



# Chelmsford Water District

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## CHELMSFORD WATER DISTRICT REGULAR COMMISSIONERS' MEETING October 18, 2023

### PRESENT:

Commissioners	Ronald W. Wetmore (Remotely) John G. Harrington Richard Romano Andy Reid
Superintendent	Lisa Quatrone
Business Director/Treasurer	Todd Melanson
Environmental Compliance Mgr.	Robert Delaney
Consultant	James E. Powers, CPA
Auditor	Pat Wojtas
Town Selectperson	Marc Gibbs
Guest	Michaela Thompson
Recording Secretary	

Chairman Wetmore was present remotely and asked Commissioner Romano to call the meeting to order. Commissioner Romano called the Regular Meeting of the Commissioners to order at 1:08pm with all reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

### Open Session:

- **Introduction to new employee hire:** Due to a main break, new hire Jack Kostro to be introduced later in the meeting.

### • ***Powers and Sullivan – FY23 Audit Results***

James Powers, Auditor from Powers and Sullivan, LLC presented the Board with the results of the annual audit and handed out a packet titled "Chelmsford Water District Report on Examination of Basic Financial Statements Year Ended June 30, 2023." Mr. Powers stated that the audit went extremely well and that the District had strengthened the internal controls that had room for improvement last year. He complimented the District's conservative approach to budgeting and stated the District's OPEB account has continued a healthy fund balance. He added that the Free Cash will be submitted soon. Treasurer Lisa Quatrone praised Auditor Laura Stone, stating that she and the entire team were extremely helpful and that the company's portal streamlined the process.

### Environmental Compliance Report – Todd Melanson

Mr. Melanson distributed to the Board his report titled "**Environmental Compliance Manager's Report Water Commissioners' Meeting: 10/18/2023**". Updates to his report included:

- 1) **PFAS:** Individual results for September 2023: Crooked Spring WTP: 20.4, Riverneck WTP: 20.6, Smith Street WT: Not taken

**a) Crooked Spring Water Treatment Plant:** The quarterly average for the Crooked Spring Water Treatment Plant has exceeded the MCL and has triggered the requirement of a Public Notification.

**b) Riverneck Water Treatment Plant:** The September number of 20.6 was not high enough to push the quarterly MLC average (19.4ppt) over the 20ppt limit, so no violation occurred and there is no public notification needed.

**c) Precipitation Impact:** With over 72" of rain for the year so far, Meadowbrook Well #3 showed a decreased level to 32 ppt in September.

**d) SS WTP to Crooked Spring WTP via School Property:** The School Committee voted unanimously in favor of using school property to transmit Smith Street Water Treatment Plant water to the Crooked Spring Water Treatment Plant for PFAS treatment and the initial work needed to produce the final easement path (surveying and boring). Additionally, there is interest in tying this work process into the curriculum of the schools and the Innovative Pathways Program. The next step in the process is to get Town Manager Paul Cohen's support and the final easement to pass Town Meeting.

**2) Discolored Water:** Seems to have abated to only isolated events.

**3) Energy Program Update:** Solar REC Credit Sales – 475 for the YTD and 24 so far for October. Still on track for average production. Production is continuing to slow due to the cloudy/wet weather. Mr. Melanson stated that, to date the solar array has produced 2.9 million dollars in savings for the District.

a) The replaced meter still needs housing to protect it before winter ice and snow set in.

Mr. Melanson told the Board that he posted a notice to the District website on Monday 10/16/2023 regarding the PFAS6 result that exceeded the MCL drinking water standard for the period July to September 2023 from the Crooked Spring Water Treatment Plant. The notice stated that information on a rebate program (provided by the District) would be forthcoming. He stated the District will need to implement the Sensitive Subgroup Bottled Water Rebate Program, for which he already produced a rebate program form and had it approved by DEP. It provided a quarterly credit on qualifying customers receiving a direct bill. Qualifying renters, upon proof of residency would receive a check. He told the Commissioners that his DEP approved Rebate Program form had since been changed by Treasurer Lisa Quatrale.

