

Board of Water Commissioners & Finance Committee Joint Meeting

Meeting Agenda

Monday, March 9, 2026 @ 7:00 PM

- Comments from the public
- Approve minutes from the meeting of 2/23
- 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
 - EBC Panel Discussion
- Annual District Meeting Presentation

NEW BUSINESS:

- Warrant Article Assignments
- Discussion of Annual Meeting and Surplus Revenue Articles

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 Treasurer/Collector: Ashley Pinard

District Moderator: Bill Mullin

District Counsel: Spencer Holland

District Clerk: Joe Robb

Members of the Public: Alissa Nicol, Kim Kastens

START OF MINUTES

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

Mr. Guthlein opened the Finance Committee meeting at 7:03 p.m. under the same conditions as the Board of Water Commissioners.

Comments from the public

No public comments were offered at this time.

Approve minutes from the meetings of 2/23/2026

Ms. Lin motioned to approve the minutes from the meeting held on February 23, 2026. The motion was seconded and 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 Lin to sign warrants while meetings are conducted virtually, through the next regularly scheduled meeting. Mr. Stuntz seconded, and it was unanimously approved via roll call vote: Mr. Rosen, Ms. Lin, and Mr. Stuntz.

OLD BUSINESS:

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

Current sample data, if available

Mr. Mostoller reported that the District received its first round of non-detect PFAS sample results from the South Acton Treatment Facility. The samples were collected on February 27, 2026, and results were received shortly before the meeting. Mr. Mostoller stated that this represents the first confirmation that the facility is successfully removing PFAS compounds to non-detect levels under current testing standards.

Mr. Mostoller noted that the District will continue monitoring and sampling to confirm consistent treatment performance as the facility continues operating.

Discussion of Additional PFAS Upgrades

Mr. Mostoller provided updates regarding the status of PFAS mitigation projects across the District.

The South Acton treatment facility is currently providing water to the distribution system. Remaining work at the site is largely administrative or minor construction items that do not impact plant operations.

The Center Acton treatment facility has received a conditional approval letter from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). Staff expect the facility to come online within the next several weeks once final operational items and approvals are completed.

At North Acton, the District is preparing to replace the treatment media used in PFAS filtration. Removal of the existing media is scheduled to begin on March 30, 2026, after which new media will be installed and conditioned. Mr. Mostoller noted that this process typically requires two to three weeks before the facility can be returned to full operation.

Mr. Mostoller stated that once these projects are fully completed, the District will have implemented PFAS treatment across its system using currently available technology.

EBC Panel Discussion

Mr. Mostoller informed the Board that he will be participating in an upcoming Environmental Business Council of New England (EBC) PFAS panel discussion. The panel will include representatives from municipalities including Newburyport and Concord, as well as representatives from wastewater utilities.

Mr. Mostoller stated that the discussion will focus on local impacts due to PFAS contamination, including treatment strategies, regulatory challenges, community response, and financial impacts on water systems. This is an important point of view for regulators, policy makers, and consultants to understand therefore he is prioritizing being able to share Acton's story.

Annual District Meeting Presentation

Mr. Petersen presented draft slides prepared for the Annual District Meeting presentation. Commissioners reviewed the slides in detail and discussed possible revisions to improve clarity and presentation flow.

The group discussed whether water usage should continue to be presented in cubic feet, which aligns with the units used on District water bills. Members agreed that maintaining consistency with billing units is helpful, while also providing a conversion reference to gallons.

Slides discussing PFAS litigation were reviewed. Mr. Petersen explained that the District has received approximately \$2 million in settlement funds to date from litigation involving PFAS manufacturers. Commissioners discussed the proposed creation of a PFAS Settlement Fund that would hold these funds for PFAS-related expenditures and reimbursements.

The presentation also reviewed the FY27 budget, which reflects a projected increase in debt service associated with PFAS treatment infrastructure. Mr. Petersen noted that the use of settlement funds will help offset some costs and allow the District to keep water rates unchanged for FY27 despite the increased debt service.

Commissioners discussed simplifying the presentation slides by reducing written text and allowing presenters to explain details verbally. Suggestions were also made to improve the readability of charts and graphs used in the presentation.

Ms. Nicol provided comments regarding slide layout and suggested reducing the amount of written text to make slides easier for viewers to follow during the presentation.

NEW BUSINESS:

Warrant Article Assignments

Mr. Mostoller presented a draft list to assign Commissioners and Finance Committee members to present specific warrant articles at the upcoming Annual District Meeting.

Assignments were reviewed and generally accepted by the Board. Several articles relating to infrastructure maintenance, operational funds, and system improvements were distributed among Commissioners for presentation.

During discussion, Mr. Petersen noted that some related surplus revenue articles appear similar in purpose and suggested that in future warrants the District may consider consolidating certain articles for clarity. Mr. Mostoller noted the warrant articles are designed to provide transparency, to establish financial tracking, and ensure funds are available for known and unknown needs of running a utility.

Discussion of Annual Meeting and Surplus Revenue Articles

The Board discussed how to proceed if free cash certification is not received prior to the Annual District Meeting.

Mr. Mostoller explained that certification from the Department of Revenue (DOR) had not yet been received and would not likely be available in time for the meeting. Several warrant articles rely on free cash and therefore cannot be acted upon without certification.

District Moderator Mr. Mullin and District Counsel Mr. Holland reviewed procedural options available under those circumstances. These options include:

- Taking up warrant articles that do not rely on free cash
- Passing over Articles 7 through 14 until free cash is certified
- Scheduling a future Special District Meeting to address those articles once certification is received

The Board discussed the possibility of keeping the Annual Meeting open temporarily or reconvening at a later date, but ultimately agreed that the meeting should proceed with articles that can legally be considered. Articles dependent on free cash may be passed over and addressed at a later meeting if necessary.

Mr. Petersen explained that he had been exploring a potential amendment to the proposed FY27 budget to reduce the amount of revenue collected relative to projected expenses. His concept involved reducing the planned debt service line by approximately \$300,000, which would effectively balance the budget without generating additional surplus revenue.

District Counsel, Mr. Holland noted that amendments which directly or indirectly require changes to water rates are generally outside the authority of the Annual District Meeting because rate setting authority resides with the Commissioners.

Mr. Mullin explained the procedures that would apply if a budget amendment were introduced at the meeting. If Mr. Petersen wished to present a proposal in his personal capacity rather than as a Finance Committee recommendation, he would step away from the Finance Committee table and speak as an individual voter. The Commissioners would then have the opportunity to discuss and respond to the amendment.

Mr. Mostoller emphasized the importance of adopting a budget before July 1, noting that the District cannot operate without an approved budget beginning with the start of the new fiscal year.

Ms. Lin stated that in presenting Article 4, she intends to highlight the District's careful financial management and the Commissioners' commitment to fiscal responsibility. She noted that the proposed budget reflects extensive planning and supports the District's primary mission of providing reliable water service to the community.

Mr. Petersen motioned to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting. Mr. Guthlein seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

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

The meeting closed at 8:41 p.m.

The annual meeting will be held on March 18 at 6:00 PM at the Acton Public Safety Facility (371 Main Street, Acton, MA 01720).