

Joint Meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners and Finance Committee

Meeting Agenda

Monday, April 13, 2026 @ 7:00 PM

- Comments from the public
- Appoint one Commissioner to sign warrants while conducting meetings virtually
- Approve Minutes from 3/9, 3/23, and 4/3 meetings

OLD BUSINESS:

- Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)
 - Current sample data, if available
 - Discussion of Additional PFAS Upgrades
- Discuss Special District Meeting
- Review Draft Budget for FY'27
- Discuss Rates and Fees

NEW BUSINESS:

- Drought Status and Water Use Restrictions

EXECUTIVE SESSION: To conduct strategy sessions for contract negotiations with nonunion personnel.

Present at Tonight's Meeting:

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

Finance Committee: Bill Guthlein (Chair), John Petersen

District Manager: Matt Mostoller

Deputy District Manager: Corey Godfrey

Treasurer/Collector: Ashley Pinard

District Counsel: Spencer Holland

District Clerk: Joe Robb

Members of the Public: Kim Kastens, Alissa Nicol, Brewster Conant Jr., Ron Parenti, Ann Chang

START OF MINUTES

Mr. Stuntz opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and ensured that everyone could hear and be heard. Mr. Guthlein opened the Finance Committee meeting at 7:01 p.m. under the same conditions as the Board meeting.

Comments from the public

There were no public comments at the outset of the meeting.

Appoint one Commissioner to sign warrants while conducting meetings virtually

Mr. Rosen motioned to authorize Commissioner Stuntz 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.

Approve Minutes from 3/9, 3/23, and 4/3 meetings

Mr. Rosen motioned to approve the minutes of 3/9/2026. Ms. Lin seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved via a roll call vote, Mr. Rosen, Ms. Lin, and Mr. Stuntz.

Ms. Lin motioned to approve the minutes of 3/23/2026. Mr. Rosen seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved via a roll call vote, Mr. Rosen, Ms. Lin, and Mr. Stuntz.

Mr. Rosen motioned to approve the minutes of 4/3/2026 as amended to correct the misspelling of Ron Parenti's name. Ms. Lin seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved via a roll call vote, Mr. Rosen, Ms. Lin, and Mr. Stuntz.

Mr. Petersen moved to approve the joint meeting minutes of 3/9/2026 and 4/3/2026. Mr. Guthlein seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved via roll call vote.

OLD BUSINESS:

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

Current sample data, if available

Mr. Mostoller reported that PFAS sampling was conducted on March 18, 2026. He stated that North Acton was offline and therefore no sample was collected. Center Acton measured 13.8 parts per trillion, reflecting that the PFAS treatment system is not yet operational. South Acton results were below detection limits. No questions were raised by the Board.

Discussion of Additional PFAS Upgrades

Mr. Mostoller provided an update on PFAS treatment system operations across the district. He stated that Center Acton remains offline due to ongoing chemical system upgrades, generator load testing issues, and a strategic decision to maintain at least one stable facility while other plants are experiencing operational challenges. He indicated that the District is working toward bringing Center Acton online by the end of the month.

Mr. Mostoller reported that North Acton remains offline for maintenance. He explained that media replacement is complete, though the District received slightly less granular activated carbon than required necessitating a top off delivery. Conditioning of the media is nearly complete, and the facility is expected to return to service in the near term.

Mr. Mostoller further reported that South Acton continues to experience operational issues, particularly with the equalization basin, resulting in intermittent disruptions. He stated that staff are working with engineers, contractors, and controls specialists to resolve these issues.

Discuss Special District Meeting

Mr. Stuntz opened discussion regarding preparation for the Special District Meeting scheduled for April 22, 2026. Mr. Mostoller reviewed logistical planning, including anticipated attendance and presentation setup.

Mr. Mostoller raised the option of submitting a letter to the Acton Exchange to notify the public. Mr. Petersen and Ms. Lin discussed the limitations of the letter format and emphasized the importance of directing residents to more detailed information on the District website. The Board agreed that a letter would serve as a general notice and invitation, supplemented by more detailed materials.

Kim Kastens (Acton Exchange) clarified submission deadlines and confirmed that hyperlinks and one image are permitted in submitted letters.

