

Key Topics: FY22 Capital and Operating Budget, Drought/Water Conservation Update, PFAS Update, and COVID-19 Update

CAMBRIDGE WATER BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

June 8, 2021

As a result of the Walter J. Sullivan Water Purification Facility being closed to the public due to COVID-19, this meeting is available virtually on Zoom. This meeting is being recorded.

This meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. at 250 Fresh Pond Parkway, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Those in attendance via *Zoom* were:

Cambridge Water Board (CWB): Ann Roosevelt, Mike McNeley, Kathleen Kelly and Jason Marshall

Cambridge Water Department (CWD): Sam Corda, Dave Kaplan, Fred Centanni, Ed Dowling, Jamie O'Connell, Anna Van Dreser and Mark Gallagher

A. MINUTES OF MAY 11, 2021 MEETING

Mr. Marshall moved, and Mr. McNeley seconded the motion to approve the May 11, 2021 minutes as written. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

B. MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

FY22 Budget Update: Mr. Centanni discussed the FY22 Water Department Operating and Capital Budgets. To view the budget, visit the City Web Page with the link below:

<https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/budgetdepartment/FinancePDFs/fy22submittedbudget/fy22submittedbudgetbook.pdf>

FY21 Revenue Projections: The Water Department financially is an enterprise fund which means that all operating and capital expenditures are funded through our water rates. Metered revenue projections are down ~7.5% from what we budgeted for FY21. The water pumped information allows us to see the trend of what to expect for future billings. The usage dropped off with the COVID19 shutdown in March of 2020. Helping to offset the projected revenue (decrease) were savings from less water production, such as less electricity and chemicals, as well as our miscellaneous revenue from items such as construction permits and backflow device testing.

FY22 Budget: The ~\$19M budget includes a 1% water rate increase from FY21. The capital portion of the budget request is \$5.3M which includes the first phase of the SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) Upgrade for the treatment plant.

Questions/Comments: We have a contract with CPower and get "paid" to shut down the plant if, and when, requested. The request is typically based on the mechanical status of the electrical grid. Our demand response/ turning off the plant on "Tag" day, is an essential way the City's demand charges get reduced.

Is PFAS Removal Budgeted in FY22: The replacement of the Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) in our filters was appropriated as part of the FY21 capital budget. Appropriated capital funds remain until spent.

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PFAS6 Update: The ~\$115,000 DEP grant to assist with the payments for the pilot study was appropriated by City Council. This enables CWD to request a reimbursement for funds spent on the pilot testing. At this time, we have completed all the bench scale pilot testing and data is back from the labs. CDM is analyzing the data and a preliminary report is pending. Granular activated carbon (GAC) filter media replacement will commence after MassDEP approval. Once the GAC Carbon is approved the replacement will go through the bid process and subsequently contracted out. We continue to test below the action level of 20ppt (MassDEP promulgated the PFAS6 regulation effective as of January 1, 2021). The level of PFAS6 in our finished water for May is 14ppt. Our goal is to be below 10ppt for PFAS6 at all times.

Drought/Water Conservation Update: The drought committee met today, and the recommendation is that the Northeast region will stay at level zero and the Western and Southeast Regions remain at level one. The rainfall at the end of May brought us up to above average. The state has modified its drought management plan to be ultra-sensitive. We are in the process of renewing our water registration; working with the law department and the City manager to figure out how do we want to work towards not having DEP condition water registrations. When it was established in 1986, they said they were never going to touch water registrations. Mass Waterworks support all the water purveyors in the state and are advocates politically, as well. Cambridge water usage is significantly below other towns. Our population is going up and yet we've dropped water consumption due to water conservation efforts. The residential gallons per day per capita, for Cambridge, is approximately 48 and the state standard is 65. The residents in Cambridge are doing their part and we feel we won't go above our water registration amount. Our water registration is 16.16 MGD. A permit from MassDEP is needed to withdraw more.

