

CAMBRIDGE WATER BOARD

**MEETING MINUTES**

April 9, 2024

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

This meeting was called to order at 5:01 p.m. Those in attendance via *Zoom* were:

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

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

The board welcomed their newest board member, Tahir Kapoor. Tahir is a chemical engineer who works in the biotech industry field.

Ms. Roosevelt offered a motion on behalf of the waterboard.

The waterboard congratulates Mark Gallagher on his appointment as permanent Managing Director of the Water Department. Mark has done an excellent job as interim managing director and has shown that his leadership qualities are just what the water department needs. The waterboard is delighted that we will have his steady hand guiding the department for the foreseeable future. Congratulations Mark.

**A. MINUTES OF MARCH 12, 2024, MEETING**

Ms. Roosevelt moved, and Ms. Lendorff seconded the motion to approve the March 12, 2024, minutes as amended. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

**B. MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

PFAS Update: Four out of the six filters have been changed out with new GAC (Granular Activated Carbon). We will be sampling this month for the second quarterly PFAS compliance. We anticipate Quarter Two PFAS6 compliance sampling results to be back in the "no detect" range.

For the benefit of our newest waterboard member, Ms. Greenwood-Torelli gave a brief PFAS summary as it relates to being found in everyday products, the Mass PFAS regulations, and our efforts to reduce PFAS. It was recommended that Mr. Kapoor take a tour of the plant.

Questions/Comments: Mr. Gallagher said it's a big undertaking to change out the carbon filters. Each one of our filters takes approximately 5 tractor trailer loads of carbon and the cost to change out all six filters is approximately 1.5 million dollars. We have about 14 months of life for each new filter media.

Overview of the Water Department: The water department is an enterprise fund (funded by the rate payers) with five divisions. Our capital improvement budget is well funded, allowing us to maintain up-to-date systems. Mark Gallagher has recently gone from Acting Managing Director to Managing Director of the Water Department. Having previously served as Director of Engineering and Distribution, Mark is also serving in that capacity until that position is filled.

## Key Topics: PFAS, Introduction of New Member, Overview of the Water Department

**Distribution Division:** As summarized by Mark Gallagher. The City has 185 miles of distribution piping with approximately another 25 miles of transmission mains. The oldest active main in the City was installed during the Civil War in 1864. We have almost 16,000 service connections in the City. There are approximately 27 people in the Distribution and Engineering Department. The division has all of the heavy equipment and materials needed to install and replace water main year around. The distribution department is responsible for lead service replacements, emergency leak response, and maintaining the fire hydrant system. (Mr. Gallagher said 50% of our job is fire protection and there are just under 2,000 fire hydrants.)

We are an independent system that's not dependent on the MWRA, however we have three interconnects with the MWRA. This water quality is very similar to ours. If there are issues and we need to shut down, we can shut down and seamlessly connect with the MWRA.

**Engineering:** As summarized by Mark Gallagher. This department has two full-time staff, and two co-ops (typically From Northeastern University) who rotate on a 6-month basis. Engineering handles all of our permitting. They work with groups to develop water replacement capital improvement drawings. This department maintains all of our service connection cards, updates our GIS maps, tracks lead services and facilitates hydraulic modeling.

**Watershed:** Watershed Manager Dave Kaplan presented an overview of the watershed division which is responsible for the delivery of the highest quality of raw water to Fresh Pond for the treatment plant and its operations. This includes managing watershed infrastructure, such as dams and conduit, and the land that protects it, including Fresh Pond Reservation. This department manages, maintains and programs open space and implements landscape restoration projects that were detailed in the Fresh Pond Reservation Master Plan adopted in 2001 by the City. We implement our surface water supply protection plan in the "upcountry". Routine water samples are collected in the reservoirs and tributaries that feed them. We have a "real time" water quality monitoring network. We have a fairly developed watershed which includes Routes 128 and 2 bisecting our reservoirs and contributing stormwater and potential hazardous materials releases to our reservoirs. We've partnered with first responders in Waltham to ensure the water supply remains safe. Mr. Kaplan encouraged our newest member, or existing members, to ask questions or request a watershed tour at any time.

**Questions/Comments:** Ms. Roosevelt commented that we have a very good team who keeps track of the large number of development projects in the watershed.

**Questions/Comments:** Ms. Roosevelt commented that back in the day the Waterboard was extremely forward looking and, in the middle 1800's, bought the upcountry reservoirs and that's why we have such a great water system. She recommends Jill Sinclair's fascinating book which describes the history of Fresh Pond. Ms. Roosevelt also encouraged reading the "Fresh Pond Master Plan" which is online and downloadable by chapter.

