

Key Topics: PFAS, Drought, Lead Service Renewal, Fresh Pond Public Service Engagement Recap

CAMBRIDGE WATER BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

December 10, 2024

This meeting is available virtually on Zoom and in person. 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, Benjamis Lendorff, James Burruss, Tahir Kapoor and Kathleen Kelly.

Cambridge Water Department (CWD): Mark Gallagher, Fred Centanni, Dave Kaplan, Tim Puopolo, Julie Greenwood-Torelli, Rich Lagerholm and Linda Vierboom.

A. MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 12, 2024, MEETING

Mr. Burruss moved, and Ms. Lendorff seconded the motion to approve November 12, 2024, minutes as written. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

B. MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

PFAS Update: Fourth quarter PFAS6 sample results were 4ppt. We've scheduled the next carbon change out for January 2025. (Changing two filters in January, two in February and two in March.) The current vendor (Calgon) contract ends after this removal. Pending the upcoming signed vendor contract (Calgon), we can apply for and will receive an additional one million dollars of ARPA funding (grant) for the next change out.

Drought: All of Massachusetts continues in Critical Drought except for the Cape and the islands which are in Mild Drought status. Our storage bottomed out in November (750MG/Hobbs Brook storage) and currently is seeing some recharge thanks to some rain events over the last couple of weeks. Storage is currently 900MG (Million Gallons). We are still drawing off of our storage at Hobbs Brook, but the rains are helping us to hold steady. More rain is anticipated next week, and precipitation patterns have somewhat normalized with average rainfall.

Questions/Comments: At our lowest, we had about 23 days of storage. Now, at current rate (if there was no more recharge) and if nothing changed, we have about 133 days of storage. We continue to monitor and to remind people they still need to conserve.

Questions/Comments: The Deputy City manager has asked Mr. Gallagher for weekly updates, and the Deputy City manager will update the City Council and City Manager.

EPA Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR) initiated by the EPA and the federal government. Municipalities nationwide have until 2027 to have a lead service replacement plan in place. The federal government will give until 2037 to get all lead services out of distribution systems to be in full compliance with federal law. Mass DEP has required all Massachusetts municipalities to have their service line inventory complete and know where all their lead services are by October 16, 2024, and mail notifications to every property that has lead, galvanized needing replacement or unknown service by November 16th. We sent out five thousand letters and have been inundated with responses. Our distribution staff have been doing a great job of responding to customers and working with property owners.

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The first step is to verify the service, either onsite or per photo sent in by customer. If the service type is listed as unknown, they are given instructions on how to contact the water department so we can identify the material type of the unknowns. We've found about 150 copper lines that we previously identified as "unknown" material type. Seven lead services have been updated in the last two weeks. We have about thirteen years to get this done per the federal regulations. We've applied for approximately 6.5M in state revolving funds and are trying to get all lead services removed in five years.

Questions/Comments: How long does it take to provide water sample results to customers? Mr. Gallagher said it takes approximately two to three weeks.

We explain to callers that water coming out of the plant has a PH of 9.2 which prevents lead and copper from leaching out of the pipe. Cambridge is well below what the future federal regulation will require. Typically, all of our water samples come back as non-detects for lead.

We provide free lead testing for all Cambridge residents. Lead sample kits are kept in the foyer of the front lobby. We can deliver sample kits if necessary. In the past three weeks we've tested 172 samples for lead. This equates to about a year's worth of sampling in just three weeks. Rich and his staff in the lab are doing an amazing job. Jeremy Halsdorff, who does a lot of in-house IT, has developed a QR code system which has been very efficient in processing sample requests.

If we are doing a watermain replacement project scheduled through DPW chapter 90 or from our internal list of mains that need to be replaced, the water department will cover the complete cost of replacing lead service lines all the way to the meter. We have a list of main replacement addresses, and timelines which property owners may use to coordinate their replacement.

Fresh Pond Public Engagement Re-Cap: Presented in slide format by Ranger Tim Puopolo. Different events reach different people at different walks of life. Ranger Tim highlighted the following four large scale, festival styling program events.

