

WLMAC MEETING NOTES OF JUNE 19, 2012

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

Note Taker(s): Paul Malchodi, Barry Rosen

Chairperson: Barry Rosen

Call To Order: The chairperson called the meeting to order on June 19, 2012 at 8:25 PM EDT.

New Business:

1. Approval of Minutes: Mr. Olmstead moved and Mr. Malchodi seconded a motion to accept the WLMAC minutes of May 15, 2012 as presented (which included additions submitted by Ms. Eckhardt). The motion to accept the minutes was passed unanimously.
2. Updates:
 - 2.1. Mr. Rosen told the committee that he had sent the letter which reminded the Commissioners that the WLMAC was still not fully staffed. The letter also suggested some additional ways that could circulate the need for a member along with a “job description” more widely throughout the town.
3. Confirm Next WLMAC Meeting Date:
 - 3.1. After polling the membership, it was determined that the next meeting date of July 10 at 8:00 PM seemed to be OK. However, Mr. Olmstead stated that he might be away at that time. He would check on it and get back to Mr. Rosen within a few days. Mr. Rosen asked the committee if the following Tuesday (7/17) could be a possible alternate meeting date which everyone could attend. Mr. Malchodi indicated that he might have a conflict on that date and would require a couple of days to check on it. He would get back to Mr. Rosen as soon as he was able to determine his availability. If all can make the 7/17 meeting date, the WLMAC indicated that it would change the meeting date. Otherwise, it would take place on 7/10. As the date gets a little closer, an email check to confirm that no conflicts have developed will be done.
 - 3.2. The membership looked ahead to August to determine if there were any conflicts. It appeared that there were none at this time. The meeting is scheduled to take place on August 14.
4. Summary of AWD Commissioners’ Meeting of June 4, 2012:
 - 4.1. Chip Orcutt, the AWD Clerk, has some concerns about being on multiple boards and committees. He explained that under the state ethics law, in some circumstances this can be construed to be a conflict of interest. Therefore, he proposed a remedy in having the District Clerk position being declared as a “special mu-

municipal employee.” The Board of Water Commissioners passed the motion unanimously.

- 4.2. There was considerable discussion of approving a warrant for a special AWD meeting to be scheduled for June 25, 2012. The purpose of the meeting would be to ask the voters to approve a \$12M estimated budget for building a new water treatment plant in South Acton to service the School Street and Assabet wells. The plan is to finance 50% through a low interest revolving fund load from the state (usually at 2%) and to ask for bids for the remaining \$6M in the bond market. The final cost of the project has not yet been determined. A number of escalations in rate payers’ water bills is the stated method of funding the new plant.
 - 4.2.1. Mr. Rosen stated that we need to be careful about continuing to raise the water rates in Acton. We do not have the lowest water rates of all of the water districts around us as was stated by one of the commissioners. Our last rate increase was in excess of 35% which was acknowledged by Ms. Bates. This is impacting seniors and others on fixed incomes. He thought that the ever increasing water rates could become an issue in the future.
 - 4.2.2. Mr. Mostoller did not think that this would be an issue based upon the feedback that he had been receiving.
 - 4.2.3. Dr. Parenti reminded the board that last time we had to go back to the voters to ask for additional monies when the cost of the North Acton plant was well above the District estimate provided to the voters. He cautioned about the need to do that again.
 - 4.2.4. Mr. Orcutt seconded that warning. He also thought that the District was cutting the special meeting very close and urged the District to find methods of getting the information about the new plant and the special meeting out to the voters as quickly as possible. He was a little nervous about the timing.
- 4.3. Mr. Allen provided a brief update on the South Acton filtration pilot. A 30 day run had just been completed at the School Street site. The equipment has been relocated to the Assabet site to begin testing there. The initial pilot did find 1,4 dioxane in the water.
- 4.4. In answer to a question, Mr. Allen explained that the system being tested is a cartridge based one versus the submerged membrane system that has been installed in the North Acton treatment plant.
- 4.5. Mr. Allen also told the commissioners that an alternate type of system which is being tested in Burlington will also be tested in Acton. It can treat all kinds of VOC’s in addition to 1,4 dioxane and has been used extensively in the West to process drinking water but has not yet been approved for use for drinking water in MA. The company is known for providing systems that can clean-up industrial waste sites – heavy duty water contamination. It sounded like they might be able to provide a less expensive solution for South Acton. Their solution has a smaller footprint and is a “packaged plant” that is meant to be rolled into a building.

