

CAMBRIDGE WATER BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

January 14, 2025

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, Allan Cheung, Dave Kaplan, Julie Greenwood-Torelli, Fred Centanni, Jamie O'Connell, Rich Lagerholm and Linda Vierboom.

A. MINUTES OF DECEMBER 10, 2024, MEETING

Ms. Kelly moved, and Mr. Kapoor seconded the motion to approve December 10, 2024, minutes as written. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Ms. Roosevelt suggested water board meetings be held in person April through June and again in the fall; with online winter meetings. There is a lot of value to it because it gets you to know your fellow board members a little bit better. Members appeared open to this idea with the exception of Mr. Kapoor. Mr. Kapoor would prefer hybrid meetings as it's difficult to arrive on time after work.

B. MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

PFAS Update: Sampling is currently at 4ppt. The next carbon change out is scheduled for this week, and we anticipate that our April sampling will be back at non-detect. The change out cost was estimated at 1.5M. Lately it's about 1.3M. We got the Calgon contract signed and pushed through purchasing in record time and applied for the ARPA Funds before the December 31st deadline. We received 1M of ARPA funds for the next carbon change out.

Drought: As of 1/8/2025 Massachusetts has decreased our drought status from Level 3 critical drought to a Level 2 significant drought. A city ordinance will go along with water bans to comply with Mass Clean Water Act regulation changes. To comply with the Mass Clean Water Act regulation changes, Mr. Gallagher has been working with the deputy city manager and the law department in creating a city ordinance to go along with water bans. The deputy city manager will reach out to the board president to discuss the ordinance change. This will be brought up to the city council at the city council meeting on 1/27/25.

Hobbs Brook is recharging and climbing slowly. It is currently at 1.2 billion gallons of storage. Precipitation in any form is a good thing. Last year at this time we were full at 2.58 billion gallons and held steady until 7/2024.

NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration): Seasonal data for our region towards March predicts/anticipates leaning 40-50% above normal temperatures. Models for precipitation indicate an equal chance for above or below average precipitation.

Key Topics: PFAS, Drought, SCADA Upgrade Project Presentation

SCADA Upgrade Project Presentation: As presented in slide format by project manager Allan Cheung. SCADA stands for “Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition” and is a way for the operator to control the plant through a graphical interface. The treatment plant has outgrown the current system. The new system will be faster, more capable and more cost-effective than the current system.

Comments: If a pump goes down. How does a pump alert the SCADA system that it is not working?

Pumps are hardwired for security issues. The SCADA system would ask the next pump to come online and sound an alarm over the intercom alerting the operator. The condition is rectified but the operator is notified anyway. Payson Park has its own security system for its doors.

Scope of the Project:

- Replace aging SCADA infrastructures
- SCADA software updates and enhancements
- Replace plant wide fiber optic and ethernet network
- Access and improve SCADA cyber-security
- Automate Regulatory water quality reporting

Project Timeline:

- Preliminary Study for the SCADA system began in 2018
- Project start date: May 2024
- Contract Expiration Date: May 2026
- Currently project is ahead of schedule and on budget

Project Completion:

- Project completion date May 2026
- Construction cost \$3.8M
- Design and Application engineering Cost: Estimate cost in 2021, \$2.7M
- Improved speed and efficiency
- Increase reliability and reduce downtime

Questions/Comments: Re: Cyber Security. Don't we have a closed system?

Our main system is an “island”. We do have remote sites that we have to connect to and access for cyber security.

Questions/Comments: What company is helping with the upgrade?

CDM Smith has a team of four engineers working on the project and who will be the “go to” people.

Questions/Comments: Re: SCADA Funding and the Water Fund.

The money is already appropriated/encumbered. That's not part of the current Water Fund.

C. OPERATIONS

Transmission and Distribution:

We've been busy scheduling lead service replacements. Since November we've done about 14 replacements. We continue to increase the amount to about 2-3 per week.

Questions/Comments: Ms. Lendorff asked about the Maple Ave work timeline.

Mr. Gallagher said this is a DPW Contract and we have already done the watermain work. Mr. Gallagher does not have the DPW schedule.

Watershed:

Questions/Comments: The Kingsley Park off leash area has moved for the winter to upper mall. Mr. Kaplan said this is usually a smooth transition and there are no issues at this time.

Questions/Comments: Site restoration is beginning in the spring at Enbridge. Ms. Roosevelt thanked Mr. Kaplan and his team for their efforts and for negotiating with them.

Questions/Comments: It was asked why wastewater pumps at a subdivision had stopped working. Mr. Kaplan said either mechanical or power failure resulted in an overflow into a catch basin and release into a wetland that borders a water supply tributary. This was far from the watershed. DPW did not recommend any mitigation/action.

Questions/Comments: Re: Water Supply Summary Report

Ms. O'Connell said a new table was added to help us better understand the longer-term impacts of where we are. Ideally, we should be at 90-95% in June. Ms. O'Connell will keep updating this.

Questions/Comments: Ms. Kelley asked what does the reservation have in place, or what preparation is there, for a fire on the reservation?

Mr. Kaplan said what we strive to provide, mostly, is access. This includes keeping a width of perimeter road that can support emergency vehicles, hydrants around Lusitania Meadow and quick connects to water at the golf course. We have a good connection with the Cambridge Fire Department, who use the reservoir for exercises. We also maintain those relationships with fire departments in our watershed area. We have key access points for vehicle access. There is one fire box on the building.

Questions/Comments: Ms. Kelly suggested a fire awareness public promotion/reminder in collaboration with the city or on our website to raise people's consciousness.

We do put this information out. During the drought, when fire danger was elevated, we included information on our website, and we worked with the public information office to add news bulletins and newsletters.

We have the ability to ban smoking on the reservation during times of drought when fire susceptibility is high. The City-wide ordinance governs smoking. Smoking ban is only around playgrounds and buildings.

Mr. Gallagher said we have an emergency response plan and do emergency training with the Cambridge fire department. The water department is the back up for their emergency center.

Key Topics: PFAS, Drought, SCADA Upgrade Project Presentation

Water Operations:

Questions/Comments: December's monthly average was 11.08. The daily maximum was 13.08 MGD. These numbers all fall within normal range.

Engineering:

Questions/Comments: Huron Avenue and Chestnut Street watermain projects are complete. These projects haven't been closed out because Eversource sometimes goes before our work and sometimes after.

Business:

None

D. ACTION ITEMS

None

E. MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

None

F. NEW BUSINESS

None

G. NEXT MEETING DATES/AGENDA – Meetings via Zoom

- February 11, 2025: Approved/TBD

Ms. Kelly moved, and Mr. Burruss seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:26pm. All were in favor of the motion.