

Board of Water Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
Acton Water District
693 Massachusetts Avenue, Acton, MA
Monday, March 29, 2021

AGENDA

- A. Comments from Citizens
- B. Approve minutes from meeting of 3/8
- C. Appoint one Commissioner to approve warrants while conducting meetings virtually
- D. Interview with Sandy Stapczynski, President of Human Resources Services (HRS)
- E. OLD BUSINESS:
 - 1. Update on Per- and Poly-Fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)
 - 2. Update on pump test for potential Bedrock source
 - 3. Update on the MA Supreme Court decision on access to water rights at Nagog Pond
 - 4. Approve Executive Session minutes from 2/10/20, and approve release of all minutes relating to the Nagog Pond litigation to public record
- F. NEW BUSINESS:
 - 1. Spring water main flushing in south Acton starting Monday, April 5th
 - 2. Discussion of the summer outdoor water conservation program for 2021

Present at Tonight's Meeting:

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

District Commissioner: Chris Allen

District Treasurer: Mary Jo Bates

District Counsel: Mary Bassett

Environmental Manager: Matthew Mostoller

Commissioners Secretary: Lynn Protasowicki

Finance Committee Representative: David Butler

Citizens:

Kim Kastens

Ron Parenti

Carolyn Kiely

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. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM on Monday, March 29, 2021 by Ms. Erika Amir-Lin.

A. Comments from Citizens:

No comments this evening.

B. Approve Minutes from Meeting of 3/8

Mr. Rosen motioned to approve the minutes of March 8, 2021. Mr. Stuntz seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Mr. Stuntz, Mr. Rosen, and Ms. Amir-Lin.

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

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

D. Interview with Sandy Stapczynski, President of Human Resources Services (HRS)

- Provided an overview of her company, what they do, and what the District's project entails with regards to updating District Policies and Job Descriptions.
- Provided background about her company – has worked with large water districts in Boston to small towns like Gill, MA. Have done work in every community surrounding Acton as well as in New England. They have 35 years of experience.
- The plan would be to analyze all the current job descriptions of the District. They have a successful methodology in writing job descriptions. Mr. Allen confirmed that the District has 15 job titles to review.
- With regards to the District Policies, she stated that they would do a general HR audit to see what they have for policies; review current and update them; work closely with key staff.
- Orientation with District employees; interview employees and department heads; every employee gets to review draft job descriptions and comment on them.
- Training is also part of the final process.
- They will put together an action plan for the District.
- She views this as a 6-month project. Mr. Allen suggests starting ASAP and having this completed by September. She stated that the training will happen afterwards.

Mr. Rosen asked if when they analyze each job description, do they analyze as each as a Wage Class 1, 2, 3 or 4. She stated that they are not doing a compensation and class study as part of this scope.

Mr. Rosen stated that the Board should decide if the training is something worth \$2,000 and upper management time. Mr. Allen stated that he originally thought that they would not need the training but after listening to her tonight it might be good to hire them for the training. Ms. Bates stated that it's short money and if we want to do it right then let's keep the training as part of the project. Mr. Stuntz and Ms. Amir-Lin both believe it's a good idea and value in professionally done training.

Mr. Rosen would like to see adding in the wage classes to the employee job descriptions – Wage Class 1 (hourly); Wage Class 2 (hourly but can earn overtime); Wage Class 3 (contract salary and can earn some overtime); and Wage Class 4 (straight salary/no overtime). Mr. Allen mentioned that exempt and non-exempt is listed in each job description. Operators are all hourly and they get time and half for time worked over 40 hours.

Mr. Rosen motioned to have the Acton Water District hire Human Resource Services Inc. to execute the entire proposal made to the Water District including the training component for a sum of \$14,000. Mr. Stuntz seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Mr. Stuntz, Mr. Rosen, Ms. Amir-Lin.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Update on Per- and Poly-Fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS).

Mr. Mostoller provided update Per- and Poly-Fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS). He presented a slide showing the latest summary table for PFAS which outlined most of data that came back for February sampling. We began pumping North Acton into the system again. Prior to turning it on it was at 19.8 parts per trillion (ppt), it rose slightly to 22.8ppt, and has come back down to 19.9ppt. Of note would also be results from SAWTP – two samples that went to two different labs – one came back non-detect and other came back as 16.8ppt. We don't have any other March results.

Mr. Stuntz inquired as to what labs have been doing our testing. Mr. Mostoller stated that we use Alpha Analytical located in Massachusetts and Europhins in Indiana. In January starting using a new lab called Contest in MA but we have been having a lot of issues with them.

Ms. Amir-Lin asked if any other samples were sent as splits? Mr. Mostoller stated that no other samples were sent as splits. And, we won't be using Contest again

Kim Kastens: what is the 1,-4 dioxane levels in Assabet 3? Mr. Mostoller stated that in January 2021 when we did an 8-hour pumping test the levels were down to .41 ppb which is lower than our 5-day pumping test back in 2007 which was .56 ppt

Ms. Amir-Lin inquired as to when April sampling will start. Mr. Mostoller stated that we are not sure due to maintenance activities.

Mr. Rosen asked, do we have any information on the mitigation tests that are running at NAWTP? Mr. Allen stated no. The pilot study report should be forthcoming in the next few weeks.

