

Board of Water Commissioners

Meeting Agenda

October 7, 2024

- Comments from the public
- Approve minutes from the meetings of 9/23
- 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 Update
- Kelley's Corner Project
- Outdoor Water Use Restrictions
- US EPA Lead & Copper Rule Improvement

NEW BUSINESS:

- Request for service outside of District boundary

Present at Tonight's Meeting:

Commissioners: Barry Rosen (Chair), Erika Amir Lin

Members of the Finance Committee: John Petersen

District Manager: Matt Mostoller

Members of the Public: Kim Kastens, Bill Guthlein, Ron Parenti

## **START OF MINUTES**

Mr. Rosen opened the meeting at 7:00.

### **Comments from the public**

None at this time.

### **Approve minutes from the meetings of 9/23**

Mr. Rosen motioned to approve the minutes of 9/23/24. Ms. Amir Lin seconded, and it was approved via a roll call vote, Ms. Amir Lin, Mr. Rosen.

### **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. Ms. Amir Lin seconded, and it was approved via a roll call vote, Ms. Amir Lin, Mr. Rosen.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

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

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

Mr. Mostoller shared the September sample data for Center Acton, sampled on September 25 at 11ppt. This source continues to be stable in sample results. There was an increase in the Conant 1 raw water, while Conant 2 stayed the same. October sampling will be completed this week. North and South Acton are currently in use. Center Acton will be turned on to provide water into the system towards the end of the month.

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

Mr. Mostoller updated the board on the North Acton project. On September 30<sup>th</sup> the electrical subcontractor resolved his final items from the project. They are waiting for Veolia to finish their items, they owe battery backup work, a couple of valves, and some troubleshooting work on the compressor. Mr. Mostoller estimated the final paperwork on North Acton will wrap up officially in November.

Moving on to the Center Acton project, Mr. Mostoller informed the board that work on the foundation will begin this week, weather permitting. They hope to pour concrete over the next 2 weeks to get the slab ready for assembly of the building and other aspects as winter approaches. They have completed the majority of the piping work from the treatment plant to the Bedrock wells, and the project continues to make good progress.

For the South Acton project, previous issues with transferring the building permit were resolved. The contractor has cleared the site. Toward the end of the week the contractor will be out to do additional site work, after contacting the building manufacturer the structure is almost done and is on track with the initial schedule to be onsite in November.

The filter vessels for both projects use the same vendors and they are experiencing issues getting some of the valves necessary for the filter vessels. For one of the missing valves sets they found an alternative with a lower pressure rating that should keep the project on schedule. However, the pressure sustaining valve is no longer made by the manufacturer. They are working with the vessel manufacturer and the engineers to develop a workaround as quickly as possible because otherwise expected delays could be 22 to 28 weeks.

### **Bottled Water Rebate Update**

Mr. Mostoller updated the board with the Bottled Water Rebate for the third quarter. This quarter they had 166 water bottle rebates, which is a net gain of 1 from the previous quarter. A total of \$7,425 was provided in rebates. This is stable with what the rebate has been for several quarters now.

Mr. Rosen asked a question about the finance mechanism for this rebate, which Mr. Mostoller responded is just revenue that we forego. It is not a budgeted line item.

### **Kelley's Corner Project**

Mr. Mostoller informed the board that water work is on pause. The final connection by Roche Brothers was made last week and K-Mart has completed their connection. The project is now in the phase that will abandon the old water main on that section of Main Street. The town's sewer project has taken precedent on the northern leg of the project area, and they are also completing night work. As soon as they are done, the MassDOT crew will do the water portion from approximately Middlesex Savings Bank to Acton Medical. The Contractor has assured Mr. Mostoller that the work will be done by December at the latest.

### **Outdoor Water Use Restrictions**

Mr. Mostoller reminded the board that on September 28 the Nashoba stream gauge met criteria to lift the one day per week water restriction. However, with the seasonal shift in restrictions on October 1<sup>st</sup> approaching, Mr. Mostoller made the decision to lift all restrictions as scheduled on October 1<sup>st</sup> to avoid confusion over several restriction shifts in a matter of days. Currently there is no restriction in place, but the District does ask that users be mindful of water use due to constraints from PFAS and the seasonal flushing. Mr.

Mostoller noted that this is a departure from previous trends, since 2019 they've maintained restrictions into the winter months.

Ms. Amir Lin asked if there were any calls about the October 1<sup>st</sup> restriction change. Mr. Mostoller responded that there weren't but leading up to October 1<sup>st</sup> and on September 11<sup>th</sup> they did receive some calls asking how long the restriction would be in place, which at the time they didn't know. Nashoba brook is at the necessary threshold right now, but numbers indicate the stream is not at a full recovery flow. Mr. Rosen asked if Mr. Mostoller believed upstream drafting of water is still of concern, Mr. Mostoller responded it does not appear that way.

