

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

**AGENDA**

- A. Comments from Citizens
- B. Approve minutes from meeting of 6/28/2021
- C. Appoint one Commissioner to approve warrants while conducting meetings virtually

**D. OLD BUSINESS:**

- 1. Update on Per- and Poly-Fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS).
  - Current sample data, if available
  - Any updates or discussion from PFAS Working Group

**E. NEW BUSINESS:**

Any agenda item(s) which did not come to the attention of the Board of Water Commissioners 48 hours prior to this meeting and were not reasonably anticipated

**Present at Tonight's Meeting:**

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

District Manager: Chris Allen

District Treasurer: Mary Jo Bates

District Counsel: Mary Bassett

Environmental Manager: Matthew Mostoller

Commissioners Secretary: Lynn Protasowicki

Finance Committee: Chuck Bradley

Public Attendees:

Kim Kastens

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, July 12, 2021 by Mr. Barry Rosen.

**A. Comments from Citizens**

Kim Kastens had questions regarding the Annual Water Quality Report –

1. On Page 1 – the quarterly debt fee will increase to \$60 as of July 1<sup>st</sup>. There was conversation at the beginning of the year to give a break in the increase to the households were low income that were designated by the Town. What happened to that idea? Steve: who the Town gives a discount to we follow that same rule as the town. That is our policy. There had been a suggestion by the Finance Committee to have a progressive element to it such that the lower income houses would get a rate cut. She was just wondering what happened to that discussion. Steve: he thought the discount applied to the capital rate as well as the operating rate. Chris: the discussion based on the Finance Committee's recommendation was to have a weighted debt fee such that higher users would pay more of the debt fee. That has been examined and been discussed but not adopted . Kim: will there be any more discussion. Chris: yes it is still under investigation. Bill Guthlein is doing the homework on this but has been tabled due to the retirement of one of the Committee members and the District Moderator is still trying to find an appointee

for the vacancy. Kim stated that Green Acton has become more interested in social justice topics so this would be one of them.

Kim Kastens: Comments on PFAS. Is the PFAS working group working on a mechanism to bring in public comment? Barry asked to hold off on that question until we get to the PFAS part of our agenda.

2. Kim Kastens: Table on treatment methods on each of the sites on page 6 and noticing that Clapp Whitcomb has carbon filtration. Historically what was the reason for using carbon at this site. Mr. Allen mentioned that carbon was installed due to organic color and other water constituents in the source. Does a good job without pretreatment. We got lucky with the PFAS contamination in the West Acton sources. Prior to that installation it was located in South Acton for remediation of the Grace contamination for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) there. The carbon was moved to West Acton to help remove constituents there. Mr. Stuntz: the Water District land was covered with pine trees and they were producing a lot of color in the West Acton wells. That was two District Managers ago. We used to be able to reactivate the carbon but can't do that anymore. We now replace it with new media annually.

3. Kim Kastens: Water Quality table and wondering if any of the detects which are at allowable levels are rising over time? Mr. Mostoller stated that he will have to look at the trend tables and he will follow up with her off line.

Kim Kastens: On the page on "do you want to be more involved" is it only citizens or all residents who are welcomed to attend. Mr. Allen is not aware of the distinction. It is an important distinction due to the large immigrant population in town. Mr. Stuntz stated that we think of the citizens as the Water District but we can see why that someone would think the other way. Kim Kastens suggests that we should be more sensitive to the wording. Mr. Rosen stated that the meetings are public and the public is welcome to attend so we will change that wording.

## **B. Approve Minutes from Meeting of 6/28**

Mr. Stuntz motioned to approve the amended minutes of June 28, 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 motioned to appoint Mr. Rosen as the Commissioner to approve warrants while conducting meetings virtually until the next meeting of the Commissioners. Ms. Amir-Lin seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Ms. Amir-Lin, Mr. Stuntz, and Mr. Rosen.

## **E. OLD BUSINESS:**

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

- Current sample data, if available
- Any updates or discussion from PFAS Working Group

Mr. Mostoller – we have our June results. Clapp Whitcomb is still non detect (ND); SAWTP is at 18.7 parts per trillion (ppt); Conant 1 well is at 16.2 ppt and the NAWTP is at 21.5 ppt. Data has been submitted to DEP. Assuming that they accept all the data it does appear that the second quarter will be in violation of the PFAS Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) in North Acton. We had a 30.2 ppt sample in April that really spiked us at that location. That was prior to making any of the recent adjustments that has brought us down closer to the 20 ppt regulatory limit.

