



BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS

Cotuit Fire District Water Department

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

03/26/2025

The Board of Water Commissioners held their monthly meeting on Wednesday, March 26 2025, at 5:45 p.m. at Freedom Hall. Present at the meeting were Chairman David Churbuck, Commissioner Mark Robinson, Commissioner Scott Horsley, Superintendent Chris Wiseman and Office Manager, Jen Nash.

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

Mr. William Caulder, who requested time on the agenda to dispute a charge to his account, was not in attendance, so this agenda item was tabled to a later time.

Superintendent Wiseman reported the February water testing results. Total Coliform tests showed no detections. Sodium results were reviewed, all were very low compared to prior periods.

The superintendent gave his report:

| | <u>2024</u> | <u>2025</u> | <u>+/-</u> |
|----------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| February | 7,270,000 | 4,977,000 | -304,000 |

New Service = 0; Replacement Services = 0; Leaks = 0

Association Updates -Superintendent Wiseman will be attending the Annual Meeting in Western Massachusetts on 4/2 - 4/3. He also attended a training session in Easton last week which addressed several topics such as Carbon Efficiencies (EV's) and PFOS litigation. MRWA - Feb/March class schedule has been released; all the operators have signed up for Continuing Ed classes. Superintendent Wiseman noted that he had circulated a request for support for MRWA, as the organization is at risk of closing due to federal funding cuts. He emphasized the valuable assistance Bruce Young has provided in many of the board's initiatives and encouraged members to send a letter of support.

Generators - Station #1 - Insurance will not cover the damage to the generator at Station #1, as the cause- "nesting & infestation"-is specifically excluded from the policy. A crane was used to remove the generator and transport it to a facility in New Bedford for evaluation and potential repair. Originally installed in May 2010, the generator's repair or replacement cost remains unknown until the evaluation is complete. Backup generators are available at other stations in case of an extended power outage at Station #1.

CyberSecurity - The engineering firm EDR is preparing a grant application for up to \$30,000 in funding, which could help offset the \$60,000 appropriation request for cybersecurity upgrades.

Staffing Update - Keegan Duval was hired and started on Monday, March 17th as the new Jr. Operator for the department. So far he is doing well with learning and applying the requirements of the position.

W2 Issue 2024 - W2's issued by Paychex for calendar year 2024 were incorrect. This issue is STILL not resolved. All employees will need to file for an extension as we are not expected to receive the corrected forms prior to the tax filing deadline. PruComm noted at their meeting this past Monday that they will be looking for a new payroll company that can handle the requirements of our retirement plan.

PFOS/PFOA Litigation - It was noted at the meeting in Easton that several companies have settle their class action suit and the funds would be distributed in stages. We do not yet know the CFD-Water settlement totals for each company/defendant. Dupont will issue a one-time payout sometime in the next 2 months; 3M will issue a 40% payment, then a 20% payment with the balance being paid over time; Tyco & BASF are the latest companies to reach a settlement, no other details are available at this time; 4 other companies have reached a settlement and one has declared bankruptcy (Kidde-Fenwal); there are 12 other companies in negotiations with settlements pending.

Budget Meeting Update - Chairman Churbuck and Superintendent Wiseman attended the PruComm meeting on Monday 3/24 to present the FY28 O&M and Capital Improvement Budget. There were no questions other than a request to combine the staff increase to a total percentage of increase rather than noting the COLA increase as a separate percentage.

On-Call Compensation - Superintendent Wiseman asked the commissioners to consider raising the compensation rate for on-call weeks to be comparable with the other local districts. As the Sr. Operators have been covering the responsibilities of a 3rd operator, their rate was temporarily increased to \$375/wk. plus overtime for checks and calls. He would like to raise it to \$350/wk. once they are back to a 3-week rotation. Other districts are paying anywhere from \$350-\$400 per week, some with 3-hour minimums for each call, and one other (union) district is paying based on overtime rates. This structure is financially out of reach for Cotuit).

SWPP - Commissioner Horsley presented a proposal from the engineering firm GHD to evaluate the feasibility of constructing a small wastewater treatment plant in the vicinity of Little River Estates. There was concern that the district's Enabling Legislation changes have not yet passed at the state level and are unlikely to be approved before the Annual District Meeting. The evaluation should also consider other neighborhoods and the potential for future expansion.

The board expressed interest in holding a public education meeting in collaboration with the Civic Association, featuring subject matter experts such as Rob Steen and Zee Crocker. The session would cover topics including CWMP alternatives, water treatment plants, and related infrastructure. Given the ongoing importance of this issue for the village, an information session is warranted before proceeding with expenditures.

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. Commissioner Robinson will contact David Anthony with the Town of Barnstable on this matter.

Enabling Legislation - This has not yet advanced through the state. The bill has been renumbered and it is not likely to pass prior to the Annual District Meeting.

Sodium Workshop - Tabled for now.

New Business/Matters Not Anticipated - Commissioner Robinson, who attended prior meetings remotely, noted that the OWL system and the acoustics at Freedom Hall make it very difficult to hear clearly when attending via zoom. The commissioners discussed going back to the former microphone/recording system, no longer holding hybrid meetings, or zoom only meetings in the winter months.

The minutes for the February 19th regular meeting were reviewed and approved.

The meeting was reopened for public comment. Carol Zais raised concerns about the audio quality of recorded meetings and urged the board to petition PruComm to address the issue. She suggested either improving the existing system and acoustics or relocating meetings to a facility with better conditions, such as Hamilton Hall at CFC, which was used for the Special District Meeting. She noted that video recordings are particularly valuable, especially given the current all-male composition of the board, as it can be difficult to identify speakers in audio-only recordings. She also expressed her gratitude to the BOWC for their service to the district and for the expertise they bring both individually and collectively.

Budget & Candidates night is scheduled for Tuesday, May 20th. The district will hold its annual elections on Tuesday May 27th and the Annual District meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 28th.

The date for the next meeting was set for Wednesday, April 16, 2025. The meeting was then adjourned at 7:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "David Churbuck", written over a horizontal line.

David Churbuck, Chairman
Board of Water Commissioners