



## BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS

# Cotuit Fire District Water Department

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COTUIT, MASS. 02635

02/19/2025

The Board of Water Commissioners held their monthly meeting on Wednesday, February 19, 2025, at 5:45 p.m. at Freedom Hall. Present at the meeting were Chairman David Churbuck, Commissioner Scott Horsley, Superintendent Chris Wiseman and Office Manager, Jen Nash. Commissioner Robinson attended via Zoom.

The meeting was called to order at 5:45 p.m. and was opened to public comment. There were no comments at this time.

Superintendent Wiseman reported the November water testing results. Total Coliform tests showed no detections. Sodium levels were reviewed, Station #4 is down from the previous month, all other results are similar. Volatile Organic Contaminant testing was completed, the only result of note was the detection of a small amount of chloroform. PFOS samples were taken by the contractor (Tom Cambareri, Sole Source Consulting) at the TEST wells north of the wellfield (not the production wells) showing results higher than state allowable levels, but half of what they were during the last round of sampling. Superintendent Wiseman will continue to work with Sole Source Consulting to monitor and evaluate the trends. He also spoke with Mark Nelson regarding the mapping of the contaminants. He noted that expanded testing (testing for more compounds) done by a different laboratory would help to fingerprint the type and source of compounds. Commissioner Horsley discussed a possible meeting with some of the businesses along Rte. 28 around the SS1 test well. The board decided to consult with some industry professionals before approaching the businesses and trying to more closely identify the source and type of contaminants through additional and expanded testing.

The superintendent gave his report:

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>+/-</u>
January	5,950,000	7,270,000	+1,320,000

New Service = 2; Replacement Services = 0; Leaks = 1 (Highland & Lake radial crack in 6" water main)

Association Updates - BCWUA - not a lot of activity; MWWA & NEWWA - hosting the annual conference in western Massachusetts. Chris will be attending 4/2 - 4/3. MRWA - Feb/March class schedule has been released.

Generators - Station #2 - ATS repair is complete (that was encumbered in FY24) and the start up will happen tomorrow. The Station 1 generator had severe damage from rodents who made a nest in the generator. It will cost a minimum of \$4,000 to have (the internal components of the) generator sent for evaluation to see if it can be repaired or if the generator will need to be replaced. We are also checking with the insurance company to see if any of the damage will

be covered by insurance. Once we have a more realistic picture of our needs, we will update the amount requested in the capital expenditure budget.

Drought Conditions - Level 2 Drought conditions were declared for Cape Cod & The Islands. Our Water Management Act guidelines do not require us to take any action right now. The well level did go up 3" in the last week but it is still down 1" from the same time last year. Chairman Churbuck will draft some language regarding the drought conditions to post on the web, Facebook and Civic Association pages.

Staffing Update - Still no viable candidate for the open field operator position. Superintendent Wiseman interviewed one candidate, who has since taken another position. We are going to contact a representative from Mass Hire regarding some local job fairs and the Tech Schools for any intern candidates.

W2 Issue 2024 - W2's issued by Paychex for calendar year 2024 were incorrect. Finance caught this in early January and requested corrected W2's to be issued by the 1/31/25 deadline. This did not happen. On 2/4 Treasurer Pirrone followed up with an email and said they should be issued "in a day or 3". We did not receive them. Superintendent Wiseman noted that they were available in the portal on 2/11, however the corrected W2's were still not correct (they decreased the state earnings instead of increasing them). As of the meeting date, new W2's have not been issued. Chairman Churbuck will follow up with PruComm at their meeting on 2/24/25.

Domain Renewal - cotuitwater.org is expiring in March 2025 and we were notified by Secure Networks that it needs to be renewed with a credit card or bank account. Finance has responded that they do not have a credit card and do not wish to use the bank account. They have stated that an employee has to put the expense on their personal credit card and submit for reimbursement. This does not sound like a good practice, especially since we were notified by the post office that all bulk mailings have to be ordered and paid for through the online site - which is approximately \$1,000 for each mailing. Chairman Churbuck will also address this at Monday's PruComm meeting.

SWPP - Commissioner Horsley, Chairman of the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP) ad hoc committee gave an update regarding their upcoming meeting. They will be meeting with Mark Milne in early March to discuss financing options or available grant funding for work on this project. He has requested a preliminary proposal from GHD on options for dealing with wastewater for the neighborhood and businesses that abut our wellfield/source water supply. It is not yet available.

