

Board of Water Commissioners Meeting Minutes
Acton Water District
693 Massachusetts Avenue, Acton MA
Monday, May 18, 2020

AGENDA

A. Comments from Citizens

B. Approve Minutes of April 27th and May 1st

C. OLD BUSINESS:

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

2. Discussion off the Upcoming Special District Meeting

- Scheduled for Wednesday, May 20, 2020 @6:30 PM at the District's Main Office

3. Update on Proposed Solar Energy Projects

4. District Manager's Contract

- Current contract expires on June 30, 2020

D. 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 Today's Meeting:

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

District Manager: Chris Allen

District Treasurer: Mary Jo Bates

District Counsel: Mary Bassett

Environmental Manager: Matthew Mostoller

Finance Committee: Dave Butler

Commissioners Secretary: Lynn Protasowicki

District Moderator: Dick O'Brien

IT Manager: Bob Murch

Citizen: Lucy Kirshner (representing Green Acton)

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 a video conference using Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM on Monday, May 18, 2020 by Mr. Stephen Stuntz.

A. Comments from Citizens:

Lucy Kirshner – mentioned that Green Acton held a Zoom meeting yesterday and the committee was wondering why the bids for the Central Acton Water Treatment Facility were so high. They asked Ms. Kirshner to inquire so she asked the District the following questions: why were the bids high?; were they made before the pandemic?; would there be a major change in the charge?; is it worth getting a different bid?; and are there new infrastructure loans available that could take cost away? Mr. Allen stated that bids were opened on March 5th (Pre-pandemic). He recently spoke with Waterline Industries, who is the apparent low bidder for Contract #1, building the new water treatment facility, and Ralph Dumke, the President, stated that prices for new construction are going up, not down. Mr. Allen stated that with our funding through MA State Revolving Fund (SRF), if we cancelled the current bid, we would lose the funding. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, SRF did extend the timeline to sign contracts for 2020 Intended Use Plan (IUP) projects from June 30th to August 14th. Our interest rate would be 1.5% on the 20-year Promissory note, and the construction loan would be 0% interest.

B. Approve Minutes of Meetings of April 27th and May 1st:

Mr. Rosen motioned to approve the minutes of April 27, 2020. Ms. Amir-Lin seconded, and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote.

Mr. Stuntz motioned to approve the minutes of May 1, 2020. Ms. Amir-Lin seconded, and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote.

C. OLD BUSINESS:

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

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

2. Discussion of the Upcoming Special District Meeting.

- Scheduled for Wednesday, May 20, 2020 @6:30 PM at the District's Main Office

Mr. Allen mentioned to the Commissioners that per Governor Baker, there is still a restriction on gatherings of 10+ people which restricts us in holding the Special District meeting scheduled for May 20th. He is proposing that we hold the Special District Meeting and the Annual District Meeting on June 8 with the Special District meeting starting at 6:30 PM and the Annual District Meeting starting at 7:00 PM. He will try to book the Town's Public Safety Facility for the meeting. But, since most town buildings are still closed to the public, and if we cannot reserve space, he would then recommend holding it at the Acton Water District main office in the big garage and set up accordingly per social distancing protocols.

The Commissioners accept Mr. Allen's recommendation of holding the two meetings on June 8, 2020.

3. Update on Proposed Solar Energy Projects.

Mr. Allen provided an update on the proposed solar energy projects. There has been a positive development recently. He enclosed a letter in Commissioners' packets showing that he sent in support of it to the joint committee on municipal and regional government which is a substantive move for our Article 97 Bill being sponsored by Representative Gouveia from Acton. The lease for the Lawsbrook parcel is currently being edited internally by District Counsel and staff. The Developer mentioned to Mr. Allen that Knox Trail was submitted into the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) program today. At their meeting on Tuesday, 5/19, The Acton Board of Selectmen will discuss sending a letter of support for the Bill to the legislative committee.

4. District Manager's Contract.

- Current contract expires on June 30, 2020

Mr. Stuntz mentioned that the District Manager's contract expires on June 30, 2020. This contract is renewed every three years. The contract review is straight forward and doesn't require a long-written review. Mr. Stuntz recommends circulating the contract to the Commissioners, if they have any questions to contact either Ms. Bates or Mr. Allen directly, and then we will vote on next meeting. Ms. Amir-Lin and Mr. Rosen both agreed to this.

Other Old Business:

Mr. Rosen provided an update on the Housing Production Plan (HPP). He mentioned that he had a phone conversation with Selectman Jon Benson on May 13th who wanted to inform Mr. Rosen of a meeting that he attended which consisted of members of the ACHC, the Planning Board and the two Consulting companies who prepared the HPP. He stated that when they tallied up the comments there were 41 different commenters; 246 comments; which completely overwhelmed the consultants, so they were not able to get the revised draft to the Acton Selectmen by the deadline. The next draft should be available to download from the Town website on 5/19. They postponed the next joint meeting between the Acton Planning Board and Selectmen until May 27th. If for some reason they don't have the updated draft ready by that date, they will meet on June 9th at 7 PM. Mr. Rosen will keep everyone updated.

E. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Mr. Stuntz moved to adjourn the open meeting at 4:26 PM and motioned to move into Executive Session at 4:26 PM to discuss the purchase, exchange, lease of real property as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the District and not to reconvene in open session. Mr. Rosen seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote.