



BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS

Cotuit Fire District

Water Department

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

01/21/2026

The Board of Water Commissioners held their monthly meeting on Wednesday, January 21, 2026, at 5:45 p.m. via ZOOM only. Present at the meeting were Chairman Mark Robinson; Commissioner David Churbuck; Commissioner Scott Horsley; Superintendent Chris Wiseman; Office Manager Jen Nash; Senior Field Operators JR Gallagher and Matthew Dwyer.

Chairman Robinson called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m.

Public Comment: Senior Field Operator Matthew Dwyer presented a proposal requesting changes to the on-call bonus and overtime policy. Commissioner Churbuck moved to temporarily increase the on-call bonus to \$400 per week, effective immediately. Following discussion, the Board agreed to review the proposal in more detail and revisit the matter at the next meeting. No vote was taken.

Superintendent Wiseman reported that there were no total coliform detections. PFOS sampling has not yet been conducted due to illness, holidays, and vacations, and is scheduled for completion the following week. VOC sampling will be conducted during the next quarter.

The superintendent gave his report:

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>+/-</u>
November	6,712,000	6,340,000	-372,000
December	7,393,000	6,354,000	-1,039,000

Rainfall comparisons were discussed, noting that Cape Cod remains in a significant drought.

Service activity was reviewed:

- November: No new services; three replacement services; no leaks
- December: No new services, replacements, or leaks

Superintendent Wiseman noted that the water table is still low - below what it was last year at this time.

There were no new association updates. Superintendent Wiseman will attend the annual conference in Worcester in April 2026.

Regarding the antenna lease extension, Superintendent Wiseman advised that the District will not execute the extension due to statutory restrictions on lease duration.

Staffing updates included the hiring of Jeff Marks, who will begin employment on January 26, 2026. Three candidates were interviewed for the position.

A new service truck has arrived and is in service. The old truck will be offered through sealed bid, with bid opening scheduled for Tuesday, January 27, 2026, at 2:30 p.m.

Superintendent Wiseman will circulate a proposal from Sole Source Consulting for groundwater mapping at Station 5 for Board review, with discussion planned for the next meeting.

December 26, 2025, was declared a federal holiday after staff had used vacation time. Upon request from Superintendent Wiseman, the Board approved granting staff a floating holiday to be used by the end of FY26.

This concludes the Superintendent's report.

Commissioner Horsley raised the issue of whether the current rate structure is achieving conservation goals. While the Board agreed that a rate increase would likely lack public support, they acknowledged that water demand is inelastic and discussed the potential need for additional conservation measures, including mandatory restrictions.

Commissioner Horsley noted that the Town of Truro is investigating a new well site with an estimated cost between \$8 million and \$15 million, a cost he hopes to avoid for the District.

The Board requested a breakdown of water usage by percentage. Office Manager Nash will prepare and circulate this information.

Superintendent Wiseman noted that MassDEP reduced the District's withdrawal permit from 640,000 to 630,000 gallons per day, and that one well operated within five feet of the screen during peak demand last summer.

The board discussed the "Old Business" topics:

Source Water Protection - Commissioner Horsley reported that he is preparing a final report to Town Council from the Ad Hoc Committee for the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan. Recommendations include requiring I/A septic systems for properties within 1,000 feet of shoreline, including inlet streams, with replacement triggered by qualifying events such as property sale or system failure.

Concerns were expressed regarding the long-term reliance on Title V septic systems.

Commissioner Horsley will provide a map identifying affected properties. No final solution has yet been identified for treated wastewater placement, and the existing treatment facility cannot accommodate projected sewer expansion.

Cotuit Elementary Conservation Restriction - There has been no update or communication from Town Counsel.

Enabling Legislation - The proposed enabling legislation remains under review by the Senate Committee on Rules.

Pipe Replacement - Superintendent Wiseman addressed Board questions regarding system infrastructure.

The district maintains approximately 53 miles of water main, including some original pipe dating to 1936.

Materials include cast iron (with leadite connectors), ductile iron (Class 52), and PVC.

Service connections include cement-lined wrought iron, HDPE, and copper; no soldered connections are used.

Importantly, Superintendent Wiseman confirmed that there are no lead water mains or lead service lines in the district.

Main sizes were reviewed:

- 6" (24%)
- 8" (57%)
- 10" (11%)
- 12" (approximately 5%)

There is no current systematic replacement plan beyond planned projects on Roosevelt & Truman Roads and Santuit Road over the next two fiscal years.

Approximately 13 customers outside the district boundaries receive water service due to main locations.

District responsibility ends at the curb stop, though legacy requirements for copper piping have resulted in some pinhole leaks; the District assumes responsibility for replacement in those cases.

Leak detection is conducted annually, typically beginning in January.

Commissioner Horsley noted evolving material regulations and expressed interest in commissioning an engineering study to assess system life expectancy and risk-based replacement planning. Office Manager Nash noted that Barnstable Fire District is conducting a similar study, and the district will inquire about sharing that report when available.

Sick Time Memo to Prudential Committee - The Board noted that the sick time memo submitted to the Prudential Committee on November 20, 2025, has not yet been addressed. The Board voted unanimously to submit two articles for the Annual District Meeting warrant:

1. An article requiring a minimum four-month notice period to budget for accrued sick time payouts.
2. An article establishing a fund for the currently unfunded accrued sick time benefit.

Exact Article language will be taken from the memorandum prepared by Attorney Michael Pierce, who specializes in employment law and was recommended by District Counsel. The Board commended Commissioner Churbuck for his extensive work on this matter.

Office Manager Nash noted ongoing errors in W-2 reporting and urged the Board to seek a firm commitment from the Prudential Committee to address the issue. Commissioner Horsley recommended directing the Prudential Committee to make an immediate personnel change.

Review of November 19, 2025, meeting minutes were postponed to the next meeting.

The Board scheduled its next meeting for February 18, 2026, at 5:45 p.m., to be held via Zoom.

Commissioner Churbuck recused himself and left the meeting. Office Manager Nash presented the leak adjustment request for Mr. Churbuck's property. After discussion, the Board determined the request met policy criteria and approved it unanimously.

The board discussed and agreed to suspend the December meeting, and scheduled their next meeting for Wednesday, January 21st via Zoom.

There was no additional public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark H. Robinson".

Mark Robinson, Chairman
Board of Water Commissioners