

DENNIS WATER DISTRICT

Board of Water Commissioners

Minutes of Meeting held

April 20, 2023

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, Chair, at approximately 10:00 AM. Water Commissioners Peter L. McDowell and Robert M. Perry were present. Also present were David Larkowski, Superintendent and Sheryl A McMahon, Treasurer.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Discuss and Consider a Board of Water Commissioner's statement to Select Board and Citizens of Dennis Concerning the Development of a Wastewater Collection and Treatment System.

Opened his remarks by saying he had had a little bit of confusion and hassle with the Clerk Treasurer and certain wording he had wanted on the agenda. He distributed a written document to the Board members. He said that when the agenda came by, he had wanted certain words to be stricken. He said he had wanted clarification for what he respectfully asked for.

He wanted to discuss what he believed facing the Dennis Water District is the most serious threat we have had in our history. He was asking for an opportunity to insert appropriate words that can clarify a concern he has about a very serious threat to the drinking water supply. He noted that the Environmental Protection Agency is proposing a limit of no more than 4 parts per trillion in drinking water of PFAS. He believed we should have a role in every way possible of communicating with the people of Dennis on what is happening with the threat he believes is the proposed wastewater program that has been planned for some time in the Town of Dennis. Mr. McDowell shared headlines from the Cape Cod Times and Boston Herald regarding contaminants. He said that 99% of us who work and live in Dennis flush everything down the toilets on the same piece of land that are set by standards currently set. He said the report should include a concern that we can agree on and we can address. He noted the current design puts all of the treated wastewater into the Swan River Natural Resource Area. He said we don't know anything about the discharge. He noted his involvement in state and local government for more than fifty-eight years. He was a stakeholder in the Barnstable County 208 water study. He said the matter is serious and no one is looking at it. He said if the plan goes forward as it is today for the wastewater facility and that the treated discharge is being planned for at least one site located at the intersection of Bob Crowell Road and Old Bass River Road. Mr. McDowell distributed prepared text he wanted the Board members to consider. He read aloud from the text which stressed the serious concern for the contamination that could flow into our drinking water wells from the planned Town of Dennis underground disposal of billions of gallons of wastewater forever. He said there has been no information provided to anyone about what will be in that discharge that will be there forever. He said there is one option to do nothing because all of the toilets are currently discharged on the same piece of land. He said that another option is to discharge all of this into a pipe out into the ocean. Mr. McDowell said he knew the person that installed seven outfall pipes for Boston. He said the Board should take some steps to get some rational assurances that whatever is done with wastewater does not have the potential of destroying the drinking water of the Town. He felt we should put an expression in our annual report that we get assurance from competent qualified people, that whatever the Town does it will be practiced by our Water District.

Chair Prue said he agreed with some of what Mr. McDowell had said, but he pointed out that Mr. McDowell had voted against hiring the consultant recently voted by the Board. Mr. McDowell said

that he was impressed with the lady that had met with the Board at the last meeting. He said he did not support it because he felt it was a ho-hum decision for a very serious issue. He said we needed to be more aggressive and more absolute in protecting our drinking water.

Mr. Perry said he appreciated Mr. McDowell's concerns about protecting our drinking water and that no one wants our drinking water affected. He said he was hopeful that going forward changes could be made so that we provide some or all of the assurances that Mr. McDowell is seeking. He believed the steps recently taken to obtain professionally obtained scientific information is the only way we can have a dialogue with the various forces for moving the sewer project along. He said that PFAS is present now and without sewerage they will become even more prolific, and we are really looking a century of sewer planning. He said what the town is planning to do is use treated effluent for recharging the ground water, but it has no controls at all. Concerning Mr. McDowell's comments, going forward the Board will have comments and engagement as we are currently engaged with our own consultant, so we have something to present rather than just a general the-sky-is-falling complaint. He said that he was on board philosophically, but we don't have any information because we have not been engaged directly with the wastewater operation. He said that the 50-year plan does have discharge sites planned within the drinking water recharge, but the two that are currently are not although one is very close that leads us to have concerns that maybe it will affect our wells. Mr. Perry moved to indefinitely postpone agenda item 2.

In regard to Item 2 on the agenda, Mr. Perry said he did not believe it was appropriate to comment at this time because we do not have the information to make a statement. It would be without clear evidence. Mr. Perry said he appreciated Mr. McDowell's impassioned pleas to protect the drinking water, but felt it was premature to include comments at this time. Mr. McDowell asked Mr. Perry if he had any direct knowledge of what will flow out of the wastewater treatment facility as it is proposed. Mr. Perry said we do not know and the only thing to be treated currently is nitrogen and everything else that is put down the drain is going to end up at the treatment plant. He was hopeful that society will, at the supply end, do away with contaminants, but that is a dream. He agreed with Mr. McDowell about that issue, but the hyperbolic portion has to do with a broad concern that the wells will be contaminated, and we are trying to determine if the Main Station and Well 5 can potentially be contaminated. He said the long-term is unknown but surmised that different levels of treatment will become more common for drinking water whether or not there is sewerage or not. Treatment will be required for anything that is not supposed to be there. He said the Board should be logical and level-headed and we provide ourselves with information before we go at any of this from a technical point of view.

Mr. McDowell read from a newspaper article which was quoting an EPA official said the agency estimates that the rule could reduce exposure to PFAS to nearly 100 million people, decreasing rates of cancer, heart attacks and birth complications. He said if the voters of Dennis listen and become concerned about the message can come from no better place than the Board of Water Commissioners, who have a responsibility for the quality of the drinking water. He was hopeful the Board would have questions about the wisdom of the Town's leadership regarding the wastewater facility. He was hopeful the Board's report would include some appropriate wording regarding its concerns.

Mr. Perry noted that this report is for 2022 and that this Board had had very little discussion about this concern. The Board was introduced to the Site 2 Report and concerns were expressed. The Board took no action and did not feel it was appropriate to include any statements that reach any kind of conclusion. He said that there have been objections to the wastewater program previously, but they were mostly financial. He believed the Board needed to be careful to turn to water quality as a rational

to seek force against that wastewater program. He recommended that we avail ourselves with as much information as possible and that 2023 lay ahead and in the Spring of 2024, we can report what we did in 2023. Mr. Perry moved to indefinitely postpone this agenda item. Mr. McDowell said that if this was not done it would be two out of the three Dennis Water Commissioners have no concerns or don't want to get into it at this particular time. Mr. Perry said this is a public hearing and a record of what is said and discussed and it stands as a testimony of what these Commissioners believe and all three are close to the same page believing that our mandate is to protect the drinking water supply. Mr. Perry rendered his objection to any conclusion that he was not concerned about the drinking water supply.

Ms. McMahon noted that Mr. Perry has moved twice to indefinitely postpone agenda item 2, but had not heard a second. Chair Prue seconded and then called for a vote which was found to be two in favor and one opposed (PLM).

Consider and Authorize the Board of Water Commissioners' Report for the 2022 Calendar and Fiscal Year.

Ms. McMahon said she had worked with the Chair to prepare a draft culled from the Board's meetings throughout the year and highlighted significant events. Mr. Perry had provided edits previously. He further recommended modifying the last paragraph that would clarify which report the Board was referring to by including the specific title. On a motion made by Robert M. Perry, and duly seconded, the Board ***UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to approve the final draft, as most recently amended and edited, as the Board's 2022 annual report.***

On a motion made by Robert M. Perry and duly seconded, the Board ***UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to adjourn the meeting at approximately 10:38 AM.***

Respectfully submitted,

Sheryl A McMahon, Clerk