

Key Topics: Drought/Water Conservation & Transmission and Distribution System Updates

CAMBRIDGE WATER BOARD

**MEETING MINUTES**

March 14, 2023

*Due to COVID-19, this meeting is available virtually on Zoom. This meeting is being recorded.*

This meeting was called to order at 5:03 p.m., those in attendance via *Zoom* were:

**Cambridge Water Board (CWB):** Ann Roosevelt, Kathleen Kelly, Benjamas Lendorff and Mike McNeley.

**Cambridge Water Department (CWD):** Owen O’Riordan, Sam Corda, Fred Centanni, Mark Gallagher, Julie Greenwood-Torelli, Jamie O’Connell, Dave Kaplan, Krystyna McNally, and Rich Holly.

**A. MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 21, 2023, MEETING**

Ms. Lendorff moved, and Mr. McNelly seconded the motion to approve the February 21, 2023, minutes. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

**B. MANAGING DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

*Drought /Water Conservation Update:* January precipitation measured at 3.66” over average, February measured at 1.4” below average. So far March measures at 4.64”, which is slightly over average.

*Transmission and Distribution System Update:* As presented by Mark Gallagher, Director of Engineering and Distribution Operations, in Power Point format. A link to this presentation may be found at: <https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/waterdepartment/waterboardminutes/transmissionanddistributionpresentation.pdf>

**C. OPERATIONS**

**Transmission and Distribution:**

*Questions/Comments:* It was asked if we suddenly switched over to MWRA water, would that have a negative consequence on our fire hydrant infrastructure upgrades.

Mr. Gallagher said MWRA provides water only. We would still be responsible for maintaining and operating the distribution system to our standards.

**Watershed:**

*Questions/Comments:* Re: Mass DEP allowing sewerage as proposed for the redevelopment project at 1265 Main Street in Waltham. CWD escalated the matter to DEP because we didn’t want to get on board with anything that might be in conflict with new sewer lines in the Zone A. Mass DEP decided to look at the redevelopment in total and determined there were enough improvements from both phases of the development, as a whole. Sewer was there previously (clay pipes) and was removed 10 years ago. This was used as the baseline by DEP. The new sewerage will be modern and not seen as “new” sewerage.

*Questions/Comments:* Does this set a precedent?

Mr. O’Riordan said, as stewards, the water department approached this rather judiciously.

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*Questions/Comments:* Mr. Kaplan commented that we don't anticipate being any less aggressive in challenging any other developments. We hope to be involved earlier in the process with developers to point them to prohibitions and have those on their radar, so that they design an appropriate redevelopment project that avoids our even having to weigh in on new sewerage in Zone A. We are trying to be more proactive in getting people to understand what the regulations and setback requirements are.

*Questions/Comments:* Re: Cambridge Watershed Protection Land, Lincoln dumping concerns. (Rusted metal and rusted wheel barrel) and possible vegetation damage near powerlines next to an Eversource easement. The materials look "old." We may make a site visit and try to identify what it is and remove it. It was noted we have a good relationship with Eversource, and we may reach out to them. It's good timing as we would like to discuss some pole erosion from their current pole replacement project.

*Questions/Comments:* Re: Proposal to develop a solar field on a steep slope abutting Cambridge Land near Hobbs Brook Reservoir. A hearing is scheduled for May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Revised plans have been submitted by the proponent which address some of our comments. The project will be set further back outside the Zone "A" and will be located on both sides of the utility easement. This is a tricky project for such a steep slope and there will be stormwater runoff/discharge into Zone "A" even though it's set back. We hired Kleinfelder for a peer review. We will be submitting some more comments to the proponent.

### **Water Operations:**

*Questions/Comments:* *The monthly average is 11.2 MGD. The Daily maximum is 12.86 MGD. It is starting to rebound from Covid. What if it goes to 13.6 MGD? What would be the figure that would be a problem? Is there a daily limit maximum? Is there a maximum that our system can support?*

Mr. Corda said the water annual daily average is 13.1 MGD, which is where we were prior to Covid. The drought methodology changed in the last few years and droughts are claimed sooner. We don't expect there to be any impact. From a revenue perspective we have had decent revenues after the last few years. Our water withdrawal limit is 16.16 MGD on Annual Average. If it hit that amount, we would have to purchase water from MWRA. We can produce 24 MGD a day and we have 32 million gallons of storage in Payson Park

*Questions/Comments:* A contract has been awarded with CDM Smith to begin the Demand Study. Water conservation has had a significant impact on water use in the city. All the latest info up to 2022 will be included in the study. Based on the past, even with the city growing, we continue to reduce our demand. Water conservation efforts such as working with DPW on city irrigation and working with facilities that use cooling systems and chillers in the summer.

### **Engineering:**

*Questions/Comments:* *Re: Lead Services Locations. Can these services be blended into GIS efforts to make it easier for the public (owners and tenants) to see if they have lead services?* We have the working list on our website and have the availability to work with owners at their schedule. The owner's contractor must disconnect the service in the basement and break it free of the foundation wall. We do the street side work. After we replace the old lead service line, their

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contractor hooks it up and repairs the wall. A lot of lead is in the plumbing fixtures within people's homes; we do not have control over that.

Keeping our PH level at 9 to prevent lead and copper from leaching into the water is a way we can almost eliminate any issues in this regard. We are going to survey the City and we are going to be visible about the lead services. Currently there are approximately 1,900 lead services from the original 11,000 in the city.

### **Business/Billing:**

*Questions/Comments:* Water fund balance continues to be drawn down. We are allocated another \$3.5 M to start the Scada system (Supervisory control and data acquisition) upgrade. It was asked what the timeline was for the proposal before going to the city council. We had a meeting to review the budget with the city manager a few weeks ago. The rate is still being finalized. The next phase will be putting the rate letter together and going before the council next Monday. Rates will be approved at the rate letter hearing. Ms. Lendorff asked if waterboard members could be notified once the water department has finalized the rates. Mr. Corda said that will be fine. The council documentation will be forwarded to the board members.

### **D. ACTION ITEMS**

None

### **E. MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE AND ITEMS OF INTEREST**

RE: Mass DOT 2022 Snow and Ice Control Program.

Since the 1985 original study, chloride concentrations have gone up. The Mass DOT recently completed study didn't do any normalization for flow rates so concentrations can vary year to year. Concentrations have gone up quite a bit since 1985. Mass DOT has been putting less salt down on the roads since 2011 since they implemented efficiency measures. It was noted that a dry year makes salt concentrations go up. We have asked if the industry standard of concentration could be lower.

Ms. Roosevelt expressed her Congratulations on the Water Fluoridation Quality Award.

### **F. NEW BUSINESS**

None

### **G. NEXT MEETING DATES/AGENDA – Meetings via Zoom**

- May 9, 2023: TBA/TBD
- June 13, 2023: TBA/TBD
- September 12, 2023: TBA/TBD

The meeting ended with these words of thanks by Ms. Roosevelt:

“Mr. Corda, on behalf of the waterboard you've been a great managing director, great to deal with, been right on top of questions and willing to work things out. We appreciate your care and your care of the water supply and how well you've managed the plant. Thank you for everything.”

Ms. Roosevelt moved, and Ms. Lendorff seconded the motion to adjourn the Zoom meeting at 6:29 pm. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.