

Board of Water Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes  
Acton Water District  
693 Massachusetts Avenue, Acton, MA  
Monday, August 23, 2021

**AGENDA**

- A. Public Comments
- B. Approve minutes from meeting of 8/2/2021
- 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
- 2. Update on the Central Acton Water Treatment Plant (CAWTP) Project
- 3. Commissioners' Letter to the Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC) Regarding the Proposed 40B at 516 Massachusetts Avenue

**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: Bill Guthlein

Public Attendees:

Ron Parenti  
Terra Friedrichs

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, August 23, 2021 by Mr. Barry Rosen.

**A. Public Comments**

Terra Friedrich had a question about the 40B at 516 Massachusetts Avenue. Should she give comment now or during the 40B discussion on the agenda? Mr. Rosen asked to hold her question until that discussion comes up.

**B. Approve Minutes from Meeting of 8/2/2021**

Mr. Stuntz motioned to approve the minutes of August 2, 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 Ms. Amir-Lin as the Commissioner to approve warrants while conducting meetings virtually until the next meeting of the Commissioners. Mr. Rosen 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. Allen provided an update. We received some recent results. He stated that Matt sent out an email to those Acton residents who are subscribed to receive those email updates. There is a web update that is available. Mr. Allen shared the summary table with data from year to date and includes the last round of sampling data.

Mr. Rosen: regarding the Conant Wells, is there any indication of weather or seasonality to why the numbers going up and down? Matt: the seasonality may be due to the amount of pumping we do from it – as we pump more in the summer we are drawing it in from further away but there is not great answer to it. Mr. Mostoller stated that there is no correlation to rain events but there may be a correlation with drought events but can't say that with certainty.

Mr. Allen stated that we have been changing the operational scheme a little bit to try and manage the concentrations. We have been running the North Acton Water Treatment Plant (NAWTP) and Conant I into supply in about 2-3 increments. So alternately the Conant I and NAWTP have been idle. Currently NAWTP is offline as of last week; Conant I, Clapp/Whitcomb, and South Acton Water Treatment Plant (SAWTP) are all in supply.

Ron Parenti: commented on the numbers on the chart that Mr. Allen posted. The variations are not that large. If he was looking at these numbers for something else, he would characterize these numbers as measurement noise. Mr. Mostoller stated that he largely agrees with Ron's comments given the limitations of the testing methodology. Although it fluctuates over parts per trillion (ppt) the state has said that 30% +/- is pretty acceptable for the laboratory method. Mr. Allen also agrees with Ron's comments.

Mr. Mostoller provided update on PFAS grant program. He heard from MassDEP that they are currently trying to accommodate everyone who applied for interim funding which is why they haven't announced any grant recipients. At this point it appears that they will provide all the applicants with a majority of what they asked for.

Mr. Allen stated that the PFAS Working Group met last Thursday and had some discussions around the Commissioners approval of the bottled water rebate program. There is an application available on the website. We currently have no applicants.

Also discussed the strategy in South Acton to manage the PFAS concentration in the local aquifer there where is discharge of additional cleaning waste from the SAWTP to the wastewater treatment plant. We met with Town officials and representative from Woodward & Curran Engineers, the plant's contract operators, and it is under evaluation. We will do some additional sampling of the wastewater stream to

ascertain the PFAS concentrations. We are trying to coordinate an influent and effluent sample from the wastewater plant to get a baseline data to see what is coming into and going out of that facility so we can determine what impact our additional discharge would have. They are hesitant but seem to be coming around. It's a more theory to practice trying to do something to elicit a result. We are hopeful it will help Assabet IA's PFAS concentration, which is a higher concentration source and is our highest yielding source.

The group continues to evaluate temporary treatment for the North Acton Water Treatment Plant (NAWTP). We have proposals from 3 providers. The last one was from Suez, they quoted \$400K per year to operate, with some modifications to the treatment plant to accommodate that temporary system that are not included in that cost. The other two providers we have proposals from include Calgon Carbon and TIGG. TIGG is not undertaking a strategy to provide rental systems so that would be for purchase. Calgon and Tigg are not self-contained. Suez's system comes self-contained. We would need 2 containers with 12 total vessels (six per container). There would be a rental cost for each of those plus modifications to the facility to get flow through those vessels and then back into the treatment plant for disinfection to achieve our regulatory disinfection contact time prior to distribution.

