

Board of Water Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes  
Acton Water District  
693 Massachusetts Avenue, Acton, MA  
Monday, September 13, 2021

**AGENDA**

- A. Maureen Mara of Mara & Associates with Annual Audit Report
- B. Comments from the Public
- C. Approve minutes from meeting of 8/23/2021
- D. Appoint one Commissioner to approve warrants while conducting meetings virtually

**E. OLD BUSINESS**

- 1. Update on Per- and Poly-Fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS).
  - Current sample data, if available
  - Any updates or discussion from PFAS Working Group

**F. NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1. Approve the Rollover of the Promissory Note for Refinancing the Borrowing of Engineering for the Central Acton Water Treatment Plant

**G. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** To consider the purchase, exchange, lease of real property as an open meeting may have detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the District.

**Present at Tonight's Meeting:**

Commissioners: Erika Amir-Lin, Barry Rosen (Chair), Stephen Stuntz  
District Manager: Chris Allen  
District Treasurer: Mary Jo Bates  
District Counsel: Mary Bassett  
Environmental Manager: Matthew Mostoller  
Commissioners Secretary: Lynn Protasowicki  
Finance Committee: Chuck Bradley

**Public Attendees:**

Kim Kastens  
Ron Parenti

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 7:02 PM on Monday, September 13, 2021 by Mr. Barry Rosen.

**A. Maureen Mara of Mara & Associates with Annual Audit Report**

Maureen Mara provided the annual review of the audit which was completed for Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2021. The Commissioners have been provided a copy of the full financial statement and the management report letter. The following are highlights from the main report:

1. Unsold Water Percentage – had been consistent over the years but jumped a lot from 12.3% (June 2020) to 18.3% (June 2021). PFAS and drawing water for testing may contribute to this increase in unsold water.
2. Reduction in the Net Pension liability with the Middlesex County Retirement System and went down from \$3.7 million to \$3.5 million. Good rate of return so there are more assets to fund the liability. It did have a better funded percentage in 2020. They were 53% funded vs 49% funded last in 2019.
3. Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) – this trust fund did very well in the market this past fiscal year. It had a 20% rate of return. The District is over funded by \$300,000. It's definitely a good time to start paying the retiree's health insurance from this fund.
4. Fund Balances – one of which is Free Cash has been submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue for certification and just waiting on approval. Free cash decreased by about \$300,000 this year. That is because District had a surplus of about \$500,000 but appropriated \$800,000 for capital projects so the District dipped into the free cash for \$300,000. She stated to keep an eye on this fund. She doesn't want the District to be overly aggressive with appropriating funds from it. WR Grace fund is also lower than it ever has been due to last year's appropriation of \$1 million dollars for Assabet #3
5. Central Acton Water Treatment Plant - \$10M spent; all documentation was in good order. Everything had been certified by the contractors.

She stated that overall, the audit went well. The District's accounting is in good standing.

She mentioned that Acton Water District, Chelmsford Water District and North Chelmsford Water District may want to cooperate on a search for a new auditor. On June 30, 2022 she will help all three districts close their books so that they can present completed financial statement to the new auditor.

She informed the Commissioners that is her final year being the District's auditor as she will be retiring from conducting audits.

Barry Rosen: asked Ms. Mara about the status of the accounting software that she had suggested the District upgrade during last year's review by her. Ms. Mara stated that she and Mary Jo have spoken and decided to wait until a new auditor has been chosen and from there make the decision with them on the new software.

## **B. Comments from the Public**

Kim Kastens: she attended her first Acton Water District's Finance Committee meeting because she was interested in hearing about the debt relief discussion. Pleased to see the careful thought

going into it and what's going in it. She would encourage Fin COMM to bring in voices from low to moderate income rate payers/water takers before Fin COMM decides on anything.

She has two PFAS comments. Mr. Rosen suggests holding her comments until the agenda item.

### **B. Approve Minutes from Meeting of 8/23/2021**

Mr. Rosen motioned to approve the minutes of August 23, 2021. Ms. Amir-Lin seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Ms. Amir-Lin, Mr. Stuntz, and Mr. Rosen.

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

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

### **E. OLD BUSINESS:**

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

- Current sample data, if available
- Any updates or discussion from PFAS Working Group

#### *Current sample data, if available*

Mr. Allen posted the recent sample results table. For the calendar year of 2021, including the results of the August samples. Conant I's concentration was 17.8 Parts Per Trillion (ppt). We continue to operate Conant I intermittently with North Acton Water Treatment Plant (NAWTP). Clapp/Whitcomb was non-detect; North Acton Water Treatment Plant 18.4 PPT. The primary supply to customers currently is from Clapp/Whitcomb and South Acton Water Treatment Plant (SAWTP). We will be providing another public notice as a bill stuffer and syncing that up with our next billing cycle that will come out in early October to consolidate multiple mass mailings.

