

Board of Water Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes  
Acton Water District  
693 Massachusetts Avenue, Acton, MA  
Monday, April 12, 2021

**AGENDA**

- **Swearing in of newly elected officials – District Moderator and Commissioner**
- **Annual appointments by District Clerk**
- **Discussion of the role of the Chair of the Board of Commissioners**
- **Board realignment**

A. Comments from Citizens

B. Approve minutes from meeting of 3/29

C. Appoint one Commissioner to approve warrants while conducting meetings virtually

D. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Update on Per- and Poly-Fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)
2. Update on pump test for potential Bedrock source
3. Update on Central Acton Water Treatment Plant (CAWTP) Construction Project
4. Update on Proposed Solar Array at 16 Knox Trail

E. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Current State Drought Status Update and 2021 Outdoor Water Use Program Rollout

**Present at Tonight's Meeting:**

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

District Clerk: William Stanford

District Manager: Chris Allen

District Treasurer: Mary Jo Bates

District Counsel: Mary Bassett

Environmental Manager: Matthew Mostoller

Commissioners Secretary: Lynn Protasowicki

Finance Committee Representative: William Guthlein

District Auditor: Maureen Mara

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, April 12, 2021 by Ms. Erika Amir-Lin.

## **Swearing in of Newly Elected Officials – District Moderator and Commissioner**

William Stanford, District Clerk swore in:

- Bill Mullin, newly elected District Moderator
- Erika Amir-Lin, Re-elected Commissioner

## **Annual Appointments by District Clerk**

Ms. Amir-Lin motioned to swear in the following appointees by William Stanford, District Clerk.

- Assistant District Treasurer: Chris Allen
- District Treasurer: Mary Jo Bates
- District Counsel: Mary Bassett
- Commissioners Secretary: Lynn Protasowicki
- District Auditor: Maureen Mara

Mr. Rosen seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Mr. Stuntz, Mr. Rosen, Ms. Amir-Lin.

## **Discussion of the Role of the Chair of the Board of Commissioners**

Mr. Stuntz requested to add this discussion of the role of the Chair of the Board of Commissioners because as the Board becomes more involved with the Acton Selectboard's meetings and our role as Commissioners seem to be changing and becoming different from what it has been over the years. There is no place that a Commissioner can speak without the perception that the Commissioner is speaking on behalf of the Water District. We need to be very careful about how we present ourselves. We need to say when we are speaking on behalf of ourselves (citizen) or on behalf of the Water District. The more opportunity we are to be on Zoom and TV the more there is opportunity to be misquoted and misspoken. It will be very hard to keep our own opinions separate versus what the District is doing.

Ms. Amir-Lin agrees with Mr. Stuntz. She stated it's always appropriate to bring something to the whole Board regarding a topic that might be discussed at a Acton Selectmen's meeting so let's talk about it at a Board meeting prior to see if it's appropriate for us to speak on behalf of Board or as a citizen.

Mr. Rosen stated that he usually does present himself as a Water Commissioner and as liaison of the District and typically does that at the start of the Acton Selectmen's meetings.

## **Board Realignment**

Mr. Stuntz motioned to appoint Mr. Rosen as Board Chair for the coming year. Ms. Amir-Lin seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Mr. Stuntz, Ms. Amir-Lin, Mr. Rosen

## **A. Comments from Citizens**

No comments this evening.

## **B. Approve Minutes from Meeting of 3/29**

Mr. Stuntz motioned to approve the minutes of March 29, 2021. Ms. Amir-Lin seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Mr. Stuntz, Ms. Amir-Lin, and Mr. Rosen.

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

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

## **D. OLD BUSINESS:**

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

Mr. Mostoller provided an update on PFAS. At the last Board meeting we discussed a concern about one of our data points coming back as non-detect. We went through a process with the lab and they identified that they mislabeled the bottle, so they analyzed our field blank which is distilled water which resulted in our non-detect. That sample is being tossed out. And the second sample will also need to get tossed out. We are moving forward from there. That was the 0 and the 16.8. Believes that DEP will toss them out.

Now that we are moving into April, we are coming into the compliance period. Our compliance will be based on the quarterly average from each facility. In the case of 1<sup>st</sup> quarter for 2021, it appears that we will exceed the MCL in NAWTP at 21 parts per trillion (ppt). We are just above the limit. He did push back on MassDEP because he does not think they are putting us in the compliance period correctly based on the troubles we have with samples in the 2020 year. We are still having discussions on the validity of the previous calendar year's samples. MassDEP will have to give clarity on all the usability of all the data that we generated.

We did turn on Conant 1 well and waiting sampling from that well. And we will begin April sampling tomorrow.

