

Board of Water Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
Acton Water District
693 Massachusetts Avenue, Acton, MA
Monday, March 8, 2021

AGENDA

- A. Comments from Citizens
- B. Approve Minutes from Meeting of 2/22/2021
- C. Appoint One Commissioner to Approve Warrants While Conducting Meetings Virtually

D. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Review and Approve the Land Lease with EDF Renewable for the Ground-Mount Solar Array on District Property Off Lawsbrook Road
2. Update on Per- and Poly-Fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)
3. Update on the Central Acton Water Treatment Plant (CAWTP) Construction Project

E. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Review and Approve the Warrant for the 2021 Annual District Meeting
2. Discussion of Update to the Employee Policies & Procedures Manual

Executive Session: To consider the purchase, exchange, lease of real property as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the District.

Present at Tonight's Meeting:

Commissioners: Erika Amir-Lin (Chair), Stephen Stuntz, Barry Rosen
District Manager: Chris Allen
District Treasurer: Mary Jo Bates
District Counsel: Mary Bassett
Environmental Manager: Matthew Mostoller
Commissioners Secretary: Lynn Protasowicki
Finance Committee: Charles Bradley

Citizens:

Kim Kastens
Ron Parenti

Due to the Covid-19 stay-at-home order by Governor Charles Baker, the Board of Water Commissioners meeting was not held at the Acton Water District Office, instead the meeting was held via Zoom Webinar. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM on Monday, March 8, 2021 by Ms. Erika Amir-Lin.

A. Comments from Citizens

No comments tonight.

B. Approve Minutes from Meeting of 2/22/2021

Mr. Rosen moved to approve the minutes of February 22, 2021. Mr. Stuntz seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Mr. Stuntz, Mr. Rosen, and Ms. Amir-Lin.

C. Appoint One Commissioner to Approve Warrants While Conducting Meetings Virtually

Mr. Rosen moved to appoint Mr. Stuntz as the Commissioner to approve warrants while conducting meetings virtually until the next meeting. Ms. Amir-Lin seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Mr. Rosen, Mr. Stuntz, and Ms. Amir-Lin.

D. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Review and Approve the Land Lease with EDF Renewable for the Ground-Mount Solar Array on District Property off Lawsbrook Road.

Counselor Bassett stated that the latest draft was reviewed by EDF Renewables, the third-party developer. There were only two outstanding items in the draft which was adding the year 2021 and the property description which we will use the preliminary site plan for the time being. It will be replaced with the survey with meets and bounds which they will need for the Registry of Deeds anyway. We agreed to reinsert the final description once they have it.

The Registry of Deeds receives a copy of the Memorandum of the solar land lease, which is included with the main lease document, and also must be executed.

The Commissioners will meet at the District's main office on Wednesday, March 17th at 9:00 AM to sign the lease.

Ms. Amir-Lin moved to approve the final version of the land lease with EDF Renewable for the ground-mount solar array on District property off Lawsbrook Road. Mr. Stuntz seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Mr. Stuntz, Mr. Rosen, and Ms. Amir-Lin

2. Update on Per- and Poly-Fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS).

Mr. Allen stated that there is not much to report tonight. We are awaiting sample results on several samples, but they are yet to be received.

Mr. Rosen stated on January 19th the EPA discarded all the studies that were done on PFAS, stating that they were all done politically motivated, and they have a paper out asking for comments and how the new studies should be done. He will share the link so that all can read.

Mr. Mostoller mentioned that the February samples have not been returned to us by the lab. We began the March sampling today. Hope to complete the March sampling within the next two weeks. What should have been a 10 day turnaround time is now becoming a 25 day turnaround time. Ms. Amir-Lin mentioned that it appears to be an ongoing issue.

Ron Parenti asked Mr. Rosen, "was this all studies conducted by the EPA?" Barry stated that it was conducted on behalf of the EPA which is how he read it. Mr. Parenti said that there have been quite a number of studies done by various researchers and perhaps they are referring to specific studies funded by the EPA. He would like to see the reference he had. Mr. Rosen will share the link of where he read this information on the EPA site.

Mr. Parenti mentioned that he has read quite a number of papers on PFAS. In his reading, he thinks the DEP error in placing the requirement on such a low level is something that he does not see the justification for.

3. Update on the Central Acton Water Treatment Plant (CAWTP) Construction Project.

Mr. Mostoller provided the update stating that contractor making good progress at site; about 50% through project; doing interior work inside and site work to realign duct banks and site piping. Mr. Allen mentioned that the project is about three weeks ahead of schedule, and, at the current rate of construction, we expect to commission the plant in early September of 2021.