There are still other remediation steps in the works. We are still in process of designing Assabet 3 to get that into the SAWTP to attempt to maintain a lower concentration of PFAS into supply. We are awaiting Central Acton Water Treatment Plant's (CAWTP) commissioning to see what net impact will be there and the bedrock source continues to progress forward through the permitting process. We are unsure of timing related to that. Getting Central Acton online and finding out what its concentration of PFAS will be is a key component to our response strategy. We hope the bedrock source will provide a dilution factor. Mr. Allen engaged Rich Protasowicki of Wright-Pierce, our Engineering Consultant, to work on generating a technical memorandum (addendum to the Master Plan) related to PFAS solely so that the district can create a road map to our prioritization for PFAS only. Mr. Allen is proposing that Rich meet with PFAS Working Group in an upcoming meeting to get the group's questions answered, etc. and potentially have him meet with Commissioners after the working group has met with him.

He has spoken with Eric Ryder, the Director of Public Works in Hudson, MA. There is some concern about the use of Ion Exchange (IX) resin for PFAS removal. The PFAS Working Group is planning a field trip to Hudson to meet with Eric Ryder to see their PFAS systems in operations. Mr. Allen will continue to collect information on IX and will report any additional findings.

Ron Parenti: the PFAS review by state regulators comes up in 3 years. And he guesses that there will be a push by some people to reduce the regulation even lower. How far down do you think they can get these numbers? Mr. Allen stated that Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) can take it down to non-detectible levels GAC is in operation at the District's Clapp/Whitcomb well site in west Acton.

## 2. Update on the Central Acton Water Treatment Plant (CAWTP) Project

Mr. Allen stated that the Commissioners have in-hand the proposed start-up schedule. Today, he spoke with the General Contractor (GC), Waterline Industries, today and the current hang-up is EverSource with an internal permitting issue that is causing the delay in the completion of the main power feed circuit. Waterline has installed all the equipment to receive temporary power. EverSource is causing the delay.

Later start up with a late September early October start-up. No update on when EverSource will be on-site. The GC committed to keeping Mr. Allen updated on the status as available.

3. Commissioners' Letter to the Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC) Regarding the Proposed 40B at 516 Massachusetts Avenue

Mr. Rosen stated that he did not receive any additional comments from the Commissioners on the letter. Ms. Amir-Lin mentioned that she has some minor comments and will send those edits along after the meeting. She thinks it is a good summary that expresses our water supply concerns. He will ask District office staff to print out the final version and leave in the conference room for the Commissioners to sign. He will then scan and email to Janet Adachi, ACHC President, for their discussion at their meeting.

Terra Friedrichs: asked to comment on the letter. She applauds the letter. She thinks it is fantastic. She hopes the Acton Water District writes more letters to oppose impervious building in wetlands and buffers because they seem to be approved and rubber stamped by the Conservation Commission and hopes the District takes a stronger stand, inclusive of snow and ice in disturbance declarations. She supports the signing and the expanding of Zone I. She looks forward to more Zone I's and expanding of Zone I's in Town. She is reminding the Commissioners that this type of proposed building as "affordable" does not meet the needs expressed as priority in housing production plan which calls for focus on very low income housing. This looks like a profit motive not a community needs motive.

She suspects that the Developer will come back with a tight tank proposal. She suggests holding on their other concerns about this until that time.

She believes that even one house on this site will have thousands of square feet of impervious surface and the septic system is inappropriate.

Her Question: At the state house regarding 40Bs that preempt local wetlands by-laws. There is a bill, and she hopes that the District has expressed their concerns for that bill. Barry Rosen stated that the Acton Water District already submitted testimony to the Joint Committee (Matt Mostoller submitted to the legislature about 2-3 weeks ago).

Terra Friedrichs: Regarding the issues with impervious and various actions within the wetland buffers and the Conservation Commission to willingness to rubber stamp and approve these things... will the Acton Water District take more action to urge the Conservation Commission to "cut that out". Mr. Rosen stated that in this letter we are asking the ACHC, which is treating this as a "Local Initiative Program (LIP)", to reconsider and not go the LIP method and if they don't go the LIP method it will stop immediately because Acton temporarily (until September) is under safe harbor. If Acton does not support a LIP they can stop a 40B.

Terra Friedrichs: If they don't stop this at the ACHC level, the Acton Selectboard for a "friendly" will have to approve it.

Her comment is outside of this letter and hopes for future discussion. It is the urging of the Acton Conservation Commission to be stricter because they seem to approve pools, driveways, fences, and all kinds of building inside the buffer zone.

Mr. Mostoller stated that they will submit staff level comments. He would suggest carbon copying the Town Manager on the Commissioners' letter to keep him in the loop.

*Mr. Stuntz motioned to adjourn the open meeting at 7:55 PM. Ms. Amir-Lin seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Mr. Stuntz, Ms. Amir-Lin, and Mr. Rosen.*