

**Acton Water District  
Finance Committee Meeting Minutes, April 10, 2026  
693 Massachusetts Avenue, Acton, MA 01720**

In attendance were Finance Committee members Bill Guthlein, and John Petersen.

Also in attendance:

District Representatives: none

Public Present: Brewster Conant, Ron Parenti

Mr. Petersen recorded the minutes.

Mr. Guthlein called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 2:30 PM.

**Posted Agenda**

Comments from the public

**New Business:**

1. FY2027 Budget
2. Special District Meeting April 22, 2026

**Old Business:**

1. Free Cash Certification

**Comments from the Public**

No Comments

**Discussion**

Members discussed two major elements of the FY27 budget – the additional expense associated with North Acton well rehabilitation and the increase in the usage fees to pay for the additional expense. The finance committee strongly supported the recognition of the need to make additional investment in the North Acton wells and to have the expense budget reflect the well rehabilitation work. Mr. Petersen moved, Mr. Guthlein seconded and it was unanimously approved to recommend the revised FY27 expense budget of \$9,568,431.

With respect to paying for the increase with usage charges, the finance committee did not think it was necessary or appropriate to recover the full cost of the wells via usage charges. Part of the Fincom rationale was the 22% increase in total user charges from FY26 to FY27 was very large and almost double what had been proposed a month earlier at the annual meeting.

Two approaches to reducing user revenues were discussed. Mr. Petersen provided a memorandum (Petersen to Guthlein, AWD Fincom 10April 2026 “AWD – Budgeting Process, FY27 recommendation) showing that historic budgets were very conservative. On the expense side actuals have been about 90% of budget numbers. On the revenue side, revenues averaged 104% of budgeted revenues. Mr. Petersen noted that the current free cash position appears to be very strong and proposed that the budget be modified so that budget revenue was equal

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to budget expense saving rate payers \$327K. Mr. Petersen moved that the fincom recommend to the commissioners that the revenue budget of \$9,896,313 be reduced by reducing the water revenue and or debt fee so that the total revenue will match the expense budget so that the total revenue will be \$9,568,431. Mr. Guthlein seconded and it was unanimously approved. The fincom noted that it was the purview of the Commissioners to decide whether the revenue reduction be in usage fees, debt fees or some combination.

Mr. Petersen suggested using Grace funds given that the fund has largely been depleted and is now small relative to the PFAS fund. Mr. Guthlein noted that during the Joint meeting the Commissioners had not been in favor of this approach and Mr. Petersen responded that the suggestion was new in that meeting so that no one had time to give it thoughtful consideration. After discussion, Mr. Petersen moved that \$400,000 be used from the Grace fund to defray appropriate expenses and thereby reduce cost to rate payers. Mr. Guthlein seconded and it was unanimously approved.

Mr. Guthlein agreed that he would bring these recommendations to Mr. Stuntz (Chair) prior to Monday's meeting and present the recommendations at the Joint meeting on 13 April.

Mr. Parenti noted that with respect to the long term infrastructure needs of the District, the current financial position is not necessarily excessive. Mr. Guthlein commented that additional financial needs are likely to be identified in the Master Plan later this year. Mr. Guthlein also reflected on the importance of stabilization funds and commented that it is valuable to have unrestricted stabilization funds.

The fincom discussed the delay in certifying free cash noting the negative impact of not having free cash available to appropriate and leaving the current financial position of the District somewhat uncertain. Discussion also included the point that the District had not always clearly stated where we were in the certification process during various meetings. The fincom and audience discussed the issue of setting deadlines for activities and the history of the District with respect to project management timelines.

With respect to the fincom position for the Special District meeting, Mr. Parenti suggested that the Fincom be strongly in support of the revised budget. Mr. Petersen commented that independent of the decision of the Commissioners with respect to the Fincom recommendation regarding revenue there would be little point in voting down the budget a second time and noted that a 22% increase in user charges runs the risk of decreasing voter support for the District.

Given the significant change to the budget, Mr. Conant commented that the Special meeting needed to provide a clear rationale for the change from the Annual meeting. Fincom discussed the merits of having a robust presentation by the Commissioners or management of the changes prior to consideration of the warrant article. The fincom also discussed the merits of including article explanations in the warrant. Mr. Parenti commented that he had spoken to Mr. Rosen about the value of including article explanations but had been unable to convince Mr. Rosen or the Commissioners to adopt this practice.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:32 PM (Petersen moved, Guthlein seconded, unanimous approval)

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