Ms. Kastens (speaking as a member of the public) also noted that the meeting falls on Earth Day and suggested incorporating acknowledgment of environmental stewardship. The Board expressed support for recognizing this connection.

Mr. Mostoller outlined a proposed presentation structure for the meeting, with staff presenting the detailed budget and Commissioners and Finance Committee members providing any context they feel is appropriate and responding to questions.

Review Draft Budget for FY'27

Mr. Mostoller presented the revised FY2027 expense budget of approximately \$9.5 million. He explained that the increase from the previously proposed \$8.5 million budget is primarily driven by the need to repair or replace, or a combination thereof, the North Acton wells, along with adjustments to meter replacement funding, salary allocations, and maintenance spending.

Mr. Mostoller noted the challenging optics of returning with a higher proposed budget but emphasized that delaying or not undertaking this work could result in the loss of the North Acton facility and increased operational risk.

Mr. Guthlein and Mr. Petersen, on behalf of the Finance Committee, expressed support for the expense budget but discussed options to reduce the immediate impact on ratepayers, including lowering the revenue target and utilizing available funds.

Commissioners expressed concern about reducing revenue projections given uncertainty in future expenses, including energy, materials, and operational costs. Mr. Stuntz and Mr. Rosen noted that projected surplus revenue is relatively small and may not materialize under current conditions. Commissioners also discussed the importance of maintaining free cash to avoid borrowing and to help preserve financial flexibility.

Mr. Stuntz moved to present the budget the staff has brought forth at approximately \$9.5 million and accept it. Ms. Lin seconded, and the motion passed unanimously via roll call vote.

Discuss Rates and Fees

Mr. Mostoller presented proposed changes to rates and fees, including adjustments to debt fees, variable water rates, sprinkler fees, demand charges, and miscellaneous service charges. He explained that these changes are intended to better align revenues with system costs and recent capital investments.

Ms. Lin asked for clarification regarding the fire sprinkler fee structure. Mr. Mostoller explained that the fee reflects system readiness and infrastructure capacity rather than actual water usage by fire sprinkler systems.

Members of the public raised questions regarding the magnitude and uniformity of the sprinkler fee increase. Mr. Mostoller confirmed that the proposed change would apply uniformly and is intended to reflect system readiness costs.

Mr. Petersen and Mr. Guthlein reiterated the Finance Committee's interest in moderating the overall rate increase, including a proposal to reduce projected surplus revenue.

Commissioners discussed this proposal and noted that the impact to individual ratepayers would be relatively small, estimated at less than \$50 per year.

Commissioners also discussed and declined the use of the WR Grace Fund and PFAS-related funds for rate stabilization, noting that these funds are designated for specific long-term purposes and ongoing uncertainties.

Mr. Stuntz moved to support the rates and fees as shown in Appendix A1. Ms. Lin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously via roll call vote.

NEW BUSINESS:

Drought Status and Water Use Restrictions

Mr. Mostoller reported that drought conditions have improved from significant to mild; however, the District remains under Level 4 water use restrictions due to limited production capacity and ongoing operational constraints.

He stated that while surface water conditions have improved, groundwater conditions remain constrained, and system capacity is currently reduced due to ongoing maintenance and PFAS-related work.

Ms. Nicol asked whether the District is currently receiving water from neighboring communities. Mr. Mostoller responded that the District does not currently have the ability to utilize our interconnections quickly. Ms. Nicol also noted that outdoor water use has been observed despite restrictions and has communicated reminders to the public.

Ms. Lin shared information from a recent professional session indicating that New England continues to experience a multi-year groundwater deficit despite improved rainfall, reinforcing the need to maintain restrictions.

Mr. Mostoller added that high fire risk conditions remain a concern and could further strain system capacity.

Adjournment

Mr. Petersen moved to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting, seconded by Mr. Guthlein, which passed unanimously via roll call vote.

Mr. Rosen moved to adjourn the open session of the Board of Commissioners and move into executive session, to conduct strategy sessions for contract negotiations with nonunion personnel and not to reconvene in open session. Seconded by Mr. Stuntz. Which passed unanimously via roll call vote.

The meeting closed at 9:11 p.m.

The next Board of Water Commissioners meeting is scheduled for April 27, 2026.