

**MERRIMACK VILLAGE DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MAY 19, 2025
MEETING MINUTES**

A regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners was conducted on Monday, May 19, 2025, at 5:37 p.m. at 2 Greens Pond Road, Merrimack, NH.

Donald Provencher, Chairman, presided:

Members of the Commission present: Erin Clement, Vice Chairman
Scott Sabens, Personnel Liaison
Dan Allen
Wolfram von Schoen

Members of the Commission Absent:

Also in Attendance: Ron Miner, Superintendent
Jill Lavoie, Business Manager
Kristen Maher, HR/Finance Director

FINANCE/HUMAN RESOURCES REVIEW

A. Analysis of Revenue and Expenditures

Kristen Maher, HR/Finance Director, stated closing out the month of April, we are 83.33% through the fiscal year. On the revenue side of the ledger, shown is \$5,896,660 (93.88% of budgeted amount) and on the expense side, \$4,234,330 (67.41%). Net Ordinary Income is \$1,662,330.

Revenue

40100-40300 Water Usage - higher during summer - very hot July
40405 Interest Income - rates still high
40408 New Mains – Saint-Gobain's new services online
40413 Entrance Fees - new construction
40414 Merchandise Sales - sold scrap Metal

Expenses

60300 Purchase of Water – Moved ALL to budget
60650 Filtration – Budget only has 1 for each, want to expense 2nd in budget or keep under Capital?
70040 New Entrance/Meters - new construction around town (*offset by 40413*)
70450 R&M Meters - replacing old meters
70675.6 WTP Janitorial - chemical disposal needed
70677.4 & 70677.8 R&M WTP - additional pumps & VFDs on shelf

Director Maher commented on the wet spring, and that tier II isn't really kicking in as there hasn't been the need for lawn watering.

Commissioner von Schoen questioned account 60500 – motor vehicle maintenance (\$7,933.41 over budget) and was told of the need for maintenance on a few of the trucks in the fleet in order to pass inspection. Asked, she stated those on track for replacement next year required maintenance. None of the trucks purchased two years prior required any maintenance/recall work. Superintendent Miner commented on body work that was done on some of the older trucks.

B. Capital Reserve Balance

At this point in time, the anticipated 2025 year-end totals are: Land Acquisition \$1,607,762.04, Equipment & Facilities \$3,068,524.77, System Development \$1,226,620.19, Extraordinary Legal \$113,754.36, and Water Purchase & Wastewater Treatment Plant (WTP) Operations and Maintenance (O&M) \$288,870.02.

Director Maher commented the district had not purchased new vehicles for a period of time and has taken some time to get on a regular replacement schedule for the fleet. At the end of the next fiscal year, the replacement cycle should be one every or every other year.

Net income was identified as \$2,499,268. Of that, \$3,796,698 is cash (15.8% of fund balance). Total percent that is considered fund balance is 63.6%.

Trust Activities

The approved budget included \$125,000 to come out of capital for the PFAS polishing treatment. To date \$43,453.00 has been expended. It was suggested the Trustee of the trust fund would prefer a single request be made, e.g., wait until the full cost is understood before a request is made for an allocation/transfer from the trust fund. Director Maher commented it could occur at any time as she can show that the Board approved X amount coming out and roll it all into one request. An additional invoice was received today in the amount of \$23k+ to add to the \$43k.

Regarding Mitchell Woods, as of FY24, \$75,000 was approved to come from capital with \$36,953.56 expended as 5-13-25. The artificial recharge was budgeted at \$25,000 with the full amount being expended. She questioned the will of the Commission in regard to the timing of the request from the trust.

Given the surplus and the fact that the fiscal year ends next month, Commission von Schoen requested the Commission be provided with a list of the total request in time for the next meeting so that it can be compared to the surplus. He would like to see the entire impact on the budget rather than making isolated decisions.

Director Maher noted the cost of year 3 of the three-year contract with Pennichuck has been included in the budget.

REGULAR SESSION

1. Board of Commissioners to conduct the annual review of the Investment policy.

Policy Number 04-04-B – Investment Policy
Given its first reading;

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VON SCHOEN TO ACCEPT POLICY 04-04-B – INVESTMENT WITH AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF JULY 1, 2025, AS PRESENTED
MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CLEMENT
MOTION CARRIED
5-0-0**

2. Board of Commissioners to discuss possible rate Study update by Underwood Engineers, Inc.

Business Manager Lavoie requested information from Meagan McCowen, P.E., Senior Project Engineer, Underwood Engineers. The last full rate model update was completed in December of 2018 and projected out through June 2024. A few rate reviews have been done since to determine if things were tracking with the model and provided updated rate recommendations, as needed. Approaching FY26 and out of the model projection window, they recommend a model update, which would update all the input and project rate needs for the next five years. The ballpark cost cited was \$19,000-\$20,000.

MVD data would be used to update accounts (meters/sprinklers/hydrants/multi-unit), consumption, cost comparisons to similar communities, prior revenues and expenditures, current reserves, debt schedules, and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) items. The information would be used to estimate projected expenditures. They would then provide recommendations for rate increases, as needed.