14th Annual Fresh Pond Day, 2024: Goal~ Promote the water department, promote inter-City collaboration, share sustainability resources, community building, introduce Fresh Pond to the public. Attendance: 900

10th Annual Monarch Butterfly Release Celebration: Goal~ Promote restoration work, relate meadows to water quality, pollinator awareness. Attendance: 275

Questions/Comments: The Junior Ranger Badge Program uses an activity booklet with a series of activities to complete, including learning about the Monarch Butterfly. Upon completion, the junior rangers take their oath and receive a highly coveted plastic junior ranger badge. Ms. Roosevelt said this is wonderful and is a great idea.

1st Annual Cambridge Mothball: Goal~ Promote restoration work, relate woodlands to water quality, pollinator awareness, launch monarch campaign. Attendance: 150

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Questions/Comments: The event was held during national moth week. There is a dedicated crowd to moths, and several people came dressed as moths. There was a strong turn out from the LGBTQIA+ community.

Questions/Comments: What was the most interesting moth seen at the event?
Ranger Tim said the “coolest” moths come out about 2 a.m. Our traps which were set out the evening prior failed due to rain that evening. Ranger Tim said that although there were no rare or magical moths observed that evening, it was a magical night overall.

Total Eclipse of the Park: Goal ~ City featured event, science of phenology.
Elements: Live music, various optical experiments, 1,000 free commemorative viewing ISO glasses, popcorn, interspersed educational displays featuring community and wonder.
This “City” featured event was the biggest event held at Fresh Pond in its history and had over 2,000 participants in attendance.

Questions/Comments: Ranger Tim is looking into the possibility of an indoor night sky projection system which could be used in our lobby.

Questions/Comments: Ms. Roosevelt was at the eclipse event and said it was an amazing event, and everyone was having a great time. She commented that Ranger Tim is doing a great job.

C. OPERATIONS

Transmission and Distribution:

No comments

Watershed:

Questions/Comments: Ms. Roosevelt said the watershed division is doing such a great job with funding through grants.

Questions/Comments: Are we doing the gatehouse masonry repairs in the winter?
These contractors have a lot of experience. There is a temperature limit with grout work. They are using tenting and heating on exterior portions.

Questions/Comments: Industrial Leaf and Yard Waste Compost Facility:
This was a proposed development on a parcel in Weston in zone “A” which required storm water management. This is prohibited in zone “A”. The proponents withdrew their proposal upon realizing the conflict.

Questions/Comments: 8 Hawk Road, Lincoln proposed pasture for livestock. Is this in zone “A”?
Mr. Kaplan said it’s a residence that would like to keep a few goats on their property. We are trying to confirm wetland delineation and investigate tributary hydraulic connectivity. Mr. Kaplan said per regulations for livestock you can’t stable or hitch animals within 100 feet of a tributary to a water supply.
It’s good that we point out zone “A” restrictions so that conservation commissions and local reviewing agencies will be more aware of them.

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Questions/Comments: Re: 254 Cambridge Turnpike, Lincoln. Dumping on CWD property. A neighbor, without a wetlands permit, was encroaching on our land while doing some clearing. This was inadvertently found while in process of removing deer stands on our property.

Questions/Comments: Is there a predictor for precipitation?
National and Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) publishes 3- and 6-month seasonal forecasts. It deals with averages. We can't rely on this. We can put some graphics together and present this at the next waterboard. Ms. Roosevelt said the science of weather is making some strides and it be interesting to know what they think is going to happen over the next (3) months. Our system is small. It empties quickly but also re-fills quickly. If we don't recharge by the first of July, the system will fail (need to use MWRA water). If we are low, and need to preserve our storage, we could use MWRA water intermittently.
Storage is increasing and our watershed is starting to increase with recent rain events.

Water Operations:

Questions/Comments: November used 11.9 MGD. Typically, January has the lowest daily demand.

Engineering:

No comments

Business:

Questions/Comments: Why is November billed water consumption down by almost 2%.
Mr. Centanni said this is due to the fluctuating nature of industrial sewer abatement accounts.

D. ACTION ITEMS

Election of the President:

Ms. Roosevelt was nominated to be the President of the Cambridge Water Board for 2025.
Ms. Kelly moved, and Mr. Burruss seconded the motion to elect Ms. Roosevelt as President of the Water Board for CY2025. 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

- January 14, 2025: Approved/TBD

Ms. Roosevelt moved, and Ms. Kelly seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:11 pm. All were in favor of the motion.