

Board of Water Commissioners & Finance Committee Joint Meeting

Meeting Agenda

Monday, February 9, 2026 @ 7:00 PM

- Comments from the public
- Approve minutes from the meeting of 1/12 and 1/14
- Appoint one Commissioner to sign warrants while conducting meetings virtually

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- Appointment of Treasurer/Collector
- Swearing in of Treasurer/Collector
- School Street Redevelopment
- Discussion of Finance Committee
- Discuss Commissioners' Annual report
- Annual District Meeting Presentation

**OLD BUSINESS:**

- Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)
  - Current sample data, if available
  - Discussion of Additional PFAS Upgrades
- Review Draft Budget for FY '27 and proposed articles for 2026 Annual District Meeting Warrant
- Discussion of FY'27 Projected Debt Fee

**Present at Tonight's Meeting:**

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

Finance Committee: John Petersen, Bill Guthlein

District Manager: Matt Mostoller

Deputy District Manager: Corey Godfrey

District Clerk: Joe Robb

District Treasurer/Collector: Ashley Pinard

Members of the Public: Kim Kastens; Gill Watt

## **START OF MINUTES**

Mr. Stuntz opened the meeting at 7:01 p.m. and ensured that everyone could hear and be heard. Mr. Guthlein then opened the Finance Committee meeting at 7:02 p.m.

### **Comments from the public**

Ms. Kim Kastens, representing the Green Acton Water Committee, provided an update regarding the Committee's analysis of long-term groundwater monitoring data surrounding the capped landfill in Acton. She explained that the group reviewed data from 2002–2024 and recently presented findings to the Acton Health Department. Ms. Kastens noted the Committee has been invited to present the analysis to the Board of Health at an upcoming meeting. Copies of the data were shared with District staff, and she offered to provide them to others as needed. The Commissioners thanked Green Acton for their work.

### **Approve minutes from the meetings of 1/12/2026 and 1/14/2026**

Mr. Stuntz motioned to approve the minutes from the January 12, 2026 meeting. Ms. Lin seconded, and it was unanimously approved by roll call vote: Mr. Rosen, Ms. Lin, and Mr. Stuntz.

Mr. Stuntz motioned to approve the minutes from the January 14, 2026 meeting. Mr. Rosen seconded, and it was unanimously approved by roll call vote: Mr. Rosen, Ms. Lin, and Mr. Stuntz.

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

Mr. Rosen motioned to authorize Commissioner Stuntz to sign warrants while meetings are conducted virtually, through the next regularly scheduled meeting. Ms. Lin seconded, and it was unanimously approved via roll call vote: Mr. Rosen, Ms. Lin, and Mr. Stuntz.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **Appointment of Treasurer/Collector**

Mr. Mostoller introduced Ms. Ashley Pinard, noting it was her first day of employment with the Acton Water District. He welcomed her to the team and summarized her professional background, including experience in procurement at the Department of Fire Services, municipal administration, and prior service in law enforcement.

Mr. Rosen motioned to appoint Ms. Pinard as Treasurer/Collector of the Acton Water District. Mr. Stuntz seconded, and the appointment was unanimously approved by roll call vote: Mr. Rosen, Ms. Lin, and Mr. Stuntz.

### **Swearing in of Treasurer/Collector**

Mr. Joe Robb, District Clerk, administered the oath of office to Ms. Pinard. Ms. Pinard formally swore to faithfully execute the duties of Treasurer/Collector in accordance with District bylaws and the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

### **School Street Redevelopment**

Mr. Mostoller provided an update regarding multiple redevelopment proposals along School Street in South Acton, including residential conversions, mixed-use development, and accessory dwelling units. He explained that the existing cast iron water main in this area is aging and may not support increased domestic and fire protection demand.

Mr. Mostoller noted that the District has limited information from developers at this stage, making it difficult to model future system impacts. He raised the possibility of pursuing state development-related infrastructure grants, which may require a 25% District match.

Commissioners discussed the importance of requiring developers to provide clearer project scope of information and potentially contribute toward infrastructure upgrades. Mr. Mostoller indicated the District would continue gathering project details, exploring hydraulic modeling with our consulting engineer, and evaluating grant opportunities before returning with recommendations.

### **Discussion of Finance Committee**

Mr. Guthlein announced that Mr. Ron Parenti, Chair of the Finance Committee, had resigned, leaving only two remaining members. Commissioners expressed appreciation for Mr. Parenti's long service and institutional knowledge.

The Board discussed the increasing difficulty of recruiting qualified volunteers for District committees. Ms. Lin recommended broadening the search and taking time to find the right candidate rather than rushing an appointment. Mr. Rosen noted that volunteer shortages are affecting committees town-wide.

Commissioners briefly discussed whether committee structures should be revisited in the future, including combining the three-member Finance Committee and five-member Water Land Management Advisory Committee into a single three-member advisory committee. It was agreed that no bylaw changes should be pursued immediately before the Annual District Meeting.

Mr. Mostoller noted that outreach for Finance Committee recruitment would include the District website, social media, and the upcoming winter newsletter mailing.

