

Board of Water Commissioners

Meeting Agenda

Monday, May 13, 2024 @ 7:00 PM

AGENDA

- Swearing in of newly elected officials—Commissioner and Moderator
- Annual appointments by Board of Water Commissioners
- Annual appointment by District Moderator
- Swearing in of newly appointed officials
- Board realignment
- Comments from the public
- Approve minutes from the meeting of 4/29/24
- Appoint one Commissioner to sign warrants while conducting meetings virtually

OLD BUSINESS:

- Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)
- Current sample data, if available
- Discussion of PFAS Upgrades

NEW BUSINESS:

- Approve rebate program for Flume water monitoring devices in support of Water Research Foundation (WRF) Residential End Uses of Water, Version 3: A Single-Family and Multi-Family Study

Present at Tonight's Meeting:

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

Members of the Finance Committee: John Petersen, Bill Guthlein

District Manager: Matt Mostoller

District Treasurer: Christine McCarthy

District Counsel: Mary Bassett, Spencer Holland

District Clerk: William Stanford

Assistant District Clerk: Helen Argento

District Moderator: William Mullin

Environmental Manager: Alexandra Wahlstrom

Members of the Public: Kim Kastens, Ron Parenti, Alisa Nicol, Diane Baum

START OF MINUTES

Ms. Amir Lin opened meeting at 7:08

Swearing in of newly elected officials—Commissioner and Moderator

William Stanford, District Clerk, swore in elected official Erika Amir Lin as Commissioner.

William Stanford, District Clerk, swore in elected official William Mullin as Moderator.

Annual appointments by Board of Water Commissioners

Mr. Rosen motioned for the Board of Commissioners to make the following appointments,

- Christine McCarthy as Treasurer/Collector
- Matthew Mostoller as Assistant Treasurer
- Spencer Holland as District Counsel
- Meredith Roberts as Secretary
- Helen Argento as Assistant District Clerk

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

Annual appointment by District Moderator

William Mullin, District Moderator, appointed William Guthlein to the Finance Committee.

Swearing in of newly appointed officials

William Stanford, District Clerk swore in the following appointed officials:

- Christine McCarthy as Treasurer Collector
- Matthew Mostoller as Assistant Treasurer
- Spencer Holland as District Counsel
- Meredith Robers as Secretary
- Helen Argento as Assistant District Clerk
- William Guthlein as Finance Committee Member

Of the Annual Appointments, Mr. Mostoller noted that there is no appointment to the Water Land Management Advisory Committee (WLMAC). The Committee is now at two members after the recent passing of Charles Olmstead in March. The Board will discuss the future of WLMAC at a later date. The Board of Commissioners expressed their condolences for Mr. Olmstead's passing.

Board realignment

Mr. Stuntz motioned to elect Barry Rosen as the Chair of the Board of Commissioners. Ms. Amir Lin seconded, and it was unanimously approved via a roll call vote, Mr. Stunts, Mr. Rosen, Ms. Amir Lin.

Mr. Mostoller and the Board thanked Mary Bassett for her many years of service to the Acton Water District as District Counsel.

Comments from the public

None at this time,

Approve minutes from the meeting of 4/29/24

Ms. Amir Lin motioned to approve the minutes of April 29, 2024. Mr. Stuntz seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved via a roll call vote, Ms. Amir Lin, Mr. Stuntz, Mr. Rosen.

Appoint one Commissioner to sign warrants while conducting meetings virtually

Mr. Rosen motioned to appoint Mr. Stuntz to sign warrants until the next regularly scheduled meeting. Ms. Amir Lin seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved via a roll call vote, Ms. Amir Lin, Mr. Stuntz, Mr. Rosen.

OLD BUSINESS:

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

Current sample data, if available

Mr. Mostoller updated the board on PFAS sample data. The April results from Center Acton taken April 24th came back at 5 ppt. Mr. Mostoller also noted that this sampling data is for the Mass DEP regulated compounds. Mr. Mostoller noted that though these sample results are very good, sample results may climb in the fall.

Currently, both Center and South Acton are contributing to the water system. Ms. Wahlstrom will conduct May sampling this week.

Mr. Rosen asked if the frequent rains diluted the PFAS, to which Mr. Mostoller affirmed that they do think the favorable precipitation is diluting the sample.

Discussion of PFAS Upgrades

Mr. Mostoller reviewed the positive updates from the PFAS upgrade projects. Center Acton Treatment Plant had its kickoff meeting for the Variable Frequency Drive Manufacturer who was confident they could deliver all four on time. MassDEP approved the construction of the PFAS Treatment Plant, and the District received their Water Management Act Permit,

amended to include the additional withdrawal from the Bedrock Well. They are still awaiting the new source approval and approval to construct the Bedrock Wells, which has been delayed due to personnel changes at DEP and the hand off of this paperwork. The bids on the Center Acton project will be opening this week.

For South Acton, bids were opened last week, and they only had 2 bidders. Both came in above what the engineer estimated but the approval for the project was for a higher amount. During the design phase, changes to the building type and treatment technology were made, helping decrease the overall cost. They are awaiting word from the engineer on their official recommendation to award.

A meeting with the building structure supplier last week also went well. That vendor is eager to begin work and assured Mr. Mostoller that they believe they can deliver supplies by December of this year.

Ms. Amir Lin asked what areas of the project contributed to the increased cost of the two bids that came in. Mr. Mostoller said they are waiting for the more specific bid info from the engineer to see where those increases came from.

