

WLMAC MEETING NOTES OF APRIL 10, 2012

Present: Greta Eckhardt, Charles Olmstead, Paul Malchodi, Barry Rosen

Note Taker(s): Paul Malchodi, Barry Rosen

Chairperson: Barry Rosen

Called To Order: The chairperson called the meeting to order on April 10, 2012 at 8:20 PM EDT.

New Business:

1. Approval of Minutes: Mr. Malchodi moved and Mr. Olmstead seconded a motion to accept the WLMAC minutes of March 13, 2012 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.
2. Updates:
 - 2.1. Mr. Malchodi stated that he needs additional time to complete some of the work that he promised to the WLMAC. He expects to have it prepared by the next meeting of the committee.
 - 2.2. In answer to a question by Mr. Olmstead regarding the status of the candidate for the open WLMAC position, Mr. Rosen explained that as far as he knew, there was no new information. The last that he had heard, the candidate had closed on his Acton home and was scheduled to move-in a week or so ago. However, the candidate's wife was expected to give birth to their first child very soon. Mr. Rosen said that if he heard anything further from Chris Allen, he would immediately update the WLMAC.
 - 2.3. AWD Centennial Celebration: The members shared their availability for attending the 5 May 2012 AWD celebration. Ms. Eckhardt and Mr. Rosen will both be out-of-town that weekend. At this time, Mr. Olmstead plans to attend.
 - 2.4. Commissioners' Meeting: None of the WLMAC members attended the last AWD Commissioners' meeting. It was the same night as the first night of the Acton Town meeting.
3. Next WLMAC Meeting Date: The membership polled itself to determine if the next scheduled meeting of the WLMAC has any known conflicts. The date/time appeared to be good for everyone at this time. The next meeting will be held on May 8, 2012 at 8:00 PM at the AWD HQ.

Old Business:

4. AWD Capacity Study: The members continued their discussion of revising the Capacity study outline to make it a simpler and quicker project. Mr. Rosen explained

- that he would like to move ahead with the current proposed outline or one that includes any member introduced additions or deletions to the topics.
- 4.1. AWD is moving forward (after voter approval) of an engineering study to determine the best treatment modalities for the South Acton wells (Assabet and School Street). It is hoped that a single plant may be able to serve both locations and to allow enough spare room in the plant to implement future treatments that may be necessary.
 - 4.2. Water usage in Acton seems to have declined. Mr. Mostoller believes that we are using about 55 gallons/person/day.
 - 4.2.1. Ms. Eckhardt wondered if the calculation included both residential and business. She thought that per capita should only include residential water takers and not industrial users.
 - 4.2.2. A question was also raised about whether the calculation included people who were not taking AWD water such as properties utilizing their own well water. Was the population of Avon Acton Apartments included? While the apartments are almost all in Acton and the occupancy is high, all of their water is supplied by Littleton.
 - 4.2.3. Mr. Malchodi reminded us that we may be using less water over the short term because "We are coming off three very wet years." [Ed. Note: He was speaking in terms of rainfall.]
 - 4.2.4. Mr. Rosen was asked to see if Mr. Mostoller would be able to answer a few of the committee's questions prior to the next meeting.
 - 4.3. Mr. Olmstead suggests that the committee look at previous historic disturbances to see how they may have affected water demand/usage.
 - 4.4. The cost of AWD water is trending up. Mr. Rosen thought that it was trending up more quickly than had been anticipated. He stated that we were lower or average with most nearby towns (including some MWRA towns) but some initial research shows that we are becoming more expensive for the same quantity of water.
 - 4.4.1. *Information from notes that Mr. Rosen did not have with him at the meeting. Based upon the same measurement & quantity of water utilized in our last report to the AWD, some initial research found:* Prior to the AWD's latest rate increase which may change things a bit, Maynard's rates have become more expensive than Acton as have the rates of Westford. However, we are now about even with Concord but much more expensive than Littleton, Burlington (both of which have surface and ground water supplies), Natick, Cambridge (surface water), Lancaster and Lowell (a regional water supply). [The database was last updated in 2009.]
 - 4.4.2. Acton has made investments in more expensive treatment plant technologies which the District financed (c. \$6M) with a 20-year bond.
 - 4.4.3. At least one South Acton treatment plant utilizing more expensive technologies will be required to deal with the School Street and Assabet well

fields. While there is no firm price at this time for the cost, the District believes that a single plant to service both well fields would cost in the area of \$15M and would likely be financed by bonding. Mr. Rosen expects that the District will request additional rate increases to pay for the bonding.

- 4.4.4. It's likely that the West Acton wells would require additional treatment in the future.
- 4.5. AWD may need to pay for multiple treatment plants and/or improvements to plants particularly as the requirements for removing/reducing substances in the water supply become more stringent.
 - 4.5.1. Increasing water rates
 - 4.5.2. Mr. Rosen noted AWD has the ability to tax which could have several advantages depending upon how it is done. This may be a viable alternative rather than raising the water rates.
 - 4.5.3. Ms. Eckhardt suggested that another possible avenue to think about would be to reduce the active well count and force less water use.
 - 4.5.4. Ms. Eckhardt is also concerned about the increased power usage and treatment costs of Acton's wells. She has a substantial thesis that long term reductions in water usage would eliminate the need for so many wells and consequently so much expensive treatment.
- 4.6. Committee will continue this discussion and finalize the outline for the study at the next meeting of the WLMAC.

Adjournment:

On a motion by Ms. Eckhardt which was seconded by Mr. Olmstead, the meeting was adjourned at 9:55 PM ET on April 10, 2012 by a unanimous vote.