. No further discussion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Bourque

Water & Sewer Office Manager