

CAMBRIDGE WATER BOARD

**MEETING MINUTES**

September 12, 2023

*This meeting is available virtually on Zoom. This meeting is being recorded.*

This meeting was called to order at 5:08 p.m., those in attendance via *Zoom* were:

**Cambridge Water Board (CWB):** Ann Roosevelt, James Burruss, and Benjamas Lendorff.

**Cambridge Water Department (CWD):** Mark Gallagher, Fred Centanni, Krystyna McNally, Julie Greenwood-Torelli, Dave Kaplan, and Jamie O'Connell.

**A. MINUTES OF JUNE 13, 2023, MEETING**

Ms. Lendorff moved, and Mr. Burruss seconded the motion to approve the June 13, 2023, minutes as written. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

**B. MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

***Summer Review:*** Mr. Gallagher has made a request to city hall to petition for a new waterboard member now that Mr. McNeley has vacated the position.

***Retirement:*** The head of the law department, Nancy Glowa, is retiring next week. Ms. Glowa has been integral to our operations here.

Ms. Roosevelt moved, and Mr. Burruss seconded the motion, wishing Nancy Glowa well and thanking her for excellent service and help in the water department. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Sad Announcement:*** CWD employee Walter Bernis passed away unexpectedly last Thursday. Walter began his career here in 1994 and held the role as Inventory Control Specialist for the last ten years. Mr. Gallagher described Walter as the glue that kept the department together. He will be missed both personally and professionally.

Ms. Roosevelt made a motion to convey condolences on behalf of the waterboard to Walter's family, stating he was such an important part of the water department. He will be sorely missed. All were in favor of the motion.

***Fresh Pond Day:*** The event was a smashing success and received a great turnout, including the deputy city manager, Owen O'Riordan, who was very impressed. Kudos to Ranger Tim for pulling this all together. In addition, we are looking at bringing back our annual Water Day with local schools next year. The event has been in hiatus since the start of COVID.

***Annual Monarch Butterfly Release:*** Ranger Tim held his annual butterfly release a month ago; releasing an even greater number of Monarchs since the previous year's event. Approximately 250 people were in attendance. Next year will mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the butterfly release.

## Key Topics: Summer Review, PFAS Update, FY23 Budget Closeout, SCADA

**Letters from Elizabeth Stokes Regarding 10 Newell Terrace:** Ms. Stokes lives on a private way and first contacted the water department in 2021 when she saw she had a lead service line going into her home. There is a 2” lead service line that feeds 2 properties on Newell Terrace. The property owner requested that we replace the lead line in the private way. Mr. Gallagher said we couldn’t do that because its considered private property (appx 150’). He did agree that the portion in the public right of way would be replaced by CWD.

In the 90’s we opted to take on the responsibility of replacing the portions of the lead service in the public right away as a motivator to try and help property owners “Get the Lead Out”. The property owner has always been responsible for the portion on private property and that includes private ways

In March Ms. Stokes law firm sent a letter stating she found a city utility easement from 1925. This easement has the verbiage that included water pipes. Her contention was that since the city had an easement, the city should be responsible for the private way replacement. It is currently with the law department for review. Two months went by, and her initial letter was not responded to by the law department. As a result, she sent copies of the original letter to the city council, city manager and waterboard members. We have been following our policy and replaced the pipes right up to the property line.

In response to an independent lab action sample the owner had taken, we want to make sure the samples follow all state sampling protocols and Mr. Gallagher has been in contact with Ms. Stokes to obtain confirmatory water samples. We are currently awaiting response from the law department.

**Questions/Comments:** Ms. Lendorff asked when the law department would answer the letter. Mr. Gallagher expressed his hope that their response would be expedited. Mr. Gallagher has been in contact with the property owner in the interim. He has also been in contact with Owen O’Riordan to make sure this does not fall through the cracks.

**Questions/Comments:** Ms. Lendorff asked if Mr. Gallagher could foresee this type of situation again (easement for private ways and owners requesting lead service replacements). Ms. Lendorff asked also, how many potential cases were out there.

Mr. Gallagher said a lot of private ways don’t have lead services because they are typically 4” cast iron. This is the first time he has been notified by an owner of an easement that mentions water services. The potential number of this type of easement is unknown.

**Budget FY23 Closeout:** Mr. Centanni reported that FY23 closed out June 30<sup>th</sup>. We exceeded our revenues and closed out the year very well despite materials and services costs that went up exponentially. We are fortunate that water usage has gone back up. Once auditing certifies our numbers, we should have an updated fund balance to share with the board at the October meeting.

**PFAS Update:** As touched upon at the last meeting, we were moved to quarterly monitoring since our numbers were consistently coming in under 10PPT. Our next compliance sample will be in October. For our own in-house records, we continue monthly monitoring using combined affluence samples. We are also looking at each individual filter and sample at each one. If we continue on track, our next filter change out may be possibly March/April 2024. We are still in that assessment stage. PFAS travels quickly in ground water. October is re-charge time in the watershed and historically our PFAS levels increase at that time.

