

CAMBRIDGE WATER BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

September 10, 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 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, Anna Van Dreser, Rich Lagerholm and Linda Vierboom.

A. MINUTES OF JUNE 11, 2024, MEETING

Mr. Burruss moved, and Mr. Kapoor seconded the motion to approve the June 11, 2024, minutes as written. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

B. MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

PFAS Update: Third quarter (July) PFAS6 results were non-detects at 1.8ppt.

Non-Detects measure less than 2ppt and are below the reading range of the testing instruments.

Questions/Comments: The EPA new Federal PFAS Standard regulations were passed and won't take full effect until 2029. The EPA standard numbers are lower for Perfluorooctanesulfonic Acid (PFOS) and Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA). These numbers can't go above 4ppt on a running "annual" average. Because it's an "annual" average of the results of the whole year, if Mass DEP sticks with the EPA regulation, we feel we will stay in compliance longer and get more life out of our carbon beds before change outs are needed. The Mass DEP PFAS standard is 20ppt. Fortunately, because MASS DEP has been so strict, we would already be in 100% compliance if it took place today. If DEP makes the standard stricter, such as results based on actual "quarterly" sample results instead of a running "annual" average, we may have to change out the carbon sooner at 10 months instead of the 14 months we change out now. We will need to wait and see what Mass DEP decides to do with the new EPA standard.

Questions/Comments: What are the health effects between the 4ppt and 10 ppt? Has there been any kind of study?

Mr. Gallagher said we have to go by the EPA and DEP for what is and what is not acceptable. Parts per trillion are extremely small amounts and the data is still somewhat inconclusive. There is still a 30% degree of error on the reading because it's hard for the instruments to be extremely accurate for such small measurements.

The MWRA is not PFAS free, and they don't have to sample that often. They call their amounts "trace" instead of providing the actual number. They don't have a filter plant and have no way to treat for PFAS. Depending how the DEP handles the new EPA guidelines, it could be a gamechanger for the MWRA.

Questions/Comments: Ms. Roosevelt said PFAS is an ongoing issue, and we have to keep it at non-detect as long as we can. Mr. Gallagher said you can find PFAS in rainwater.

ARPA funding is gone so we will have to roll carbon change outs into our annual operating costs. Each carbon change out costs 1.5 million dollars.

Questions/Comments: Ms. Roosevelt suggests any rate increases to consumers (due to PFAS removal costs) be approached as a public health and safety issue.

Questions/Comments: What is the frequency of PFAS testing?

We are required to take PFAS samples on the first month of each quarter. Initially we were on a monthly sampling schedule. Staying under 10ppt allows for quarterly sampling instead of monthly. Our running annual average is 2.8.

Supply, Demand and Distribution Update: Presented by Mark Gallagher in PowerPoint

Presentation: To view the presentation, use the link below:

<https://www.cambridgema.gov/>

[/media/Files/waterdepartment/waterboardminutes/sept24waterboardpresentation.pdf](https://www.cambridgema.gov/media/Files/waterdepartment/waterboardminutes/sept24waterboardpresentation.pdf)

Our Total Watershed area is approximately 24 square miles. Cambridge ownership is 2.4 square miles. About 10 percent is owned/controlled by the City. Only 25 % of our watershed area is protected.

“Recent” Land Acquisitions:

- Harrington Property (2005) ~ 16 Acres. Acquired/ and surrounding conservation parcels (54 acres total).
- DeNormandie & Flint (2012) ~ 74 Acres
- Rando/Stankard (Jerodel) Parcel (2015) ~ 54 Acres
- Twin Pond Lane Parcels (2022) ~ 8 Acres

Land Acquisition Opportunity: The proposal to build a large one-megawatt solar array on the Tracer property in Lexington abutting our watershed has been cancelled by the owner.

Questions/Comments: What made the owner change his plans to build a solar array?

Mr. Gallagher surmises that Zone “A” restrictions and clarifications as to where Zone “A” was located, legal fees and the appeals process were most likely the reasons. Eventually we asked to purchase the property which was assessed at \$1M (million). The owner wanted \$15M for the property. With that figure out of sight for us we said we would continue with the solar array litigation at Superior Court. We met and negotiated and came to agreement to purchase at \$3M. The City did an assessment and agreed the price was an appropriate assessment for the land at this time. We are currently in the process of purchasing the property.

After meeting with the city council, we went to the CPA (Community Preservation Association) and asked for \$1M. They will bring this up at their upcoming meeting this month. The other \$2M is slotted to come from the Water Fund. We are working with the Town of Lexington and Boston Properties, who abuts the property. Boston Properties have offered to donate to the land purchase with no strings attached. The land being undevelopable is attractive to them. This is still in negotiation. This will complete protected area in perpetuity.

