



BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS

Cotuit Fire District
Water Department

4300 FALMOUTH ROAD, P. O. BOX 451
COTUIT, MASS. 02635

05/19/2021

The monthly meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners was held via a public Zoom Video at 5:45 p.m. Chairman Scott Horsley, Commissioner Tom Hoppensteadt, Commissioner Mark Robinson, Superintendent Chris Wiseman and Office Manager, Jennifer Nash were present.

The meeting was called to order at 5:45 p.m. and was opened to public comment. Having none, they moved on to regular business.

The commissioners deferred approving the meeting minutes from the March and April meetings until the June meeting to preserve time for the rest of the agenda.

The Superintendent gave the water quality report noting that there were no total coliform detections. Sodium results (ranging from 20-26, average of 22) remain at or above the Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level of 20 (SMLC). The district will continue to test monthly to determine if the increased levels can be attributed to the seasonal use of salt for treating roads. Superintendent Wiseman notes that this is a cape-wide issue with most districts reporting results higher than our results. Synthetic Organic Compounds (SOC's) and Methyl Tertiary Butyl Ether (MTBE) testing will take place over the next two months and results will be reported when they become available.

The Superintendent report was given for the prior month.

Monthly Pumpage Results is as follows:

| | <u>2021</u> | <u>2020</u> | <u>+/-</u> |
|-------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| April | 10,148,000 | 8,968,000 | +1,180,000 |

Stats:

Replacement Services = 1; New Services = 1; Leaks = 0.

Project Updates:

- Flushing - the annual maintenance program was completed on May 13, 2021, 6 weeks ahead of schedule. There were very few dirty water complaints and no damage to landscaping due to flushing.
- Massachusetts continues to be under Level I Mild Drought conditions and it is likely that water conservation advisories will need to be issued this year. The Superintendent will monitor this and advise accordingly.

- New Field Operator, Jonathan Medeiros, is doing well and Field Operators, Matt and JR are doing a great job training him. He is eager to learn and a hard worker and is fitting in nicely with the team.
- Superintendent Wiseman will be keeping COVID restrictions in place at this time, keeping the office closed to the public and maintaining distancing restrictions (vehicles & facilities). The 4th vehicle has increased the staff efficiency as there are some jobs that do not require 2 operators and the added vehicle provides flexibility in scheduling tasks throughout the district.
- Superintendent Wiseman asked the BOWC to discuss offering the Insurance Stipend to Water Department staff that has been offered to the non-union FD personnel, applying the benefit equally to district employees. Currently this would apply to 2 WD employees. The commissioners will follow up with the Prudential Committee on this issue.

The commissioners discussed the proposed irrigation policy, a copy of which has been posted on the district website. The commissioners reviewed comments submitted by members of the public and discussed some amendments to the draft policy. Commissioner Hoppensteadt has concerns about the over-reach of the policy and is in favor of allowing new systems connected to the public water supply and wants the district to do more outreach and education on conservation while implementing higher water rates (possibly via a second meter dedicated to irrigation) before imposing regulations on how residents choose to use the water that they pay (a premium) for. Commissioner Robinson is in favor of not allowing new systems to connect to the public water supply but incorporating a variance into the policy noting that some residents may not be able to hand-water and some properties may not be a candidate for a private well. Chairman Horsley is not in favor of allowing new connections for irrigation, agrees with a separate meter to monitor and charge an increased rate for usage. He also noted that other districts have a similar policy (Mashpee and Chatham). The commissioners discussed raising the 60k-100k price tier as well as the 100+k price tier, separate meters, education materials/opportunities, and the summer intern position. More work will be done on this and discussed further at the June meeting before adopting a policy. Mrs. Nash will tabulate the billings generated for the top two tiers of usage to help determine a rate that would encourage reduced pumping and conservation and provide some additional data for the commissioners' consideration. Ultimately there are two things that impact the level of The Little River: Drought and Pumpage. The district cannot control the drought, but they can influence the amount of water that is pumped in this area and is in agreement that the board needs to take some action to protect this resource.

The discussion was again opened to public comment. Mr. Donald Schwinn stated that he was in favor of higher rates and allowing new systems. Ms. Betsy Hagerty asked about the impact to the aquifer of multiple private wells across the district. The commissioners explained that the impact is much different (several small "drinking straws" across the district vs. one large "drinking straw" creating a larger cone of depression as well as the drawdown impact to The Little River based on the location of the wellfield).

Commissioner Horsley then introduced the topic of PFOA/PFOS and other emerging contaminants and the need for future testing and possible treatment. He discussed a Source Water Protection Plan (SWPP) and showed several tables from the recent study to show how the supply comes through several neighborhoods with septic systems. They discussed how to best protect the source water and the possibility of offering incentives (mini-grants, rate incentives) for septic upgrades as well as public outreach and education.

Water rates in general were discussed with attention to how the rates impact the Food Service and Preparation businesses/organizations within the district. Data will be evaluated to understand the impact of the rates with the possibility of offering different rate tiers for drinking water used for this purpose.

It was noted that the Annual District Meeting will take place on Wednesday, May 26th with Candidate Voting to take place on Tuesday, May 25th. Chairman Horsley is unable to attend the ADM and asked Commissioner Hoppensteadt to present in his absence. The commissioners asked Mrs. Nash to prepare some billing charts showing the increase from July of 2019 forward.

Fire Commissioner Rick Pisano was in attendance to discuss an email that was sent to the Board of Water Commissioners asking for their support on Article #17 to re-open the District Space Needs Project to include the School Property at 140 Old Oyster Road and complete a comprehensive study of the district's needs. The discussion included the timeframe for the study to be completed and the proposed cost of the study and what needs the Water Department might have. All of the commissions agree that the priority is acquiring the property to protect the watershed and voted unanimously to support the Article if Article #16 passes to acquire the building.

Commissioner Horsley asked the commissioners to do some brainstorming prior to the next meeting to move some of the outstanding items forward (follow up with the District's counsel regarding the regulations, matrix of options, pros/cons, price tier evaluation, etc).

The next regular meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners will take place on Wednesday, June 23rd at 5:45p online via zoom. The meeting adjourned at 7:14 pm. A new Chairman will be elected at this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Horsley, Chairman