



# Chelmsford Water District

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## CHELMSFORD WATER DISTRICT REGULAR COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MARCH 10, 2021

**PRESENT:** Commissioners: John G. Harrington  
Bill Martin  
\*Ron Wetmore (remotely)  
Superintendent: Andy Reid  
Business Director/Treasurer: Lisa Quatralle  
Environmental Compliance: Todd Melanson  
Recording Secretary: Ruth Anne Blair  
Bob Delaney  
Pat Wojtas  
Matt Serpone, AVAIL Technology Group

Meeting opened at 1:05PM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Matt Serpone, AVAIL Technology Group**

Mr. Serpone presented an overview of CWD's current IT Security, with recommendations for future upgrades and changes. AVAIL feels that CWD is in a good place at this time. He did note that all the servers running Microsoft supported operating systems, 2012 or later have only have an End of Life of 2023, so they should be addressed in the near future. Future initiatives recommended are: User Training. (ASAP) 2 factor authentications on email and remote access, anti-phishing campaign, strengthen current password policies, add Riverneck location under IT support; (WAIT UNTIL JULY 1) annual external vulnerability scans The Commissioners noted that AVAIL is held in high regard by CWD for their responsiveness and professionalism.

### **Environmental Compliance Report – Todd Melanson**

A document titled "Environmental Compliance Manager's Report" dated March 10, 2021 was distributed to the Board. Mr. Melanson summarized the contents of his report which covered:

**ENERGY UPDATE** – Array produced 10 credits for February 2021, which is 25 below annual average. Sale of credits to be completed in April 2021 for a total of \$10,989. Twelve credits have been generated in March so far. Again, the goal for the year is 550. DeShaw had approached us about updating the array to produce more power. Todd researching what choices and options might be available to us. Todd and Andy have completed an energy services contract on the natural gas side with ENGIE.

**DISTRICT ISSUES** – Stream Gauge as of March 7<sup>th</sup> is at 888 CFS which is approximately 107 CFS below the median. USGS ground water wells are tracking higher than our annual average and have recovered

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#### **Commissioners**

Bill Martin, Chairman  
Ronald W. Wetmore  
John G. Harrington

#### **Operations**

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#### **Administration**

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significantly. We have asked USGS to assist us in getting more consistent data from the GW monitoring well in Westford. USGS has started the process to reconfigure this station to be automatic and continuous. No current readings from this station this month, temporarily off-line. PFOA/PFOS – DEP NERO on Next Steps – (1) Compliance monitoring samples, (2) new update and summary, (3) grant submitted and awaiting decision, (4) Direction to go based on data. Concord River Permit OTC – Working on forms. We may have to apply for an additional volume permit on the Merrimack Basin. Todd would like to send letters to all legislators asking them to support select water related house and senate bills.

**TOWN ISSUES – SEPTIC CONCERNS** - Waiting for Chelmsford's Town Counsel to make a statement about restrictions on Septic issues. CWD continues to be concerned about Mercury Company's plan to maintain a WWTP on-site. CWD feels it would be too close to the Riverneck wells. COVID-19 vaccination for our industry has been moved to phase2.

**WATER CONSERVATION & WITHDRAWALS** – UAW FOR 2021 running @13.5% and RGPCD @51.5. Watershed withdrawals at year end December 2020: pumped roughly 9.3MG-raw more than last year at this time. MRB is roughly up 11.5MG from last year and CRB is down 2.2MG, fiscally in the sixth month of FY2021, we have produced 11MG-Fin less than the previous year at this time. Precipitation through January 2021 is about 0.58" above the region expected precipitation rates for the year. Withdrawals per day for month Feb MRB = 1.64mgd and CRB= 0.59mgd. For the year 2021 MRB= 1.5mgd and CRB= 0.56mgd.

**OUTREACH – PFOA/PFOS** –Working on a library outreach presentation and High School virtual presentation.

Attached to Todd's report were graphs showing Precipitation Tracking, Groundwater Monitoring Wells, and a USGS Concord River/River Meadow Brook discharge statistics report.

Questions were asked and answered, item by item.

### **Superintendent's Report – Andy Reid**

A document titled "Superintendent's Report" dated March 10, 2021 was distributed to the Board. Mr. Reid summarized the contents of his report which covered:

**INSURANCE** - The Town is drafting an IMA regarding insurance coverage for CWD employees that assist the Town with snow plowing.

