

Nantucket Water Commission  
Minutes of Thursday, December 14, 2023

A meeting of the Nantucket Water Commission was held on Thursday, December 14, 2023, in the conference room at the Wannacomet Water Company facilities at 1 Milestone Road, Nantucket, Massachusetts.

*Commissioners Present:* Commissioners Allen Reinhard, Curtis Barnes, Nelson Eldridge, Rob Benchley and John Pearl were present. *Absent:* None. *Staff & Guests:* Mark Willett – Director, and Linda Roberts Project Coordinator. A quorum was present throughout. Commissioner Pearl excused himself and left the meeting at 9:07 AM and Commissioner Barnes at 9:22 AM. *Public:* Meg Miller Ruley and Joanne Skokan.

1. **Meeting Called to Order:** Commissioner Reinhard recognized that we had a quorum and called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM.
2. **Acceptance of Agenda:** Motion made by Commissioner Eldridge, seconded by Commissioner Barnes, and unanimously accepted the agenda as presented.
3. **Public Comment:** Commissioner Reinhard welcomed the public who introduced themselves. Meg Miller Ruley and Joanne Skokan represented themselves and the other residents of Tom's Way. They thanked the Commission and Director Willett for their support and feel very positive about their meetings with the Water Commission, and Director Willett's efforts and continued communication. With this rising to a health emergency, they are frustrated with being shut down at the Board of Health meetings by the health director and the lack of response from him or the Town's Environmental Contamination Administrator. Director Willett spoke about identifying the source and is confident with the science. Once the source is found and if the responsible party is identified everyone will be reimbursed for the funds used to extend the water service and any other expenses the homeowners and other parties have incurred. The residents have discussed the issues with installing POETS systems and since water can be brought down it wouldn't make sense to install them and then deal with the storage and disposal of filters. They asked the DEP if they could be creative and use the POET funds and use them for their other costs. Director Willett went over the details of how the excavation and water line would be run. After exe asked to place stakes where they will want their water service to come in. Each property should place stakes for two connections. Director Willett recommended the Commission consider reducing the connection fees from \$5,000 to \$2,500 to a future payment due date. Commissioner Barnes made the motion to reduce the connection fee to \$2,500 pending recovery from other sources to recover the full amount of \$5,000 with the remaining half of \$2,500 will be deferrable. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Eldridge and passed by unanimous consent.
4. **Review of Minutes from November 9, 2023.** After review, it was noted that the word perception was meant to be precipitation in the third sentence of item 5. After correcting, the motion was made, by Commissioner Barnes, seconded by Commissioner Eldridge, and unanimously approved.
5. **Production, Billing and Rainfall Reports:** Director Willett reported that there was a bump up for stroll. The DEP has declared drought conditions for the Islands. The aquifer remains strong. Billing has been difficult since the town's IT Department made changes. We can only send a limited number of emails out and our phones are ringing off the wall with people looking for their e-bills. IT is working diligently but can't resolve the issue. They are working with Harris who are our support for our billing and utility software company Impresa. The good news is for short money our billing company who sends out the printed bills can send out e-bills. There will be a \$250 set up fee. This will be a permanent change for us. The Sewer Director agrees to

increase their share of the billing cost to support this change. Windows updates at 2 AM have caused scada alarms have been indicating tank overflows causing the Director and Operations Manager to have to come out to check them. Moving to a separate system will be \$27,000. The Commissioners made comments and their consensus was this move for billing made sense and to move forward with this change and to not charge any late fees or penalties given the difficulties in customers receiving their bills.

6. **Director's Review and Updates:**

- a. **West of Airport Water Main Project:** The work on extending the water main is being done by CC Construction. Director Willett continues to meet with the contractor and engineers. Director Willett will have them split their time between Nobadeer Way and move to the Tom's Way work once we have those easements. Rob West, our operations manager, has completed the surveying and plans for Tom's Way.
- b. **Fiscal Year 2025:** Director Willett has met with the Town Manager and Finance Director reviewing the 2025 budget. Since COVID costs of inventory items have continued to increase. A few of our vendors have locked in with contracts. Other increases were made for professional services, gas, diesel, and electric energy costs. Reductions in debt service have continued and it is hoped that it could be zero by 2027.
- c. **Projects – ground water, renewable energy, tanks, and pump stations:** Director Willett shared a drone video of the tanks. The tanks need to be washed and there are areas where mold stains and rust need to be addressed. The drone videos showed the areas where rust was occurring, and the lift covers and seams were showing age. An amount will be determined in the next fiscal year to cover that. Director Willett is meeting with others to project solar panels on water department buildings and find out the cost benefits for that. Commissioners made comments and their consensus was to move forward with whatever helps reduce energy costs. Director Willett spoke of the work Dr. Person and others were doing with offshore drilling in search of freshwater sources. Director Willett updated the Commissioners on projects pending and their impact on ground water and storm water drainage. The island's rainwater has had a river of sandy silt materials running down roads. Storm water drains which are already impacted from rising ground water and prior debris and silt need maintenance.

7. **Discussion, amendment and execution of any personnel or vendor contracts.** None.

8. **Commissioner's Comments and Reserved for Unforeseen Items for Discussion not anticipated by the Chair.** Director Willett could see that 175 people viewed and 100 people pulled applications for our recent administrative position posting on the town's website. Human Resources was going to schedule online interviews, however he asked for in-person meetings to take place before the holidays.

9. **Adjournment:** Motion was made by Commissioner Eldridge, seconded by Commissioner Benchley, and unanimously voted to adjourn the regular business meeting at 9:50 AM.

Approved: Allen B. Reinhardt Date: Feb 8, 2024

The meeting packet included 12/14/23 Agenda, reports, and information on the Mondo Board.