Board of Commissioners
Minutes
March 21, 2016
(approved April 18, 2016)

Present: L. Woods, T. Pellegrino, G. Keller, J. Comer, J. Balcom, Superintendent R. Miner, Water Quality Support/Administrative Manager J. Lavoie

Financial Review – February 2016

N. Couture was not present this evening for the financial review.

Non-Public Session:

A motion was made by L. Woods and seconded by J. Balcom to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II(d) "…Acquisition, sale or lease of property". The motion passed 5-0-0 on a roll call vote.

After the Non-Public Session:

A motion was made by T. Pellegrino and seconded by J. Comer to seal the minutes of the non-public session of March 21, 2016. The motion passed 5-0-0.

Board of Commissioners to approve minutes from the February 22, 2016 Public session and Public Hearing meeting.

A motion was made by T. Pellegrino and seconded by J. Comer to approve the minutes from the February 22, 2016 Public session and Public Hearing meeting as written. The motion passed 4-0-1 with J. Balcom abstaining.

Board of Commissioners to discuss perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) issue and next steps with Emery & Garrett Groundwater Investigations and Underwood Engineers, Inc.

R. Miner noted that the District was notified of this issue on February 29th. Samples have been taken from wells 4, 5, and 2. These samples showed levels of PFOA of 90 ppt (well 4), 17 ppt (well 2), and 52 and 54 ppt (well 5). NHDES took samples from private wells in Merrimack and Litchfield. One private well north of St. Gobain had a level of 820 ppt.

L. Woods questioned the immediate ramifications for the water system in Merrimack. R. Miner noted that these levels are still well below the short term health advisory of 400 ppt set by the EPA. A carbon filter can be

used to remove this chemical from the water.

T. Pellegrino questioned whether there are scrubbers at St. Gobain. J. Emery noted that there are scrubbers, but that St. Gobain did violate air quality standards and were told so by the EPA. It is unknown when this violation occurred. St. Gobain is moving forward to address this issue. This chemical is fairly prevalent; it is in the atmosphere. There are a lot of unknowns about this group of chemicals. J. Emery suggested that the District do split sampling and encourage the state to use waste management funds to do this sampling to determine how persist this chemical is in this area. (NHDES is currently seeking permission to use these funds.) He noted that he is reasonably certain that St. Gobain will live up to its obligations. The process of carbon filtering may need to be put into place.

L. Woods noted that this contaminant can be treated at a cost to the ratepayers. He noted he is reluctant to begin this process. J. Emery noted that sodium and chloride may be more harmful to the human body than this chemical. He supports the pursuit of treatment. The District needs to determine the treatment level. There are no answers regarding the health impact of this chemical.

M. Metcalf, UEI, noted that the District must decide what they want to do. The chemical can be removed from the water using Granulated Activated Carbon (GAC).

T. Pellegrino questioned whether the state is moving too quickly. M. Metcalf noted that in Hoosic, NY the EPA was criticized for moving too slowly. T. Pellegrino questioned how you can fix what you don't know. M. Metcalf noted that the variability is unknown. It is unknown what is being treated or where to start.

J. Comer noted that first there was 1,4 Dioxane, now this. He questioned what is coming next. J. Emery noted that use of PFOA was discontinued by Saint Gobain in 2014. M. Metcalf noted that this chemical is being manufactured in other places in the world, just not in the US. PFOA's half-life is 4 years. He recommended that all of the wells in the District be tested.

G. Keller questioned whether the fact that well 4 is not currently running would have increased the levels there. R. Miner noted that well 4 was run to waste for 1-1.5 hours before the sample was taken. J. Emery noted

that he wants the wells around the perimeter sampled. The District needs to collect data.

L. Woods questioned a time frame for treatment. M. Metcalf noted that an idea regarding the treatment at wells 7 and 8 could be ready within 2 months. GAC will take out longer carbon molecules, but may leave shorter molecules. The on-going costs for such treatment are high. Within 2 months UEI will be able to tell the District about treatment.

L. Woods questioned the ramifications of short and long term exposure. He noted that when the District has taken a well off-line it has not been put back into service. M. Metcalf noted that safe levels are unknown. J. Emery noted that in New Hampshire this water is considered safe to drink.

J. Balcom questioned whether St. Gobain is the only source for this chemical. J. Emery noted it is NHDES's responsibility to determine that. He noted that part of the treatment can be blending. The NHDES is trying to eliminate the Longa landfill as a source. J. Emery noted that the contamination from St. Gobain comes from its smoke stacks rather than from its wash water. He noted that the question is what levels should trigger treatment.

R. Miner noted that he will confirm his understanding that PWW removes this chemical to 3 ppt. He noted that the MVD can get 1M gpd from PWW. There is a possibility of a connection with PWW on Route 3 also. He noted that staff recommends allowing UEI to look at the situation as delineated in ESR 29 dated March 11, 2016.

A motion was made by J. Comer and seconded by T. Pellegrino to authorize the expenditure of up to $17,800 for potential treatment of PFCs delineated in ESR 29 dated March 11, 2016 by Underwood Engineers, Inc.

M. Metcalf noted that this is a best guess by UEI. L. Woods noted that the Board will expect a point of departure by their May meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

L. Woods noted he is proud of the staff's handling of this problem. He noted that it is remarkable to have a proposal on hand this evening. He noted that the staff has been on this problem since day 1.

Old Business

There was no old business at this time.

4. New Business

There was no new business at this time.

5. Superintendent's Report

There was no superintendent's report at this time.

6. Questions from the Public

There were no questions from the public at this time.

7. Questions from the Press

There were no questions from the press at this time.

Adjourn

A motion was made by J. Comer and seconded by T. Pellegrino to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 PM. The motion passed 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Rita Pointon, Recording Secretary