### **Discuss Commissioners' Annual Report**

Mr. Stuntz presented the draft Commissioners' Annual Report letter to ratepayers. He explained that the letter is intended to provide an annual summary of District operations, upcoming priorities, and key updates for customers. He noted that minor edits and comments had been received by staff in advance of tonight, and the document would continue to be refined prior to the Annual Report being published.

Mr. Rosen motioned to accept the Annual Report draft and authorize the District Manager and Chair to make minor changes as needed. Mr. Stuntz seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote: Mr. Rosen, Ms. Lin, and Mr. Stuntz.

### **Annual District Meeting Presentation**

Mr. Petersen presented draft slides for the Annual District Meeting, including an updated water bill breakdown and new explanatory content regarding PFAS settlement funds.

Committee members discussed the importance of providing clear public background on the PFAS litigation and settlement process, as many residents may not understand the source of these funds. Ms. Kastens recommended explicitly stating that the District joined a multi-district lawsuit against PFAS manufacturers.

The Board agreed the presentation should provide introductory context without over-speculating about future settlement amounts.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

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

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

Mr. Mostoller reviewed January PFAS sampling results:

- South Acton remained in compliance at 15.2 ppt.
- North Acton showed detectable PFAS levels at 3 ppt, though still below regulatory thresholds; media replacement has been delayed pending completion of other plant upgrades.
- Center Acton measured 11.6 ppt, with bedrock wells continuing to effectively reduce concentrations through blending.

Mr. Mostoller noted February sampling was underway and that Mr. Godfrey had issued an email update to approximately 400 interested parties.

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

Mr. Mostoller reported that South Acton upgrades were nearing completion, with final analytical results pending, alarm and controls testing having been successfully completed, and now waiting for the MassDEP inspection to be rescheduled. He noted that Center Acton media conditioning had been successfully completed, and that startup inspection scheduling with MassDEP would follow shortly. Mr. Mostoller also acknowledged the Operations Team's efforts, guided by Mr. Godfrey, in disassembling the Concord interconnect pumping equipment under challenging winter conditions. Both emergency interconnections are closed and final costs are still being tallied, although Mr. Mostoller noted our total volume of water purchased was lower than initially expected.

### **Review Draft Budget for FY '27 and proposed articles for 2026 Annual District Meeting Warrant**

Mr. Mostoller stated that the FY27 draft budget remained unchanged. He explained that PFAS settlement funds were proposed for several purposes, including the North Acton lease, media replacement planning, and reimbursement of unanticipated FY26 interconnection costs.

Mr. Mostoller reviewed warrant article concepts, including anticipated free cash appropriations totaling just over \$1M for distribution system improvements, emergency repairs, filtration media, residuals management, ADA website compliance. Additional articles include housekeeping such as accepting reports and fixing salaries of elected officials, reauthorizing revolving funds, accepting the budget, and establishment of a PFAS Settlement Fund. Mr. Mostoller noted that free cash certification was still pending due to the late audit completion and the staff transitions. The District may need to proceed with warrant language contingent upon certification.

### **Discussion of FY'27 Projected Debt Fee**

Mr. Petersen prepared a memo which raised concerns that applying PFAS settlement funds entirely to operating expenses results in disproportionate bill impacts between low- and high-volume users. He suggested that some relief should also offset debt service to create more equitable increases.

Mr. Watt inquired what the relationship is between debt and infrastructure. Mr. Mostoller explained the history of the water system and how the pipes were installed and paid for,

how we replace and improve aging assets, and how we have paid for improvements to water quality through treatment plants and land protection. He went on to share the difference between variable operating costs and borrowed funds to pay for large projects. Mr. Stuntz discussed the positive impact on our bond rating, allowing lower borrowing costs, due to the stable revenue generation our fixed debt fee provides, independent of water sales.

Commissioners emphasized the importance of this predictable revenue stream for long-term financial health and bonding stability. Mr. Stuntz and Ms. Lin indicated they were not supportive of revising the FY27 budget allocation immediately prior to Annual Meeting, citing uncertainty about future PFAS costs and the need for maintaining reserves. Mr. Mostoller reminded everyone that we have a duty to think about the long-term financial health of the District and the current debt fee is a 3-year bump before other projects come off the debt role, naturally providing relief. Unknown additional PFAS costs were also discussed as a reason to not expend additional PFAS funds until we better understand a variety of PFAS related issues.

#### **Finance Committee Budget Recommendation**

Mr. Petersen motioned that the Finance Committee not recommend the FY27 budget as presented because it changes the fixed and usage percentages for low and high volume users. Mr. Guthlein declined to second this motion, therefore the motion failed resulting in no recommendation on the FY 27 budget from the Finance Committee.

#### **Commissioners' Budget Vote**

Mr. Rosen motioned to approve the FY27 budget as presented. Ms. Lin seconded, and the budget was unanimously approved by roll call vote: Mr. Rosen, Ms. Lin, and Mr. Stuntz.

Mr. Mostoller expressed concern that the lack of a Finance Committee recommendation could complicate the neutrality of the Annual Meeting presentation, and the Board agreed to revisit this at the next meeting.

**Mr. Petersen motioned to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting. Mr. Guthlein seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.**

**Mr. Rosen moved to adjourn the Board of Water Commissioners meeting. Ms. Lin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by roll call vote.**

**Meeting Closed at 9:22 p.m.**