



BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS

Cotuit Fire District Water Department

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

02/21/2024

The monthly meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners was held via Zoom at 5:45 p.m. Chairman Scott Horsley, Commissioner David Churbuck, Commissioner Mark Robinson, Superintendent Chris Wiseman and Office Manager, Jen Nash were present.

The meeting was called to order at 5:45 p.m. and was opened to Public Comment. There was none at this time.

Minutes of the January 17, 2024, meeting were reviewed and approved as written.

Superintendent Wiseman reviewed the recent water quality testing results for total coliform. There were no detections. UCMR5 (Fifth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule) testing was conducted, all were below readable limits.

The Superintendent's report was presented:

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>+/-</u>
January	6,503,000 gal.	5,950,000 gal.	-533,000 gal.

New Service = 0, Replacement/Relocation Services = 0, Leaks/Repairs = 0

Project Updates:

- Lewis Pond Road Water Main Upgrade - Met with EDR, making corrections to plans, once approved, we will start the bidding process.
- Association News - Mr. Wiseman will be attending the NEWWA/MWWA conference in Worcester next month. Newsletters have been circulated to the Board.
- Staffing - New Field Operator, Jonathan Brooks, local Cotuit resident, started 2/5/2024. He is picking up quickly and fitting in well with the team. All staff reviews for calendar year 2023 have been completed. All were rated as exceeding expectations.
- Test Wells- Sampling will be done in March or April, fees will be approximately \$1,600 and includes PFOS testing.

New Business:

- Superintendent Evaluation - discussed and completed with an overall rating of 12 out of 12. Goals for the coming year include: Explaining WQ Report to the public in layman's terms, improved public communication regarding flushing and drought levels, including BOWC in Sanitary Survey, conducting a Cyber Security Public Presentation, Education & Planning regarding future treatment needs, and to continue to improve summary reports for commissioner meetings and website (ie. pumping, water quality).
- Mid-Year Budget Review - Commissioner Robinson and Superintendent Wiseman will attend the February 27th PruComm meeting to review the mid-year budget. Office Manager Nash has prepared comments regarding overall revenue (will meet

projections), Salary Expenses (under budget), Operating & Maintenance Expenses (within budget).

- Special Town Council Meeting - In response to an email invitation from Cynthia Lovell, Commissioner Robinson and Superintendent Wiseman will attend a special town council meeting to discuss the current state of the Cotuit's water system. Commissioner Churbuck will RSVP (by 2/23) on behalf of the commissioners as he has some questions about public attendance. Commissioner Robinson will prepare slides and deliver them prior to the meeting (due date 2/28/29).
- Commissioner Robinson prepared a plot map of the private onsite irrigation wells known to the Water Department and discussed how many were inside and outside of Zone II. The document was accepted as an official report of the BOWC.

Old Business:

Source Water Protection Plan (SWPP) / Enabling Legislation: Chairman Horsley met with the district's attorney, Mark Boudreau to review and draft language for the ADM warrant which will expand the commissioner's authority to integrate the ability for water quality protection, working in a cooperative manner with private property owners. The following language was submitted by Atty. Boudreau:

"To do all things necessary to petition the Massachusetts Legislature to enact a change to the enabling legislation of the Cotuit Fire District substantially as follows: The Water Department of the Cotuit Fire District shall have the authority to fund improvements on the private land, with the full approval of the property owner, to protect the water supply and quality for the benefits of the residents of Cotuit."

Chairman Robinson would like to make a few changes to this language before it is presented to PruComm for inclusion in the ADM Warrant. The revisions will be reviewed at the March meeting.

Commissioner Churbuck raised the subject of pursuing a solar array, potential locations that don't include clearcutting would be the school property and the former tank location at 414 Main St. Chairman Horsley will have an exploratory conversation to evaluate the feasibility of this with Conrad Geysler (Cotuit Solar) and report back at a future meeting. There is a concern over the growing cost of electricity and the board is interested in exploring ways to lower or offset this expense.

FY2025 Budget: The commissioners discussed salary increases for the staff. Commissioner Churbuck noted that the Federal COLA adjustment accepted in December 2023 was 5.2% and recommended a 7% increase for all staff to include a COLA increase and merit increase based on performance. He also noted that he has been participating in a workshop with town managers, and the number one issue for all departments is attracting and retaining staff. They have members of their staff commuting from Lakeville and our district has a 30 minute response time which requires a high cost of living for our staff. Commissioner Robinson was not comfortable with this proposal noting that a majority of the staff will be eligible for a longevity increase next year and didn't feel that the public would have an appetite for increased above COLA in multiple years. Chairman Horsley weighed in, in favor of a higher increase, and after much discussion Commissioner Churbuck moved to recommend a 6% salary increase across the board based on the Fed COLA of 5.2% and a .8% merit increase for the retention of excellent and high performing staff. The motion passed unanimously.

5 Year Cap Plan - The commissioners reviewed the proposed 5yr Cap Plan and recommendations for FY25 Special Appropriations. There is a place holder in the budget for upgraded Meter Reading Hardware and Software. A quote on this is pending and will be reviewed at the March meeting. This is the only request this year.

Affordable Access to Drinking Water (AADW): Office Manager Nash will contact Carol Zais of the Cotuit-Santuit Civic Assoc. to discuss an April Community Meeting to present the AADW and Proposed Warrant Article for Source Water Protection/Legislation Change to the public.

The meeting was again opened to public comment, there was none at this time.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 20th at 5:45 pm at via Zoom only. The meeting adjourned at 7:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Scott Horsley, Chairman
Board of Water Commissioners