



Chair/James Gmeiner  
Vice Chair/Thomas Orcutt  
Clerk/Michael Bouchard

**Town of Groton Sewer Department**

173 Main Street  
Groton MA 01450

**Date:** March 30th, 2022

**Time:** 2:00PM

**Members Virtually Present:** Chair/James Gmeiner  
Vice Chair/Thomas Orcutt  
Clerk/Michael Bouchard

**Others Virtually Present:** Bob Rafferty, Thomas Nephew, Paul Brinkman, Ann Livezey, Lauren Croy, and Judy Anderson

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The Meeting was called to order by James Gmeiner at 2:00 P.M.

**Minutes and other business:**

**Minutes:** The BOSC reviewed and approved the minutes of March 2<sup>nd</sup> and March 9<sup>th</sup> as amended.

**Web Page Update:** Mr. Bouchard told the BOSC that he added the new sewer rates and the applications to the new Sewer Website.

**Review Press Release Regarding Rates:** The BOSC reviewed the press release prepared by Mr. Orcutt and made a few minor wording edits and approved it to be sent to the Groton Herald for publishing.

**ARPA updates:**

Mr. Bouchard said he does not have an update. Mr. Gmeiner said he did speak with Mr. Rafferty and is unsure how the Federal Law interplays with the State. He said under State Law we hired EP to do the I&I study and under the State Laws for bidding and procurement we have an engineering firm designated to provide us engineering services. Since we went through the process we would not have to do again and we would be in compliance under the State Law, but Federal Law may be different. Mr. Gmeiner said the I&I study will be on hold for the time being, but we do need to get the manholes done.

**2:15 p.m. Public Hearing to Adopt the “Groton Center Sewer District Rules and Regulations” and “The Four Corners Sewer District Rules and Regulations” as Amended**

Mr. Bouchard read the following:

Notice of Public Hearing

*In accordance with Chapter 83 of the Massachusetts General Laws, the Town of Groton Sewer Commission will hold a Public Hearing, **Wednesday, March 30th, 2022 at 2:15 P.M.** via Virtual Meeting using Zoom Pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order, to consider the adoption of amendments to the "Groton Center Sewer District Rules and Regulations" and the "Four Corners Sewer District Rules and Regulations". Please see Meeting posted at <https://www.grotonma.gov/events/> for details regarding Zoom meeting information.*

**Center Sewer District:** Mr. Bouchard said that he has updated the language for the regulations based on the information received from Town Counsel regarding the vested rights to sewer capacity. The changes were made to Article#1 396-1 C, D, E, F, G & H.

**Four Corners Sewer District:** Mr. Bouchard said he updated the language for the regulations to reflect the same wording changes as the Center Sewer District 397-1 C, D, E, F, G & H.

The updated regulations can be found on our website:

<https://www.grotonma.gov/government/boards-and-committees/groton-sewer-commission>

**Mr. Bouchard made a motion to close the Public Hearing at 2:26 Mr. Gmeiner Seconded and the motion passed unanimously:** Roll Call: Gmeiner-Aye & Bouchard-Aye

**Mr. Bouchard made a motion to accept the Regulations as revised for the Center Sewer District and the Four Corners Sewer District. Mr. Gmeiner Seconded and the motion passed unanimously:** Roll Call: Gmeiner-Aye & Bouchard-Aye

**2:30 p.m. Pepperell IMA**

Mr. Gmeiner asked Mr. Rafferty to walk us through the revised IMA. Mr. Rafferty said we started with all the details broken out and that had derailed us. He feels the new approach of flow over flow and splitting expenses is a more workable approach. He said Mr. Brinkman's break out is easy to understand, but would like to talk about the source data section and noticed it differs a bit. He said we need to figure out the source and if it would be year-year data. Mr. Nephew asked what specific data he was referring to and Mr. Rafferty said one was money tab and the other is the Groton actual budget tab. Mr. Brinkman said it's was a booking issue and said a few years they booked all Groton to one line. Mr. Rafferty said the more recent years its minor and was hoping we can all agree on the data used. Mr. Brinkman said the difference is what we reported paid and what Groton Paid. Mr. Gmeiner said one other difference is the that the Town picks up one half of the 2003 plant upgrade debt service or roughly \$27K . Pepperell would show they received the full amount (about \$54,000.00) but our records would show payment of only one-half (\$27K).