Ms. Quatrale told the Commissioners that a meeting was held on Tuesday 10/17/2023 to discuss the logistics, timing and language of this new program with her staff. Since approximately 8,700 letters of public notification will be mailed out to customers, discussions were needed to determine the correct course of action. Besides how to handle applications, rebates and phone calls, topics included processing credits versus refunds, timing of such with quarterly versus monthly, assisting renters, and how to properly record such payments on the books without effects on the accounting of the District's water billing. It was ultimately decided to process a monthly (month-end) \$15.00 refund check to all those that qualify for the program. She told the Commissioners that this way District customers would receive payment monthly instead of waiting for a quarterly credit which also made it much easier for accounting purposes to track and that the administrative office can process it as a separate warrant.

Ms. Quatrale added that the funding will come from the Warrant article approved at the April 2023 District Meeting to "rebate" approved customers. Amy Mace will be handling the program with support from Joan Turner. Ms. Quatrale said an email notification was sent out on Tuesday to Superintendent Reid, notifying him of the change to better manage the program. Once the form and rebate application are approved, it would be posted on the website and hard copies mailed out via the District's billing vendor.

Commissioner Wetmore said to set up the program and get it going.

This was Mr. Melanson's last Commission meeting, as he recently submitted his resignation. He sincerely thanked the Board for sixteen years of municipal employment, adding that his primary concern has always been resident's safety.

***Commissioner Harrington made a motion to accept Mr. Melanson's Environmental Compliance Manager's Report. Commissioner Wetmore seconded the motion. The Commissioners voted as follows: Mr. Romano, Aye, Mr. Wetmore, Aye and Mr. Harrington, Aye. The motion was unanimously approved.***

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

Ms. Quatrale presented her report titled "**September 2023 – Commission Meeting Business Director Report**" which included documentation on FY2024 Expense and Revenue, and Enterprise Investment and OPEB accounts.

**Personnel:** Ms. Quatrale and Superintendent Reid, on advice from the Board of Water Commissioners, met with Operations staff and discussed current staff training, job expectations and future projections of licenses, salaries and stipends. Continued discussions were held regarding backflow program, GIS and survey programs. Meeting summary will be presented to Board during FY25 budget and salary review.

**Liens:** 260 lien letters sent out 10/13/23 to customers owing money for prior fiscal year. Total \$117k. Balances not paid will be sent to Town of Chelmsford for lien inclusion on tax bills to be mailed 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. Large portion of accounts are habitually late.

**FY23 Audit:** FY23 books are closed. CPA Laura Stone has sent DOR reports to DLS Free Cash Certification website. Ms. Quatrale said Amy Mace has done an excellent job working on the accounting entries with the District's vendors.

**Bond Debt Review:** Ms. Quatrale sent request to DOR legal on Bond Debt Revenue and followed up with Attorney Hall. Will review at next meeting.

**Meter Program and Vadar Cloud Conversion:** Second round of readings sent to billing vendor to go out this month. Kinks being worked out with each of the billing cycles by Michaela Thompson and Jim Rogers.

**New Services Review:** Working with Brandon regarding billing of 18 new condo units associated with 9 Acton Road.

#### **Introduction to new employee hire (out of order from Open Session):**

Superintendent Reid introduced the District's newest hire for Operations. Jake Kostro was introduced and welcomed by all.

**Rate and Fee Review:** Ms. Quatrale provided on 10/10/2023 a presentation titled "Chelmsford Water District Rates, Fees, and Debt Review October 2023" regarding a proposed increase in rates, current fees and the establishment of some new fees to the Board of Water Commissioners and Superintendent Reid. After in-depth review with Assistant Treasurer, John Harrington, she sought a vote from the Board on her recommendations. If in agreement with the recommendations, the next quarter bills will have a notification of changes for all customers (October, November and December billing).

#### **Rates:**

After review, Chairman Wetmore recommended a 15% increase on the water rates. Commissioner Romano was in agreement with Commissioner Wetmore. Both commented that they are very concerned about the operating costs for the PFAS plants, in the not-too distant future.

