



BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS

Cotuit Fire District Water Department

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

05/14/2025

The Board of Water Commissioners held their monthly meeting on Wednesday, May 14, 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 was not in attendance to continue discussion of his request for a penalty reversal, as introduced at the previous meeting. The Board reiterated its request for copies of the plumbing licenses for both the plumber who disconnected the meter and the one who installed the spacer. The Board also reviewed an opinion submitted by district counsel, noting concern with the statement that the meter was removed "out of the home," as the meter was not taken from the premises but was found disconnected and suspended by a wire. The Superintendent was asked to seek clarification from counsel, and the matter will be revisited at the next meeting if Mr. Caulder is present.

The Board reviewed a leak adjustment request from Mr. Kelleher, who experienced a leak during construction on his property last fall. As the circumstances met the criteria outlined in the district's leak adjustment policy, the Board voted unanimously to approve relief in the amount of \$1,149.15.

To accommodate the schedule of guest Tara Nye-Lewis of the Cape Cod Commission, the Board deferred the next request for relief. Ms. Nye-Lewis explained that the Commission has received a \$44,000 grant to study water rates across Cape Cod's water departments and districts, with a project completion deadline of June 30, 2025. Commissioner Robinson introduced Ms. Nye-Lewis and highlighted the district's collaboration with her on this initiative. The district has submitted its current rate structure and outlined its conservation efforts, including increased rates for higher usage tiers. Ms. Nye-Lewis sought guidance from the Board, and Commissioner Horsley provided initial feedback. Mrs. Nash will follow up by sending Ms. Nye-Lewis a list of recently installed private irrigation wells in the district, which includes comparative water usage data from before and after the installations.

The Board resumed review of a leak adjustment request from Mr. Walsh, whose irrigation line was damaged by National Grid. The resulting leak was repaired, and measures have since been implemented to better monitor

the system and detect future issues more promptly. Mr. Walsh requested relief in the amount of \$1,413, in accordance with the district's leak adjustment policy. Commissioner Horsley expressed concern that the damage was caused by a third party and suggested that responsibility should not fall to District ratepayers through a relief adjustment. Following discussion, the Board voted 2-1 to deny the request for relief.

Superintendent Wiseman reported that April water testing showed no detections of Total Coliform. Nitrate levels were slightly elevated at some stations, while all other test results were consistent with or lower than previous data. The Commissioners requested that Superintendent Wiseman obtain historical nitrate test reports from Tighe & Bond for the Stratford Ponds area. Specifically, they asked for a chart showing nitrate levels over the past 10 years.

The superintendent gave his report:

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>+/-</u>
April	7,834,000	8,058,000	+224,000

New Service = 0; Replacement Services = 1; Leaks = 0

Association Updates - The Barnstable County Water Utilities Association (BCWUA) will be hosting its annual Water Fair in Buzzards Bay. Attendees will be eligible to receive TCH credits, and Tara Nye-Lewis is scheduled to present at the event. The New England Water Works Association (NEWWA) and the Massachusetts Water Works Association (MWWA) are also offering upcoming training classes. The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) expressed its gratitude for the letters of support submitted on its behalf. As a result of widespread support, the organization has secured its funding and will not face any budget or staffing cuts.

Generators - The generator at Station #1 needs replacement. The estimated cost to repair the existing unit is \$34,000, while a full replacement, including installation, is estimated at \$42,000. Utilizing the state bid (FAC124) may help reduce the overall cost. As this request could not be included in the FY26 Warrant Article, funding will need to be addressed at a special district meeting or the next annual district meeting. Although the replacement is not currently critical—since generators at other stations remain operational, a power outage would render this well temporarily offline.

CyberSecurity - The District's application for cybersecurity funding has been approved. Notification was received today confirming a \$30,000 grant award, which will be used to support cybersecurity upgrades.

W2 Issue 2024 - As of the meeting date, 2024 W-2 forms have not yet been received. There has been no update from the Treasurer or the Prudential Committee regarding the status of this matter.

PFOS/PFOA Litigation - Superintendent Wiseman informed the Board that the first settlement payment from 3M has been received in the amount of \$46,477.11. The future payment schedule was also presented (see report from Budd & Baron). The Board instructed the Office Manager to track all receipts related to the settlement. They discussed options for depositing the funds and expressed interest in proposing a bylaw amendment that would allow these funds to be deposited into the Water Department's stabilization fund, to be used for future filtration and treatment mitigation expenses.

Source Water Protection Plan (SWPP) - There was no new update from the CWMP meetings. Commissioner Horsley followed up with Superintendent Wiseman regarding the requested water samples from Mariner Circle and Santuit Newtown Road. Superintendent Wiseman reported that Tom Cambarari has been informed of the request and is in the process of scheduling the sampling soon. Commissioner Churbuck will confirm August 19th date with the Cotuit-Santuit Civic Association and begin the process of formally inviting the participants.

Cotuit Elementary Conservation Restriction - No new update at this time.

Enabling Legislation - Commissioner Churbuck provided remote testimony at the recent hearing on House Bill #2258. His statement complied with the three-minute time limit, and no follow-up questions were asked. He also submitted a letter-identical to the one filed last fall. At this time, Commissioner Churbuck is unaware of when the bill will advance out of committee.

Lien List - The Board reviewed the list of accounts with balances more than 365 days past due. The initial round of notification letters was sent on May 5, 2025, and to date, \$1,175.00 has been collected.

New Business/Matters Not Anticipated - None at this time. There was no additional public comment.

The minutes for the April 16th regular meeting were reviewed and approved.

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, June 18, 2025. The meeting was then adjourned at 7:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D. Churbuck', written in a cursive style.

David Churbuck, Chairman
Board of Water Commissioners