

Board of Water Commissioners

Meeting Agenda

Monday, July 7, 2025 @ 7:00 PM

- Comments from the public
- Approve minutes from the meeting of 6/16
- Appoint one Commissioner to sign warrants while conducting meetings virtually

OLD BUSINESS:

- Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)
  - Current sample data, if available
  - Discussion of Additional PFAS Upgrades
  - Bottled Water Rebate
- Discussion of PFAS MDL Settlement Funds

NEW BUSINESS:

- Consumer Confidence Report for Calendar Year 2024
- End of Fiscal Year Transfers
- Annual Audit

**Present at Tonight's Meeting:**

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

District Manager: Matthew Mostoller

Deputy District Manager: Corey Godfrey

Treasurer/Collector: Christine McCarthy

Members of the Public: Zhengyu Huang, Kim Kastens, Alissa Nicol, John Petersen, Ron Parenti

**START OF MINUTES**

Mr. Stuntz confirmed that everyone could hear and be heard, and opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

## **Comments from the public**

Alissa Nicol, the Selectboard liaison to the Water District, informed the board that the Sewer Governance study conducted by the Collins Center has reached completion. Ms. Nicol reported that the Selectboard intends to pursue the recommendations of the study and create an appointed independent commission for sewer governance. David Martin is currently creating a list of responsibilities for that commission and the Selectboard. The discussion of these responsibilities will take place at the Selectboard's August 25<sup>th</sup> meeting. Ms. Nicol recommended that if the Commissioners have opinions or insights they get in touch with Mr. Martin. She also stated that a copy of the report has been sent to the District. Mr. Stuntz thanked Ms. Nicol for the update.

Zhengyu Huang, who is a customer of the District, shared his concern with how the debt fee is applied to customers. Mr. Huang came before the District with the same issue last spring, but no changes have been made. Mr. Huang explained that on his bill the debt fee is about \$63.50, which is greater than his usage fee of \$53.35, making the debt fee about 50% of his total bill. Mr. Huang's primary concern is that because the debt fee is fixed, all homes pay the same amount no matter how much water they use. Mr. Huang thinks this set-up of the debt fee is unfair, and that no other utility sets its fees like this. Mr. Huang then went on to explain his point in further detail, comparing the District's debt fee to other utilities. Mr. Huang commented that he makes a conscious effort to recycle or conserve as much water as possible. However, the current set up of the debt fee makes this effort feel unfair as he's charged the same debt fee as high water users. Mr. Huang asked the District to change this policy of the debt fee. He added that he has made a presentation that illustrates his point in more detail and that he is willing to share it with the Board.

Mr. Stuntz thanked Mr. Huang for his comment. Mr. Stuntz explained that the District uses the current set up of the debt fee as there was concern as to how to pay for extra treatment in the last 10 years, as treatment is added. Mr. Stuntz continued that capital fees to build the plants are required to produce the first gallon of water, after that the fees are fixed for over 20 years. The goal of this set up is to collect as much money as they've budgeted to pay the debt. The reasoning behind this decision was that no matter if a customer uses 1 gallon or more, they still need the treatment plant. Mr. Stuntz thanked Mr. Huang for sharing his concern.

Mr. Huang thanked Mr. Stuntz for the additional information but reaffirmed his point that he believes the debt fee should be tied to usage.

Mr. Mostoller thanked Mr. Huang for sharing his concern and said he would follow up with Mr. Huang regarding his presentation. Mr. Huang thanked the Board for their time.

Mr. Mostoller highlighted a letter from a resident, Ms. Silverman, that was shared in the Acton Exchange over the weekend. Mr. Mostoller explained this letter was a neighbor-to-neighbor effort encouraging folks to follow the District's water restrictions. Mr. Mostoller commented that citizen to citizen communication like this carries a lot more meaning than the District repeatedly trying to enforce and educate. Mr. Mostoller wanted to publicly thank Ms. Silverman for her letter and remind everyone that we all play a role in managing water use.

#### **Approve minutes from the meeting of 6/16**

Mr. Rosen motioned to approve the minutes of 6/16/25. Ms. Amir Lin seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved via a roll call vote, Mr. Rosen, Ms. Amir Lin, Mr. Stuntz.

#### **Appoint one Commissioner to sign warrants while conducting meetings virtually**

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

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

##### **Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)**

##### **Current sample data, if available**

Mr. Mostoller reported the June sample data. On June 16<sup>th</sup> Center Acton was at 10.3 ppt, South Acton was at 17.8 ppt, and North Acton remained at non-detect. All three plants are in operation, and Mr. Godfrey is coordinating the July sampling.

Mr. Stuntz asked what the turnaround time for testing is. Mr. Godfrey replied it's currently at about 10 days.

##### **Discussion of Additional PFAS Upgrades**

Mr. Mostoller informed the board that at South Acton they resolved the issues around the equalization basin and site piping with the general contractor. They poured concrete for the basin last Thursday. On Wednesday and Thursday this week they are scheduled to work on the electrical cutover, tying the PFAS system into the main plant. This will require about a half a day shutdown at South Acton. Mr. Mostoller confirmed they've topped off the tanks over the last few days to cover for this shut-off time. While they continue to make good progress, they are still behind schedule. Originally the substantial completion date was in June, they are now looking towards the fall.

Mr. Mostoller reported that for Center Acton the pumps in the Bedrock wells have been installed, and final electrical connections are being made. The final site grading is complete, and the road's drainage is coming along. Currently they are working on the interior drywall treatment of the building, then they will do the final electrical work in the building. Everything is on track, and they expect no issues for a September start up.

