



# TOWN OF LINCOLN

WATER DEPARTMENT

MIDDLESEX COUNTY MASSACHUSETTS

TOWN OF LINCOLN  
WATER DEPARTMENT  
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## Board of Water Commissioners Meeting Agenda

Monday, April 12, 2021 8:00 a.m.

### Virtual Meeting Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law

**Remote Participation Protocols:** 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 Lincoln Board of Water Commissioners will be 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 [www.lincolntown.org](http://www.lincolntown.org). For this meeting, members of the public who wish to listen or watch the meeting may do so in the following manner:

#### Topic: Board of Water Commissioners Zoom Meeting

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Meeting ID: 933 9332 7939

Password: 770882

Dial by your location: 646- 876- 9923

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 the Town's website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.

Jim Hutchinson, Chairman

Ruth Ann Hendrickson, Commissioner

Michelle Barnes, Commissioner

Alison Boland, Administrative Assistant

Tom Sander, Finance Committee Liaison

Cindy Sheriff, Lincoln resident

Darin LaFalam, Water Superintendent

Meeting Called to order at 8:06.

1. Discuss whether Water Audit is still needed in FY22 Capital Request now that UAW is below 10% - vote expected

Chairman Hutchinson said the Annual Statical Reporting (ASR) for 2020 was submitted to the MassDEP by former water superintendent Ms. MaryBeth Wiser on April 7, 2021. Ms. Wiser's calculations showed an unaccounted-for water (UAW) of 4.7%. Mr. Hutchinson also stated the submitted report was consistent with how Ms. Wiser had been reporting it for the last couple of years.

Commissioner Hendrickson asked how the estimates of leak rates were obtained and how other communities get their information. Mr. Hutchinson said an outside contractor performed the survey for the Water Department. Mr. Hutchinson asked Superintendent LaFalam if he knew how other communities' surveys were performed. Mr. LaFalam said he did not know but would research that question. Mr. Hutchinson said the way that the permit item is listed, it states that if the UAW remains above 10%, repeat the steps outlined in paragraph a., and in paragraph a. of the permit section is where it stated that the water audit should be completed. Mr. Hutchinson continued to say that if UAW were less than 10%, a water audit would not be necessary. The ASR indicates 4.7%; this is subject to review and approval by MassDEP. Mr. Sander asked if there was a deadline by when the DEP submits

an approval of the application. Chairman Hutchinson said he was unaware of any specific timeline. Mr. Sander stated that the DEP could come back at any time.

Commissioner Barnes asked if the funds should remain in the budget in case the DEP requires a water audit later. Mr. Hutchinson agreed with keeping the funds in the warrant until the last possible date and removing it if necessary was a good idea. Mr. Hutchinson said the stated decision to keep or remove the funds must be made before Town Meeting, in order to ask voters for the funds.

Commissioner Hendrickson said she felt the water audit would not give us any additional information and the funds could be used in other places. Ms. Hendrickson continued and said almost all leaks are fixed within 6 months and the Water Department already performs an annual leak survey. Mr. Hutchinson agreed with Ms. Hendrickson.

MOTION: Commissioner Hutchinson made the motion to remove the water audit from our FY 22 Capital request, but not until the last possible date in case the state comes back to us with a problem with our UAW calculation. Commissioner Barnes seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Barnes, Aye; Hendrickson, Aye; Hutchinson, Aye.

## 2. Discuss and decide outcome of the Long-Term Water Supply Evaluation Project (including “should we switch to MWRA?”) – vote expected

Chairman Hutchinson presented the Net Present Value (NPV) calculation spreadsheet. The spreadsheet details each of the options, including those associated with joining the MWRA. The spreadsheet reviews the three options and their variants presented in the Tata & Howard Long-Term Water Supply Evaluation report. Option 1 includes the fixed assets that would need to be purchased in the next 20 years and the full operating cost for staying the current course; Option 2 includes variants on Option 1 such as a new Water Treatment Plant and that plus a new Pump Station; and Option 3 has two variants related to connecting to MWRA: the option of interconnecting to MWRA with Weston or the option of interconnecting with MWRA through Lexington. Mr. Hutchinson said he felt the most important information from the spreadsheet was the 20-year average annual NPV, the average amount in current dollars that is needed per year to run the Water Department under these different options. Mr. Hutchinson said after reviewing all the options and parameters, the difference between all of the options is in the range of \$400,000 to \$700,000 a year extra to switch from Option 1 (current course) to either Options 2 or 3 (switching to MWRA). Mr. Hutchinson stated that the Water Department recently invested two plus million dollars and will possibly invest close to another million into our current plant this year in FY 22. The other options cannot compete as at this point in the capital replacement cycle you are comparing replacing a relatively small amount of remaining capital to be replaced over the next twenty years (current course) with options that require the installation of all required capital over the next twenty years. The Options are at different stages of maturity in their capital cycle. Mr. Hutchinson continued to say that the MWRA annual assessments are going up at 3.9% per year for the next 10 years. Additionally, we do not know if the MWRA would accept us solely for financial reasons. It is unprecedented for a community to be accepted purely on financial grounds. Chairman Hendrickson observed that not only that, Lincoln doesn't have a true financial hardship either. Mr. Hutchinson stated he felt the Board had done their due diligence on exploring Option 3, the option to switch to MWRA, and it was not a good option financially at this point in time. Mr. Hutchinson asked if there were any comments or questions?