We are continuing with our water conservation efforts via daily water conservation Tweets, updating our webpage with conservation tips on a regular basis, cable tv blurbs, indoor/outdoor water conservation stuffers and notes on the bills

COVID-19 Update: The City will continue to follow their own internal guidelines until June 15th. On June 15th, the State is removing all the emergency orders (including Zoom meetings), related to COVID19. The City can only make recommendations after that point. The City is slowly bringing things back to normal. Starting July 19th, 100% public access will be granted to all public buildings; all employees are expected back. The City continues to be flexible with employees working at home through September 17th, but with more stringent criteria. Around the Reservation bubblers will be open, one-way directional signs and mask signs will be removed. Permitting for outdoor use of the Reservation is open again. Larger events still requiring caution.

C. OPERATIONS

Transmission and Distribution:

Questions/Comments: None

Watershed:

Questions/Comments: In response to Mr. Marshall’s question about the progress of the bike path Mark Gallagher said they are moving forward, with curbing and final paving soon. Ms. Kelly has concerns about the new electricity/connection box conduits and is concerned we would be forced to light the pine forest area to justify the costs. Mr. Gallagher said the precast structures were not expensive. There is no wiring in place. Mr. Corda said it was prudent to install those at the time of construction. Mr. Corda re-iterated from past meetings that lighting would not go in without the correct due process. Mr. Corda said the cost of the conduits at bike path installation is a lot less than the potential cost of digging up the path to install them, should the option of lighting be chosen. Mr. Marshall noted there is a value in the “option”.

Two-foot Dredge at Black’s Nook: Ms. Roosevelt asked for a recap of the formal recommendation as voted by the board due to her absence from that meeting. Mr. Kaplan is very much for the two-foot dredge and thinks it’s the least cost option that meets all the goals that were set out in the pre-planning processing. Mr. Kaplan thinks this will give us a good product for a long period of time. This project could be 2-3 years from now until it can be funded. There is a significant amount of permitting and sediment water testing to be done in order to get the permits in place. The cost estimate of \$300,000 from the engineers, could be \$500,000 in the future. This project may qualify for some state grants.

Mr. McNeley moved, and Ms. Roosevelt seconded the motion to accept the water department’s recommendation to undertake a 2-foot dredge at Black’s Nook as described more fully by the Hatch Associates report. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Little Fresh Pond Shoreline Access Restoration Project:

Ms. Roosevelt moved, and Mr. Marshall seconded the motion to approve the Preferred Option from the Hatch Study. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Permit Requests:

Mr. Kaplan received two usage research permit requests. One from a grad student affiliated with a group at BU and research on deer impact to vegetation communities. The application was thorough. The 2nd request was for monitoring loons from the Bio-diversity Research Institute. Research will be shared with us. The board had no objections to these permits and Mr. Kaplan will go ahead with the approval and coordination with the permittees.

Water Operations:

No Comments

Engineering:

No Comments

Business/Billing:

No Comments

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D. ACTION ITEMS

Two-foot Dredge at Black's Nook

Mr. McNeley moved, and Ms. Roosevelt seconded the motion to accept the water department's recommendation to undertake a 2-foot dredge at Black's Nook as described more fully by the Hatch Associates report. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Little Fresh Pond Shoreline Access Restoration Project:

Ms. Roosevelt moved, and Mr. Marshall seconded the motion to approve the Preferred Option from the Hatch Study. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

E. MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

None

F. NEW BUSINESS

None

G. NEXT MEETING DATES/AGENDA – Meetings via Zoom

- September 14, 2021: Approved/Water Quality Update
- October 12, 2021: Approved/Fresh Pond Reservation/Eco-Counter Report
- November 16, 2021: TBA/PFAS6/Filter Media
- December 14, 2021: TBA/TBD

Mr. McNeley moved, and Mr. Marshall seconded the motion to adjourn the Zoom meeting at 6:51 pm. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.