If we violate the MCL at NAWTP, MassDEP will get back to us. If they do reach out, we will be required to put out the public notice. They will be expecting more concrete response on how we will move forward and how to make provisions for people in the sensitive subgroups.

Ms. Amir-Lin: Any revisions to the public notice form? Mr. Mostoller stated that there are and unfortunately there are a couple iterations by the state. It has been updated and some of the things that are problematic continue to be in the public notice, but they have clarified some areas.

Ron Parenti: with regard to the public notice, he had a question from an old friend whose son lives in Wayland who just got a notice and their son and young children are concerned. Wayland is slightly over the limit. The school system has shut down the water fountains and are handing out water bottles to students. He thinks that there is something very wrong in the way it being presented to the public. There is no way to convey to people that the level of risk is miniscule from going just slightly below the MCL to above. Not sure how that gets corrected. When people ask him, he says "don't worry". The wording of the notice is dictated by the state but does not convey properly the level of risk.

He noted a Consumer Reports article that just came out about PFAS. Their experts are saying the levels should be set at 5 ppt. He thinks that the MA levels should be changed and wonders if MassDEP is setting these numbers appropriately.

Mr. Mostoller stated that he is aware of the situation in Wayland and agrees that their response is not commensurate with what is required with the regulation or by the levels that they are seeing. Most important are the conversations that Commissioners and the District are having with people.

Mr. Rosen asked Matt if we have NAWTP back online and putting water back into the system. Matt stated that is correct. It's been pumping for a month and half now. Mr. Rosen: Are all the wells contributing? Mr. Mostoller: Kennedy 2 well is acting as a capture well; with April sampling we plan to do the individual sources again and reconfigure how we are operating those wells.

Mr. Mostoller mentioned that the EPA recently updated its risk characterization of 1 compound PFBS which is not currently regulated in MA. There is a lot of conversation about whether or not MassDEP is going to take this data into consideration and either add it as a 7<sup>th</sup> compound or regulate it as another matter. And there was a study that came out that rainwater is a contributor of PFAS. There is a second study that was released that identified even higher concentrations of PFAS compounds in it. PFAS may come to a community without a point source contributor and may come from more natural process.

Bill Mullin: the period up until March 31<sup>st</sup> was a specific well by well testing and going forward it's the average? With NAWTP at 21 ppt, what would the average have been at the first quarter? Mr. Mostoller: just to clarify we are going to continue to do a well by well monthly and take the average at the end of each quarter. This is the first time we are calculating the average so what we did at the end of March will happen at the end of each quarter going forward. If we looked at the 2021 Q1 we had two samples for NAWPT (Feb and Mar) that were 22.8 and 19.9 ppt if we had been operating the plant earlier we had two samples that could have lowered our average but because we didn't have producing water to our customers the state is not going to allow us to use those samples in our compliance calculation.

Kim Kastens: I know we don't have enough data to know but have other studies in MA showed a strong seasonality in PFAS levels. Is this a problem we should expect in the summer? Mr. Mostoller mentioned that there are no studies that he is aware of. Last summer when we moved from spring into summer, we saw concentrations go up but not sure if this is related to seasonality.

## 2. Update on Pump Test for Potential Bedrock Source

Mr. Mostoller provided an update on the pump test for the potential Central Acton bedrock source. He stated that the pumping test we are currently running both wells (D and E). MassDEP put into approval letter was that if we ask that we run in combination that we run a 10-day tests. We began on April 5<sup>th</sup> and slated to end April 14<sup>th</sup>. We are running Well D at 150 gpm and Well E at 75 gpm. It's not meant to increase the volume of water that we can potentially get permitted but to allow us more variation on how we operate the wells. For water quality purposes there

could be some compounds that we could blend to manage their concentrations. This would enable us to do that. It does look like these will be viable wells. We will probably be permitted at 190 gpm. All in all, the test is going well. Our consultant has been begun to tabulate our water quality data and our trending data and we've asked them to speed through compiling that information so that we can make some decisions here within the month.

Mr. Rosen: Is the TCE continuing to go down? Matt: through the second pump test we did see the TCE go down. Unfortunately, we have not seen the combined TCE data that would have been collected a week ago.

Ms. Amir-Lin: sampling at shut down? Mr. Mostoller: we are doing the full water quality analysis minus the micro particulate analysis so we will have all data points.

Kim Kastens: so, you've asked the new bedrock wells to be permitted at 190 gpm, are you planning to ask that increment of a larger amount in the water management act permitting process? Mr. Mostoller: when we submit our pumping test report to the state there will also be a permit request that will ask for a new water management act permit which would be looking for the additional gallons per minute on top of our current gallons per minute for a new water management permit looking for additional gpm on top of our current gpm. Currently we have a renewal application pending with DEP that we would walk away from the renewal application and submit a new permit application asking for the increased withdrawal and with the new withdrawal points.