**GRANT PROGRAM** – there is a grant program related to drinking water supply protection. In order for CWD to pursue this this year it would have to be completed and submitted by May. Due to the short notice, it was decided to pursue this next year, if it is still available

**IT SECURITY** – AVAIL Technology Group is attending this meeting to bring us up to date regarding CWD's security levels and what, if anything we need to upgrade.

**EAST CHELMSFORD WATER DISTRICT** – ECWD will be painting their tank and has requested third-party supply back up by CWD and Billerica in the event they need emergency water. There was some discussion about whether ECWD did have an agreement with Billerica. Todd called Billerica and was told there was no agreement with ECWD. It was decided that if ECWD wants our assistance they should rewrite the existing IMA, send it to us for review and then we will respond to their request. It was also noted that ECWD still owes CWD +\$26,000. **Mr. Harrington made a motion that we request ECWD send us an updated IMA regarding their request for possible back up water supply during the painting of their water tower. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wetmore. Ron Wetmore voted Aye, Bill Martin voted Aye, John Harrington voted Aye. Motion passed with unanimous support.**

**CANAL RD/THOMAS RANDALL PROPERTY** – Owner had offered to sell to us the piece of land that abuts our Canal Well #1 400ft buffer zone for \$20,000. We responded that this was too high, given the fact that the Town has assessed it at \$8,000. They have countered with a price of \$10,000. By law we need to own or have an easement to this piece of land. **A motion was made by Mr. Wetmore, seconded by Mr. Harrington that we counter this offer with \$6,000. Ron Wetmore voted Aye, Bill Martin voted Aye, John Harrington voted Aye. Motion passed with unanimous support.**

**AUTOMATIC FLUSHING** - An automatic flushing unit has been placed at the intersection of Queen St and Mill Road to try to lower THMs in this section of town.

**PFAS CLASS ACTION** – Attorney Hall expressed concerns about the draft retainer agreement with Napoli Law firm, Clinton, MA, because it was a New York contract. He will make changes.

**GENERATORS** – Mr. Reid presented a list of our generators (2 diesel, 5 natural gas, 1 liquid propane and 3 propane). He is exploring if the natural gas-powered generators could be converted to propane during an emergency. The BoWC elected to stay with natural gas-powered generators only.

**SNOW BLOWER** – Permission was given to allow the purchase of a new snow blower. It has been reported that the current blower is “tired”.

**FLUSHING** – Discussion with the operations staff indicates that the current procedure to flush the distribution system is not adequate. There is no real plan in place. We did not flush last year, and it was decided not to flush this year but to focus on gates, valves and hydrants, until we can create a comprehensive uni-directional flushing plan. Creating a comprehensive plan would require hiring the services of an engineering firm. This could be done in FY23. Todd indicated he has certain areas he would like to flush. The decision was made to only flush extremity sections of the Distribution which had historical color issues, as well as a means to reduce water age in these areas of the distribution system.

Questions were asked and answered, item by item.

#### **Business Director/Treasurer’s Report – Lisa Quatrale**

Ms. Quatrale’s report for February 2020 activity was presented.

**ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE** – Continue to monitor A/R closely. The water rates A/R continue to increase. We are still encouraging water takers to take advantage of our on-line bill payer system. There was discussion about the District’s shutting off program for water takers that are historically behind in their payments. Mr. Harrington asked if we have analyzed our accounts receivable increase. Ms. Quatrale indicated that approximately 90% of our increase is from customers who repetitively do not pay their bill until they are faced with shutoff. Repeat offenders. Because we have not shut off water service during last fiscal year, these repeat offenders have not paid. Even though there is **no longer** a moratorium to not shut off water and the District has the right to continue with shutoffs. Mr. Harrington suggested that we continue with the shutoff program. Ms. Quatrale suggested that we refrain from the shut off program this year and send an “urgent letter” to those customers who are in arrears. She also indicated that 90% of these customers have not paid their bill in over a year. Ms. Quatrale will send a second urgent letter to customers outlining on-line pay options that allow customers to set up weekly or monthly payments. All accounts that remain unpaid as of June 30, 2021, will be forwarded to homeowner’s tax bill as a lien. Commissioners all agreed to Ms. Quatrale’s approach.

**2022 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT** – Lisa and Andy have met and gone over the draft expense budget prior to meeting with the Commissioners review meetings. Currently looking at a draft budget of \$5.4M which is a 3.2% increase over last year.

