

Acton Water District

WINTER 2023

Water Words Notice

Please mark your calendar for our Annual District Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, March 15 at 6pm at the RJ Grey Junior High School Auditorium located at 16 Charter Road. This edition of our *Water Words Notice* also includes the Warrant Articles to be voted on at this meeting. If you are interested in learning more about the budget, reviewing reports on activities of the District during the past year, or reviewing a complete copy of the Independent Auditors report, the Annual Report of the District is available at www.actonwater.com/annualreport.

Upcoming Actions on Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

The understanding and regulatory impacts of PFAS have evolved considerably over the last three years and are anticipated to continue to do so. As the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) is expected to announce a draft federal drinking water standard for PFAS in March 2023, we continue to plan for how future regulatory changes may impact our PFAS response strategies, operations and available water supply. Several short-term solutions continue to be leveraged to manage PFAS concentrations in our treated drinking water, including resting wells, reducing flow rates and blending. We also recently received approval to activate the Assabet 3 well, which was one of our medium-term solutions for PFAS mitigation. Another medium-term solution is the approval and construction of bedrock wells D and E in the vicinity of the new Central Acton Water Treatment Plant (WTP), which remains in the permitting phase at the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). Once approved, these wells will help maintain our source of supply in compliance with existing regulations while permanent solutions continue to be developed and implemented at that site. We are excited to be one step closer to the implementation of one such permanent solution, as the invitation to bid for the construction of the PFAS filtration installation at our North Acton WTP has been released. Construction of this system is anticipated to be completed during 2023.

The patience and understanding of you, our customer, has been appreciated as we continue to navigate the ever-changing landscape of PFAS. At the upcoming Annual meeting on March 15 at 6pm, we will be asking voters to approve two warrant articles specifically addressing PFAS. Articles 19 and 20 will authorize borrowing for the design and construction of PFAS treatment systems at the South and Central Acton WTPs respectively. While operational changes implemented at the South Acton WTP, our largest source of supply (~80%), have been successful at managing PFAS concentrations, drought

conditions coupled with consistent pumping of the wells feeding the Central Acton WTP have led to a rise in PFAS concentrations there as indicated in our most recent public notice. Results from recently completed pilot tests at both facilities will further inform the engineering, capital and operating costs and time frames for implementing these solutions.

We will also be asking voters to approve two additional warrant articles, Articles 17 and 18, that address PFAS more indirectly. Article 18 will authorize the acquisition of land at 549 Main Street, on which bedrock wells D and E are located, while Article 17 will authorize borrowing to construct these wells, which have very low PFAS concentrations. Bringing these wells online will enable blending to mitigate PFAS concentrations at the Central Acton WTP until such time as a permanent solution can be implemented.

We continue to provide the most recent PFAS data on our website www.actonwater.com/pfas and encourage you to sign up for our email updates, which notify you when new information is made available. This can be done by sending your name and address to wq@actonwater.com requesting to receive updates. The success of these four warrant articles will enable important next steps to begin in our PFAS response.

Comings and Goings!

This fall marked the end of an era for the District, as long-time Treasurer/Collector, Mary Jo Bates, retired after 21.5 years of devoted service. We thank her for her vision, leadership and dedication to the community and wish her all the best as she embarks on new adventures.

Christine M. McCarthy joined the District in September 2022 as our new Treasurer/Collector. Christine has

an MBA from Rivier University and brings with her 15 years of accounting experience and nearly 13 years of municipal finance experience, 10 of which were in a Treasurer's role. She previously worked for the North Chelmsford Water District from 2006 to 2017, and during her employment became certified as a Massachusetts Municipal Treasurer. She is also a licensed Grade 3



Mary Jo Bates (l) passed the torch to our new Treasurer/Collector Christine McCarthy (r) last fall.

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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
Middlesex, ss.



To the Clerk of the Water Supply District of Acton, GREETINGS:

You are directed to notify the inhabitants of the Town of Acton who are qualified to vote in elections and town affairs, to assemble at their precinct:

All Precincts voting at Blanchard Auditorium
R.J. Grey Junior High School, 16 Charter Road, Acton, Massachusetts

On Tuesday, April 25, 2023 • Between 7:00 A.M. and 8:00 P.M.
Then and there to bring their votes on one ballot for the following officers:

Commissioner for three years • District Clerk for three years

You are further directed to notify the legal voters of the Town of Acton, as aforesaid, to assemble at:

R.J. Grey Junior High School, 16 Charter Road, Acton, Massachusetts 01720

On Wednesday, March 15, 2023, 6:00 P.M.