Business Manager Lavoie noted previous rate reviews were at a cost of approximately \$4,700. The \$19,000-\$20,000 cost, if approved, would be included in the FY27 budget

Director Maher stated the last three recommended increases did not occur.

Commissioner Sabens commented on the financial stability in the absence of the 3 recommended rate increases. Director Maher remarked MVD continues to remain stable at this time. Asked for her opinion as to why that is the case, she cited significant expenses that were planned but have not yet come to fruition (pushed into outer years). Chair Provencher spoke of engineering that has not yet come about due to holding off on some projects.

Director Maher commented the end of next year is where she feels there is uncertainty with regard to the need for rate increases. Data is being gathered on what may need to be done for mains, etc. Those items are not budgeted out in the current model, which is part of what Underwood includes in the rate study. We have gone out comfortably to FY28. Beyond that there is uncertainty; what we plan and the amount of growth in town is a new water source an absolute? Do we have another treatment plant? Those are things we need to determine. Because we have not done those last three recommended rate increases, where do we sit?

Vice Chair Clement remarked because projects have been pushed out to later years as we wait on further information, she is concerned with spending \$20,000 when we don't have all of the backup to give them. She suggested a full rate study wait another year.

Commissioner von Schoen agreed. For the sake of the new members, he clarified there remain a few projects on the table for additional water sources; Mitchell Woods as an additional water source/well, unofficial recharge of wells 4 & 5 from the Merrimack River by injecting river water into the ground and

artificially recharging the aquifer faster, which may, in the process, wash some of the PFAS out of the groundwater. We have the Pennichuck connection as one which we have done (wholesale agreement). They are all on hold as we are not 100% clear as to which is worthwhile to pursue.

Mitchell Woods is great, but low producing and likely fairly expensive to create in the first place. The cost per gallon would be expensive, but it would be nice water for the summertime. Artificial recharge has been done before successfully but not all over the world and not everywhere in the State.

Asked if all of those possibilities are being studied at this time, Chair Provencher responded to a certain degree. Commissioner von Schoen commented it has been a bit frustrating because we have kind of gotten the same half-baked information. It is just not clear. That is why a lot of them were delayed over the past few years as it was not evident which was the right direction to take.

Superintendent Miner remarked not factored into the rate study were other impacts on the budget such as grants.

Business Manager Lavoie questioned whether it would be worthwhile to do an update as opposed to a full study.

Commissioner von Schoen suggested it might be a good idea to do another update on where we stand today as that would provide valuable information for new members and refresh the memories of others. Chair Provencher agreed. Vice Chair Clement reiterated she would be pleased to have a full rate study when there exists enough information to support what we are going to do moving forward.

Business Manager Lavoie stated the matter could be tabled.

Commissioner von Schoen spoke of it being time to conclude the discussion of Mitchell Woods. The Commission just approved (1-27-25) expending \$9,300 to pump this well for an extended period (8 hours), take a PFAS sample and then pump all wells and get PFAS samples. The Commission would then be provided with the results and a recommendation as to whether this remains a viable well.

Commissioner von Schoen asked that an update be provided as part of the next agenda. Chair Provencher commented on the Commission not having heard from Jamie Emery, Emery & Garret Groundwater Investigations (EGGI), in several months.

Commissioner von Schoen remarked the Commission is discussing a potential rate study that would be impacted by a decision of whether or not we are moving forward with Mitchell Woods, artificial recharge, etc. We have spent countless hours on this. Chair Provencher added it needs to be compared against other things. A decision cannot be made without understanding all viable alternatives.

Vice Chair Clement added, the Commission also discussed that if Mitchell Woods showed PFAS it would likely put an end to that discussion. Commissioner von Schoen stated the agenda item should include a discussion of the power issue (three-phase power or converting power at the site). Chair Provencher noted even having this information, we would not yet be in a position to compare it to other options. Vice Chair Clement suggested a work session during which all options could be discussed.

Commissioner von Schoen stated there to have been an entire table of comparisons for pump cost/gallon that has been updated several times.

Chair Provencher reiterated even if updated on other alternatives there would remain one that may not be able to be evaluated for several years. He commented on Mitchell Woods being in the Groundwater Management Zone. If PFAS is detected that could become part of the lawsuit.

Chair Provencher was uncertain what the cost would be related to the power issue. The pump test will provide needed information. By the time we are able to compare all options, any cost estimates that could be provided at this point would be outdated. He spoke of the possibility of being at status quo for the next two years.

Vice Chair Clement remarked we discussed the potential of renegotiating with Pennichuck and of the amount of use being less than anticipated.

Superintendent Miner informed the Commission of a conversation with Chris Countie, Director of Operations, Pennichuck Corp. They may be looking to talk with us as their numbers are getting high in Amherst. We offset their use in Amherst. Theirs is a peak offset and their PFAS numbers are getting higher. They may need to send that supply over there altogether. Nothing is cast in concrete yet.

Asked when the wholesale agreement has to renew, Director Maher stated the agreement ends in August.

