

**GROVELAND WATER & SEWER BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
February 12, 2024**

A Regular Meeting of the Groveland Water & Sewer Board was held on Monday, February 12, 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

Bill Dunn, Chairperson
Sarah Sheehan-McGrath
Terry Grim

Staff Members Present

Colin Stokes, W/S Superintendent
Danielle Albright, W/S Office Manager

OPENING

Commissioner Dunn made a motion to open the meeting at 5:00 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Sheehan-McGrath. All in favor.

CUSTOMER COMMENTS

None

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Budget Review

Superintendent Stokes presented the updated FY2025 proposed budget with some additional and updated information including union contract wages, and retirement and overtime expenses. At the last meeting, the Board requested historical overtime data going back five years, which Superintendent Stokes presented. The overtime budget line includes both scheduled and unscheduled overtime. The data demonstrates a steady rise in the need for additional overtime hours which explains the bump in the proposed budget for the crew. The budget lines for non-union staff wages were reduced to match with the proposed FY25 Town budget which is level-funding wages for Town Hall employees. There was a brief discussion regarding union contract negotiations in which Commissioner Dunn asked about the process and when or if the Board would get involved. Superintendent Stokes explained to the Board that part of his job is to act as a steward of the Board to protect financial interests for the department. Superintendent Stokes reiterated if there were ever an instance where he felt uncomfortable speaking on behalf of the Board in regard to union negotiations, he would bring the matter before them to deliberate.

Commissioner Sheehan-McGrath made a motion to approve the proposed FY2025 Water & Sewer Department budget for July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025 as presented, pending any changes to the salaries based on the Board of Selectmen recommendation. Seconded by Commissioner Grim. No further discussion. All in favor.

2. Town Meeting Warrant Article Discussion

Superintendent Stokes presented two proposed Warrant Articles for Town Meeting. First, a new roof is required on the large sewer station off of Main Street across from Esty's Business Park. The existing roof has failed. It's been patched together for years and now needs a complete repair. The approximate cost of the project is Seventy Thousand Dollars (\$70,000.00). The second article would be to appropriate the funds to move forward with Environmental Partners on the pilot study for the future treatment plant. The approximate cost of the project is One Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$150,000.00) and includes three phases. Superintendent Stokes briefly explained the pilot study process and provided documentation from Environmental Partners which outlined in detail the three phases of the pilot study, including a timeline. If approved, work on the pilot study would begin in August 2024. If the money is not appropriated in FY25, the timeline for the project is pushed back by at least a year, which may put the Town out of compliance when the EPA releases the new PFAS regulations. Superintendent Stokes explained that money for both articles would come out of retained earnings. He further explained that even if the money is

TOWN OF GROVELAND
2024 FEB 27 AM 11:12
TOWN CLERK
RECEIVED/POSTED

appropriated at Town Meeting, it doesn't necessarily have to be spent if another solution to meet the EPA PFAS regulations were to present itself. At this time, Commissioner Dunn introduced the Haverhill Water Discussion (see Items Not Reasonably Anticipated at Time of Posting). **Commissioner Grim made a motion to approve the Warrant Article for roof improvements to the Main Street Sewer Station. Seconded by Commissioner Sheehan-McGrath. No further discussion. All in favor.** The Board agreed to wait to further discuss the warrant article for the pilot study until after the special meeting on February 26, 2024.

3. Environmental Partners Update

Ryan Allgrove provided a proposal for the Well #3 Pilot Treatability Study to the Board outlining the scope, timeline and cost of the project. Superintendent Stokes requested the Board take it home to review for further discussion at the February 26th meeting.

ITEMS NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED AT TIME OF POSTING

1. Haverhill Water Discussion

Commissioner Dunn had a meeting with Bob Ward, Haverhill Department of Public Works Director, to discuss the logistics for Groveland to connect to Haverhill water as a possible alternative to building a water treatment facility in Groveland. The City of Haverhill would be open to contracting with Groveland to sell us water. Haverhill already has the existing facilities to treat water and have a plan to accommodate the new EPA regulations. Haverhill recently updated their infrastructure and selling water to Groveland would help offset the cost of improvements. The discussion between Commissioner Dunn and Director Ward was strictly for informational purposes and no dollar amounts were provided. Director Ward expressed his willingness to come before the Board to discuss further. Superintendent Stokes provided some additional information stating that, historically, Groveland was connected to Haverhill water at one point. Currently, Groveland is connected to Haverhill sewer. Haverhill accepts waste from Groveland for a per gallon dollar amount and an additional capital fee which goes toward supporting their infrastructure. It could be assumed that a water contract would be structured similarly. Additional discussion ensued regarding the cost-benefit of building a water treatment facility in Groveland versus connecting to Haverhill water. Superintendent Stokes outlined positive and negative consequences of both options. The Board agreed the best next step was to schedule an additional meeting in February and request Director Ward to be present. This special meeting is scheduled for February 26, 2024 at 5:00 pm.

OLD OR UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Capital Fee Implementation

Commissioner Sheehan-McGrath asked for an update on the timeline for implementing a Capital Fee. Superintendent Stokes explained the posting requirements for a rate hearing and suggested waiting until after the budget is set before setting a date for the hearing, stating sometime in April would be appropriate.

2. Compliance with PFAS Regulations

Commissioner Dunn asked Superintendent Stokes when the EPA is saying we have to comply with the new guidelines. Superintendent Stokes explained that they haven't come out with a deadline yet, however, typically when new regulations are established the general guideline is three to five years to comply.

3. Lead Line Replacement Project

Commissioner Dunn also asked about the compliance deadline for the Lead Line Replacement Project. The first phase of this project is to produce a list of lead lines within Town that need to be replaced. The deadline for this phase is October 2024. The next phase will be to confirm the list, there is no deadline set for the second phase yet. Superintendent Stokes stated there is only a small number of lead lines still in use in Groveland. The system in Groveland is structured in such a way that the Water Department owns the lines from the pipe in the street to the shut off valve in each resident's front yard. The homeowner owns the pipe from the shut off into the house. It hasn't yet been determined who will be responsible for the cost to replace the lines.

4. Supplemental Funding

Commissioner Dunn asked if there are any grants out there to help pay for a treatment facility in Groveland. Superintendent Stokes reminded the Board that our application has already been submitted for SRF and has advanced through the first selection round. The treatment of PFAS would be an eligible project for these funds. There have not been any grants released yet to support the building of a water treatment facility to treat for PFAS but it's possible as the regulations are released that some grant funding may become available.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Albright presented the minutes from the January 08, 2024 Water & Sewer Board meeting. **Commissioner Grim made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 08, 2024, meeting as submitted. Commissioner Grim seconded. No further discussion. All were in favor.**

NEXT MEETING

Monday, February 26, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room at Groveland Town Hall, 183 Main Street, Groveland.

CLOSING

Commissioner Sheehan-McGrath made a motion to close the meeting at 5:49 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Grim. No further discussion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Danielle Albright
Water & Sewer Office Manager

