

CAMBRIDGE WATER BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

October 8, 2024

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 in person or via Zoom were:

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

Cambridge Water Department (CWD): Mark Gallagher, Fred Centanni, Jamie O'Connell, Dave Kaplan, Rich Lagerholm and Linda Vierboom.

A. MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2024, MEETING

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

B. MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

PFAS Update: Fourth quarter PFAS6 samples were taken last week. Results are pending.

Questions/Comments: The new EPA Federal PFAS Standard regulations were passed and won't take full effect until 2029.

Lead and Copper Rule Revision: Our updated full Water Service Inventory must be completed in the new DEP format by October 16th. All municipalities in Massachusetts (this will also be a federal standard) are required to fully identify all of their service line material. Mass DEP has set a five-year goal (not a requirement) for lead removal/copper replacement. Currently, 16% of our water services are lead. President Biden just announced the federal EPA 10-year standard for removal/copper replacement of every lead service. CWD has been doing this for years and are in good shape. We plan to submit our lead service replacement plan information by the end of the week. We have submitted applications and asked for 6.2 million in SRF (State Revolving Fund) funding. This equates to 1,600 lead replacements. SRF are zero percent interest loans and, sometimes based on the number of applicants, there is partial and even full loan forgiveness in the form of a grant. Cambridge is unique in that property owners own the service all the way out to the watermain. We are not responsible for replacing them. We are responsible to "identify lead" and work with property owners in helping by any means we can to reduce the costs to help get the lead services out. If we do the outside work replacing the water line within the public right of way from water main to the property line, and if the homeowners replace the section from the property line to the meter at the same time, typically their contractor only needs to break the existing service line free from the foundation wall/disconnect it and connect copper tubing the old line as it is pulled out by the water department. When done this way typically 80% of the cost is covered by the water department and there is minimal expense to the property owner.

CWD Source Water Protection Program Updates: Presented by Jamie O'Connell in slide format.

Staffing Update: Anna Van Dreser is now in her new role as Watershed Technical Supervisor. Emily Maynard is Watershed Management Assistant.

CWD Water quality monitoring includes twelve tributary sites and three reservoirs. Sampling is conducted 6-8x year per site, with the exception of Hobbs Brook and Stoney Brook, which are collected weekly. We have a joint funding agreement with the US Geological Survey. They have continuous monitoring stations at most of those sites and we receive real time continuous data. They will also collect some storm water samples so we can see what our water looks like during major storms.

New and in Development: Biological monitoring for algae and cyanobacteria, and Asian Clam Study. We have updated our Interactive Source Water Quality Report.

Questions/Comments: Do we test for pesticides in finished water?

Mr. Lagerholm said we do and test following the UCMR sampling frequency and DEP schedule.

We participate and voluntarily test periodically for emergent list of contaminants in the lab. This is not part of raw water sampling. If there were a spill or release in the watershed, the lab could test for contaminants. We also monitor testing that's going on at known contaminant sites and neighboring properties to make sure that there isn't any movement into our water.

Cyanobacteria: We haven't been able to check for cyanobacteria before. The consultant we've been working with did a study that found that 95% of the toxin got removed in treatment in a facility very similar to our facility.

CWD is proactive. We don't have any signs that it is of concern. The goal is to "anticipate" when a bloom "can" happen and be able to treat it at the source and not at the treatment plant.

Future goals:

- Engage consultant to help us:
 - Improve monitoring and analysis protocols
 - Understand impact on water treatment
 - Predict blooms and cyanotoxin levels
 - Develop action criteria
- Expand Program to additional Reservoirs
- Continue Developing In-House Algae, cyanobacteria, and phycocyanin analysis capacity

Questions/Comments: Possible reasons for algae: Temperature, nutrient availability, turbulence in the water.

Questions/Comments: Are we concerned about algae/cyanobacteria in Fresh Pond?

Currently, there is no impact on water treatment operations.

Fresh Pond has an aeration system, which is a tool to help prevent blooms.

Climate change could increase the risk of serious blooms due to warmer weather and more intense rainfall.

Questions/Comments: We are hoping the consultant can help with treatment criteria.

Algaecide treatments are approved and would be one option. Trying to understand where it's coming from is important.

Questions/Comments: Invasive Asian Clams are a concern because they tend to release phosphorous.

Interactive Source Water Quality Report: Sodium and chloride concentrations - The lack of rain in 2012-2017 may have caused salt concentrations to increase. Recent wet years most likely diluted salt in reservoirs; decreasing concentrations.

Questions/Comments: Ms. Roosevelt asked Ms. O'Connell to keep the board informed on cyanobacteria at every few water board meetings.

Watershed Updates: No further comments

C. OPERATIONS

Transmission and Distribution:

Questions/Comments: No comments

Watershed:

Questions/Comments: There was only one bid for the Winter Street gate house repairs. It was asked if that was usual?

Mr. Kaplan said "Yes". We've had bids go out that returned without any bids. We will vet the bid as it was submitted and make a recommendation or not to award the contract.

Questions/Comments: All Glyphosate samples were non-detect. Volunteer testing was done by the department of agriculture and done in their laboratory. They tested once a month from our raw water tap in our lab. This spanned mostly the growing season.

Questions/Comments: Re: 604B Grant opportunity for Chloride Pollution at Hobbs Brook. Ms. O'Connell said we applied through the State/DEP to develop a watershed plan to reduce chloride and develop strategies. The primary source of chloride in our watershed is from deicing chemicals. That relationship has been established since the 1990's. DOT has implemented many management changes that reduce the amount of chloride they are putting down but depending on bad snow and ice year, it can add up to more salt put down in a year. There is also a lot of development/parking areas in the watershed that haven't been studied as thoroughly as our highway layouts.

We've proposed developing a steering committee to help us develop and write a watershed-based plan to develop some strategies to reduce it. We haven't heard back from the State if we've received it.

Questions/Comments: Re: Waltham Pump Station Repair. Lots of debris have been dumped. (Mostly, landscape debris.) Waltham will install a physical barrier of boulders at the roadway leading to the pump station area, thus keeping people off the road and going into our property to dump.

Questions/Comments: The Tracer Lane (solar property) closing is targeted for Thursday.

Questions/Comments: Ms. Roosevelt commented on the large number of development projects in our watershed and said there is not a lot we can do about it. Ms. Roosevelt asked how/can we keep up.

Ms. O'Connell said we have a very robust treatment process because we are in a developed watershed. State storm water regulations are in place to mitigate issues.

Mr. Kaplan said we focus on making sure that a developer is meeting all state standards to ensure water quality, and not prohibiting development. Our team is on it.

Questions/Comments: We are not in drought. Hobbs Brook Reservoir storage is down due to lack of precipitation. Our demand isn't any higher than usual this time of year.

Water Operations:

Questions/Comments: No comments

Engineering:

Questions/Comments: What is "feedback to utility design engineers"?

Any property that is being developed needs water and we need to work with other utilities such as gas and electric; making sure their layouts are not in conflict with our utility.

Questions/Comments: What is the Harvard Square Kiosk Project? What will it be once completed?

The City owns it and is proposing to lease it. The "who" and "why" are unknown at this point.

Business:

Questions/Comments: FY24 billings were smaller than FY25 because FY2025 is projected. The water fund balance is \$6.2 million. Some will be used to pay for land acquisition.

D. ACTION ITEMS

None

E. MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

None

F. NEW BUSINESS

None

G. NEXT MEETING DATES/AGENDA – Meetings via Zoom

- November 12, 2024: Approved/TBD

Mr. Burruss moved, and Ms. Kelly seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:17 pm. All were in favor of the motion.