

Board of Water Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
Acton Water District
693 Massachusetts Avenue, Acton, MA
Monday, January 9, 2023

AGENDA

A. Comments from the public

B. Approve minutes from the 12/5 and 12/12 meetings

C. Appoint one Commissioner to sign warrants while conducting meetings virtually

D. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

- Current sample data, if available
- Discussion of Public Notice
- Assabet 3 Update
- PFAS Pilot Update
- Bottled Water Rebate Status

2. Review Draft Budget for FY '24 and proposed articles for 2023 Annual District Meeting Warrant

3. Discuss Annual Report

E. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Request for road maintenance contribution for Wyndcliff Drive

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- To consider the purchase, exchange, lease of real property as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the District.

Due to the Covid-19 stay-at-home order by Governor Charles Baker, the Board of Water Commissioners meeting was not held at the Acton Water District Office; instead, the meeting was held via Zoom Webinar and was recorded. The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM on Monday, January 9, 2023, by Mr. Stephen Stuntz.

Present at Tonight's Meeting:

Commissioners: Erika Amir-Lin, Barry Rosen, Stephen Stuntz (Chair)

Assistant District Manager: Matthew Mostoller

District Treasurer: Christine McCarthy

District Counsel: Mary Bassett

Finance Committee: Ron Parenti

Commissioners Secretary: Lynn Protasowicki

Public Present:

Kim Kastens, Carolyn Platt

A. Comments from the Public.

Kim Kastens noted that Matthew Mostoller was sitting in the District Manager slot on the meeting and congratulated him on that role. She mentioned the walk conducted on Sunday by Matthew Mostoller and Alex Wahlstrom in conjunction with the Acton Conservation Trust was well done with over 60 participants. She is curious about what the Commissioners decided regarding the Open Space & Recreation Plan (OSRP) as she doesn't see it on the agenda. There are two new posts on the Green Acton website which are intended to help the public understand the relationship between water rates, conservation and environmental justice. They are called The Challenging Interrelationship Among Water Rates, Conservation and Environmental Justice and Perspectives: Opinions for Funding Acton's Response to PFAS. The Perspectives article is an opinion piece. She ends this piece by encouraging the District to think about a plan on whether or not to join the MWRA and to think about a process to arrive at the decision that would involve public education and input about that decision making process.

Erika Amir-Lin: stated that the forum for all the boards and committees who were solicited for commentary on the OSRP was announced for January 19th and Erika will be attending on behalf of the District. She will be delivering the Districts' comments at this meeting.

B. Approve minutes from the 12/5 and 12/12.

Mr. Rosen motioned to approve the meeting minutes of 12/5/2022 and 12/12/2022 with the revisions placed into the minutes of 12/5 by Counselor Bassett. Ms. Amir-Lin seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Mr. Rosen, Ms. Amir-Lin, and Mr. Stuntz.

C. Appoint One Commissioner to Sign Warrants While Conducting Meetings Virtually.

Mr. Rosen motioned to appoint Erika Amir-Lin as the Commissioner to approve warrants while conducting meetings virtually until the next meeting of the Commissioners. Mr. Stuntz seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Mr. Rosen, Ms. Amir-Lin, and Mr. Stuntz.

B. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS).

- Current sample data, if available
- Discussion of Public Notice
- Assabet 3 Update
- PFAS Pilot Update
- Bottled Water Rebate Status

Matthew Mostoller provided the update.

- Current sample data, if available

We have preliminary results for the month of December. The South Acton Water Treatment plant had low recovery from the lab and so results may get rejected. Those were at 15.7 PPT. We do continue to be in compliance in South Acton and it does continue to be our largest source of

supply therefore our greatest percentage of water being supplied to the community. Our Central Acton Treatment plant only had Conant 2 running. It has gone up to 28.6 PPT. We shut off this well and put Conant I into service. We will run Conant I for about a week or two to see if the PFAS concentrations get lower. He also reminded the Commissioners that we did not run Clapp Whitcomb or North Acton Treatment plants in December.

- Discussion of Public Notice

The public notice started going out via email on December 16th followed up by direct mail on December 20th and by New Year's Eve, we believe the entire town was notified. We have received the same type of feedback as prior public notices, including questions about filters; the bottled water rebate; and people asking why they are just seeing this for the first time (even though this is our 5th notice). A lower volume of calls this time but same type of information requested. Staff has been great about following up and responding to all inquiries.

- Assabet 3 Update

Still awaiting MassDEP's approval to use that source. We have sent in all the hydrogeology data and water quality data. They are taking issue with format of the way we submitted some of the data and they have some questions about the yield of the well and how we achieved stabilization in that well during the pumping test.