Then and there to Act on the following Articles:

Article 1. To fix salaries of the elected officials.

Article 2. To act on the reports of the Commissioners, the Treasurer and other officers and committees of the District.

Article 3. To see if the District will vote to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Commissioners, to borrow in anticipation of the revenue of the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023 in accordance with the provisions of General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 4, and to renew any note or notes as may be given for a period of less than one year, in accordance with the provisions of the General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 17, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Article 4. To see what sums of money the District will vote to raise and appropriate to defray the usual expenses of the District.

Article 5. To see if the District will vote, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws c.44, §53E½, to establish a \$100,000 limitation on expenditures from the revolving fund captioned "District Revolving Fund for Mitigation," or to take any other action relative thereto.

Article 6. To see if the District will vote to transfer from Grace Stabilization Fund (W.R. Grace settlement) the sum of \$125,000 for the maintenance and repair of the various treatment facilities including, but not limited to, media replacement in the filtration tanks, aeration tower repair, and replacement of packing material or to take any other action relative thereto.

Article 7. To see if the District will vote to transfer from Surplus Revenue the sum of \$100,000 to clean and rehabilitate existing wells throughout the District or to take any other action relative thereto.

Article 8. To see if the District will vote to transfer from Surplus Revenue the sum of \$30,000 for the purpose of replacing old water mains, renewing old water services, replacing old fire hydrants or to take any other action relative thereto.

Article 9. To see if the District will vote to transfer from Surplus Revenue the sum of \$30,000 for the purpose of repairing emergency water main breaks or to take any other action relative thereto.

Article 10. To see if the District will vote to transfer from Surplus Revenue the sum of \$100,000 for the replacement of

filtration media at the District's water treatment plants or to take any other action relative thereto.

Article 11. To see if the District will vote to transfer from Surplus Revenue the sum of \$150,000 to Lights, Power, and Fuel for additional utility costs or to take any other action relative thereto.

Article 12. To see if the District will appropriate \$400,000 or any other amount, to pay costs of improvements to the District's water system and water mains in Acton, as well as costs of a Lead Service Line Inventory and Replacement Plan; to determine whether this amount shall be raised by transfer from available funds, borrowing, which may include the borrowing of funds through the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust, or any combination thereof, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Article 13. To see if the District will vote to transfer from Surplus Revenue the sum of \$25,104 to the Article 97 Stabilization Fund or to take any other action relative thereto.

Article 14. To see if the District will vote to appropriate the sum of \$100,000 to fund the Mitigation Revolving Fund or take any other action relative thereto.

Article 15. To see if the District will vote to transfer from the Other Post Employment Benefits Liability Trust Fund (OPEB) to Surplus Revenue the sum of \$84,325 to fund health insurance benefits for retirees to take any other action relative thereto.

Article 16. To see if the District will vote to appropriate the sum of \$180,000 to acquire by purchase, gift, eminent domain, or otherwise, a parcel of land at 104 Powder Mill Road Rear and 36 Knox Trail owned by or formerly owned by Baldco Inc. containing a combined 18.27 acres of land, more or less, as shown in deeds recorded in Middlesex Registry (South) of Deeds in Book 28877, Page 294; Plan 343 of 1993 and Land Court Book 0119, Page 147, Plan No. 25398J, and to enter into a long term lease with Baldco, Inc. to lease back the land to maintain its existing radio towers; said land being acquired for the purposes of protecting the groundwater aquifers and recharge areas for District water supply wells, and conserving the land for watershed protection purposes, and for all things pertinent to its duties as a water district per its enabling act, Chapter 326 of the Acts of 1912, as amended, and under the provisions of Chapter 40 and Chapter 79 of the General Laws; to determine whether this appropriation shall be raised by borrowing or otherwise; or to take any other action relative thereto.

Article 17. To see if the District will vote to appropriate the sum of \$2,400,000 for costs associated with construction of bedrock wells at 549 Main Street; to determine whether this amount shall be raised by borrowing or otherwise, which may include the borrowing of funds through the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust; or to take any other action relative thereto.

