

GROVELAND WATER & SEWER BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
February 26, 2024

A Regular Meeting of the Groveland Water & Sewer Board was held on Monday, February 26, 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 Grim. All in favor.

CUSTOMER COMMENTS

None

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Future Water Supply Discussion

Mr. Robert Ward, Haverhill DPW Director, attended the meeting at the invitation of the Board to discuss the possibility of Groveland purchasing its water from Haverhill in the future. Superintendent Stokes briefly summarized the reason for this discussion which is the PFAS regulation changes expected from the EPA. When the regulations go into effect, Groveland water will not be in compliance and will be required to either begin treating the water through the construction of a water treatment facility or find an alternative water source with Haverhill being one option.

Director Ward stated that Haverhill does have the capacity to expand their system into Groveland. Haverhill recently upgraded their own water treatment plant and are capable of supplying 7.1 million gallons of water per day with actual current supply being closer to 5 million gallons of water per day. With Groveland only supplying less than three hundred and fifty thousand (350,000) gallons per day on average, the capacity certainly exists within Haverhill's system to accommodate Groveland residents. There was some brief discussion about infrastructure, previous connections to Haverhill and logistics of reconnecting. Superintendent Stokes asked Director Ward if Haverhill is currently meeting PFAS requirements. Director Ward stated that Haverhill water is supplied by surface water as opposed to groundwater, which typically has lower PFAS concentrations. Additionally, the new treatment facility is also utilizing carbon filters which is one of the best technologies for treating PFAS in water. Haverhill is currently meeting all PFAS standards.

Superintendent Stokes commented that one possible solution might be to blend a small amount of Haverhill water into Groveland's water in order to lower the concentration of PFAS in Groveland's water supply, rather than purchasing all of the water from Haverhill. This, of course, would require approval from DEP. Director Ward stated Haverhill would be open to this arrangement as well.

Director Ward suggested a feasibility study be completed by both Groveland and Haverhill engineers to determine pressures, hydraulics, water quality issues, existing infrastructure, engineering costs, etc. Groveland would be expected to reimburse Haverhill for the cost of their study which could be up to twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000.00). Regulatory concerns, such as how much responsibility Haverhill would have as a supplier to

Groveland and how it may affect certain licenses and permits held by the city, may also be vetted out through a feasibility study.

Commissioner Grim mentioned the new 40-B development being built in Groveland as it relates to capacity which could potentially be about thirty-five thousand (35,000) gallons per day but, again, Director Ward referenced their ability to pump up to 7.1 million gallons per day and how the cities average usage has been trending down the last few years. Haverhill's ability to support Groveland's current and projected future usage doesn't appear to be an issue.

Superintendent Stokes inquired about Haverhill's billing system - if it is a tiered or flat rate system. Director Ward stated that they currently charge residents and businesses four dollars and ninety-three cents (\$4.93) per one hundred cubic feet of water with approximately fifty-five thousand (55,000) customers on city water.

Commissioner Dunn asked what the next step should be to determine if buying water from Haverhill is a good solution. Director Ward suggested the feasibility study as the next logical step. Commissioner Dunn confirmed with Director Ward that Groveland has the "green light" to move forward with the study and then, once completed, the Towns can reconvene to negotiate costs, fee structures, etc. Director Ward suggested getting the two engineering firms together to discuss systems which would enable them to provide a better scope of work. The Board agreed and suggested Superintendent Stokes and Director Ward work together to organize then report back with the information.

Commissioner Grim made a motion to create a warrant article for up to fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) towards a feasibility study with the City of Haverhill Water & Sewer Department to explore the possibility and the cost of Groveland connecting to Haverhill water system. Commissioner Sheehan-McGrath seconded. No further discussion. All were in favor.

The Board thanked Director Ward for his time and he left the meeting at 5:29. The Board engaged in a brief discussion of the positive and negative outcomes for each possible solution (building a treatment plant versus connecting to Haverhill water). Superintendent Stokes provided some background information about the old board of directors and their goal to develop Groveland into an independent system with a new well and future treatment plant.

2. Town Meeting Warrant Article Discussion

Superintendent Stokes provided some background information about the old board of directors and their goal to develop Groveland into an independent system with a new well and future treatment plant. He cautioned the Board against "putting all their eggs in one basket" by approving a warrant article for a feasibility study with Haverhill and neglecting the pilot study previously presented by Environmental Partners. The Board agreed it's important to move forward with both studies simultaneously in order to build an argument to present to the community down the road.

Given that the department is simultaneously exploring future water sources in both the feasibility study and the treatment plant pilot study, Superintendent Stokes asked the Board if they would like to submit two separate warrant articles at Town Meeting or if they would prefer to combine two warrant articles into one with language that would support both options. The Board agreed combining both requests into one article simplifies the request.

Commissioner Dunn made a friendly amendment to change the previous motion. The new motion is to develop a warrant article requesting two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) to be used for both a feasibility study with the City of Haverhill and the water treatment facility pilot study with Environmental Partners. Commissioner Sheehan-McGrath seconded. No further discussion. All were in favor.

Commissioner Dunn asked what the best way to get the background information out to the public might be. Commissioner Sheehan-McGrath referenced a recent discussion with a resident who suggested putting out a fact sheet explaining the situation and what the Board is doing about it. Commissioner Dunn agreed a PR campaign is needed. Superintendent Stokes will reach out to Mr. John Guilfoil with JGPR, who supports public relations for

the Water & Sewer Department and the Town of Groveland. Commissioner Sheehan-McGrath asked if the Board would agree to allow herself and Superintendent Stokes to begin working together with JGPR to develop a presentation to bring back to the Board. **Commissioner Dunn made a motion to allow Commissioner Sheehan-McGrath to work with Superintendent Stokes to put together a PR program. Seconded by Commissioner Grim. No further discussion. All were in favor.**

ITEMS NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED AT TIME OF POSTING

None

OLD OR UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Commissioner Grim asked for an update on the splash pad. Superintendent Stokes mentioned there are budgetary concerns over operating costs and the project has stalled temporarily.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Albright presented the minutes from the February 12, 2024 Water & Sewer Board meeting. **Commissioner Grim made a motion to approve the minutes from February 12, 2024, as submitted. Commissioner Sheehan-McGrath seconded. No further discussion. All were in favor.**

NEXT MEETING

Monday, March 18, 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 5:48 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Sheehan-McGrath. No further discussion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Danielle Albright
Water & Sewer Office Manager