

DENNIS WATER DISTRICT

Board of Water Commissioners

Minutes of Meeting held

May 26, 2022

A meeting, having been duly posted, was held this date at the Stone Hearing Room, Dennis Town Hall, 685 Route 134, South Dennis and called to order by Paul F. Prue, Chairman at approximately 10:02AM. Water Commissioners Peter L. McDowell and Robert M. Perry were present. Also present were David Larkowski, Superintendent and Sheryl A McMahan, Treasurer.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Information

Mr. Larkowski announced that one of the three annual Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days will be held on Saturday, June 4 from 9AM to 1PM at the Tony Kent Arena. He noted that the District has been sponsoring this event for 26 or 27 years. The other dates, hosted by the Town of Dennis will be August 6 and September 10. This is for products such as oil based paints, auto fluids and household cleaners.

Mr. Larkowski reminded viewers about the mandatory outdoor watering restrictions for odd/even days. He clarified that odd numbered houses were to water on odd days of the month and even numbered houses for even days of the month. The District is aware that not all irrigation systems can be programmed for odd/even days and suggested that odd numbered houses water on Mon-Wed-Fri and even numbered houses water on Tue-Thu-Sat. He said that we all need to do our part to comply with the restrictions.

Mr. McDowell welcomed Mr. Perry to the Board and noted that as a civil engineer and his expertise will be welcomed to the Board. Mr. Perry said he was honored to be a commission and is looking forward to learning what he can.

Updates Regarding Water Use Restrictions

Mr. Larkowski distributed a graph of the USGS monitoring well in Brewster that provides historical ground water levels and the current trend and that it exactly mimics the District's 22 wells. It shows how dramatic is the downward trend. The data shows that normally the levels go up through May, but is showing how the level is dropping already. This is similar to last year. Brewster, Harwich and Orleans are updating their watering restrictions. In terms of mandatory, Mr. Larkowski stated that this will mean issuing citations for violations. He noted that signs have been placed all around the town. The postcard for the Annual Water Quality Report that was mailed to every customer earlier this month included the mandatory odd/even watering restrictions. The announcement is also on the District's website and the Town has a link on their website as well. He said that while a lot of people are complying there are still some that are not. He advised that the citation books are being printed and should be received shortly. Every effort will be made to educate people first. Mr. McDowell asked what the amounts of the fines were. The first is a warning, second is \$100, third is \$200 and the fourth is \$300. Mr. McDowell suggested that people who are unable to program their system may want to consider shutting it off until they can figure it out. Mr. Larkowski said that they will help customers as much as possible.

Consider Wage Increases Effective May 9, 2022

Ms. McMahon reminded the Board that the District has had difficulty hiring entry level employees. During the FY 2023 budget development, the Board had agreed to raise the entry level labor rate from \$18 to \$21. The Board also agreed to increase the hourly rate of those employees being paid less than \$30 per hour by \$3 per hour and to increase those employees earning \$30 or more per hour by \$1.5 per hour. She explained that the reason for these increases was that by raising the entry level rate to \$21 it meant that there were a number of employees with years of service and licenses would only be making a few dollars more than entry level. The District Finance Committee unanimously supported this budget and it passed by unanimous vote at the Annual District Meeting. Ms. McMahon reminded the Board that during the Finance Committee's review of the budget, there were several members that suggested that the Board consider implementing these increases if the District was able to hire an entry level employee at \$21, even if it was before the beginning of the new fiscal year. She advised that the District was able to hire a new laborer at \$21 as of May 9, and was therefore requesting that the Board authorize the wage increases also effective May 9. Chairman Prue said that it was Mr. McDowell who had previously suggested that this matter be brought up at a meeting. Mr. McDowell said he had trouble with this. He said he was unsure of exactly who was getting how much. He asked when the last wage increases were given. Mr. Larkowski said it was July 1 of last year and said that this was being brought forward in order to implement the increases prior to July 1. Mr. Perry said that a lot of people are going through some very stark economic times and in his opinion, if ever there was a time to consider accelerating this, it would be this point. Mr. Larkowski pointed out that during the discussion with the Finance Committee, it was noted that the Board did have Reserve Funds available to fund an early increase, but he noted that in the memo shared with the Board, Ms. McMahon has confirmed that there is money available within this year's budget as a result of the previous employee leaving and a number of unpaid absences. On a motion made by Robert M. Perry and duly seconded, the Board ***UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to implement the wage increases as discussed effective May 9, 2022.***

Superintendent's Report

Mr. Larkowski advised that the District would be finishing up flushing on the north side (area of Taunton Ave) as of this day. Then return to flushing on the south side in the fall. It was noted that customers do call with "rust" complaints from time-to-time. The District crews make every effort not to washout bark mulch on people's properties. Mr. Perry inquired about the flushing leaving a depression on North Street. Mr. Larkowski advised that they will be rearranging the order of hydrants in order not to flush on North Street at all. The Superintendent advised that not all of the iron that comes from wells is removed. Only the worst wells go through the treatment plants which are 12 of them, which means there is still iron in the distribution system and the subsequent need to continue flushing.

Mr. Larkowski advised that six wells were scheduled to be cleaned. Five have been done with one left to go. He noted that the Board had requested American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds from the Town of Dennis for cleaning a District well in the amount of \$78,000. Mr. McDowell suggested that Mr. Larkowski find out who on the Town of Dennis staff will be making the decisions or recommendations to the Board of Selectmen. The Select Board has yet to hear all of the requests and make a decision. He noted that the four wells that have been cleaned are back on line and the last one will be completed in the next few weeks.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. McMahon advised that she is working on two projects and working to get the Request for Proposals (RFP) issued. One is for the financial audit. She noted that due to the delay in getting the matter agreed upon by the Board, she was recommending that, since the close of FY 2022 is the end of June, the RFP would request that FY 2021 and 2022 be done back-to-back as soon as the year-end work for the current fiscal year was completed, which is likely in August. It was noted that the Board would be making the RFP award.

Minutes of March 31, 2022

On a motion made by Peter L. McDowell and duly seconded, the Board VOTED: 2-0-1 (RMP): to accept the minutes of March 31, 2022

Adjournment

On a motion made by Peter L. McDowell and duly seconded, the Board UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to adjourn the meeting at approximately 10:45AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheryl A McMahon, Clerk