



Commissioners:
James Gmeiner/Chair
Eric A. Berg/Vice Chair
Darius A. Budrys/Clerk

Town of Groton Sewer Department
173 Main Street
Groton MA 01450

Date: September 17th, 2025
Time: 2:00 PM

Members Virtually Present: James Gmeiner/Chair
Eric Berg/Vice Chair
Darius Budrys/Clerk

Others Virtually Present: Rob Anctil/Perkins & Anctil, Brittany Gesner/VHB, Chris Anderson/UMass Memorial, Danae Tinsley/Whiting-Turner, Paul Brinkman/Pepperell DPW, Lauren Crory/Business Manager and Ann Livezey/Assistant

The Virtual Meeting was called to order by James Gmeiner at 2:00 PM

UMass Memorial – Discuss Capacity

This discussion was about the UMass Memorial Healthcare's proposal for a new satellite emergency facility and a future medical office building at 490 Main Street in Groton. Ms. Gesner said they would like to start construction on the emergency facility in the next month or so and hoping to be up and running before the end of 2026.

Ms. Gesner from UMass presented the plans, which include connecting to an existing sewer main across the street from the site. She said she has spoken with Mr. Brinkman and has discussed tying into the existing sewer line that crosses Main Street. She figures the first phase of the project will use 3,000/gpd based on Title V and the future project would be about 1,250/gpd and they are looking to take a credit from the existing 3-bedroom single family home that will on site. She would like to discuss the current calculations for the emergency facility project and come back at a later date to discuss the associated fees for the future project.

Mr. Gmeiner said he reviewed the calculations that were submitted and he came up with the same calculations. It would be 3,000/gpd credit divided by 3300 to get to our ERU times the \$7,500 connection fee for a total of \$60,681.75.

Mr. Berg made a motion to accept the connection fee of \$60,681.75 for the satellite emergency facility at 490 Main Street Mr. Budrys seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Roll Call: Gmeiner-Aye, Berg-Aye and Budrys-Aye

The BOSC approved the connection and associated fee of for the emergency facility only at this time, with the medical office building fee to be addressed at a later date. Mr. Anctil raised concerns about the inability to guarantee sewer capacity for the future medical office building, but the commission explained current limitations in making such guarantees.

Pepperell

Mr. Brinkman explained the true-up process, which involves reviewing actual expenditures and allocating them into specific cost buckets based on the Inter-Municipal Agreement (IMA). He clarified that his budget covers most sewer-related costs, with the exception of direct costs paid by Pepperell, and outlined how debt service costs are calculated and shared between the municipalities. Mr. Brinkman noted that there is currently no debt service costs for shared pipes and explained the process for treatment plant debt service, which Pepperell pays 25% of annually.

Mr. Brinkman explained how the 25% wastewater capacity allocation was determined historically and how it evolved with plant upgrades. He discussed the challenges of identifying and fixing inflow issues, suggesting a practical approach of repairing known problems first and then conducting "midnight manhole" inspections to locate additional issues when flow is minimal. Mr. Brinkman emphasized that rather than spending significant resources on extensive testing, the team should focus on direct identification and repair of problems.

Mr. Gmeiner said that while debt service costs represent approximately 25% of the plant's expenses, the actual operational and maintenance costs are allocated based on wastewater flow ratios, with Groton contributing about 25% of the treatment costs based on their actual flow contribution to the plant. Mr. Brinkman described how the budget is structured, separating costs into collection system expenses and treatment plant expenses, with septage revenue credited against plant operating costs.

The discussion focused on how costs for maintaining the combined Groton and Pepperell collection systems are allocated between the two towns. Mr. Brinkman explained that instead of using flow-based percentages like the treatment plant, they use a formula based on the number of assets each town uses, including pipes, pump stations, and siphons. The allocation takes into account both direct operating costs and shared maintenance costs, with towns paying based on their proportion of system assets rather than individual costs. A specific example was given of a \$70,000 generator replacement at Partridgeberry Woods that would be shared across both towns based on their allocation formula.

The BOSC discussed the \$52,000 monthly expense for running the water treatment system, which represents Mr. Brinkman best estimate for fiscal year 2026. Mr. Brinkman explained that this flat fee approach replaced a previous system based on variable units, as costs are more stable regardless of flow rates. When asked about handling unexpected major expenses, Mr. Brinkman described maintaining a contingency line item of \$100,000-\$150,000 in the budget and indicated that significant unanticipated costs would require town meeting approval, with examples like major pump failures typically being manageable through existing spare parts they keep on hand.

Mr. Brinkman explained that the current sewer system capacity is sufficient and unlikely to require expansion anytime soon, except for potential large-scale projects in remote areas. He discussed managing a contingency line in the budget to account for unforeseen expenses, ensuring adequate funding for unexpected costs without affecting the forecast. Mr. Brinkman confirmed that he would notify the team of any significant, unanticipated expenses to allow for proper planning and accommodation in the true-up process.

FY25 & FY26 Budget

Ms. Crory told the BOSC that the free cash number came in as forecasted and that included the built in transfer.

The BOSC will continue discussing the budget numbers at the next meeting and Mr. Brinkman will prepare those numbers for the true up.

Other Business: Bills, Minutes, etc.

Next Meeting – October 1st, 2025

BILLS SIGNED: No bills signed

MINUTES: *Mr. Budrys made a motion to approve the minutes of September 3rd, 2025 as written Mr. Berg Seconded. Roll Call: Gmeiner–Aye, Berg–Aye and Budrys-Aye*

ADJOURN: *Mr. Berg made a motion to adjourn at 3:15 PM. Mr. Gmeiner seconded. Roll Call: Gmeiner–Aye, Berg – Aye and Budrys-Aye*

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Livezey
Water & Sewer Assistant