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

Mr. Allen provided an update on the Central Acton Water Treatment Plant (CAWTP) construction project. He stated that the construction is going very well. At the last progress meeting with the general contractor, Waterline, believes that they will have the plant ready to filter water by July. There is one piece of equipment is lagging delivery and they are trying to push that manufacturer to get that on site so that they can meet that July startup. He visited the site on Friday and it's a complete building, fully enclosed, interior painting is far along, and the metal roof is going on. The masonry contractor is substantially complete with their aspect of the project

Contract 2: the contractor, Five Oaks Construction, was working this past weekend to make connections at Post Office Square. They completed Jasmin Circle, KinderCare, and the main Post Office. The plan was to connect the relined main on Main St to existing main on PO Square for raw water transmission. Plan to do that at the end of the week. No impact on anyone's service. Later on, when needed, the Conant I well will have to be connected to that transmission line to pump water to the treatment plant. That would happen in June or July.

Ms. Amir-Lin: will PO Square have to be repaved? Mr. Allen: it will be temporarily paved, and, after a waiting period, permanently resurfaced.

### 4. Update on Proposed Solar Array at 16 Knox Trail

Mr. Allen provided an update on the proposed solar array at 16 Knox Trail. Included in the Commissioners packets and email from Peter Bay of EDF Renewables. The solar array did make

it out of the interconnection study at Eversource and was declared feasible. The developer will start their site work permitting through local and state agencies, and hope that construction will run consecutive to the Lawsbrook project. They are expecting to commission the Lawsbrook array by the end of the year and sometime next year the Knox Trail array should be commissioned.

Mr. Rosen: can we suggest to EDF since we have to be PFAS free for our fire suppression system can we get any say in suggesting to them one or two safe alternatives (i.e. Novec 1230 it's a 3M product – tested and developed so there is no ozone depletion, harmless to humans, doesn't require protected clothing, been tested in computer rooms and other places; and been used for electronic applications such as battery storage arrays). Maybe we can suggest that they use this. He also wanted to note that we or EDF will have to go through another iteration of a PILOT with the Town. He noticed that they are selling most of their power to the town of Plymouth. Syncarpha (who will be the plant operator at 50 Independence Road) approached Acton and are asking if Acton would they like the power. You sell us the power and we can negotiate the whole package. Would a similar arrangement be helpful to us? Perhaps EDF already sold their power. Syncarpha suggested the power be sold to lower income Acton families which makes it good for town of Acton and gives Syncarpha a tax advantage as the operator of the plant A power arrangement like that could give the Town "brownie point" with the state. Syncarpha is negotiating with the town now. Can we suggest that to our vendor that they consider a similar arrangement? Maybe it would shorten or streamline this PILOT thing. It will be viewed as we are doing something for Acton.

Mr. Allen stated that we are currently working on an Alternative On Bill Credit Agreement (AOBCA) with EDF to purchase the additional power from the Lawsbrook array. The Knox Trail array will be behind the meter power supply to the South Acton Water Treatment Plant. After commission of both arrays, our power needs will be supplied by renewable energy He did speak with Syncarpha. They approached us to take power from Grace array. They went away with the understanding that we will get power from the arrays we are building.

Ms. Amir-Lin: Is there an update on construction start for Lawsbrook? Chris: he touched base with Building Commissioner last week and we don't see any impediments at the local level. The contractor is planning to mobilize out there in April.

#### Other Old Business:

Mr. Stuntz: Town of Concord started construction on Nagog Pond by putting 10" main, platforms? What is happening with that? Mr. Mostoller: they put a temporary barge; they'll be fusing together a new in-take line; and doing a portion of their intake line and will ferry back and forth to center of Pond.

### **E. NEW BUSINESS:**

#### 1. Current State Drought Status Update and 2021 Outdoor Water Use Program Rollout

Mr. Allen stated that the Massachusetts Drought Task Force met, and the entire state of MA is in some form of a drought. Our current outdoor water management program for immediate season does give a significant reduction in lawn irrigation down to one day a week depending upon where you live in Town. We will continue to monitor these conditions, and it's all subject to change as conditions persist. The web page is pretty interactive. Add your address and it will let you know when you can water your grass.

Currently we are allowing other watering and comply with our normal calendar triggered program (odd/even).

*Ms. Amir-Lin motioned to adjourn the open meeting at 8:20 PM. Mr. Rosen seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Mr. Stuntz, Ms. Amir-Lin, Mr. Rosen*