- PFAS Pilot Update

We do not have a pilot running anywhere. We wrapped up the South Acton pilot just before Christmas. The contractor mobilized to the Central Acton Water Treatment plant, and we are hoping to start the test on Monday, January 16th which will run for six weeks. At the South Acton Water Treatment pilot, we had an issue and are working with one of the equipment vendors to rectify the issue which hopefully won't significantly delay the report.

- Bottled Water Rebate Status

Christine McCarthy provided the update. For this quarter, we had \$4,605 worth of bottled water rebates. There were 103 total customers that received the rebates through their bill plus two tenants received a check directly. To-date we have provided \$18,345 in rebates since the inception in October 2021. Barry Rosen had a question if we have budgeted for these rebates. She informed the Commissioners that an upper limit has not been established at this time and they are taken as a reduction in revenue. She stated that some rebates are \$45, and some are \$30. It depends on when we receive the application. If we received applications in November, they would have received rebates for the month of November and December on their January bill. As of today, we have received 15 new applications and those will be applied toward April bills. We had 93 rebates last quarter and 103 this quarter through the bills. It looks like we will exceed \$5,000 and trending upwards. People do not come off the list unless they tell us or if they were to sell their property and move, so we just keep adding to the rebates.

Matt stated that when we adopted the bottled water rebate program, we were comparing that to a monthly cost of installing and maintaining a filtered water filling station which was \$8K-\$10K/month plus the cost of water so this rebate program is a financially feasible program compared to the alternative.

2. Review Draft Budget for FY '24 and Proposed Articles for 2023 Annual District Meeting Warrant.

- Draft Budget for FY '24

Christine McCarthy stated that there were no changes to the draft except she put the actual amounts for the January billing. At the next meeting the budget may be ready to get voted on.

- Proposed Warrant Articles

Counselor Bassett took the rough list from various meetings and turned those into the actual warrant articles. The final three articles are about establishing a revolving fund for the meters and that was suggested by the Treasurer and those are modeled after how the mitigation revolving fund works. Erika Amir-Lin: asked Counselor Bassett about the revolving fund - would this be money that would normally be portioned by a vote for water meter repairs goes into the revolving fund. Matt Mostoller stated that we charge new installations for the cost of the meter but that money we brought in was going back into free cash. This meant we couldn't replenish the meter stock with those funds we brought in so this will allow us to always have cash on hand to purchase new meters. It will then allow us to use appropriations for meters for our internal upgrades and replacement as opposed to new installations.

Articles will be presented in the following order:

Stephen Stuntz
Erika Amir-Lin
Barry Rosen

There will be a Consent Agenda for Articles 7-10 as those are the usual surplus revenue articles.

Counselor Bassett reviewed Articles 11- 23 for the Commissioners with some discussion about each.

Kim Kastens: the overall price of the amount of borrowing strikes her as being high so she would think that the Commissioners would want to provide comments about how that fits in with historical borrowing. Is it unprecedented to be borrowing this much? Be prepared with an answer as to why it's appropriate and timely to be doing all this borrowing. And be ready for someone to ask is all the PFAS borrowing necessary if we can connect to MWRA? Why do we have to spend all this money now if it might not be the best long-term solution. Steve Stuntz stated that we are aware of these concerns.

3. Discuss Annual Report.

Steve Stuntz is working on the draft annual report. The focus will be on transitions and the long-term issues that the District will face. Matt Mostoller would like to see the draft within the next couple of weeks.

E. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Request for Road Maintenance Contribution for Wyndcliff Drive.

Matt Mostoller stated that our Wampus Hill Tank relies on a private roadway which is Wyndcliff Drive to access that tank. We do travel that road daily. We do pay towards the annual

maintenance of that road. The homeowners association is looking for a special assessment to help them maintain the road in addition to snow removal costs. They have taken on some capital improvements to help maintain the road surface and base material and so they are assessing all the property owners an additional sum of money and for the District that will be \$1,400 extra on top of the \$500 a year into that fund. We wanted to make the Commissioners aware of this. The alternative would be for the District to build a road from Main Street at a substantial cost. We do need a vote from the Board to go forward with paying this additional cost.

Mr. Rosen motioned to approve the District to appropriate \$1,400 toward the Wyndcliff Drive Homeowners Association for road maintenance costs. Ms. Amir Lin seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Mr. Rosen, Ms. Amir-Lin and Mr. Stutz.

Mr. Stutz motioned to adjourn the open meeting and move into Executive Session at 8:15 PM to discuss the purchase, exchange, lease of real property as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the District. Mr. Rosen seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Mr. Rosen, Ms. Amir-Lin, and Mr. Stutz.

Next Meeting: January 23, 2023