Mr. Mostoller stated that we did not receive the second round of grant funding from MassDEP for PFAS work regarding assistance for reactivating Assabet 3.

Mr. Mostoller also mentioned that a web update will be made available in the next few days.

2. Update on Pump Test for Potential Bedrock Source.

Mr. Mostoller provided an update on the pump test for the potential bedrock source. We began the pump test on March 8th; ran well E for 10 days at a 150 gallons per minute (gpm); lost 2 gpm during that time frame; we were able to reach stabilization at that pumping rate; really great recovery rate; so when we shut it down we need to see how quickly the aquifer responds and within 24 hours we had fully recovered to pre-pumping conditions. We began second pumping test at 250 gpm (gallons per minute) at well D. We had to dial back to 200 gpm and over the course of next several days as we monitored, we slowly increased the rate by 10 gpm and last Friday we made a 20 gpm jump and reached back to 250 gpm which had been our target at this well. We will reach stabilization and hopefully shutting that well down on Wednesday of this week, 3/31.

If we were to pump these wells together, we wouldn't get a yield that is beneficial to us but would help us to manage water quality from these sources. We are still discussing whether or not we should do a 10-day pumping test combined. DEP had requested that. We are having some discussions with the consultant right now to see what the value of a third pumping test is.

Water quality data is slow coming back. Most notable are the VOC concentrations. We identified TCE in these wells. And we have seen these concentrations go down as we have been pumping. There was some concern that as we started pumping, we would draw these plumes into the wells, but we are not seeing increasing VOC trends.

Kim Kastens: The District was going to be monitoring some vernal pools and the nearby brook and she was wondering if you saw anything interesting or troubling? Matt: haven't fully analyzed the data we have collected in other wells; there is small amounts of data so doesn't appear to be an impact.

Kim also asked how do these numbers of 150 gpm and 250 gpm compare with the rates of pump from shallow wells? Matt: the Conant II wells we typically pump around 230 gpm and other sources like Assabet wells are permitted at 350 gpm.

Ron Parenti: he just wanted clarification on total capacity. Not going to be able to increase your total output because by pumping bedrock wells you are taking away capacity from other wells. Matt: the capacity we are talking about is taking away from are the bedrock wells themselves. It's not stealing capacity from our existing well network. Because these two bedrock wells are in such close proximity, we aren't going to get 250 gpm plus 150 gpm we probably going to get 100-200 gpm out of them.

3. Update on the MA Supreme Court Decision on Access to Water Rights at Nagog Pond.

Mr. Allen – the document with the decision rendered by the MA Supreme Judicial Court in the Concord vs Littleton Water Department suit in Land Court and then appealed to Supreme Judicial Court.

Mary Bassett – we would have been interested in what the court upheld. It did conclude the 1884 Act was repugnant to the Water Management Act (WMA). Was not appealed and that Littleton and Acton retain their rights to use the pond. It was a policy decision by the court, and application to use the pond is subject to permitting authority of the MA Department of Environmental Protection (MA DEP) and the state's WMA.

4. Approve Executive Session Minutes from 2/10/21 and Approve Release of All Minutes Relating to the Nagog Pond Litigation to Public Record.

Ms. Amir-Lin motioned to approve the Executive Session minutes of February 10, 2021. Mr. Stuntz seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Mr. Stuntz, Mr. Rosen, and Ms. Amir-Lin.

Ms. Amir-Lin motioned to approve the additional the release of all Executive Session minutes related to the Nagog Pond litigation to public record. Mr. Stuntz seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Mr. Stuntz, Mr. Rosen, and Ms. Amir-Lin.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Spring Water Main Flushing in South Acton Starting Monday, April 5th.

Mr. Allen mentioned that the spring water main flushing in South Acton to begin on Monday, April 5th. We will flush Monday through Thursday from 8am-8pm; it will take the entire month of April.

2. Discussion of the Summer Outdoor Water Conservation Program for 2021.

Mr. Mostoller provided the overview of the new 2021 watering program. He stated that last year we did not allow lawn watering from May 31st through the summer. We are anticipating a challenging year in 2021. We are still experiencing PFAS impacts. We don't have the maintenance delays like we did in 2020 but we have construction in Acton Center which is taking the Conant II wells out of service through the season. Based on recent trends, we probably are looking at the potential for drought conditions. The proposal would limit to one day per week of lawn watering and keep our 3 day per week odd/even for other outdoor water uses. People want to water lawns and we are trying to allow limited water use for that but not sure how long we can sustain that. This would foray into new Water Management Act permit which will, most likely, push us to two days per week for outdoor water use.

Mr. Mostoller mentioned that communication will be key. Notify customers through the water bills, annual report the website, Twitter and try to run a press release in the Beacon; and use WaterSmart. We will use education over enforcement. We will notify the owner of the program and provide them with written material before ever fining someone.

Mr. Allen mentioned that they are looking at more enhanced web access for customers, he spoke to the IT Manager about creating a search engine where customers could type their address in, and they can see when they can water. This is being worked on now.

Mr. Rosen motioned to adjourn the open meeting at 8:52 PM. Mr. Stuntz seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Mr. Stuntz, Mr. Rosen, Ms. Amir-Lin