### **US EPA Lead & Copper Rule Improvement**

Mr. Mostoller informed the board that they did end up offering the \$15 incentive to get residents who were unresponsive to identify their service line. They had a good response to that with the incentive in place, and they may consider using it again. He informed the board the inventory still requires some work; staff are working to get the service line inventory to pass validation which is different than having a true representation of what materials are associated with each line. The first public notice needs to be done in the first 30 days, between October 16 to November 16 and will inform residents that they may have a lead service line or more likely a currently unknown material. Mr. Mostoller is still uncertain about what the required language will be, and they are strategizing how to manage the public's questions during this notice, especially since Mr. Mostoller believes that most of the system is likely copper or plastic.

Ms. Amir Lin asked if the language is determined by MassDEP. Mr. Mostoller responded it's set by the EPA, and they are in the process of finalizing it. Mr. Mostoller's concern about the language pertains to giving the correct context to the customers since we have not documented any true lead service lines, but all unknown service lines are being treated as lead until shown otherwise.

Ms. Kim Kastens asked if the District has hired someone to fill Ms. Wahlstrom's role in this project, Mr. Mostoller responded they will address that issue later in the meeting.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **Request for service outside of District boundary**

Mr. Mostoller informed the board that they received a request from a corporation based in China that owns land in Maynard. The property is just over the town line. They originally intended to build a school on the site, but now the developer is looking to build approximately 500 units of multi-family housing. Maynard has denied their request for

water service to that property and suggested they reach out to other neighboring communities.

Mr. Mostoller spoke with a representative from the company over the summer. In that conversation Mr. Mostoller laid out the District's process for accepting out of district customers which includes evaluating, if the district has excess capacity, if it's in the District's best interests, and then the approval process for changing the District's boundary. Currently the District is able to serve Acton and Boxborough, but adding Maynard would require legislative charter changes. Mr. Mostoller's question for the commissioners is if they would like to carry this item any further, invite a representative to speak with them, or deny their request.

The board then began their discussions on the topic. Mr. Rosen referred to the WLMAC criteria and interpreted that this proposal is on the edge of the acceptable criteria. Mr. Rosen then ran through the pros and cons, that it would increase their base of support, however the rough estimates are that this would draw 110,000 gallons per day based off title 5 estimates. Mr. Rosen stated that this does not seem like a good investment to him and shared his concerns that it sends the wrong message to current water customers who are being asked to conserve water.

Ms. Amir Lin shared her thoughts, she agreed with Mr. Rosen that the District is in the middle of tackling several big issues like PFAS and discussing long term water source planning. The District has a lot on their plate and has asked a lot from water takers while they navigate these issues, so she is hesitant to take on something like this while they have so little information about the project. She added that she would be disinclined to invite them to a meeting.

The commissioners asked Mr. Mostoller if Mr. Stuntz shared his thoughts with him on this item. Mr. Mostoller stated that Mr. Stuntz expressed similar concerns, but he was more open to exploring financial benefits. Mr. Stuntz also indicated to Mr. Mostoller that due to the proximity of Sudbury, an interconnection with Sudbury might be possible, which they did look into when the Powder Mill Place proposal first came up in 2017. Mr. Stuntz indicated to Mr. Mostoller that it seems a little early to shut the door when they don't know much about the project.

Mr. Mostoller added that the project is in its infancy and the contact informed him that this could be completed in 3 phases over 10 years. Mr. Rosen and Ms. Amir Lin continued to discuss their thoughts on the matter. Mr. Rosen and Ms. Amir Lin decided to defer the decision until the next meeting when Mr. Stuntz would be present to contribute more directly to the discussion.

Mr. John Petersen asked if they knew why Maynard turned down the project. Mr. Mostoller responded because they did not have the adequate capacity to supply it. Mr. Petersen then asked about the infrastructure of the existing interconnections we have, which Mr. Mostoller affirmed the interconnection would be done by a change to the valve status. Lastly Mr. Petersen congratulated Mr. Mostoller on his NEWWA award discussed at the last meeting, and said he was also pleased with the results of the audit from the last meeting as well.

### **Additional new business**

Mr. Mostoller had some additional new business for the Board. He hopes to formally introduce the new Environmental Manager at the next meeting, fulfilling the role of Ms. Wahlstrom. The tentative start date is October 23 and one of their first assignments would be assisting Mr. Mostoller in finding an additional staff member. Mr. Mostoller was very pleased with the progress in rebuilding the team. This individual is already licensed and has worked for a larger utility in the area but sees more opportunity in a smaller system like Acton.

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

**Meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.**