

Board of Water Commissioners & Finance Committee Joint Meeting

Meeting Agenda

Monday, February 23, 2026 @ 7:00 PM

- Comments from the public
- Approve minutes from the meeting of 2/9/2026
- Appoint one Commissioner to sign warrants while conducting meetings virtually

OLD BUSINESS:

- Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)
 - Current sample data, if available
 - Discussion of Additional PFAS Upgrades
 - Bottled Water Rebate Update
- Review Draft Budget for FY'27 and proposed articles for 2026 Annual District Meeting Warrant
- Discussion of FY'27 Projected Debt Fee
- Annual District Meeting Presentation

NEW BUSINESS:

- Discussion of 2/14/26 Acton Exchange Article

Present at Tonight's Meeting:

Commissioners: Stephen Stuntz (Chair), Erika Lin, Barry Rosen

Finance Committee: John Petersen

District Manager: Matt Mostoller

Deputy District Manager: Corey Godfrey

District Treasurer/Collector: Ashley Pinard

Members of the Public: Kim Kastens; Greg Jarboe; Bill Guthlein

START OF MINUTES

Mr. Stuntz opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and ensured that everyone could hear and be heard.

Comments from the public

Ms. Kim Kastens of Pope Road addressed the Board in her role as a journalist with the Acton Exchange. She explained that the publication views its recent article concerning the District as an ongoing, developing story and may provide additional reporting in the future. Ms. Kastens also noted that the Acton Exchange welcomes letters to the editor and encourages community members to submit comments or perspectives on Acton-related matters.

Mr. Stuntz thanked Ms. Kastens for her remarks and acknowledged the role of the Acton Exchange in providing a public forum for civic discussion within the community.

Approve minutes from the meetings of 2/9/2026

Ms. Lin motioned to approve the minutes of February 9, 2026, with corrections to the spelling of Mr. Petersen's name throughout the document. Mr. Rosen seconded, and it was unanimously approved via a roll call vote, Mr. Rosen, Ms. Lin, and Mr. Stuntz.

Appoint one Commissioner to sign warrants while conducting meetings virtually

Mr. Stuntz motioned to authorize Commissioner Rosen to sign warrants while meetings are conducted virtually, through the next regularly scheduled meeting. Ms. Lin seconded, and it was unanimously approved via roll call vote: Mr. Rosen, Ms. Lin, and Mr. Stuntz.

OLD BUSINESS:

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

Current sample data, if available

Mr. Mostoller provided updated PFAS sampling results and clarified that the figures in the meeting packet had since been updated:

- February 4, 2026 – Center Acton Plant: 12.5 parts per trillion (ppt)
- February 4, 2026 – North Acton Facility: 2.9 ppt
- February 18, 2026 – South Acton: 14 ppt

He explained that these results reflect sampling prior to full operational integration of the new granular activated carbon (GAC) treatment systems in Center and South Acton. Once DEP approvals are finalized and the GAC treatment trains are fully incorporated into

operations, PFAS levels are expected to reflect treated output rather than pre-upgrade conditions.

In response to a clarifying question, Mr. Mostoller confirmed that future reported PFAS values will represent performance with the upgraded systems online.

Discussion of Additional PFAS Upgrades

Mr. Mostoller reported that the South Acton treatment plant underwent a Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) inspection the previous Thursday. MassDEP staff reviewed sampling data, inspected the facility as constructed, observed alarm testing, and discussed operational procedures and system safeguards. He stated that no major concerns were identified and that the District anticipates receiving a conditional approval letter within approximately one week. Such approval would allow full operation of the facility while final documentation, including record drawings, O&M manuals, and administrative plan updates, is completed.

The Center Acton plant inspection was scheduled for later that week. Mr. Mostoller reported that the facility had recently undergone a successful “shakedown” run, including overnight unmanned operation, and that preliminary sampling results appeared favorable.

Mr. Mostoller also provided an update on the North Acton facility, which is currently offline or resting, due to low-level PFAS-6 detections in treated water. The District has requested a timeline from Veolia for the carbon media replacement process. Once the MassDEP inspection is completed in Center Acton, it is anticipated that well rehabilitation will begin in North Acton in March, followed by well rehabilitation at South Acton in April.

The discussion broadened to include operational impacts of the delayed PFAS project timeline. Mr. Mostoller noted that maintenance and flushing schedules have been affected due to focus on treatment plant construction. As a result, the District will implement a truncated flushing program and could enter the spring season with some form of water restriction in place. He also referenced ongoing drought conditions and noted that deep frost conditions have limited groundwater recharge, even with winter snowfall, potentially affecting seasonal recovery.

Bottled Water Rebate Update

Mr. Mostoller reviewed the draft notification letter included in the packet and explained that, with MassDEP approvals expected imminently for the South and Center Acton PFAS mitigation systems, the District should consider winding down the bottled water rebate program. The program, which provided \$15 per month per household, for qualifying

sensitive subgroup members, was implemented during periods of non-compliance as an interim alternate water supply.

The Board discussed timing considerations, including whether a delay in MassDEP approvals would require adjusting the program's conclusion. Mr. Mostoller expressed confidence that conditional approvals would likely be received in early March and stated that providing advance notice to participants was important.