The commissioners reviewed the report from Tom Cambareri from Sole Source Consulting regarding the PFOS testing that was done at the new test wells. The test well (SS1) that showed the higher level of PFOS is lined up with our production Well #1. They also discussed a report from Mark Nelson who recommended that we use a more comprehensive lab analysis the next time we test. This will help him fingerprint the PFOS/PFOA compounds and help determine the potential source(s) of these contaminant. The next PFOS scheduled testing for the production wells is April 2025. Chairman Churbuck read a segment of the report into the record (see video) emphasizing the fact that these results are at the TEST wells that are not used for drinking water and not at the PRODUCTION wells. All results from the production wells continue to be below the MCL/Action Levels as required by MassDEP.

Cotuit Elementary Conservation Restriction - There is no update on the Conservation Restriction for the Cotuit Elementary School property. The BOWC wants to review this before it is filed. Chairman Churbuck will contact the town again.

Enabling Legislation - Carol Zais, Chair of the Cotuit Civic Association notified Chairman Churbuck that we are "back to the starting line" with the legislation being passed through the state. The petition goes back into committee, and they recommended that it be filed by Sen. Julian Cyr. It is not clear if they will act prior to the ADM. Chairman Churbuck also contacted Mark Boudreau to inquire if it does pass, would it then need to be a warrant article for the ADM. He has not had a response as of this meeting.

Sodium Workshop - Commissioner Robinson noted that there is nothing new to report at this time.

FY26 Budget - The commissioners recommended a 2.5% COLA increase for all staff. The basis of this recommendation is the COLA rate recommended by Social Security and is the index supported by the Prudential Committee. The items included in the Operating & Maintenance (O&M) Budget were reviewed. Some discussion was had about the possibility of solar pumps for the station. Superintendent Wiseman didn't think they had enough power for our level of pumping but would investigate further. The electricity budget is level funded but based on actual usage and the % of increase that has taken place in the current fiscal year (\$95k). However, this expense is offset by the CVEC solar credits that we receive. The amount of CVEC credits in FY24 was over \$68k and offsets 71% of our FY expense.

Superintendent Wiseman noted that the performance reviews for the staff were completed with all employees rating "exceeds expectations" and complimented the staff for the way they have handled this challenging year (short staffed, increased water rate). The commissioners then made recommendations for merit and longevity increases for the staff in addition to the COLA increase.

Performance Review for Superintendent Wiseman - all of the commissioners noted that Superintendent has done well this year managing the department while being short staffed. They noted that there have been no interruptions or declines in the level of service that we have provided. Chairman Churbuck will share his written evaluation of the Superintendent at the next meeting.

5 Year Capital Expense Plan/Warrant Articles for May ADM - The board reviewed the upcoming expenses and projects for the water department and made recommendations as to what could be accomplished in FY26 and what should be postponed to FY27. They approved the following capital projects for the FY26 ADM warrant: Replacement Truck: \$75,000; HVAC for Office Building: \$20,000; Cybersecurity Upgrades Phase I: \$60,000; Scanner/Copier/Printer Replacement: \$3,500. There is a likelihood that grant funding is available in the amount of \$30,000 to offset the Cybersecurity expenses, but it would be done by reimbursement after the funds are spent so the Water Department needs to request the full amount of the project.

CCR Content: There will be a new format for the Calendar Year 2024 Consumer Confidence Report (CCR). The new format allows room for additional articles and Office Manager Nash asked the Commissioner for their input. They would like to include a summary of some of the initiatives that have been put forward during the previous calendar year, especially since the letter for the Annual Report is information that is already 8 months old as it reflects the previous

fiscal year rather than calendar year. Commissioner Horsley will compose a paragraph on PFAS, Commissioner Robinson will draft a paragraph on our conservation initiatives and Chairman Churbuck will pull them all together and draft a cohesive message for the CCR. The deadline for these articles is Friday 2/28/25 so that the report can be brought to the printers and sent to the consumers in time for the DEP deadlines.

Chairman Churbuck will attend the PruComm meeting on Monday, 2/24/25 to present the proposed FY26 budget.

Chairman Churbuck shared the draft of his letter for the Annual Report. All comments were in support of the draft, and it will be submitted to the clerk for publishing.

The minutes for the January 15th regular meeting and the February 5th Special Meeting were reviewed and approved. Commissioner Robinson abstained from the February 5<sup>th</sup> vote as he was absent from the meeting due to a medical emergency.

The meeting was reopened to Public Comment. There was none. The date for the next meeting was set for Wednesday, March 26, 2025. The meeting was then adjourned at 7:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



David Churbuck, Chairman  
Board of Water Commissioners