

# DENNIS WATER DISTRICT

## *Board of Water Commissioners*

Minutes of Meeting held

August 31, 2020

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the **Dennis Water District Board of Water Commissioners on Monday, August 31, 2020 at 10:00AM originally scheduled to be held in the Stone Hearing Room, Dennis Town Hall, 685 Route 134, South Dennis, MA 02660** will be physically closed to the public and conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting can be found on the town's website, at [www.town.dennis.ma.us](http://www.town.dennis.ma.us) . For this meeting, members of the public who wish to watch the meeting may do so in the following manner: The meeting will be televised via Dennis Channel 18 on Comcast or on the web at <https://www.town.dennis.ma.us/channel-18/pages/live-stream>. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post on <https://www.town.dennis.ma.us/home/pages/agendas-minutes-videos> a video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.

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 10:00 AM. Water Commissioners Peter L. McDowell and Alan Tuttle was present. Also present were David Larkowski, Superintendent and Sheryl A McMahon, Treasurer.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Public Information - None**

### **Update on Tank Painting and Maintenance Projects**

Mr. Larkowski advised that the Hokum Rock Tank was power washed which took about a week to accomplish. He tries to get to the tanks to power wash them in the summer because the high humidity aids in cleaning. This tank is 112 feet tall. It appears that the integrity of the tank is in good shape. Power washing routinely helps extend the life of the paint. The last time an additional coat of paint was applied the contract was for about \$266,000.

In regards to the Route 134 tank, the bid cost is just under \$600,000. A site meeting was held with the contractors a couple of weeks ago and the project work is scheduled to begin October first. The contractor will be mobilizing and setting up at the site over the next several weeks. The tank will be drained approximately one week prior to the first of October. He anticipated that the usage will be done enough to be able to rely on the Route 28 tank. It is anticipated that the tank project will be completed by the end of the fall. Chairman Prue asked that, on behalf of the Water Commissioners, he extended their appreciation for the work that was done by District employees on the Hokum Rock Tank. The Superintendent stated that it costs approximately \$4,000 for the equipment rental and the employees who do the work are compensated at the state prevailing wage rates because the work is beyond their normal jobs. Mr. McDowell asked what the District's actual cost savings is between the Hokum Rock Tank and the Route 134 Tank taking into consideration the size differential of the two tanks.

## **MA Drought Task Force's Recommendation to Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs to declare a Level 2 - Significant Drought for each drought region in Massachusetts.**

Mr. Larkowski wanted to make clear to the public that when the State issues this type of advisory they are looking at many variables concerning the conditions such as crop index, rainfall, rivers and reservoirs, etc. He said there is no denying that it has been very dry in terms of rainfall. He wanted to be clear that there is plenty of groundwater available, particularly generally across the Cape. The State does recognize that the Cape's groundwater levels are normal. There are no water usage restrictions for the Town of Dennis. Although the last several months of precipitation have been a few inches below normal, over the past two years, the cumulative rainfall has been approximately 29 inches above normal. He encouraged conservation whenever possible and pointed out that it saves the customer money. Mr. Tuttle asked about the pumping demand being up against the District's permitted limit. Mr. Larkowski responded that April and May were below average while June was the highest June on record. However, July had average pumping. Mr. McDowell noted that the rain data in the newspaper reports that the rainfall is about eight inches below normal.

## **Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Hearing for District's Acquisition of Land for Watershed Protection Purposes.**

The Superintendent reported on the DEP hearing that took place on August 27. It is normally held in the Lakeville office, but due to the pandemic it was held via Zoom with the help of Ms. McMahon. Abutters were properly notified and the plan of land completed by John Demarest was submitted for the approval. He noted it was just the second such remote hearing for this type of hearing. It is open for comments until September 7<sup>th</sup> and it will be followed in a few weeks with DEP's approval letter and then the closing can move forward.

## **Superintendent's Report**

Mr. Larkowski advised that the computer system that operates the controls for the pumps and tanks crashed and has been out of commission for a several weeks. The backup system, although it does not have all the bells and whistles, it has been functioning satisfactorily until a new system can be installed. A detailed discussion ensued as to how the pumps communicate with the computer system. It was noted that the District did experience several days of pumping that exceeded 10 million gallons.

He further reported that the District has been collecting Lead and Copper samples, which is done once every three years. These samples are collected to ensure that our treatment is working properly. He reminded the Board that in the case of Flint, MI, they failed to adjust the pH of the water supplied in order to prevent lead and copper from leaching out of pipes and into the drinking water. He said that the results will be available in about thirty days. Last month he reviewed, and the Board approved, a State sponsored round of PFAS (polyfluoroalkyl substances). He reported that the sampling bottles recently arrived at the District and they will be conducting those samples shortly.

The Superintendent reported that there is currently a Labor position vacant due to that employee being deployed a little more than a year ago and has subsequently decided not to return to employment with the District.

Mr. McDowell inquired about the gate covers in roadways and the possibility of them being modified in such a way that they can remain level with the roadway as to not cause bumps when vehicles drive

over them. He suggested that perhaps some sort of steel plate could be placed that would prevent the covers from being depressed. The Superintendent advised that there are two different issues. One is that the boxes telescope over one another and the top one tends to get depressed because of the weight of the vehicles passing over. The second is the entire box has been excavated and the soil surrounding it is getting compacted. (Inaudible). Mr. McDowell asked if the Superintendent's Association or the District's engineers could devise a means of remedying the situation. Mr. Larkowski said he would take a look at it.

### **Treasurer's Report**

**a) Solar Revenue** – Ms. McMahon advised that the Fiscal Year 2020 report had been included in their meeting packets. In the prior fiscal year, the District received actually 14-months' worth of solar revenue. The total received was over \$142,000. The Town remits the turnover of funds once they have them but, we have no control over when the payments are received. She anticipated that next fiscal year's receipt will be much closer to the \$100,000 estimated receipts.

**b) Borrowing for Old Bass River Road Acquisition - Vote to Authorize Borrowing** – The Treasurer reported that the bid results for the \$700,000 bond anticipation note came in for the one-year note at .95% and was awarded to Unibank. . On a motion made by Alan Tuttle, and duly seconded, the Board **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to authorize the Treasurer to borrow \$700,000 for a one year bond anticipation note to be awarded to Unibank at .95%.**

**Consider Entering into Executive Session: Mass. General Law Ch. 30A, Sec. 21(a) Reason 6: to discuss the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real estate, for the purpose of watershed protection, and Reason 3: to discuss strategy with respect to litigation as the Chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the District for both of these discussions.**

At approximately 10:39 AM a motion was made by Alan Tuttle to enter into an *Executive Session in accordance with Mass. General Law Ch. 30A, Sec. 21(a) Reason 6: to discuss the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real estate, for the purpose of watershed protection, and Reason 3: to discuss strategy with respect to litigation as the Chair has declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the District for both of these discussions and not to return to open session. The motion was seconded by Peter L. McDowell. The Chair then called for the vote which was found to be as follows:*

*Alan Tuttle "aye"*

*Paul F. Prue "aye"*

*Peter L. McDowell "aye"*

Respectfully submitted,

Sheryl A McMahon, Clerk