

Key Topics: Drought/Water Conservation Update, PFAS6 Update, COVID-19 Update,
Water Rate Update

CAMBRIDGE WATER BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

April 12, 2022

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. at 250 Fresh Pond Parkway, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Those in attendance via *Zoom* were:

Cambridge Water Board (CWB): Mike McNeley, Jason Marshall, Jim Burruss and Ann Roosevelt.

Cambridge Water Department (CWD): Sam Corda, Dave Kaplan, Jamie O'Connell, Anna Van Dreser, Krystyna McNally, Fred Centanni, Julie Greenwood-Torelli, Mark Gallagher and Linda Vierboom.

A. MINUTES OF MARCH 8, 2022, MEETING

Mr. Burruss moved, and Mr. McNeley seconded the motion to approve the March 8, 2022, minutes as written. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

B. MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Drought /Water Conservation Update: There is no drought in Massachusetts per the DEP or US Drought Monitor. Predictions are for slightly above average rainfall for the next three months. We are continuing our water conservation efforts via social media, and plan to mail water conservation pamphlets in the spring as inserts with the water bills.

Covid-19 Update: Masks and special requirements have been dropped by the city. There has been an uptick in the Omicron BA.2 subvariant numbers. We decided to continue to have meetings remotely and, for the near future, there are no large type meetings scheduled at the department. Air purifiers continue to run, and disinfection of the building continues twice daily. Monthly tours have resumed at the plant. Fresh Pond Day will not be held this year however we may have a mini-Fresh Pond Day. Monthly tours will resume in May. Masks are provided to those on tour who request them.

Questions/Comments: Ms. Roosevelt asked if there has been an uptick of Covid19 cases in the building. Mr. Corda said there has been but there have been no close contact issues and has had negligible effects on our operation.

PFAS6 Update: We continue to remain in full compliance with the Mass DEP PFAS Regulations. The first quarter average tested at 12.9 ppt's. April tested at 15 ppt's. As noted previously, lower outside temps typically yield lower numbers. The Granulated Activated Carbon (GAC) media replacement project has been put out to bid. Once the bid is approved and contractual work is completed, we expect replacement to take 6-12 weeks. (Replacement takes about one week per filter.)

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Questions/Comments: Ms. Roosevelt asked if PFAS levels would decrease after the installation of a single GAC filter. Mr. Corda said we will likely change two filters at a time, and PFAS levels will decrease after the completion of each filter changeout. Each filter will be monitored on a regular basis to confirm/determine PFAS removal efficiency.

The Distribution Update has been tabled to the May meeting. Tentatively, the PFAS update will be discussed at the June meeting.

Water Rate: The establishment of the FY23 Water/Sewer rates remain challenging with consumption still lower than Covid levels. This ultimately impacts water and sewer revenues. FY23 water and sewer rates will be increasing and the FY23 operating budget is pretty much set. (This includes budget for salaries, operations costs including costs for electricity and chemicals, etc.)

Revenue remains down although it has been increasing slightly every month. Our typical top users - Harvard and MIT are not fully back to student/staff capacity. As a result, we have reduced our capital budget to water main work, Fresh Pond master plan obligations and USGS gaging stations. The SCADA Project continues, and the remaining monies are going to be allocated for this project from the fund balance in the FY23 budget. As revenues continue to rebound, in future years we will likely be able to return to our typical pay-as-you-go capital budget.

We have been dealing with an increase in costs. Two places we have seen significant increases are chemicals and water work materials. Pipe is becoming difficult to purchase. We have pipe in stock and can cover leaks and emergencies, but planned work may have to wait until availability improves and costs come down.

Questions/Comments: Mr. Marshall asked if SCADA costs could be spread out during FY's. Mr. Corda said we have already appropriated some funds with the remaining funds to be appropriated in FY23.

Mr. McNeley asked if ARPA Funding carries forward after FY24 & FY25. Mr. Corda said the ARPA funds are for projects completed through 2024. The majority of ARPA funds will be spent on Covid-19 related items. The City has allocated ARPA funds for GAC media replacement for PFAS removal. We are looking into future funding possibilities from the Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act (IIJA) for continued PFAS removal, lead service line replacement and other water infrastructure needs.

C. OPERATIONS

Transmission and Distribution:

Questions/Comments: None

Watershed:

Questions/Comments: Ms. Roosevelt commented on the large number of projects in the watershed.

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Ms. Roosevelt asked why the solar field proposal is feasible now and not in the previous year. Ms. O'Connell said the proponent has made the design scope smaller and has dropped the CWD property access road proposal. Instead, they have purchased property in Waltham for access to the property. The steep slope would be graded up to our property line. The City of Waltham had a legal challenge pending and lost that case. There will be a ruling. The Lexington planning board will have a hearing on this subject in May and we will have an opportunity to present formal comments.

Water Operations:

Questions/Comments: Water usage is slightly above last March. (Other communities have reported this, also.)

Engineering:

Questions/Comments: Ms. Roosevelt asked why we provide feedback to contractors (provide feedback to utility design Spinelli Place....) Mr. Corda said to protect our water supply system, feedback related to water main work and locations of water services is given to contractors.

Ms. Roosevelt asked if we had a list of lead services. Mr. Corda said we have a list of lead services, and it is updated routinely as we acquire more information. With the new lead and copper rule, effective in late 2024, we will need to know as much as we can about the lead service lines and will continue and expand our lead service line removal plan.

Business/Billing:

Questions/Comments: Our water fund balance is at \$10.8 million as of 6/30/2021.

D. ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Permit for Use of Reservation Land for a Memorial Walk.

Questions/Comments: It was asked if, during the current permit moratorium, Fresh Pond Reservation should support the Memorial Walk requested to be held on a weekday in early summer.

In order to make an informed decision the board would like to investigate this further and review the current permit moratorium information. The board agrees to defer action until the next water board meeting. Mr. Kaplan said we can send any additional info we can find to the board to help in making this decision. Mr. Kaplan will reach out to the applicant and ask them to discuss the proposal in their own words.

E. MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

Questions/Comments: No Comments

F. NEW BUSINESS

None

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G. NEXT MEETING DATES/AGENDA – Meetings via Zoom

- May 10, 2022: Approved/Distribution Update
- June 14, 2022: Approved/FY23 Budget/GAC Filter Media Update
- September 13, 2022: TBA/TBD
- October 11, 2022: TBA/TBD
- November 8, 2022: TBA/TBD
- December 13, 2022: TBA/TBD

Mr. Marshall moved, and Mr. Burruss seconded the motion to adjourn the Zoom meeting at 5:57 pm. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.