

TRI TOWN BOARD
of Water Commissioners
Braintree, Holbrook, Randolph

MINUTES

November 7, 2019

Present: Joseph C. Sullivan, Chair, Town of Braintree, Bill Alexopolous, Town of Randolph, Tim Gordon, Town of Holbrook.

In attendance: Jim Arsenault, Kathy Baskin, Meg Blanchet, Millie Garcia-Serrano, Damon Guterman, Jon Hobill, Stephen DeFrancesco, Lou Dutton, Helen Gordon, Brian Howard, Eric Kelley, Robyn LaFrance, Chris Pellitteri, Keith Nastasia, Rhonda Pogodzienski, Lorraine See, C. Mark Smith, Janine Smith, Ed Spellman.

Mayor Sullivan opened the meeting at 1:15 pm.

Minutes: The minutes of the October 3 and October 21, 2019 meetings were reviewed and accepted.

MOTION: by Bill Alexopolous to accept the minutes of October 3, 2019 as presented

SECOND: by Tim Gordon

VOTE: unanimous

MOTION: by Bill Alexopolous to accept the minutes of October 21, 2019 as presented

SECOND: by Tim Gordon

VOTE: unanimous

Update on Per and Poly Fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) by MassDEP Representatives:

Mayor welcomed and introduced guest attendees from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. Mayor gave a brief background on the reason for their visit and stated that the initial Tri Town water testing occurred one day earlier.

Millie Garcia-Serrano, Regional Director, SERO, introduced herself and explained the territory covered by her office. Millie provided a hard copy of the presentation and she discussed what all communities share with regard to PFAS. She explained what the Governor tasked MassDEP with and stated that it is all proactive work.

Kathy Baskin, Assistant Commissioner, Bureau of Water Resources, Boston office, introduced herself and her team. Kathy explained that she and Millie communicate daily.

C. Mark Smith, Ph. D., Director of Research and Standards, provided background on PFAS and explained what's new. He stated that the focus is on drinking water and he discussed the Massachusetts Drinking Water Guideline. Mark gave a Regulatory Status update and explained that the proposed MCL is expected to be finalized by year end. There was brief discussion and questions concerning bottled water and spring water and the soon to be released Hollywood movie, Dark Waters.

Mayor Sullivan asked if the states are leading on this issue rather than the federal government. Millie and Mark provided feedback stating that what the states are doing is satisfactory and that the federal government is not acting fast enough.

Kathy Baskin presented on PFAS Actions to Date by Mass DEP explaining that this is a new issue for both communities and regulators. She discussed monitoring of Public Water System sources, testing of new public water supply sources and encouraging public notice, and outreach to all public water supplies to encourage voluntary sampling. In addition, they are requesting water bottlers and bulk suppliers to voluntarily share sampling results.

Jon Hobill, from the Southeast Office, Bureau of Water Resources, SERO, presented on PFAS and the Tri Town Water Supply. Jon noted that it was his office that approved the Braintree PAC pilot. Jon presented a map of the Tri Town water supply and said the first task is to zoom out to look at the entire water supply area and determine what's contributing to it.

Mayor Sullivan interrupted to introduce Mayor-elect Charles Kokores who had just entered the meeting.

Jon Hobill and Millie Garcia-Serrano shared a copy of the Town of Hyannis and Town of Mashpee public notices concerning PFAS and urged the Tri Town board to tell its story. They suggested doing a soft public notice by posting a drinking water health advisory statement on the town websites, the water supply, and the Board of Health webpage.

There was some discussion concerning the fact that Tri Town is in compliance and is being proactive and responsive and the board exercised caution about the possibility of causing alarm to residents. The board expressed that they want to be accurate with the public notice. It was agreed that any public message will come from the Tri Town board in collaboration with MassDEP on behalf of Braintree, Holbrook and Randolph. Millie Garcia-Serrano reiterated that they are only suggesting and urging communities to provide a PFAS notice. MassDEP has provided public notice templates for communities to use.

It was mentioned that a Boston Globe story was published this week concerning a community with a high PFAS count above 70 and in this particular case a public notice was needed. The current EPA/MassDEP federal and state health advisory is 70 parts per trillion (ppt). Millie and Jon reiterated that a draft MCL drinking water standard will be determined in the very near future and they said the Town of Ayer is currently posting regular PFAS testing updates on its website.

Discussion continued concerning the fact that the Tri Town water supply is in compliance and averaging 24.5 ppt, well below the current standard of 70. Brian Howard asked how long communities will have to provide public water quality notice when MassDEP releases the new guideline. Millie responded stating that communities are obligated to notify the public if the drinking water is unsafe.

It was stated that MassDEP is also urging bottled water companies to voluntarily test for PFAS and at this point only three bottled water companies are testing. This information is on the MassDEP website.

Mayor Sullivan stated that at this point Tri Town is 1) monitoring the water supply, 2) testing the water supply, 3) well within the guideline, and 4) keeping the public informed. Millie responded stating that's exactly what to communicate to the public.

Millie further stated that as public officials, MassDEP must upload the data and explain facts and cannot withhold information. Jon Hobill said that news reporters are already in the routine of checking the MassDEP website daily for PFAS updates.

Mayor-elect Charles Kokores asked if this is set in stone and stated that if the number comes out as 30, Tri Town is in compliance. He made comments concerning causing a social media frenzy. Millie stated that MassDEP will likely start uploading data in approximately one week.

Mayor Sullivan stated that the Tri Town board will draft a public notice before November 15, 2019 and the message will state that they are working closely with MassDEP. Mayor asked Jim Arsenault, Braintree Public Works Director, to draft a water quality advisory notice by November 12 and the board will review it and meet two days later to finalize it. Peter Mello stated that a public notice will inform or confuse. Millie stated that they have a public obligation to notify.

- MOTION: by Bill Alexopolous for the Tri Town board to provide a Water Quality Advisory public notice
- SECOND: by Tim Gordon
- VOTE: unanimous

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, November 14, 2019 at 10:00 AM at Braintree Town Hall with the only agenda item of drafting the public water advisory notice.

A five minute meeting break was granted before the final agenda item.

Presentation and Discussion of draft special act and joint powers agreement for consideration or any action related thereto: Nicole Taub

- Nicole Taub provided an update stating that she and the other town attorney's focused on the changes the board made at the last meeting and she asked the board to vote at this meeting.
- Peter Berry read and discussed the newest copy of An Act Establishing the Tri Town Water District, dated October 21, 2109, in its entirety. The legislation covers the authority of the Tri Town Board and will take effect when the new Tri Town Water Treatment Plant is operational. Everything remains the same until then.
- It was explained that the Joint Powers Agreement (Holbrook and Randolph) can be adopted and does not need to be approved by the Tri Town Board.
- Rick Manley, bond counsel, was introduced by conference call at 4:25 pm initiated by Peter Mello. Mayor Sullivan asked a question as to whether or not the current language allows flexibility to the Tri Town Board to go back to their respective communities and bond individually, and Rick Manley responded yes, it does have that flexibility build into it. Rick Manley referenced the Municipal Modernization Act.

MOTION: by Tim Gordon to amend the draft legislation as discussed

SECOND: by Bill Alexopolous

VOTE: unanimous

MOTION: by Bill Alexopolus to refer the legislation to each town with the recommendation that each town affirm in substantially the same form

SECOND: by Tim Gordon

VOTE: unanimous

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Robyn LaFrance

Recording Secretary