



WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
November 3, 2022
7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

Present: Barry Rosen, Ron Parenti, Joe Robb, Matt Mostoller, and Mike Geis

Chairperson: Mike Geis

Clerk: Ron Parenti

Others in Attendance: Kim Kastens and Terra Friedrichs.

1. Opening

WRAC chair Mike Geis opened the meeting at 7:05 PM.

2. Regular Business

- A. Review Minutes – The draft minutes from 13 October with modifications suggested by Matt Mostoller were reviewed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ron Parenti and seconded by Mike Geis; the minutes were approved by a unanimous roll-call vote.
- B. Public Remarks/Comments – Kim Kastens urged the Committee members to attend the public forum on the revision of Acton’s Open Space and Recreation Plan on 10 November. She also encouraged the WRAC to request funding from the Select Board to perform a town-wide water resources study, which would expand upon some of the work being performed by Wright-Pierce for the Great Road study. When making this funding request, Kastens advised the Committee that it should be prepared to respond to the following set of questions: a) primary insights gained from the Great Road study relating to water resources, b) the feasibility of applying the methodologies developed by Wright-Pierce to a town-wide study, c) the anticipated benefits of a town-wide study of water resources, d) the cost of a comprehensive town-wide study, and e) the likelihood of obtaining outside funding for the study.

Terra Friedrichs also offered a series of suggestions for future actions to be taken by WRAC. Her list of recommendations to the Committee included the following: a) stay focused on goals that are within the authority of the Select Board, b) prepare a WRAC point-of-view statement relating to potable water quality and quantity issues, c) make regular visits to Select Board, Finance Committee, and Planning Board meetings, and d) request the Select Board to allocate money for a town-wide water/land use study. Friedrichs suggested that the Committee to assign members to regularly attend board meetings to in order to gain a better understanding of how each board functions and the issues that are typically addressed.

Kastens and Friedrichs both suggested that it would be beneficial to speak to the Town’s Finance Committee about the projected costs of treatment for PFAS, which may require



major modifications of all the Water District's existing treatment plants as well as a future connection to the MWRA aqueduct. They stated that the Finance Committee would be particularly interested in the size of the water rate increases that may be necessitated by the recent changes in water quality standards.

- C. Discussion of Future WRAC Tasks – Since the discussion of future WRAC tasks had been initiated during the public comment section of the meeting, Parenti suggested that this item be taken out of order. This recommendation was unanimously approved by the full committee.

In response to the comments presented by members of the public, Joe Robb stated that he supported the generation of a position paper that would define WRAC's view of the issues that Acton needs to address to ensure that an adequate supply of high-quality potable water can be maintained. He also agreed with the suggestions that members of WRAC should attend meetings of the Select Board on a regular basis.

Matt Mostoller supported Robb's comments, and made several additional points. He indicated that a position paper would be an excellent way to emphasize the impact of land use on the protection of the Town's water resources to both the Select Board and public. Mostoller also indicated that a separate educational document could be generated to discuss the actions that the Water District has already taken and plans to take to satisfy the new PFAS regulations established by the MassDEP and the EPA. This document would include a decision-making framework of issues to be considered before a decision is made to connect to MWRA. Mostoller stressed that the Water District is currently evaluating a set of PFAS remediation options. The decisions made by the Water Commissioners will have a long-term impact on the Town, and it would be helpful to make sure we don't miss important considerations of stakeholders.

Joe Robb volunteered to draft an outline that would delineate WRAC's position on a variety of issues; Committee members then provided a series of recommendations for the material to be included in this document. It was noted that any funding requests that might be formulated as part of this exercise would need to be made quickly, since the FY 24 budgetary discussions are already underway.

To assist the preparation of the outline for the WRAC position statement, Ron Parenti volunteered to generate a set of tables outlining current and future supply capabilities and limitations similar to those that appear in the report prepared for the town of Wayland. He was advised by other Committee members to limit the amount of detail included to ensure that the information provided can be easily understood by the general public.

- D. Great Road Study Update -- Parenti informed the Committee that as the WRAC's liaison for the Great Road study he had received the list of attendees and the notes taken by Wright-Pierce during the kickoff meeting held on 27 September. This information had been distributed to the attendees by Corey York, who is the point of contact for the Town staff involved in the study. Mostoller stated that the Water District had received recent requests from Wright-Pierce for information regarding water use for specific parcels within the Great Road corridor and potential impacts on the Water District's wells in that



region. He indicated that Wright-Pierce is probably still in the initial data collection phase of its study.

- E. Long-Range Estimates of PFAS Remediation Costs -- Parenti showed several charts that outlined cost projections for scenarios that included the addition of PFAS treatment to each of the Water District's existing treatment plants and a future connection to the MWRA aqueduct. These infrastructure improvements might double the Water District's annual budget in the coming years in order to cover debt repayment costs. Matt Mostoller urged caution in circulating these early cost estimates, since there are still many uncertainties relating to the final regulatory limits, the cost of chosen technology, available funding from state and federal agencies, possible cost recovery from pending lawsuits, and long-term operational costs. Barry Rosen noted that a connection to MWRA would not provide Acton with an unlimited supply of water, since any future agreement with the MWRA would specify a limit on annual usage. It was also noted that while PFAS levels in the water supplied by MWRA are currently non-detectable, treatment may become necessary if future regulatory limits are set below the current 20ppt MCL established by the MassDEP.
- F. Any Other New Business -- None.

3. **Adjournment**

Committee members agreed to hold the next meeting on 29 November 2022 at 7pm. A motion to adjourn was made by Mike Geis and seconded by Matt Mostoller. Adjournment was approved by a unanimous roll call vote of the WRAC members, Joe Robb, Matt Mostoller, Barry Rosen, Ron Parenti, and Mike Geis, at 8:45 PM.