Questions/Comments: Is there a plan to do anything with the stretch of land that looks like it is clear cut?

No. Eversource has an easement for power lines. The contingency of the sale is that it has to remain open space. The area will be registered as Town of Lexington conservation/watershed protection and protected in perpetuity.

Enbridge/Algonquin Gas Update: Re-cap/update: Federal suit for temporary land taking and tree removal on CWD Watershed land for staging at a meter station improvement project. In early April their (the utility) response to our request for a work proposal and timeline was what they deemed a "Final" offer packet, offering \$10,000 to use the land (timber value of the trees) and stated that if we didn't agree they would file an injunction against us in federal court under the Natural Gas Act. Our request for an extension was declined by the utility. We declined to accept their "final offer", and they immediately filed an injunction against us in court. (Temporary land taking for an easement for construction purposes.)

The federal judge said she understood the utility has the right under the Natural Gas Act to work on their infrastructure but would not issue a federal order. She said CWD requests are reasonable and commonsensical, and the utility should work with the City and come up with an approach that is amendable and reasonable to protect the interests of the citizens of Cambridge. We went to a second court date. The judge was sympathetic to us and said the water was more important and asked them to work with us. The utility was amenable and began to work with us. We are working on some of the language and specific details, and we will be getting the best deal we can. 24 trees will be removed (55 were planned), deer fence installed, trees and understory will be replanted and maintained for three years starting from the completion of the project. Any trees/shrubs that die in that period will have to be replanted. Work will start in November.

Questions/Comments: Ms. Roosevelt said it's an amazing win for the department and for Cambridge.

Questions/Comments: Who is going to follow through with the restoration efforts? They are obligated under federal law to follow the restoration plan. Once the construction is over the water department has jurisdiction over their restoration efforts.

Watershed Updates:

The Stony Brook Gatehouse masonry repairs contract was awarded. Repairs are underway. The Hobbs Brook Gatehouse and dam repair project is anticipated to start late fall/winter. The Little Fresh Pond Shoreline Restoration Project has been completed.

Questions/Comments: The Cambridge Open Data Program can be found via the link to the open data in the packet or via Google search for Cambridge Open Data Portal (search for Fresh Pond Usership). Our website has a census program page, and the report can be clicked/opened.

Questions/Comments: Re: EV "universal" vehicle charging stations at the Fresh Pond parking lot. 10 EV stations will be designated for CWD city fleet vehicles, 6 for the public; 2 of those are ADA accessible. Tesla operators will need an adapter. We are waiting on the delivery of charging pads and hoping to see installation/operable sometime this fall.

Water Main Replacement: 2024 Water Main Replacement total thus far is about 2 miles. Some watermain work is done in house and some is outsourced. We typically piggyback onto chapter 90 (DPW) projects because it is the most cost-effective way.

SCADA: The SCADA contract has been awarded and work has started. We will be able to continue to operate during the upgrade. The project is funded by the water department fund. The idea is that monies are set aside for big projects.

C. OPERATIONS

Transmission and Distribution:

Questions/Comments: How many lead services are left?

We are at 2,500. Galvanized steel must be listed as lead. Any "unknowns" have to be assumed as lead until verified.

Years ago, lead lines were replaced up to the property line only and we took it off the Lead List". Now the DEP wants those added back on because they are deemed only "partially" done. We were down to 1,300 before this.

Watershed:

Questions/Comments: What is the grant opportunity for Chloride Pollution.

Ms. O'Connor said we applied through the State/DEP to develop a watershed plan and develop strategies. We haven't heard back from the State if we've received it.

Questions/Comments: What is the Phosphorous control plan?

This is related to the clean water act and the permit that governs public storm drains. Towns that hold elimination (public storm drains) permits must comply with the permit conditions. The permit is getting more stringent, and we are looking to see if any towns are willing to collaborate.

Questions/Comments: Are the patrols by upcountry staff enough to protect our watershed?

Ms. O'Connell said they are doing a great job and are pro-active.

Questions/Comments: We are currently not in a drought.

Water Operations:

Questions/Comments: The plant daily maximum capacity is 24mg (million gallons) per day.

Engineering:

Questions/Comments: No comments

Business:

Questions/Comments: The water fund balance is \$5.08M

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 8, 2024: Approved/TBD

Mr. Burruss moved, and Ms. Roosevelt seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:27 pm.
All were in favor of the motion.