Mr. Mostoller mentioned that we began the first 10-day of pumping test at Well E and will go through St. Patrick's Day and wait until wells recover. Waterline was helpful in getting us setup with our temporary treatment system. They have been working with our well company and hydro geologist and our operators to pull that together. Follow us on Twitter to see photos and you can see them on the District website.

Mr. Mostoller stated that in the DEP approval letter if we want to operate them together we will need to do a combined test which is still under discussion or go with numerical modeling to permit that combined volume. As we generate data over the next couple weeks we can make that decision about the combine them.

E. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Review and Approve the Warrant for the 2021 Annual District Meeting.

Mr. Allen informed the Commissioners that, at their meeting earlier today, the Finance Committee recommended to approve the Warrant for the 2021 Annual District Meeting.

The Articles will be presented as follows:

Ms. Amir-Lin

Mr. Rosen

Mr. Stuntz

The Board went through each Article in the Warrant and Mr. Allen gave an explanation for each.

Ms. Bates informed the Commissioners that the free cash still has not be certified but we are expecting it to be at \$1,460,000 and after these appropriations the balance left would be \$639,000.

Mr. Rosen moved to approve the Warrant for the 2021 Annual Meeting and close it to any changes or additions. Mr. Stuntz seconded, and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Mr. Stuntz, Mr. Rosen, and Ms. Amir-Lin

2. Discussion of Update to the Employee Policies & Procedures Manual.

Mr. Rosen stated that this discussion came from an email that Mary Jo sent around to the Commissioners recently. In her email she mentioned that the employee manual and employee job descriptions had not been updated for many years. He thought it would be good for the Commissioners to discuss going through a major overhaul and working with a company who has experience in writing job descriptions and one that can revise and update our employee handbook. Ms. Bates mentioned to Mr. Rosen that the District has worked with consultants before and one of them that she works with does salary surveys and also has experience writing job descriptions and employee manual updating. She asked Human Resources Services Inc (HRS) to provide a proposal for the District which they have and should review tonight. Mr. Rosen stated that we should discuss allocating the funds to hire this consultant company and discuss what parts of their proposal we want to hire them for.

Mr. Rosen motioned to have the Commissioners allocate the money to hire HRS to review and update the employee manual and also review and amend the job descriptions and during that discussion would should discuss which of the three menu items we want to engage them for. Mr. Stuntz seconded the motion.

Mr. Stuntz stated that lets discuss the employee manual and do that within the contexts of where the District will be in 5 years. Last time the manual was revised we had no treatment plants in town. Maybe have the consultant do a survey of job titles and look at other Water Districts.

Mr. Amir-Lin stated that there is value in understanding how other Districts describe what their staff do.

Mr. Stuntz mentioned that we should ask for a consulting arrangement where they could give us this information before we start the things they have proposed.

Ms. Bates outlined the breakdown of the fees for service:

- \$6K for update to the employee manual
- \$6k for updating the job descriptions
- \$2k on training on the updated employee manual

Mr. Rosen stated that the first order of business is:

- Get a current job description
- Should job description “A” look like this or is it typical that other Districts add this (meaning a particular phrase) to job description “A”.
- I am sure they will interview all employees plus Matt and Chris to ask them what they see happening 5 years down the road.
- Look at other Districts to see what they include in their job descriptions.
- We should invite HRS to our next meeting

Ms. Amir-Lin would like to get references provided before she attends our next meeting.

Two Action Items for Ms. Bates to talk to HRS include:

1. Ask for other Water District specific references
2. Invite HRS to our next meeting on March 29th.

Kim Kastens stated that in all her many interactions with the Acton Water District every single person has been of high character and honorable. If the manual is decades old then it is not updated with respect to discrimination, sexual harassment and other modern ideas. She just wants to make sure that the manual includes this information. Ms. Amir-Lin stated that the expectations would be that the updated manual will include all employment law as it is today. Mr. Rosen stated that in the proposal it does outline all those specifics.

Mr. Rosen moved to table the motion until the March 29th meeting. Mr. Stuntz seconded the motion, and was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Mr. Stuntz, Mr. Rosen, Ms. Amir-Lin

Ms. Amir-Lin motioned to adjourn the open meeting at 8:20 PM. Mr. Rosen seconded the motion. Ms. Amir-Lin moved to go into Executive Session at 8:20 PM to discuss the purchase, exchange, lease of real property as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the District. The motion was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Mr. Stuntz, Mr. Rosen, Ms. Amir-Lin