Mr. Rosen motioned to discontinue the bottled water rebate program pending receipt of MassDEP approvals for the South Acton and Center Acton PFAS mitigation systems. Ms. Lin seconded, and it was unanimously approved via a roll call vote, Mr. Rosen, Ms. Lin, and Mr. Stuntz.

Review Draft Budget for FY'27 and proposed articles for 2026 Annual District Meeting Warrant

Mr. Mostoller reviewed the draft FY27 budget and proposed warrant articles. He explained that approximately \$1.3 million in surplus revenue (free cash) is proposed for capital projects and that the warrant includes creation of a PFAS stabilization fund and related appropriations for PFAS totaling \$630,000 across FY26 and FY27.

He detailed the delay in free cash certification, attributing it to late delivery of the District audit, reconciliation of prior borrowing and Clean Water Trust reimbursements, and coordination with consultants to ensure compliance with Department of Revenue requirements.

The Board discussed procedural options should free cash not be certified prior to the Annual District Meeting, including continuing the meeting within statutory limits or calling a special meeting once certification is received. The importance of publishing the warrant in a timely manner was emphasized.

Ms. Lin motioned to close the warrant for the 2026 Annual District Meeting as presented. Mr. Rosen seconded, and it was unanimously approved via a roll call vote, Mr. Rosen, Ms. Lin, and Mr. Stuntz.

Discussion of FY'27 Projected Debt Fee

Mr. Mostoller reviewed the projected FY27 debt fee and emphasized the importance of evaluating rate changes in actual dollar amounts rather than percentage increases. He explained that the fixed fee represents shared infrastructure costs incurred before any water is consumed and supports system reliability, public health protection, and fire suppression capacity.

He noted that while percentage increases may appear significant, the monthly impact between what the Board and Finance Committee are discussing equates to approximately \$4.60 for low users, \$2.65 for average users, and \$1.25 for high users. He expressed concern that water service is often undervalued relative to the essential services provided and this conversation is continuing to perpetuate that view.

Commissioners reflected that voters had previously approved PFAS and other capital investments with the understanding that related costs would eventually be reflected in the debt fee. Transparency is part of the argument for utilizing the debt fee. Mr. Petersen and Mr. Guthlein raised concerns regarding cost allocation, equity between fixed and variable components, and conservation incentives. The conversation acknowledged differing perspectives but remained focused on balancing infrastructure sustainability with ratepayer impacts.

Annual District Meeting Presentation

The Board and Finance Committee engaged in a detailed discussion regarding preparation for the upcoming Annual District Meeting presentation.

There was broad agreement that the startup of the PFAS treatment plants represents a major operational milestone for the District and should be prominently acknowledged at the outset of the presentation. Mr. Petersen and Mr. Rosen emphasized that the presentation should first highlight accomplishments made possible through prior voter-approved investments, particularly the completion of the PFAS treatment facilities and related supply improvements, before transitioning into discussion of new warrant articles and the proposed FY'27 budget. Members expressed that beginning with these achievements would provide important context for voters and underscore the progress made in strengthening the District's water system.

The group also discussed organizing the presentation around the themes of supply, distribution, and overall system improvements. It was suggested that the PFAS treatment plant upgrades, well rehabilitation efforts, and land acquisition initiatives be clearly framed as supply-side investments essential to long-term reliability and public health protection. In addition, members noted the importance of clearly communicating key budget drivers, including increases in healthcare and retirement costs, as well as the operational uncertainties associated with running the newly installed granular activated carbon (GAC) systems.

Finally, the role of the Finance Committee in giving the presentation and their recommendations on the warrant articles at the Annual District Meeting was reviewed. Mr. Stuntz felt that the Finance Committee chair should make the presentation. Mr. Mostoller

indicated that the Committee has deferred to John since the inception of a presentation. Mr. Guthlein indicated he would be travelling abroad on the night of Annual Meeting so cannot be the presenter. The discussion then addressed logistical considerations for the March 18 annual meeting relative to Mr. Guthlein being out of the country. Mr. Petersen and Mr. Guthlein will need a meeting to ensure that the presentation materials and article positions are fully aligned in advance of the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Discussion of 2/14/26 Acton Exchange Article

The Board discussed the February 14, 2026 Acton Exchange article concerning water rates and PFAS settlement funds.

Commissioners emphasized that two separate issues were being conflated in public discussion: rate structure considerations and allocation of PFAS settlement funds. The Board reiterated that it chose not to use PFAS settlement funds to reduce debt at this time due to ongoing uncertainty regarding long-term PFAS treatment costs, including unknown GAC replacement frequency and potential future regulatory changes at the state or federal level.

The Board discussed whether a formal written response was warranted. While concerns were expressed regarding framing and certain factual elements, the consensus was that no formal response would be issued at this time. Mr. Mostoller noted that Ms. Kastens had reached out with an offer to make factual corrections if needed, however, he did not take her up on this offer pending tonight's meeting.

Mr. Greg Jarboe thanked Mr. Mostoller for providing an expedited meeting transcript to assist with timely reporting.

Mr. Rosen moved to adjourn the Board of Water Commissioners meeting. Ms. Lin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Meeting Closed at 8:19 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting is March 9, 2026.