**Plant Operations:** As summarized by Jim Rita. This department is involved in energy saving/cost saving initiatives such as Go Green (operating certain pumps at certain times of the day) and Tag Day Energy. (The plant is shut down on the day we think next year's rates will be set). The department works with the lab for PFAS water testing and water quality issues, works with Mr. Kaplan's group regarding water supply issues/security, and alerts the distribution department for water breaks. Questions from board members or tours are welcome.

## Key Topics: PFAS, Introduction of New Member, Overview of the Water Department

*Questions/Comments:* Comments were made on the recent seamless transition to MWRA water when there was a backwash pipe support structural beam failure in the pipe gallery.

*Laboratory:* As summarized by Krystyna McNally. Julie Greenwood-Torelli is the director of water operations. She is the primary operator for the public water system and reports directly to Mass DEP. The lab is staffed by 6 (which includes 2 rotating co-ops from Northeastern University). 90% of water testing is done in house; 10% is sent out. We are doing more and more with our new PFAS testing equipment such as comparison studies. The laboratory tests watershed water, treatment plant water, and finished water.

Tours are open to the public on Monday nights. The tour schedule is online.

*Administration:* As summarized by Fred Centanni. The water department employs 65 people. Administration handles personnel and payroll, accounts payable/receivable, budget, cross connection, metering, quarterly water billing and weekly final billing (for sales).

*Questions/Comments:* It was asked by the new board member if the waterboard served as an advisory position or had certain powers. Where does the balance between public and water experts come into play?

Ms. Roosevelt replied that the waterboard is a different entity from most other organizations and has power. "We rarely exercise the power we have except in certain instances. We could though - that's the key. We have the power. We talk to the staff and it's a very collegial thing. In general, we talk and give advice to the department. Usually, the water department tells us what is going on and we are aware of it. The city council knows we have this power".

Mr. Gallagher said we are regulated by the DEP. Everything we do at the plant is under the direction of the DEP. The waterboard helps with managing public access and use of the reservation.

### C. OPERATIONS

**Transmission and Distribution:** *Questions/Comments:* It was asked how many lead service replacements were left to be done. We are back up to 2,800 because ones done previously from the water main to the property line but not from the property line into the building have been added back to the list in anticipation of the New Lead and Copper Rule. There are currently 500 unknowns.

**Watershed:** *Questions/Comments:* Ms. Roosevelt suggested we talk about a future tour of the upcountry watershed. All were in agreement.

*Questions/Comments:* Waltham Pump Station Encroachment: In the course of repair and restoration work at the pump station there was further encroachment. Now they have to restore more than at the beginning of the project. This is in process.

*Stoney Brook Shoreline Study:* The study is conducted annually. There is a lot of trash everywhere. It's a struggle because it's next to the highway and there's nothing to block the trash from concentrating but it does not seem to migrate out of the area. It's an issue we'd like to see if there is anything we can do about. The upper basin has a lot of fishing wire which is posing a hazard to wildlife. Dumped landscaping debris appears to be residential encroachment.

## Key Topics: PFAS, Introduction of New Member, Overview of the Water Department

It's a hard site to get to, with unstable surfaces and steep banks and so it's not an ideal spot for volunteers to tackle.

*Questions/Comments:* Can the Environmental Police be involved in the dumping site?  
Mr. Kaplan said we are going to show them around our properties and discuss routine issues we see such as hunting, ATV and fishing. They are going to add us as part of their routine. They have two officers. We are looking into video cameras as long as they meet the spirit of the City of Cambridge Surveillance Ordinance.

*Questions/Comments:* It was agreed to speak about the gatehouses at the next meeting.

*Questions/Comments:* Is there a risk in an earthquake? What are the risks?  
Mr. Gallagher said we have a full emergency response plan which covers disasters. We also have a backup water supply which we can switch over to. A natural disaster response would be handled by our citywide emergency management team.

### **Water Operations:**

*Questions/Comments:* Does limited snowfall impact drought?  
This late in the season, and with our capacity being on the full side, we are in the same shape as if there had been a snowy winter.

*Questions/Comments:* Ms. Roosevelt commented positively on the water usage figures/graphs. We are at full capacity going into the spring.

### **Engineering:**

*Questions/Comments:* No Comments

### **Business:**

*Questions/Comments:* No Comments

### **D. ACTION ITEMS**

None

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

None

### **F. NEW BUSINESS**

None

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

- May 14, 2024: Approved/TBD
- June 11, 2024: TBA/TBD (Ms. Roosevelt would like an in-person meeting.)

Ms. Kelly moved, and Ms. Roosevelt seconded to adjourn the meeting at 6:29 pm. All were in favor of the motion.

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