Mr. Sander said it would be interesting to review the 20-year lifecycle cost, if the project had been started 3 years ago. Although it would not affect our current decisions, it would be interesting to review. Chairman Hutchinson stated that he had discussed that with Commissioner Barnes and that he would annotate his spreadsheet with suggestions for how to do that analysis in the future, in advance of the current capital stock being depleted, so that there is time to make the switch to MWRA if that proves more financially prudent when comparing all Options at the start of their respective capital cycle processes.

Commissioner Hendrickson asked if the report had taken into consideration that within the next 5 to 6 years a major overhaul will need to be performed on the Water Treatment Plant. Mr. Hutchinson said Tata & Howard had listed possible upgrades for the next 20 years. Ms. Hendrickson suggested that an assessment of the Water Treatment Plant be done every 10 years. Mr. Hutchinson agreed.

MOTION: Chairman Hutchinson moved to conclude the analysis of this project and decide in favor of Option 1 staying with the existing approach to delivering safe and reliable drinking water to the Town of Lincoln. Commissioner Hendrickson seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Barnes, Aye; Hendrickson, Aye; Hutchinson, Aye.

Commissioner Barnes thanked Chairman Hutchinson for his incredibly thorough financial analysis, and all of his hard work on this project.

### 3. Discuss deCordova Pondsides Landscaping Submission

Commissioner Barnes said being within 400' of the bank of Flint's Pond, that this was a Zone A issue. While the Conservation Commission has jurisdiction over Zone A, both the deCordova Museum and the Conservation Commission have sought input from the Water Commission since any work performed in Zone A concerns surface drinking water protection. Ms. Barnes said the deCordova has submitted this planting scheme as part of their view shed restoration project. Ms. Barnes said she has been in contact with Josh Hasenfus, the representative from the deCordova and he has been very open to her suggestions. The scope of the project is regarding planting on the hill, and her concerns are related to the maintenance of these plantings, pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, and erosion control. Ms. Barnes said the deCordova will be using chemical-free native seeds and plantings. Native plantings are beneficial because once native plantings are established, they don't need the chemical maintenance and watering that non-native plantings require; also, the straw wattle being used for erosion control is chemical free. Ms. Barnes said that the product he is recommending consists only of fish. Ms. Barnes suggested that leak checks be done on any vehicle outside of Zone A before the vehicles enter Zone A.

Supernatant LaFalam asked if they were attempting to minimize that fertilizer used; excess phosphate in the water will promote algae growth, which is an issue if we are filtering the water. She reported that Mr. Hasenfus assured her that fertilizer would be used only with the initial planting of the shrubs, and not afterwards, that the fertilizer to be used would be Neptune's Harvest which consists only of fish, that the total amount used would be 2.5-5.0 gallons, and this would take place about 200 feet away from the pond. Mr. LaFalam said that was acceptable. Ms. Barnes then went on to discuss a concern she had about the sculptures being relocated and the new concrete footings that are needed each time a sculpture is moved or newly installed. The footing would be poured in sections and then moved to support the sculpture in zone A. Ms. Barnes was concerned about the lime in the concrete leaching into the water. Mr. Hutchinson said he felt the amount that the concrete leaching would affect the Ph in the pond would be minimal. Ms. Barnes said the deCordova also has plans to reduce the size of the upper parking lot eventually and to install a few trees, which would be better for ground water recharge. Ms. Barnes also reported that she had asked whether when they mow they could use machinery that uses fuel that is not petroleum based but was told they weren't able to at this point. She suggested that in the eventual watershed maintenance agreement that will be renewed, that it perhaps be a goal that they switch their equipment over to equipment that is "greener."

Commissioner Hendrickson asked if any of the planting along the pond might discourage geese and ducks. Ms. Barnes said none of the planting are within 50 feet of Flint's Pond.