**FREE CASH** – We still have not received official notification of our free cash from DLS. Response from DLS is that it will be certified before our annual meeting (April 28<sup>th</sup>). The District has submitted free cash on the DLS gateway annually. It appears that this year, they have additional questions and there is some confusion as to Accrual Basis. Modified Accrual Basis or Cash basis accounting. Maureen Mara is communicating with DLS to help them better understand our accounting and how we modify it to fit into their template.

**ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION** – Proposed date for the District's Annual Election is April 12 and Annual meeting is April 28. Notices will be posted in the Lowell Sun, on the CWD website, on the Town website and the front door at 20 Watershed Lane.

**WATCHING** – results of Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program and how relief for water bills will be approached. This program is traditionally run through the Town. Ms. Quatralle participated in a roundtable discussion with MWWA along with other water districts and general consensus is any assistance would probably be through this program.

**RUSSELL MILL** – The Millstream Foundation has sent CWD a proposal of \$510,000 as a sale price for the 97 and 99 Mill Road property. Attorney Hall indicated that the appraisal of the property may not be a true representation of its true worth as the appraiser was not aware of the costs to maintain this property and the dam restrictions with state testing, etc. A call with the appraiser to review this is scheduled for this week.

**CHASE LAND** – Mr. Harrington asked if there was any potential for the acquisition of this property. After researching who owns this property, and taking into consideration of the well 400ft zone 1, it was concluded that pursuing this property would not be advantageous to CWD and it will be removed from our Short Term to do list. However, it was suggested that we investigate town land on Riverneck Road.

**CLASS ACTION** – A conference call was held with members of the Napoli Law Firm, Clinton, MA, lawyers in the class action suit against the manufacturers of the chemicals creating PFAS found in drinking water. A draft retainer agreement was forwarded to Attorney Jim Hall for his opinion. He has concerns about the contract as it was a New York template. In addition, there was concern about potential costs mentioned in the contract. Previous discussion was centered around no cost to participants, lawyers expected to receive 25% of the settlement. In addition to the 25% to the lawyers, it now mentions Disbursements costs. Disbursements could include document preparation, filing fees, court costs, etc., etc. At the time of settlement distribution of proceeds, these expenses would be deducted from clients' share, after computation of attorneys' fees. Attorney Hall was going to reach out to Hank Naughton, Napoli Law, to discuss his concerns.

**MISTY MEADOWS** – Deed has been recorded at the Middlesex North District Registry of Deeds.

**MASSACHUSETTS UNEMPLOYMENT STATUS** – Employers are waiting for Governor Baker to file Legislation related to an anticipated increase of UI employer contribution rates by 60%. This Legislation would freeze the rate schedule for 2021 and 2022 at the current schedule, slowing the contribution rate. If the Legislature does not act promptly, this will affect employers' ability to file their Q1 2021 Employment and Wage Detail.

**FINAL WATER READINGS** – Twenty-two final readings were completed in February.

Questions were asked and answered, item by item.

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**OPEN SESSION**

Bill Martin – Mr. Martin asked if there had been any comments on Facebook about the Mill Pond Dam Property.

Ron Wetmore – None

John Harrington – None

**New Business   None**

**PREVIOUS MINUTES**

**Motion to approve minutes of Commissioners' Meeting of February 10, 2021 was made by John Harrington, seconded by Ron Wetmore. Ron Wetmore voted Aye, Bill Martin voted Aye, John Harrington voted Aye. Motion passed with unanimous support.**

**Motion to approve minutes of Commissioners' Work Session of February 10, 2021 was made by Ron Wetmore, seconded by John Harrington. Ron Wetmore voted Aye, Bill Martin voted Aye, John Harrington voted Aye. Motion passed with unanimous support.**

**Motion to approve minutes of Commissioners' Work Session of February 23, 2021 was made by Ron Wetmore, seconded by John Harrington. Ron Wetmore voted Aye, Bill Martin voted Aye, John Harrington voted Aye. Motion passed with unanimous support.**

**NEXT MEETING SCHEDULE**

Commissioners' Meeting, April 14, 2021, 1:00PM

**Town Elections** will be held on April 6<sup>th</sup>. It was noted that the Town has 31,000 registered voters.

**District Elections** will be held on April 12<sup>th</sup>. It was noted that the District has approximately 20,000 district voters

**District Annual Meeting** will be held on April 28.

**A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Wetmore, seconded by Mr. Harrington. Ron Wetmore voted Aye, Bill Martin voted Aye, John Harrington voted Aye. Motion passed with unanimous support. Meeting adjourned at 3:07PM.**

Ruth Anne Blair  
Recording Secretary

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