Mr. Rosen inquired about the NAWTP plant as to whether it is on or offline right now? Mr. Mostoller stated that it is scheduled to be shut down tomorrow. We needed to run it to collect our July samples. Its' been running for about 2 weeks. And we'll rest it pending the outcome of those results.

Ms. Amir-Lin inquired as to how long are we waiting on results. Mr. Mostoller stated that its been about 20-25 business days.

Mr. Allen stated that in regard to the current state grant funding, we applied on July 8<sup>th</sup> for \$150K, the maximum for a system of our size. This is the three phase roll out, but we can only receive one grant. There is a maximum of \$666K per phase, \$2 million total. The first phase's application deadline was July 8<sup>th</sup> and is expected to be awarded by July 29<sup>th</sup>. The District applied for the purpose of supplying alternate drinking water for the impacted subgroups of pregnant women, nursing mothers, infants (< 2yrs old), and people with physician diagnosed compromised immune systems.

#### Updates on the PFAS Working Group

Mr. Allen mentioned that the group has been discussing alternate drinking water for the impacted subgroups. We have been looking at rebates and vending machines for filling stations. Members have been taking action items and coming back to group with their findings. There has been some debate between members on what would be good for us. There are complexities to vending machines, i.e., the need for a sewer connection for discharge of filtration reject, so public sewer access is a prerequisite. It is a Very Small System, and thus needs a license operator to maintain regulatory compliance and sampling submitted to lab to confirm water quality, and we are still gathering information on the mechanical maintenance on a system like this. Next meeting of the group is on Thursday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Mr. Rosen - will we have to send another public notice out based on current Mass DEP information? Mr. Allen stated that yes we will. Mr. Mostoller stated that in the grant application we did indicate that in the next round that we would be publicizing a program if the Commissioners vote to approve that so we did commit to that with MassDEP.

Mr. Rosen - if North Acton Water Treatment Plant (NAWTP) stays offline but is still running... Do we have to continue to test the processed water if it remains offline and report that to the state? Matt: if we make a full commitment to not utilize the source we don't have to sample it, and we don't need to do public notice related to that source; we don't have to provide alternate drinking water if concentrations of PFAS6 stabilize. If we can find the additional water somewhere else, that could change things. We just don't have that additional water to supplement right now.

Mr. Allen - Last meeting we made some asks from town representation. There has been some desire for us to experiment with discharging additional volumes to the wastewater plant from the South Acton Water Treatment Plant (SAWTP) vs onsite processing and infiltration and subsequent return to the local aquifer. That is going to be checked into by Mark Hald, the Assistant Town Manager. And there was an ask to sample the effluent of the wastewater plant and that will, also, be looked into by Mark.

Mr. Allen - American Rescue Plant funds – consideration for this contamination and possible investment of those funds and a solution to this PFAS problem. This would require the Town of Acton to so designate the funds appropriately.

Kim Kastens: a mechanism for public input for the working discussions. Mr. Allen stated that this would be the time in the open meetings with the Board of Water Commissioners. Ms. Amir-Lin stated that it is more effective to comment here in open session so that all the Commissioners can hear the comments from the public.

Mr. Mostoller – we should be publicizing the June results this week. He updated the Board that the Mass Department of Environmental Protection (MA DEP) created a hazardous waste site listing for PFAS as it relates to Conant I and II well fields. MassDEP sent out an RFI asking two property owners at 531 and 533 Main Street, and their former operators on those sites as to whether or not they had any processes that

could have contained PFAS. Ms. Amir-Lin asked if this is an action that they have taken with other municipalities. Matt stated that they have with Littleton and Ayer. And they have sent out 100 RFIs. It's been a challenging process for them.

Mr. Mostoller stated that the Acton Water District is one of the largest water systems dealing with PFAS right now in the state of Massachusetts.

*Mr. Stuntz motioned to adjourn the open meeting at 7:30 PM. Mr. Rosen seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Ms. Amir-Lin, Mr. Stuntz, and Mr. Rosen.*