

CAMBRIDGE WATER BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

October 11, 2022

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

This meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m., those in attendance via Zoom were:

Cambridge Water Board (CWB): James Burruss, Kathleen Kelly, Mike McNeley, Benjamis Lendorff and Ann Roosevelt.

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

A. MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 13, 2022, MEETING

Mr. Burruss moved, and Ms. Kelly seconded the motion to approve the September 13, 2022, minutes as amended. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

B. MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Drought /Water Conservation Update: September's precipitation has been better compared to the previous months. Currently we are ~5" below average precipitation. On September 10, 2022, the EEA Secretary reduced the level 3 drought status to level 2 status. This will be reviewed again in November.

Questions/Comments: We are not using Cambridge Water. Reservoirs have gained storage in the last month

PFAS6 and Filter Media Update: Good news. We began to remove the old Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) filter media today. The plan is to install new media late next week, replacing the filter media two filters at a time.

Tomorrow the Health and Environmental Committee, a subcommittee of the City Council, will be holding a meeting at 2:00 pm regarding CWD water quality. Once the zoom link is available, Fred will send it out to the board. Ms. Roosevelt urged board members to attend, if possible.

Questions/Comments: *Is the City Health and Environmental Committee meeting usual business for the City?* Mr. Corda said the city council Health and Environmental Committee is a subcommittee that brings up issues that are relevant to the city. Mr. Lipson from the Cambridge Health Department will join in the presentation and Mr. Corda feels this meeting will clear up many misconceptions - PFAS in particular.

Questions/Comments: Ms. Roosevelt is glad this meeting will be taking place. We are an entity that is governed by state rules and regulations and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) isn't going to let us take a perfectly good water supply and shelve it.

Key Topics: Distribution System, Drought, PFAS6 & Filter Media Updates

Ms. Kelly asked what the reasoning was behind those who want to switch to MWRA water permanently? Mr. Corda said we are going to achieve similar MWRA PFAS levels once the new filter media is installed. MWRA water is not PFAS free.

The CWD August PFAS6 result of 21.6 ppt was QC disqualified by MassDEP. After resampling in August, the PFAS6 was officially 17.1 ppt. We still think we did the right thing going on MWRA water as a precaution relating to the potential PFAS6 level in August and September.

Distribution System Update- As presented by Mark Gallagher, Director of Engineering and Distribution Operations. Hydrant flushing helps clean out the lines, clears out sediment, allows us to see if we have sufficient flows and that hydrants are fully operable. Hydrants with low flow are painted black. Black hydrants indicate they can't be used in a fire because the flow is too low. Having leaks is one major reason to rehabilitate or replace old distribution system piping.

Between 2017 and 2021, 11.4 miles of water main was replaced and, as part of this work, 764 lead services were replaced (Averaging 3 lead service replacements per week). ~1,900 out of 11,000 lead services are left to be done. Supply chain issues have limited our water main work. It can take several months to receive pipe orders. We have some stockpile on hand. We are beginning a pipe exchange with DPW and City contractors. This exchange has helped us to continue to replace water mains and we are now restarting Phase 2 of the Huron Avenue work.

CWD anticipates installing (or at least starting) 3 miles of pipe this year. More lead services will be replaced. 43 fire hydrants have been upgraded from black (can't be used for a fire) to blue (highest firefighting/flow rating) as a result of our water main rehabilitation work.

Questions/Comments: Is pipe replacement limited by weather (i.e., snow)? Mr. Gallagher said we will continue right through the winter. In the winter we try to pick areas that are not in major thoroughfares.

Questions/Comments: Please explain more about lending ductile iron pipe. Mr. Gallagher said we have long standing relationships with vendors. They call us when they have a shipment and ask if we want it. Because of this we have a large stockpile. Contractors working on City projects are part of the pipe exchange and use our pipe until their shipment comes in.

Questions/Comments: What's the situation with the demand study? Mr. Corda said it's in process and we are waiting on the scope of work from CDM Smith. Once it's in we can send it to the purchasing department to develop a contract to perform the Demand Study. We expect it to be completed in the late spring/early summer of next year (2023).

C. OPERATIONS

Transmission and Distribution:

Questions/Comments: None

Watershed:

Questions/Comments: Salt Mitigation - Ms. Roosevelt remembers years ago at previous waterboard meetings when this was an issue and asked if we have any new ways to mitigate salt.