*Commissioner Harrington made a motion to raise water rates 15%. Commissioner Wetmore seconded the motion. The Commissioners voted as follows: Mr. Romano, Aye, Mr. Harrington, Aye, Mr. Wetmore, Aye. The motion was unanimously approved.*

**Change in Fees:**

*Commissioner Harrington made a motion to raise the fees listed in the presentation that Ms. Quatralle provided:*

*Labor cost from \$50.00 per hour to \$65.00 per hour.*

*Backflow Inspection Fee from \$70.00 to \$80.00.*

*Service Termination (water off) from \$50.00 to \$60.00.*

*Service Reconnection (water on) from \$50.00 to \$60.00.*

*Service Line Cleaning (from meter to curb box) from \$100.00 to \$150.00.*

*Service Line Thawing (from meter to curb box) from \$100.00 to \$150.00.*

*Commissioner Wetmore seconded the motion. The Commissioners voted as follows: Mr. Romano, Aye, Mr. Harrington, Aye, Mr. Wetmore, Aye. The motion was unanimously approved.*

**Final Closings Property Transfer Fees:**

*Commissioner Wetmore made a motion to raise the Final Closing Transfer Fee from \$50.00 to \$100.00. Commissioner Harrington seconded the motion. The Commissioners voted as follows: Mr. Romano, Aye, Mr. Wetmore, Aye, Mr. Harrington, Aye. The motion was unanimously approved.*

**New Service Connection Fees:**

*Commissioner Harrington made a motion to raise the New Service Connection Fees 20%.*

*Commissioner Wetmore seconded the motion. The Commissioners voted as follows: Mr. Romano, Aye, Mr. Harrington, Aye, Mr. Wetmore, Aye. The motion was unanimously approved.*

**Creation of 8" New Service Connection Fee:**

Some confusion occurred when Commissioner Wetmore asked what site the 8" service line is needed for. Superintendent Reid and Mr. Melanson believed it was for a property on School Street. Ms. Quatralle believed it was for a different site. She requested to leave the meeting to find Distribution Manager, Brandon Cannata, to clarify to the Board. Mr. Cannata stated it was for the project at 12 Kidder Road.

*Commissioner Wetmore made a motion to create a New Service Connection Fee for an 8" Service Size in the amount of \$15,000.00 and to include this New Service Connection with the New Service Connection Fees 20% increase on January 1, 2024. Commissioner Harrington seconded the motion. The Commissioners voted as follows: Mr. Romano, Aye, Mr. Wetmore, Aye, Mr. Harrington, Aye. The motion was unanimously approved.*

**Overtime Labor Costs:**

*Commissioner Harrington made a motion to create a new fee for Overtime Labor Costs in the amount of \$130.00 per hour. Commissioner Wetmore seconded the motion. The Commissioners voted as follows: Mr. Romano, Aye, Mr. Wetmore, Aye, Mr. Harrington, Aye. The motion was unanimously approved.*

**Hydrant Fire System Test:**

*Commissioner Wetmore made a motion to create a Hydrant Fire System Test Fee in the amount of \$200.00. Commissioner Harrington seconded the motion. The Commissioners voted as follows: Mr. Romano, Aye, Mr. Harrington, Aye, Mr. Wetmore, Aye. The motion was unanimously approved.*

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

A document titled “**Superintendent Report for October 2023 BoWC Meeting**” was distributed to the Board.

Commissioner Romano asked Superintendent Reid how long will it take to fill the Environmental Compliance Manager's position and who would be handling the water sampling and testing until such time. Mr. Reid estimated 3 months to find a replacement for the position and that Bob Hayes would handle the testing. Ms. Quatrala added that the position will be posted on various websites. Mr. Melanson suggested to add WIMS and SCADA experience to the job description. Commissioner Wetmore told Mr. Reid to get the job posting out as soon as possible.

#### **1. PFAS Engineering Design Update:**

AECOM to provide project update in November. First phase of design for the Crooked Spring and Smith Street water treatment plants is in progress along with the wetlands survey. Transmission main survey to occur early November.

#### **2. Staffing Updates:**

Joe Furey completed his backflow class and is waiting on confirmation of exam.

#### **3. Project Updates:**

a. 270 Billerica Road Proposed Redevelopment:

Superintendent Reid asked if the Board wanted to take a position regarding the PFAS Contamination.

**Chairman Wetmore asked what the Town and Mr. Reid's position was on it, since it's stormwater.**

Regarding the PFAS contamination, Superintendent Reid stated that his position for the District is to treat the stormwater and release it above ground and not back into the groundwater because the concern is that groundwater goes in the direction of the wells.