Kim Kastens: she received from Chris Smith a report about sampling around WR Grace site. TetraTech was recommending that there should be no more PFAS sampling at the WR Grace site. It struck her as a premature at sampling there. She wanted to know the Commissioners thoughts on this of further sampling at this site. Matt Mostoller stated that he has not done a thorough review of the report, so he does not have any formal comments right now about it.

Kim Kastens: A few months ago she made a comment at one of the Commissioners meeting about joining the new program about MassDEP along with University of Massachusetts to test effectiveness of home filtration systems for removing PFAS and they were recruiting public water supplies to enter into a program where if they had more 20 PPT could have their water run through a bunch of tests to see which ones were effective at removing PFAS. She thought it was a great idea as Green Acton is getting lots of questions about this from water takers. She heard from Matt that the District was not going to join this program. She was disappointed. She'd like to understand the reasons for this. Strategize about whether there is any way to get comparable information regarding which filtration systems will be effective on our water. Matt staged that

the number one reason that we didn't take part is we need to remain in control of how and when we are operating our wells. Last fall with NAWTP we were trying to accommodate two pilot programs at this site, and we couldn't rest and run the wells when we wanted to and that became a challenge to get the data we needed to get. Turning our schedule over to UMass while we are trying to meet the current demands of meeting water for our community during the growing season wasn't something we needed to add to what we are juggling. To Kim's question about how comparable data could be obtained. The NSF and filter manufacturers and other certified agencies need to step up and recognize that the EPA recommended guideline of 70 PPT is becoming an obsolete number. They need to be working together to achieve standards and equipment that can meet that array of standards that various states have adopted.

Barry Rosen: we were curious to know if there was any seasonality to having PFAS in the raw water. He noticed that when you look at the data chart that Kim was referring the PFOA, when they tested in winter, was up around 22 nanograms per liter (ng/L) and in the summer it dropped to 5.3 ng/L. He wonders if TetraTech tests in winter, if the numbers would be high again and in the summer it's above the state standard. He doesn't know if there is any seasonality but would be interested to see what the numbers would be if they tested in the winter. There are so many variables of course. He is questioning the conclusion of the results and it's not comfortable that they are telling us "don't worry about it" based on the long-chain readings that they got in the wintertime. Erika Amir-Lin commented, "I don't know how you can tell anything with two data points so she would be hesitant in making any proclamations." Kim Kastens stated that it struck her as premature which is why she raised the question. Matt Mostoller stated that it is difficult to make decision on two data points; they were reluctant to do the first round and the second round; the few scattered places that show some places of elevation are not in proximity to our production wells which suggests that there isn't a connection to what contributed to those wells and our production wells. The majority of the wells in South Acton with the highest concentration of PFAS in production wells goes down as they get closer to Grace site. Our two highest concentrations wells are Assabet IA and Christofferson are the furthest away from the Grace site proper. Kim Kastens stated that she is happy that they were able to get the additional four samples done because that did include the spatial picture. Matt stated that unfortunately we did have interest in the wells in proximity to the Concord Bus Depot, but they were not sampled. Would have been nice if the NMI superfund site would do sampling there but they are in a holding pattern until they get approval to do more work.

Ron Parenti: he keeps looking at the numbers in the table and he is struck how consistent the numbers are. Might be possible that the PFAS is coming out of the pumping equipment? He was wondering if they thought of this and if there is a way to prove or disprove that. Matt Mostoller stated that we have also wondered the same thing. What could be contributing factors. We have been trying to delve into that, but we have nothing conclusive to-date.

Mr. Allen gave an update regarding the PFAS working group. He continues to try and schedule a trip to observe the town of Hudson's PFAS systems. There are currently 17 applications for bottled water rebates; engaged our engineering consultant, Wright-Pierce, to do an analysis of feasibility for temporary treatment in North Acton and will continue to work with the working group on that scope and will present that report when completed.

**F. NEW BUSINESS:**

*1. Approve the Rollover of the Promissory Note for Refinancing the Borrowing of Engineering for the Central Acton Water Treatment Plant*

Ms. Bates stated that we went out to bid for the rollover of \$215,000 which is the balance of the engineering on the Central Acton Water Treatment Plant. We received two bids last week. The lower bid was from UniBank at .46%. She recommends the Board to award the note to UniBank for \$215,000 at .46%

Mr. Stuntz moved that we accept Ms. Bates recommendation of awarding the note to UniBank for \$215,000 at .46%. Ms. Amir-Lin seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Ms. Amir-Lin, Mr. Stuntz, and Mr. Rosen.

*Mr. Rosen motioned to adjourn open meeting at 7:52 PM. Mr. Stuntz seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Ms. Amir-Lin, Mr. Stuntz, and Mr. Rosen. Mr. Rosen moved to enter into Executive Session at 7:53 PM to discuss strategy with respect to the purchase, exchange, lease of real property as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the District.*