Discussion of Commissioners' Meeting: The WLMAC decided that it wanted to discuss some areas of the Commissioners' meeting since they believed that parts of it related to the AWD water capacity.

5. Eliminating or Reducing the Use of Some District Wells utilizing some “out of the box” thinking was suggested as a topic discussion.
 - 5.1. Outdoor water usage during the warmer months seems to be major cause of the increased need for pumping and for utilizing more of the water wells in the District. Therefore, if one could eliminate the volume of outdoor water demand from the total water pumped, the AWD could probably reduce the need for pumping some of the wells.
 - 5.2. One suggestion was to have two separate water supplies – one for human consumption and the other for flushing and outdoor water usage. It was pointed-out that the vast majority of the residential water used is for non-consumption uses. [It was thought that the figure was close to 80%.] Therefore, the majority of the water would not have to be treated up to drinking water standards. While this seemed to be attractive, it was deemed not to be practical and could also be very expensive to implement.
 - 5.3. Getting as many residents as possible to move their outdoor water consumption to private well water would greatly reduce the peak pumping required by the District. This led the committee to consider a what if scenario of:
 - 5.3.1. Asking residents to install a private bedrock well (bedrock depth is now required by Acton Town bylaw) for outdoor water use which costs between \$8 – 10K.
 - 5.3.2. Require NEW construction or reconstruction of a residential building to provide for private well water for outdoor use. [Ed. Note: This is now required in Sudbury.]
 - 5.3.3. Have the AWD subsidize voluntary residential installation of wells used for irrigation. Some suggestions on how to fund:
 - 5.3.3.1. Using some of the \$12M for South Acton treatment plant construction that could be saved. E.g. If there is substantial reduction in peak summer water usage, a plant might not be necessary or a smaller treatment plant could be built. Some wells could be left off-line except in emergencies.
 - 5.3.3.2. Using funds from reduced energy costs of water pumping.
 - 5.3.3.3. Reducing water rates.
 - 5.3.3.4. Providing access to low rate loans.
6. Ms. Eckhardt had a number of questions in mind. Among them, she would like an explanation of the two types of processes that are scheduled to be tested as candidates for the South Acton treatment plant(s).
7. Other members also had questions about the treatment plant and other related matters. Mr. Malchodi introduced a motion which was seconded by Mr. Olmstead that the

WLMAC convene a meeting to which Mr. Allen and/or Mr. Mostoller are invited. The purpose would be to answer WLMAC questions. The meeting would be held at an earlier time so that it would be more convenient to Mr. Allen. The WLMAC would submit its initial questions in advance to Mr. Allen. The motion was passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEM: Prior to the next meeting of the WLMAC, members will email their initial list of questions to Mr. Rosen who will consolidate the list. CC the other members of the WLMAC. The list will be finalized at the next meeting and sent to Mr. Allen.

8. Mr. Rosen will speak with Mr. Allen about this request to see if he is agreeable and to determine if there are potential dates following the next WLMAC meeting on which we might be able to meet.

Old Business:

9. Continue discussion item(s) from last meeting: As there was substantial earlier discussion and the hour was growing late, the WLMAC decided to wait on any further discussion.
10. Capacity Study Presentation: Mr. Malchodi will wait until our next meeting.

Adjournment:

On a motion by Mr. Olmstead and seconded by Mr. Malchodi, the committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 PM EDT on June 19, 2012.