Key Topics: Distribution System, Drought, PFAS6 & Filter Media Updates

Ms. O'Conner said CWD is working with MassDOT redevelopment projects and have reviewed plans for the proposed Phase II onsite construction for 1265 Main Street in Waltham. The applicant will be reducing salt load for the campus surface parking lots and implementing best management practices (BMPs) for safety. CWD will be conferring with the applicant's salt mitigation proposal.

Questions/Comments: What does the acronym SWPPP stand for? Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan. Construction/jobs disturbing more than an acre must submit plans.

Questions/Comments: Ms. Roosevelt asked when the new GAC media will be up and running. We expect the first two filters to be finished up by the end of October. It will take up to 10 days to get the PFAS6 test results back. We will start blending the water from the two filters with MWRA water once we receive approval from DEP and the City Manager's office. We expect that the discharge for the two filters with the new GAC filter media to be "No Detects" for PFAS6. In November we will be replacing the filter media in two more filters. We should, at that point, be able to run fully on our own water. The proposed schedule is to have the filter media in the last two filters replaced in December 2022. The ideal scenario would be to be back 100% on our own water in mid-December. This will depend on the actual filter media replacement dates and PFAS6 test results. We should be able to run at about 6 MGD with two filters. This will reduce the MWRA water usage and our cost to purchase it.

Questions/Comments: Do we need additional permissions to run our water? The key is the PFAS test results. These need to be below 10 ppt and preferably "no detects" to run our water.

Water Operations:

Questions/Comments: The city purchased the Harvard Square kiosk, and we are adding a domestic water supply there. Tobin School was knocked down and we are adding new service lines for the new school.

Engineering:

Questions/Comments: We hired a new engineering intern (our second). Usually, we've had two co-ops, but we couldn't hire a second one as there was no one available. She worked for us before and reached out to us for another term – this has worked out well for us as she is trained and ready to go.

Business/Billing:

Questions/Comments: The water fund balance is at 8.69 million dollars. This is the lowest amount since the early 1990's. How are we paying for MWRA water? This amount does not include previously appropriated SCADA costs which were ~ \$3.5M. We will need to do an appropriation to pay for the MWRA water with the intent to be split 50/50 between the water fund balance and free cash. Depending on revenues we may have to cut back on capitol items over the next few years.

Questions/Comments: Who makes the decision about projects, and will the board see any of that? (For example, Black's Nook changes or delays or removals)? Mr. Corda along with input from the Department staff makes the recommendation to the City Manager during the budget process and projects are typically deferred; not removed. Ms. Roosevelt understands these are executive decisions but would like to be kept in the loop when/if scaling back of projects occurs.

Key Topics: Distribution System, Drought, PFAS6 & Filter Media Updates

Mr. Corda agreed. As an example, Fresh Pond Reservation is not as high a priority as the distribution system and dam work currently are. The first phase of the dam work is in the works. Ms. Roosevelt would like dam updates.

Little Fresh Pond upgrade is in the works and will get done after permitting is in place. We can certainly have some discussion about Reservation projects.

Water usage has been up in the last few months. If we can stabilize the revenue it will help with the “pay as you go” capital projects.

Questions/Updates: Do we need to update the water rate again? How is the rate updated?
Annually, typically in March, we go before the city council for water and sewer rates. In the budget cycle we go over our costs and based on revenue projections the water rate is determined. We have asked for a rate increase for FY22 and FY23. The city council has control over finances even though we are an enterprise fund. Once they appropriate monies we can spend as intended.

Questions/Updates: Is the water rate the same for everyone? We bill with a five-block increasing rate structure. Human services supplement water bills for special circumstances. Qualifying for fuel assistance also qualifies for the water bill reduction program. The city offers a senior discount based on age with a cap of \$90 per FY. The city also offers an income-based reduction. Mr. Centanni will send out the discount info to the board members.

D. ACTION ITEMS

None

E. MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

Questions/Comments: How do we make sure retention basins are properly maintained? What is the response time to a CWD letter? Ms. O’Connell said it’s a constant struggle. Responses depend on the entity. We inspect and follow up if need be.

F. NEW BUSINESS

None

G. NEXT MEETING DATES/AGENDA – Meetings via Zoom

- November 15, 2022: Approved/TBD
- December 13, 2022: Approved/TBD
- January 10, 2023: TBA/TBD

Ms. Kelly moved, and Ms. Lendorff seconded the motion to adjourn the Zoom meeting at 6:25 pm. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.