Chairman Hutchinson said he was in favor of Ms. Barnes suggestions and comments to the Conservation Commission and the deCordova. Mr. Hutchinson noted that the deCordova did not want to use alternative biofuel landscaping equipment. Mr. Hutchinson said in the future they might consider electric equipment as replacements are needed. Mr. Hutchinson said this should be a suggestion rather than a requirement. Ms. Barnes noted that the Conservation Commission is replacing some equipment with electric equipment and that it seems a good goal. Ms. Barnes and Ms. Hendrickson agreed that at this point it should be a suggestion rather than a requirement.

Chairman Hutchinson thanked Commissioner Barnes for all of her hard work on this issue.

Commissioner Barnes will update the Conservation Committee on the Board's concerns with this project.

### 4. Discuss conservation related initiatives contemplated

Commissioner Barnes said she had contacted the Conservation Commission to discuss the following topics that might be mutually beneficial.

The following three options were presented:

- **Water Conservation**

Ms. Barnes said she informed the Conservation Committee about the current programs in place to encourage water conservation, the steep rate structure, and efforts to encourage reduction of lawn size. We could positively work together on education about water conservation. Water conservation is important and education works. Ms. Barnes stated the Conservation Committee is willing to work with the Water Commission to help educate the town on the importance of water conservation. She also observed that it would be good to know whether our steep rate structure resulted in water conservation; she noted both that it may have encouraged the drilling of wells and that when budget constraints are not met when a consumer faces the higher rates, then they may not choose to reduce their consumption.

Superintendent LaFalam said in his past experience public notification works to reduce water consumption. Ms. Hendrickson said Lincoln had an education program 10 or 15 years ago and the annual water usage dropped from 80 GPPD to below 70 GPPD. Ms. Barnes would like to include education about how private wells impact aquifers. Mr. Hutchinson agreed that it would be good to publicize non-economic reasons for people to want to conserve and a new education program might reach residents who are unaware of the information. Mr. LaFalam suggested speaking with the schools about water conservation; by educating the children you will also educate the parents. Commissioner Hendrickson had provided slides on water conservation to the Lincoln Schools some years ago; she will check to see if they are still in use.

- **Protection of surface water through conservation restrictions or purchase of land around Zone A.**

Ms. Barnes stated that we should investigate the use of Conservation Restrictions (CRs) to further protect land in Zone A; grants may be available to fund the acquisition of easements or outright fee-owned land. Ms. Barnes also stated the Town of Lincoln consists of approximately 30% wetland and that in the past no one from the Conservation Department or the Water Department or the Board of Health had been tracking the applications or installation of septic systems in Zone A; going forward Michell Grzenda will be monitoring the septic applications in Zone A. Commissioner Hendrickson suggested that we notify property owners that their residence is in Zone A and give them information on how their behavior might impact the water supply and the environment. Mr. Hutchinson asked if we are notifying current owners or just new owners? Ms. Barnes said she felt all residents could benefit from an information packet informing them of what activities could harm the water quality. Ms. Hendrickson said she would be happy to draft a letter to send to residents. Mr. Hutchinson asked to clarify if this will be sent just to Zone A or will this be town wide? Ms. Barnes and Ms. Hendrickson felt town wide education was a good idea, but that it would certainly make sense for people to be alerted to the fact that they have Zone A areas on their property if they do.

- **Ranger to Protect Flint's Pond**

Ms. Barnes said the Lincoln Water Department, Lincoln Land Conservation Trust (LLCT) and the Conservation Department no longer fund payment for a ranger. Ms. Barnes said she asked the Police Department to increase patrol at the pump station on the weekends with binoculars, as well as the deCordova parking lot. The Department of Public Works will be installing new parking signs to limit parking near Flint's Pond. Ms. Barnes said the Town of Weston has created a volunteer program to patrol their walking trails. Mr. Hutchinson and Ms. Barnes both volunteered to help patrol Flint's pond by walking trails on the weekends. Mr. Hutchinson suggested giving volunteers a brief training on educating and interacting with the general public. Ms. Barnes said the Conservation Department Staff suggested that fencing around the pond be inspected and replaced if need be. The Conservation Department also suggested the planting around the pump station lawn be changed to from an inviting lawn to plants that will discourage ducks, geese, dogs, and humans from picnicking and fishing. Care should be taken to allow the bird watchers access. Ms. Barnes also mentioned that Conservation Department Staff will be hosting a site visit to Flint's Pond trouble areas for the Water Department's and Commission's benefit and the benefit of the new Conservation Director.

5. Discuss increasing washing machine rebates from \$50 to \$150 – vote expected

Commissioner Hendrickson said the rebate program used to offer a \$150.00 high efficiency clothes washer rebate but it was at some point reduced to \$50.00. Neighboring towns' rebate programs are approximately \$150.00. Ms. Hendrickson suggested changing the rebate for washer machines to \$150.00, toilets to \$50.00, and water irrigation moisture monitoring systems to \$50.00. Mr. Hutchinson stated that rebates will be given as long as funds are available; once the funds are depleted, rebates are shut off for that year. Ms. Hendrickson would like changes to be effective immediately, Ms. Hendrickson will release a statement informing the public of these changes.

**MOTION:** Chairman Hutchinson made motion to accept the proposal as presented: washing machine rebates from \$50 to \$150, toilets from \$30.00 to \$50.00 and Irrigation Monitor systems from \$70.00 to \$50.00. Commissioner Barnes seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Barnes, Aye; Hendrickson, Aye; Hutchinson, Aye.

## 6. Review and approve Agricultural Rate Application renewal for 279 Cambridge Turnpike – vote expected

**MOTION:** Chairman Hutchinson made a motion to approve the Agricultural Rate Application renewal for 279 Cambridge Turnpike. Commissioner Hendrickson seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Barnes, Aye; Hendrickson, Aye; Hutchinson, Aye.

### 6b. Codman Farms Agricultural Rate Application

Pete Lowy from Codman Farms pointed out that a backflow device was not being used for a DPW site and other places on Town of Lincoln property. Mr. Hutchinson stated the backflow enforcement should be applied equally across the board including the municipal connections. Commissioner Hendrickson said the agricultural applications are new and need more education on this. Ms. Hendrickson suggested a cross contamination rebate be created. Mr. Hutchinson suggested that a “to do” item for the coming year should be to investigate the backflow policy and how it should be implemented. Mr. Hutchinson did not feel the application could be denied at this time for backflow issues.

Commissioner Barnes said she was not inclined to approve the application for the two meters for which the backflow preventors have been purchased but not installed, since those prior applications were approved on the expectation that they would be installed; the same as other prior applications from other applicants over the past year of this new agricultural rate policy. Ms. Hendrickson agreed with Ms. Barnes.

Chairman Hutchinson said the committee has not made the cross-connection program clear to all town residents and he is not in favor of denying this application until more education is available to the town.

**MOTION:** Commission Hendrickson moved that Codman Farms be given until June 30, 2021 to complete the backflow installation on accounts #3660 and #1783 where the backflow devices have been purchased but not installed. If those have not been installed by that time, those two meters will revert to residential rates. The two yard hydrants, accounts # 3672 and 2033, will be given a six month extension as the Water Department looks for lower cost approaches to cross-connection control for yard hydrants and then ensures that all municipal yard hydrants have cross-connections properly installed. Seconded by Ms. Barnes. Roll call vote: Barnes, Aye; Hendrickson, Aye; Hutchinson, Aye.

Superintendent LaFalam will write a letter to Codman Farms; Commissioner Hendrickson is authorized to approve the final draft.

Once we have decided on the most cost-effective hardware, Mr. LaFalam will approach Tim Higgins about the best approach to bringing all municipal accounts into compliance on cross-connection control. Ms. Hendrickson will draft some educational material on the subject to be used in a general informational campaign.

## 7. Discuss whether to authorize Chair to be sole signatory on Water Commitments – vote expected

Chairman Hutchinson said that using Adobe Sign software made it easy to get all our signatures. Ms. Hendrickson and Ms. Barnes both expressed the opinion that their review of these documents added no value and thus they were in favor of delegating authority to the Chair.

MOTION: Chairman Hutchinson made a motion to approve Chair to be the sole signatory on Water Commitments. Commissioner Hendrickson seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Barnes, Aye; Hendrickson, Aye; Hutchinson, Aye

8. Approve minutes from February 25, 2021 – vote expected

Commissioner Hendrickson noted the “Tower Road Well” reference in paragraph 5 of section 2 should be “WTP” instead, and Commissioner Barnes requested a period at the end of that same sentence.

MOTION: Commissioner Hendrickson made motion to approved February 25, 2021 minutes as amended. Chairman Hutchinson seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Barnes, Aye; Hendrickson, Aye; Hutchinson, Aye.

9. Approve minutes from March 11, 2021 – vote expected

No one had any further comments.

MOTION: Chairman Hutchinson made motion to approve March 11, 2021 minutes as submitted. Commissioner Barnes seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Barnes, Aye; Hendrickson, Aye; Hutchinson, Aye.

10. Other Business

Superintendent LaFalam began to discuss expense items he needed help dealing with, and Mr. Hutchinson suggested they discuss the matter offline, and that the FY21 budget is currently in OK shape. Ms. Hendrickson and Ms. Barnes requested that Mr. LaFalam go thru the usual sequence of internal control checks on any capital expenditures, i.e., check if repairing the item makes more sense than replacement, and checking if there is any warranty coverage.

MOTION: Chairman Barnes made the motion to adjourn. Chairman Hutchinson seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Barnes, Aye; Hendrickson, Aye; Hutchinson, Aye.

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There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:14am.