**Chairman Wetmore said to let the Town do what they want to do.**

b. Riverneck Intermunicipal Agreement (IMA): signed by all parties.

c. Working with IXOM to get Summit tank mixer inspected and repaired. Range of \$5k to fix or up to \$20k to replace motors.

d. Turnpike Tank telecommunication Lease: Legal reviews of lease contract with Dish continue with Attorney Hall.

e. ATT at Turnpike tank would like to place a generator within their leased area. Waiting for rent offer and noise impact study

f. Canal St. Culvert Failure: National Grid forecasting replacement in early spring.

g. Roof replacement at Riverneck WTP to be complete by BoWC meeting.

h. Electrical disconnections installed at Crooked Springs WTP should they be needed in emergency.

i. Initiated well performance testing by Maher to identify wells to be cleaned.

j. 10 Hildreth Update: Contractor has installed monitoring wells and taken water samples.

k. Front step coating losing adhesion. Full replacement \$4,175 estimate by BMI Mechanical. Will address in the springtime.

l. Security Updates: AI Antivirus installation in November. Working thru issues with Variable frequency Drives.

#### **4. Recent Bid Results:**

a. Mr. Reid stated that Dish placed the wrong dollar value for the total 20 years at 3% change per year. They used a 25-year sum and not a 20-year sum. Mr. Reid asked the Board to confirm original vote, to which all commissioners agreed to.

b. Riverneck Water Treatment Plant Aeration Ball Replacement: Superintendent Reid asked the Board to vote to accept lowest qualified bidder at \$149k by Carbon Filtration System, Inc. out of Johnston, RI.

**Commissioner Harrington asked if cleaning the aeration balls was an option. Mr. Reid stated no.**

- c. Repair Fire valve & leak in sprinkler system at Crooked Springs WTP. Work provided to New England Fire and Sprinkler. Proposed cost: \$13,393.60.
- d. Repair for Meadowbrook Well No. 2 casing is out to bid.
- e. Gas Contract expires March 2024. Placing bid out to see if pricing is good.

Commissioner Romano asked Superintendent Reid about the main break on Route 110. Superintendent Reid stated that it is a service line break where the ground water is high. This area subsequently has had issues with Stormwater. Consulted with Town and came up with a solution to put in a 50' drain pipe to low area and that will take care of it. Commissioner Wetmore asked why Superintendent Reid was working on groundwater solutions and stated that groundwater caused the issue and that would make it the Town's responsibility. Robert Delaney stated that the District changed the direction of the groundwater when the crew dug it up. Commissioner Harrington asked about the cost. Mr. Reid said he estimates the drain pipe would cost approximately \$1,500.00. Commissioner Romano expressed concerns that the District may be overstepping responsibilities as it pertains to stormwater.

**Commissioner Wetmore** asked Superintendent for an update on the well exploration on Riverneck. Mr. Reid stated that the permit just came in and the test wells would be completed in November.

**Commissioner Romano** recommended door hangers with instructions, on what to do and how to clear the pipes, be supplied to as many people as possible during water main breaks.

**Motion to approve the minutes of the Commissioners' Regular Meeting held on September 13, 2023 was made by Commissioner Harrington, seconded by Commissioner Wetmore. The Commissioners voted as follows: Mr. Romano, Aye. Mr. Harrington, Aye, and Mr. Wetmore, Aye. The motion was unanimously approved.**

**Motion to approve the minutes of the Commissioners' Work Session held on September 13, 2023 was made by Commissioner Harrington, seconded by Commissioner Wetmore. The Commissioners voted as follows: Mr. Romano, Aye. Mr. Harrington, Aye, and Mr. Wetmore, Aye. The motion was unanimously approved.**

**Next Meeting Scheduled:**

Chairman Wetmore stated that he has a scheduling conflict for the next meeting. He asked if the meeting could be moved to Thursday, 11/16/2023.

**Next Commissioners Regular Meeting was rescheduled to – November 16, 2023 at 1:00pm**

**Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Wetmore. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Harrington. The Commissioners voted as follows: Mr. Romano, Aye. Mr. Wetmore, Aye, and Mr. Harrington, Aye. Motion passed.**

Meeting adjourned at 4:30pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Michaela A. Thompson  
Recording Secretary