Mr. Bouchard said a lot of this is driven by flows and Mr. Brinkman said part of it is from the pump station and the other is from the GDRHS pump station. Mr. Brinkman said the flow numbers currently are not as tight as they should be and he will be looking into that and come up with a new methodology. He said he realizes we all need to be comfortable with the flow reads and be sure they are accurate.

Mr. Rafferty said he is comfortable with the break out of the siphons and likes that. He said it's understandable and he noticed that the shared piping was abandoned and the percentage of what each town uses. He feels it's better to just keep shared and if we were to split it, it would change everytime the flow changes.

Mr. Gmeiner said splitting the capital costs are not an issue and he is fine with the 25% to 75% split. Mr. Rafferty asked about the spreadsheet from 2017 that was broken out and feels we could use that for a breakdown as far as categories. Mr. Brinkman asked which one he was referring to. Mr. Brinkman said there are two sets, one that is for the effort of each items pump station, gravity pipe and siphons. The other splits non direct cost and that does not use collection system or treatment and he did an 80% to 20% for that. Mr. Rafferty said he is fine with the 80%-20% and asked that Mr. Brinkman to review.

Mr. Brinkman said he would want to see the 80%-20% and the collection system costs and a breakout of the level of effort. Mr. Nephew said this would be part of the annual review and at the end of year we true up and feels there would be certain things that need to be looked at.

Mr. Rafferty asked about the pump station costs and that the Groton's utility costs are not included int that and asked if that would be rolled in the budget. Mr. Brinkman said they could roll utility costs in and they become a credit to part the collection system at the end of the year, Mr. Nephew said he wants to keep it simple.

Mr. Rafferty asked about staffing split, Mr. Brinkman said (7) people and (3) dedicated to the collection system (3) to the plant and he did that in terms of labor. He said he would look at how they are categorized and if that changed, we could let Groton know. Mr. Rafferty asked if this was just operating staff and he said "yes" the administrative and his cost are not included, but he did include on the total salary line. Mr. Rafferty asked if the administrative was all sewer and Mr. Brinkman said she does storm water too. Mr. Rafferty asked Mr. Gmeiner about the administrative staff in Groton and he said one is dedicated and the business manager we pick up 1/3 of that. He said if we are viewing as a whole how would we account for that. Mr. Brinkman said we could compare the costs and treat like the utility cost we discussed and issue a credit.

Mr. Rafferty asked if we could combine the collection system and have one flow over flow for everything. Mr. Brinkman said that was the original idea and he thought Groton did not want that. Mr. Rafferty thought it would make it simpler and Mr. Brinkman said if we are doing the Groton system equally to Pepperell that there would be more effort than what the originally thought. Mr. Nephew says he likes it broken out and that he feels that if combined you would lose the difficulty factor and that the collection system can change.

Mr. Gmeiner said in reviewing that he noticed Mr. Brinkman did break out the GDRHS cost and we need to sort through that. He said the breakout was helpful and we would need to recoup costs that we have not. Mr. Rafferty also added that they share the pipe too. Mr. Brinkman said the flow cost is minor and to have their own treatment system would be \$200K a year.

Mr. Bouchard asked how the upgrade of pumps at Nod Road would work. Mr. Brinkman said that anything \$1k or less they would handle and it becomes a challenge when you need to bond the cost. This is something he would have to look into and see how it was managed in the past and he feels that Groton managed it. Mr. Gmeiner said we are looking at a minimum of \$200K-\$300K upgrade and if we want to pump the max amount to Pepperell, we would need to do the 4 million upgrade which includes a

complete replacement. Mr. Brinkman said if there is a pump at the pump station that needs replacing and coming out regular budget than we would have to address that and take that pump and decide if it was ineligible and we would put in a different column.

Mr. ~~nephew~~-Nephew told the BOSC he during this meeting he made a list of the year end true ups that credits may apply:

- Budget vs actual
- Review cost percent of the allocation collection system
- Review Labor allocation
- Groton utility cost
- Groton Personnel cost

Mr. Rafferty asked about the O&M services that Mr. Brinkman originally proposed and he replied he would like all services offered in Pepperell also be done in Groton.

**Next Meeting** – April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**BILLS SIGNED** – No bills signed

**MINUTES:** - March 2<sup>nd</sup> & March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022 as amended

**ADJOURN** – Mr. Orcutt made a motion to adjourn at 3:30 PM Mr. Bouchard seconded the motion. Roll Call Gmeiner –Aye, Orcutt- Aye and Bouchard-Aye

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Livezey  
Water & Sewer Assistant