Mr. John Petersen asked what the appropriated amount was. Mr. Mostoller estimated it was around \$8.7 million. (After the meeting, it was noted that the actual amount for this project was \$7.82 million, the South Acton project was the \$8.7 million appropriation). Mr. Mostoller added that he does not believe this increased cost will be a major issue, but they are still awaiting more specific details to understand the situation.

Mr. Mostoller moved on to update the board on project issues with North Acton. The project was moving rapidly towards MassDEP approval and sampling was conducted. When that data came back it suggested no removal of PFAS from the water. This was determined to be because of a flaw in the flow configuration, not a design flaw or issue with the media. The configuration as it was set up had multiple bypasses open. They have been working on this with the filter provider, Veolia, since last week. Mr. Mostoller then thanked the District's staff, including Ms. Wahlstrom, Mr. Andrew Peterson, and Mr. Jamie Trippier for their hard work to resolve this issue over the past few days. Mr. Mostoller estimated that they lost 2-3 weeks on the project's start up schedule. In working with Veolia to resolve the issues, they are asking them to provide visual cues to prevent the bypass configuration from happening again. Mr. Mostoller expressed his frustrations with this issue and the subsequent delay.

Mr. Rosen asked if the GAC vessels are still good to use. Mr. Mostoller replied he believes they are.

Mr. Petersen asked if the system is automatic or manual, if this was a failure of software or a mechanical failure. Mr. Mostoller responded that the system uses both manual and automated systems, and the issue lies with both. Mr. Mostoller noted that this is not a failure of the treatment process, or with the sampling, this was an equipment failure.

NEW BUSINESS:

Approve rebate program for Flume water monitoring devices in support of Water Research Foundation (WRF) Residential End Uses of Water, Version 3: A Single-Family and Multi-Family Study

Mr. Mostoller, assisted by Ms. Wahlstrom gave a presentation on the Flume Water monitoring device, and the Water Research Foundation Residential End Use study.

In the presentation, Mr. Mostoller highlighted the following pieces of information. Flume is a water monitoring device that can interpret water use on an hourly basis. The device uses an algorithm to interpret water flows and connect them with in-home water uses like showering, sink use, toilet flushes, etc., which is a level of specificity that current water meters cannot do, unless there is a technician in the field actively monitoring water flow patterns onsite. Mr. Mostoller explained the purpose of the device is to collect data to inform user habits to promote water conservation and efficiency. The Water Research Institute is a non-profit organizing the study of residential end water use. They've conducted this study twice before, most recently in 2016. Flume was selected as the partner company of the study.

The District agreed to participate in the study, which would entail 100 Flume devices being used in Acton. 11 are currently in use. Flume has offered to provide 10 devices free for multi-unit housing and would subsidize 80 additional devices. What the proposed motion of this item would do is provide a rebate, similar to the District's existing toilet or washing machine rebates. Mr. Mostoller also noted that there would be a fee of about \$1,100 for staff to use the utility portal.

The item opened for discussion, Ms. Amir Lin, expressed support for the study to get useful data on end use. She asked what the direct cost to the participating customer is. Mr. Mostoller responded that it's about \$249 to purchase normally, but with Flume's offer it would be about \$75 plus shipping and tax.

Ms. Amir Lin asked if there is a monthly fee to use Flume. Mr. Rosen, who is familiar with the program responded that there is not a monthly fee, but the customer does have to consent to Flume collecting and using their data.

Ms. Amir Lin asked how complex the installation is. Mr. Mostoller responded it is simple, and Flume has multiple information guides to inform installation.

Ms. Amir Lin asked if the customer gets to keep the device after the study, Mr. Mostoller responded that the customer does retain ownership of the device.

The board continued to discuss this item, covering conservation and efficiency goals, the necessity of internet connection for the Flume device to send data, and the timeline of the study. Mr. Rosen asked about the other company involved in the study. Mr. Mostoller explained they are providing analysis services for the study.

Ms. Kim Kastens asked if Mr. Mostoller can explain how the device works and how it can tell the difference between uses. Mr. Mostoller explained that there is a magnet in the water meter, the Flume picks up the signal from the magnet and measures the intervals of the flow rate. From that data the algorithm then interprets the flow rate patterns and associates it with in-home uses.

Mr. Petersen asked how customers can sign up. Mr. Mostoller said they will contact customers via email to advertise the program. Mr. Rosen asked about meter compatibility, Mr. Mostoller said that very few meters in the District are incompatible with Flume.

Mr. Ron Parenti asked about the primary purpose of the study. Mr. Mostoller and the board continued to discuss the purpose of the study, its data goals, and the role of the algorithm in the interpretation of data.

Turning back to the proposed motion for this item, Mr. Rosen asked if the rebates should have a ceiling. Mr. Mostoller suggested that 80 rebates of \$100 would be a good starting point that can be adjusted if necessary.

Mr. Rosen motioned for the Board of Commissioners to allocate up to \$8,000 for the Residential End Uses Water Study as funded by the Water Research Foundation for the. Mr. Stuntz seconded the motion.

After brief discussion, Mr. Stuntz amended the motion to allocate up to \$8,000 in rebates. Ms. Amir Lin seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved via a roll call vote, Mr. Stuntz, Ms. Amir Lin, Mr. Rosen.

Ms. Kim Kastens commented that because the algorithm of the Flume is new technology it might be good to find participants who are passionate about water use to manually log their water use to see if it matches the flume results. The Board discussed this idea briefly.

Mr. Stuntz motioned to adjourn until the next regularly scheduled meeting. Ms. Amir Lin seconded, and it was unanimously approved via a roll call vote, Mr. Stuntz, Ms. Amir Lin, Mr. Rosen.

Meeting Closed at 8:07 pm.