

Board of Water Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
Acton Water District
693 Massachusetts Avenue, Acton MA
Monday, December 2, 2019

AGENDA

- A. Comments from Citizens
- B. Approve Minutes of November 18th Meeting

C. OLD BUSINESS:

- 1. Proposed Sewer District Expansion in West Acton
- 2. MA Department of Environmental Protection (MA DEP) Approval Letter for the Central Acton Water Treatment Plant (CAWTP)

D. NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. Introduction & Review of FY '21 DRAFT Budget & Proposed Warrant Articles
- 2. Per- and Poly-fluoroalkyl (PFAS) Source and Aquifer Sampling in South Acton

Present at Tonight's Meeting:

Commissioners: Stephen Stuntz (Chair), Erika Amir-Lin
District Manager: Chris Allen
District Treasurer: Mary Jo Bates
District Counsel: Mary Bassett
Environmental Manager: Matthew Mostoller
Finance Committee: Dave Butler (via phone)
Green Acton: Lucy Kirshner

Citizens:

Mike Geis
Chris Williams
Jon Rohr
Ron Parenti

The Board of Water Commissioner's meeting was called to order at 7:31 PM on Monday, December 2, 2019 at the Acton Water District by Mr. Stephen Stuntz.

A. Comments from Citizens:

Lucy Kirshner who is representing Green Acton would like to know if there is a certain procedure for requesting to put an Article on the Warrant for the District's annual meeting. Counselor Bassett stated that the Commissioners need to review the information/subject and then determine whether it would recommend the article for approval. The procedure for requesting the inclusion of an article by citizens is the same as used in the Town of Acton; the District follows the same state law procedures as a town. Mr. Stuntz stated that; that she should work with Matthews Mostoller and Chris Allen to iron out the article language. ; Mr. Allen will check on what is required, and follow-up with Ms. Kirshner.

B. Approve Minutes of November 18th Meeting:

Mr. Stuntz motioned to approve the minutes of November 18, 2019. Ms. Amir-Lin seconded, and it was unanimously approved.

C. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Proposed Sewer District Expansion into West Acton.

Mike Geis spoke and made a slide presentation. He doesn't think that the Town of Acton has been consistent on sewerage. Mr. Mostoller mentioned that the data in Mike Geis' presentation on water quality relative to nitrogen does not necessarily correlate with what is coming out of groundwater wells.

Ms. Amir-Lin asked Mike Geis who he is representing. He stated that he is representing the Friends of West Acton who are just residents. Ms. Amir-Lin asked if there are any businesses that have endorsed the Friends of West Acton. Chris Williams stated that there are some; these businesses are concerned about the cost but not so much environmental issues.

Mr. Stuntz asked if the Commissioners are going to take a position on the proposal and article for Special Town Meeting? Mr. Allen stated that the sewer project is not coming down to the District office where we are currently served by multiple tight tanks. Mr. Stuntz asked if there are any advantages of having sewer? Mr. Mostoller stated that we are not getting inclusion of the neighborhood that would directly benefit the Water District's potential well site off Massachusetts Ave in the West Acton village. Many years of nitrogen build-up could be a problem as evidenced by exploration work done in the 1980's. Mr. Stuntz mentioned that if it doesn't impact the District as proposed then we don't take a position on it.

Mr. Allen asked what is the feeling amongst citizens; are they for or against the sewerage? Chris Williams stated that most are afraid of the cost associated with it; seems like it is mostly businesses in West Acton who would like to have sewers; others feel that they are modern and that septic systems are old school. Majority of homeowners are against it. There could be a \$34K-\$40K betterment on properties included in the sewer district. Financial impact is very real and worrisome.

Mr. Parenti stated that the way betterments are assessed in Acton is unique. In 1998 the Town was trying to put in sewer and was getting resistance from citizens. The Town would put all the burden on the users. Betterments are much higher, and the financial burden is very severe.

Currently, the Commissioners are taking no position on the West Acton sewer project.

Enclosed in packets is the latest version of the West Acton sewer project area map that was provided by the Town.

2. MA Department of Environmental Protection (MA DEP) Approval Letter for the Central Acton Water Treatment Plant (CAWTP).

Enclosed in tonight's packets to the Commissioners is the official approval letter received from MA DEP to construct the Central Acton Water Treatment Plant (CAWTP). Mr. Allen mentioned that we are approaching 100% design; it will go to bid mid-winter (Feb/March 2020); and break ground around June of 2020.

D. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Introduction & Review of FY' 21 DRAFT Budget & Proposed Warrant Articles

The DRAFT FY' 21 Budget:

Enclosed in tonight's packets to the Commissioners is a copy of the FY '21 DRAFT Budget. Mr. Stuntz asked about Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) and when will the District start paying retirees out

of this fund; Ms. Bates stated it is 96% funded we are not going to add any more to it; Ms. Bates stated that she needs to have a discussion with the Finance Committee to determine when they will start using the fund.

Mr. Stuntz inquired as to what the hook-up fees are projected? Mr. Allen stated \$200,000, which is a typical number that we predict annually for budgetary purposes.

Ms. Bates stated that the next budget that the Board reviews in January of 2020 will show six-month actual numbers.

The Proposed Warrant Articles:

Enclosed in tonight's packets to the Commissioners is a simplified version of the proposed Warrant Articles. Perennial appropriations some from WR Grace and some from Surplus Revenue.

Regarding the solar lease and impending Article 97 impacts, Mr. Allen asked about the need for an article on the 2020 Warrant to approve the lease, since it was approved in 2014. Counselor Bassett said that since we are adding two additional five-year increments to the approved 20-year lease, it is necessary to amend the article that had been previously approved. Ms. Bates asked about the new stabilization fund that the MA Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (MA EEA) is requiring for land acquisition related to the Article 97 impacts of the leased parcels for solar. She stated that only District voters can authorize to set up the stabilization fund. Mr. Allen mentioned that we don't know what the amount is yet. Counselor Bassett said we should have a place holder for it. There will likely be a new article to approve the solar lease the 2-five-year options to renew and authorization to set-up a new stabilization fund2020 Annual Meeting warrant.

2. Per- and Poly-fluoroalkyl (PFAS) Source and Aquifer Sampling in South Acton.

Enclosed in tonight's packets to the Commissioners is a copy of a presentation that Mr. Mostoller will review for the Board regarding an introduction to per- and poly-fluoroalkyl (PFAS) and includes information on WR Grace and NMI aquifer sampling in South Acton. He informed the Commissioners that WR Grace started sampling for PFAS back in August which included about two dozen sites being sampled as a screening evaluation for the need to do additional locations. NMI is going to sample a larger number of sites to determine whether PFAS will need to be addressed during remedial actions. The NMI sampling will include our Assabet production wells.

Other New Business:

Mr. Allen recommended that the Commissioners consider moving the open meeting start time to 7:00 PM instead of 7:30 PM. The Commissioners don't see that as a problem but would like to wait for Mr. Rosen to be present to discuss and vote.

Ms. Amir-Lin motioned to adjourn the open meeting at 8:20 PM. Mr. Stuntz seconded, and it was unanimously approved.