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**The Health Index:** The health index is a long-established tool that EPA uses to understand health risks from chemical mixtures. The EPA is proposing four new compounds to be part of the Health Index. (GenX compounds, PFBS, PFNA and PFHXS) We have been able to look historically at what our values would be if this proposed regulation were in place right now for PFBS. We come in under one. The proposed regulation is 4PPT for PFOA and PFOS. The proposed MCL is 4PPT. There is no such thing as zero when we talk about PFAS.

Once the EPA comes out with the finalized ruling, that's when the state will revisit what's going with the "PFAS6". If a regulation comes into effect, there will be 24 months to comply. We are looking at other things we can do here to get further reductions. This is a proposed rule. It does not require any actions for drinking water systems until the rule is finalized.

**Questions/Comments:** Ms. Roosevelt commented that the EPA has one idea, and the state has another. We have to go by what the EPA sets forth, said Ms. Greenwood.

**Questions/Comments:** It was asked if our filters remove other PFAS compounds. Ms. Greenwood-Torelli said as far as we can see from our testing, other compounds which are included on our water sampling reports are also removed.

**UCMR 5** (The Fifth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule): Every three years the EPA comes out with 30 new contaminants for all public water systems to sample for. We are currently collecting for this. (29 of these contaminants are PFAS and 1 is lithium). Many of these we are already testing for. The EPA will have a look at the results and see overall if there are concerns or if they will need to make regulations. Ms. Greenwood-Torelli said we are in great shape. The way the regulations stand right now, if they said we have to do this tomorrow, we would be good.

**Lead and Copper Rule:** We are finishing up for compliance.

**PFAS testing machine is up and running:** We will be ready to start collecting samples within the next month or so.

**SCADA:** (The brain and the heart of the treatment plant system). The previous replacement bids were extremely high and were rejected. We tried to cut out a couple of things, concentrating on the critical components, and hope to go out to bid again the last week of September/first week of October. The original conservative engineers cost of the project was at 4 million dollars and the bid came back at 7 million dollars. We also are going to upgrade our Ozone system. There are newer, more efficient, and less expensive options currently available that we are looking into. The newer systems have 80% less energy use, are smaller and require less maintenance. Our current ozone generator is being phased out. The technology, though only 20 years old, is outdated. Replacement parts are hard to obtain and contractors skilled on the older system are difficult to find. Worcester is currently using this new technology and they are satisfied with it. We are going there to view their system.

**Operator Apprentice Program:** We hired an operator and have another position to fill. We have an apprentice program (Cambridge youth/young adults) with an "operator in training" here. He just received his T-1 license. The program is working out very well and we are hoping to start more apprentice programs in the near future.

## C. OPERATIONS

### **Transmission and Distribution:**

*Sewer Separation:* Ms. Roosevelt asked how much of the project was left to do. Mr. Gallagher replied that Area 4 is just starting, and we will be looking at the Willard and Brattle areas next. There are also a couple of small areas to complete.

### **Watershed:**

Our reservoirs remained at 100% capacity all summer due to all of the rain we have been getting. This has been helping us reduce our salt concentrations after the previous drought when the salt concentration levels went up. We are still spilling water in August and September, which is something we usually do in the spring and fall. Since we never dropped over the summer, we will be managing the dams, so we are at safe operating capacity. Any additional water that comes into the dam will be released right away so we don't get too full and over top in a storm. Normally we would be at our lowest right now and waiting for the rainier part of the year to refill. Daily demand goes up in the summer. Demand typically drops in the fall even though students are coming back for school. We have more than enough re-charge and capacity.

*Questions/Comments:* To protect habitat, CWD created "no mow" areas on the slopes and upper flats of Payson Park. Kudos to Payson Park "no mow" lawn from Ms. Roosevelt.

*Questions/Comments:* Census Program: The annual report summarizes the findings of our watershed water quality program. The report also quantifies the users/visitors to the reservation.

*Questions/Comments:* 104 Boston Post Rd/Weston- Why did we file in superior court? Lexington zoning regulations indicate they don't have the authority to deny the solar field proposition. They can imply reasonable conditions on the site. We feel the conditions they placed were not adequate and we appealed to superior court.

Mr. Kaplan put together the grant application to the state and was awarded a million dollars for repairs to the Hobbs Brook Gatehouse and Winter Street Dam and Outfall. We went to City council last night and appropriated money because it's a reimbursable grant. We have also been awarded \$250,000 from CPA funds to restore the Stony Brook Gatehouse. Working with the historical commission, we received historical preservation funds.

### **Water Operations:**

*Questions/Comments:* Ms. Roosevelt asked if we have we reached any problem with the daily usage maximum? Ms. Greenwood-Torelli said there are no issues. We are rated for 24 MGD. Our water management act permit is 16.16 on average. That means we can go over this when it's hot and that's okay. Our average is 10-14 MGD.

### **Engineering:**

*Questions/Comments:* The Harvard Square Kiosk project has been on hold at the request of the MBTA because of the panel that fell in the subway station. All construction activities are halted.

### **Business:**

*Questions/Comments:* None

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**D. ACTION ITEMS**

None

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

None

**F. NEW BUSINESS**

None

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

- October 10, 2023: TBA/TBD
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Ms. Burruss moved, and Ms. Roosevelt seconded the motion to adjourn the Zoom meeting at 6:38pm. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.