Ms. Amir Lin asked if the start-up is putting the plant into the system, or to begin overall testing. Mr. Mostoller confirmed that the start-up is for overall testing, which could vary on timeline, he anticipates water will be flowing in September.

Mr. Rosen asked if DEP needs to be onsite for the 2 wells. Mr. Mostoller replied that he asked DEP for an advanced start up on the wells and has not received a response. Typically, it would require them to come out, sample, inspect, and sign off. This would need to repeating for the treatment system if the wells and PFAS system are started up separately.

### **Bottled Water Rebate**

Ms. McCarthy reported that they had 2 new applicants for the Bottled Water Rebate, and 3 left the program as they sold their property. Of the total rebates, there were 16 direct payments valued at \$705, which she confirmed are to tenants. The program remains at approximately 160 recipients.

Mr. Mostoller added that as they move into September the Board will have to decide how to wind down this program and provide notice as we move towards operation of the new PFAS systems. This will require a formal vote. Mr. Mostoller recommended winding down the program before the end of the calendar year.

### **Discussion of PFAS MDL Settlement Funds**

Mr. Mostoller informed the Board that the Finance Committee has nominated John Petersen to represent them in the working group. The working group is convening next week to begin their discussions. Mr. Mostoller expects they will have several meetings before coming to the Board with their recommendations.

Mr. Mostoller reported that the District signed a non-binding letter of interest for accelerated payment of the 3M MDL settlement funds. The deadline was extended to July 1, which allowed the District time to research the issue and submit their letter of interest. Mr. Mostoller stressed that they can back out at any time prior to receiving the accelerated payment and that this will be part of the working groups discussion.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **Consumer Confidence Report for Calendar Year 2024**

Mr. Mostoller thanked Mr. Godfrey and the staff for pulling together the annual water quality report and the summer newsletter. Mr. Mostoller noted that they will be required to issue it twice a year, this change will be effective in the calendar year 2026.

Mr. Godfrey reported that the Consumer Confidence Report is an annual requirement from MassDEP and US EPA to communicate water quality over the year. Mr. Godfrey reiterated that in 2024 they did not have any violations and there were no required public notifications. Mr. Godfrey reported that in the newsletter they rolled out the new water use restriction with a revised level system, currently the District is at a level 2 which requires a 2 day per week restriction.

The District also announced a new invitation for Field Trip Fridays, where they invite customers and the public to come learn about the things going on at the District, treatment, staff, the distribution system, and how we operate both as a utility and a government organization. This is part of a strategy to further their outreach efforts.

Mr. Mostoller reported that they are looking forward to inviting people to the District on July 18<sup>th</sup>, and he hopes folks sign up. Mr. Mostoller also reported this newsletter's "what is it" section received many responses.

Ms. Amir Lin asked how the response to the Field Trip Friday has been. So far no one has signed up and we may reschedule the event depending on the turnout.

Mr. Rosen commented that if they can get transportation arranged with the Council on Aging then they may have more people sign up. Mr. Mostoller replied that they considered that kind of collaboration and providing transportation in general is a work in progress. Mr. Mostoller explained that they had recently taken Kim Kastens and Brewster Conant to a few facilities and wanted to replicate that experience for more people. The District does regularly hold open houses and tours.

John Petersen asked if the location for Friday Field Trips will change. Mr. Mostoller confirmed the location will change; this first trip will be at the office. Mr. Petersen commented that he thinks this is a great opportunity for the District.

### **End of Fiscal Year Transfers**

Mr. Mostoller reported that the budget looks to be in good shape, however the account for lights, power and fuel is in a deficit. They are looking to make a transfer from the reserved

fund to cover these additional electrical costs. This issue was put before the Finance Committee which voted to recommend the transfer of these funds.

Mr. Rosen asked if this request would require a wet signature. Mr. Mostoller confirmed it will require 2 wet signatures. Mr. Mostoller noted that the fund has about a \$20,000 deficit, but there are other invoices they are collecting this week which may change the amount.

Mr. Rosen motioned to transfer up to \$80,000 from the Reserved Fund to Lights, Power, and Fuel. Mr. Stuntz seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved via a roll call vote, Mr. Rosen, Ms. Amir Lin, Mr. Stuntz.

### **Annual Audit**

Ms. McCarthy informed the Board that this year's audit started this week. She noted that this audit will incorporate the OPEB evaluation. Mr. Stuntz asked about the frequency of the OPEB evaluation. Ms. McCarthy affirmed it's every year, then in off years there's a roll forward evaluation. Ms. McCarthy expected the audit to wrap up in late September as usual.

Related to the audit, Mr. Mostoller reported that they received the free cash certification from the Department of Revenue on June 30. Mr. Mostoller reminded the Board that because the Clean Water Trust was delayed in delivering their reimbursement, they were anticipating a low free cash position of about \$45,000. Unfortunately, DOR has a different system for calculating free cash and reported -\$201,000 as opposed to the \$45,000 surplus. This funding had been appropriated at the annual meeting. They are currently assessing the needs the \$45,000 was appropriated for and are looking to make changes in the budget, as well as looking for other avenues of funding.

Mr. Petersen asked if this will have any consequences on the audit. Ms. McCarthy responded that because they will be starting with a negative number it will carry forward and put them that far behind for the coming fiscal year. Mr. Petersen asked that since this is due to timing if it holds at the end of the year. Ms. McCarthy clarified that because they received all the money they were supposed to be reimbursed, it will not affect that, and they are in a better position as opposed to last year.

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

**Meeting Closed at 7:39 p.m.**