Article 18. To see if the District will vote to appropriate the sum of \$4,900,000 to acquire by purchase, gift, eminent domain, or otherwise, a parcel of land at 549 Main Street, Acton, MA owned by or formerly owned by The Brewster Conant Trust –2017, or its nominee and containing a combined 56.85 acres of land as described in the deed recorded in Book 74052, Page 584 and shown as Parcel 2A in a plan recorded in Book 25911, Page 35, and in Plan 1168 of 1995, all recorded in Middlesex Registry (South) of Deeds, and to grant a Conservation Restriction on the same land to the Town of Acton or other entity, said land being acquired for the purposes of protecting the groundwater aquifers and recharge areas for water supply wells, and conserving the land for watershed protection purposes, and for all things pertinent to its duties as a water district per its enabling act, Chapter 326 of the Acts of 1912, as amended, and under the provisions of Chapter 40 and Chapter 79 of the General Laws; and to determine whether this appropriation shall be raised by borrowing or otherwise. The Water Commissioners are authorized to apply for funds from any private or public grant or aid programs that may be available to defray costs of this project, which funds, if any, shall reduce the amount authorized to be borrowed for this purpose; or to take any other action relative thereto.

Article 19. To see if the District will vote to appropriate the sum of \$8,700,000 for costs associated with construction of modifications to the permanent infrastructure at the South Acton Treatment Plant to accommodate installation of a PFAS treatment system; to determine whether this amount shall be raised by borrowing or otherwise, which may include the borrowing of funds through the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust; or to take any other action relative thereto.

Article 20. To see if the District will vote to appropriate the sum of \$5,420,000 for costs associated with construction of modifications to the permanent infrastructure at the Central Acton Treatment Plant to accommodate installation of a PFAS treatment system; to determine whether this amount shall be raised by borrowing or otherwise, which may include the borrowing of funds through the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust; or to take any other action relative thereto.

Article 21. To see if the District will vote to appropriate the sum of \$955,000 for costs associated with backwash upgrades at the Clapp/Whitcomb treatment plant; to determine whether this amount shall be raised by borrowing or otherwise, which may include the borrowing of funds through the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust; or to take any other action relative thereto.

Article 22. To see if the District will vote to amend the District Bylaws, pursuant to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53E½, Revolving Funds, as most recently amended by Section 86 of Chapter 218 of the Acts of 2016, the Municipal Modernization Act, by inserting the following section entitled "District Revolving Fund for New Service Meter Installations" or take any other action relative thereto.

“District Revolving Fund for New Service Meter Installations

1. Purpose. This bylaw establishes and authorizes a revolving fund for use by the District in connection with new service meter installation fees, charges or other receipts. The fund will be credited with all fees charged for new service meter installations. Expenditures will be authorized by the District Manager and will not exceed \$100,000. This revolving fund is established under and governed by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53E½.
2. Expenditure Limitations. The revolving fund is established and authorized by this bylaw subject to the following limitations
 - No liability shall be incurred in excess of the available balance of the fund.
 - The total amount spent during a fiscal year shall not exceed the amount authorized by District Meeting on or before July 1 of that fiscal year, or any increased amount of that authorization that is later approved during that fiscal year by the Water Commissioners.
3. Interest. Interest earned on monies credited to a revolving fund established by this bylaw shall be credited to the General Fund.
4. Procedures and Reports. Except as provided in Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53E½ and this bylaw, the laws, charter provisions, bylaws, rules, regulations, policies or procedures that govern the receipt and custody of District

monies and the expenditure and payment of District funds shall apply to the use of a revolving fund established and authorized by this bylaw. The District Treasurer shall include a statement on the collections credited to each fund, the encumbrances and expenditures charged to the fund and the balance available for expenditure in the regular report the District Treasurer provides.”

Article 23. To see if the District will vote, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws c.44, §53E½ as most recently amended by §86 of Chapter 218 of the Acts of 2016, to establish a \$100,000 limitation on expenditures from the revolving fund, captioned, “District Revolving Fund for New Service Meter Installations,” or to take any other action relative thereto.

Article 24. To see if the District will vote to appropriate the sum of \$25,000 from free cash to fund the District Revolving Fund for New Service Meter Installations or to take any other action relative thereto.

Article 25. Non-Binding Resolution: Water Rate Study to determine whether the Annual Meeting shall request that the Acton Water District, as part of its next 5-yearly Master Plan update or through another timely mechanism, commission an external expert study of options for structuring future water rates, with the goal of generating sufficient revenue to cover operations, maintenance, and debt service, while strongly encouraging water conservation and keeping water affordable for low-income Acton residents.

Hereof fail not and make due returns of this Warrant with your doings thereon to the Water Commissioners on or before the time of holding of said meeting.

Given under our hand this 6th day of February in the year two thousand and twenty-three.

Stephen C. Stuntz
Erika Amir-Lin
Barry Rosen, Water Commissioners

A true copy. ATTEST:

William T. Stanford
District Clerk

Comings and Goings!

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Distribution Operator as well as a Grade 3 Treatment Operator. Christine is thrilled to be here, and her skills and knowledge have enabled her to hit the ground running. Please say hello to Christine if you see her the next time you drop by our office!

As we write this newsletter, another major transition is underway. After 16 years of leadership, District Manager Chris Allen has announced his intent to retire in 2023. The Board of Water Commissioners has been working through a transition plan with Chris and the staff to facilitate a smooth transition to our next District Manager, long-time employee Matthew Mostoller. Matt has been with the District since 2009, most

recently serving as the Assistant District Manager. Chris and Matt will continue to work together over the coming months to ensure the District continues to make progress on its PFAS response, and that important projects like the solar array commissioning on Knox Trail are successfully completed. Chris has led a tremendous capital improvement plan during his tenure, resulting in the commissioning of three full scale filtration facilities.

Another long-time employee, Keith Kupfer of our operations group, recently wrapped up his 16 years of service to the District. His friendly face will be missed, and we wish him well in his next endeavor.

A Generational Opportunity: 549 Main Street

Since 2018, the District has been conducting well explorations on the 56.8-acre parcel of land owned by the Conant family located at 549 Main Street. During this time, the District drilled three bedrock wells on the site, two of which have been deemed viable sources of supply. These 600-foot-deep wells, known as wells D and E, can provide approximately 0.27 Million Gallons per Day (MGD) of water and will help improve the quality of water supplied from the Central Acton WTP. These wells will also diversify the District's water supply portfolio, which currently relies on 24 shallow sand and gravel wells to supply water to 95% of Acton, and will provide a measure of drought resilience. The District is awaiting final approval for wells D and E from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). At our upcoming Annual Meeting, we will be asking voters to approve Article 18 to authorize the acquisition of 549 Main Street for \$4.9M,

a below market value price for the parcel, which is necessary to facilitate the construction of these important new sources of supply.

The 549 Main Street parcel is crucial for watershed protection as it directly abuts the 24-acre parcel at 8 Post Office Square Behind, the site of the District's Conant II groundwater wells. The District owns an additional 31 acres of land to the north along the eastern side of Main Street, including the site of the Conant I well. Currently, just over 25% of the 549 Main Street parcel is classified as either Zone I or Zone II water supply protection area for the existing Conant I and II wells; upon approval of wells D and E, nearly 99% of the parcel will become Zone I area, demonstrating the critical nature of protecting this land.

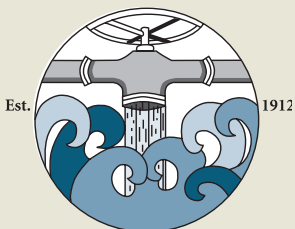


549 Main Street sits at the prominent intersection of Brook and Main Streets.

In addition to its notable water supply-specific benefits, the 549 Main Street property includes one of the last remaining unpaved segments of the Isaac Davis Trail still in existence (~2,200 feet), as well as areas of priority habitats of rare species and two potential vernal pools. Areas of moderate to high archeological potential have been identified on the land, which received the highest possible score of the 125 open space parcels that were ranked in the Town of Acton's 2014–2021 Open Space and Recreation Plan. Considering the unique combination of water, natural and historical resources that this property offers, the District looks forward to the opportunity to permanently protect it upon voter approval, after generations of good stewardship and ownership in the same family.

Additionally, the Town of Acton will be asking voters to approve the acquisition of a Conservation Restriction (CR) on 549 Main Street at the Annual Town Meeting on May 1–2, 2023. This CR will provide public access to the existing trail network on the property and enable the long-term preservation of the unique attributes of this special parcel.

Acton Water



District

P.O. Box 953
Acton, MA 01720

Water Words Notice
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for all customers of the
Acton Water District

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Erika Amir-Lin
Barry Rosen