Chair Provencher noted there are two components to the wholesale agreement; flat monthly rate and usage fee, which is based on number of gallons. That monthly fee is sort of an insurance policy in case we need to utilize their water. Superintendent Miner spoke of discussions around turning it on to ensure everything is working, etc. Chair Provencher noted the possibility of not renewing the contract was brought up, however, the problem is we cannot predict the future. Had we understood we would only utilize it for a month or so we would have been better off paying the retail rate. Business Manager Lavoie noted, without the agreement, there is no guarantee we would have the status we have in terms of availability for use.

Commissioner von Schoen spoke of the insurance that comes with the agreement in that, when needed it is simply a matter of flipping the switch. Noted were situations that existed at the time the agreement was entered into that are not currently a factor, e.g., drought, a well down, Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) deliveries holding things up.

3. Superintendent's Report

Water Quality:

Maintenance:

- Treatment Facilities (TF)
 - The cleaning and surging of wells 7&8 are complete and they are operational (ahead of schedule).
 - Media removal is scheduled for the 28th at 2&9 Treatment Facility returning June 10th with the re-gen and makeup media. The truck will then go over to 4&5 Treatment Facility to do the media removal and return on June 24th.

- Distribution
 - The annual flushing of hydrants in the regular pressure zone is ongoing. It is likely a week or so before complete.

Administrative:

- Town-Wide Hazard Mitigation Plan Update
 - First update meeting was conducted on May 8th. The intent is to complete the task in 4 meetings the next of which is scheduled for July 10th.
- PFAS Watermain Extensions (MVD)
 - Gerard/Mullikin bid opened on May 15th with 3 bidders, all coming in below the engineering estimated bid price of \$1,544,000. Bids are under review.
 - Regarding the Farmer & Mason PFAS Water Main Extension Project, comments have been received from the State and Town and are being addressed so that we can get that project out to bid as well.
- PFAS Watermain/Entrance Extensions – Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics (SGPP)
 - All work is completed.
- The Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) New Hampshire walk through will be conducted with Richard Rossi, Cybersecurity Advisor, New Hampshire CISA, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, on May 29th beginning at 9:30 a.m.
- Brandon Kernan, Administrator, Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NH DES), delivered our Excellence in Funding Award that Johnna McKenna, Public Water System Sustainability Section Administrator (NH DES), accepted for us on April 23rd in Washington, D.C. The MVD 2,3,7,8 PFAS and Iron/Manganese Treatment project was selected to receive the “Excellence in Innovative Financing” recognition for the 2025 AQUARIUS program. Only one submission per state was allowed. Out of the 16 entries to be nominated for a 2025 AQUARIUS, only five were selected as Exceptional Projects. A Press Release will occur.

Asked about the pilot test, Superintendent Miner stated the first sample has been collected. Asked how the funding would come from EPA, Business Manager Lavoie stated they cover the total cost. We are not involved in that.

4. Board of Commissioners to review the minutes from the April 21, 2025, regular BOC meeting and Non-Public meeting.

Board of Commissioners – **Non-Public** April 21, 2025

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VON SCHOEN TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE NON-PUBLIC MEETING, AS PRESENTED

MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ALLEN

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

Board of Commissioners Organizational Meeting April 21, 2025

The following amendments were offered:

Page 1, Line 42; remove “MSR”

Page 6, Line 8; insert “make it” before “back”

Page 6, Line 20; replace “about” with “amount” and insert a “comma” following “bonded for”

Page 6, Line 47; the sentence should read: “For some of the recent apartment buildings we have permitted with only a certain amount of irrigation.”

Page 11, Line 25; replace Commissioner Sabens” with “It was stated that”

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VON SCHOEN TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED

MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SABENS

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

Asked about the Army Corps of Engineers training mentioned during the last meeting, Superintendent Miner stated there to have been some confusion in that the exercise they had planned was to be conducted at the Wastewater Treatment Facility. They had reached out to us in error.

5. Board of Commissioners to review Action Items from previous meetings and those to be added from this meeting.

The Commission reviewed the Action Items. New dates were added to several of the items.

Solar Power Options

Business Manager Lavoie noted information has been received that requires review.

Salt Mitigation Committee Meeting

Business Manager Lavoie spoke of scheduling efforts with Jamie Emery. He has been out of town for the past two weeks.

Commissioner von Schoen spoke of concern over items the Commission is waiting on from Emery & Garret. It sounds as though it will be nearly a year from the time pump tests were ordered for Mitchell Woods to receiving the results. Business Manager Lavoie noted that Mr. Emery intends to be at the June meeting.

Commissioner von Schoen stated the desire to be made aware of Mr. Emery’s succession plan during the June meeting.

Salt Signage

Superintendent Miner stated the intent to speak with the Town Manager. He is hopeful the Town Manager can arrange a meeting with the NH DOT to finalize the designation of “reduced salt” on Continental Boulevard & Industrial Drive.

Mitchell Woods Power Supply

Vice Chair Clement commented on having heard from other communities regarding difficulties in getting timely responses from Underwood. Commissioner Sabens questioned what options exist for engineering.

Commissioner von Schoen spoke of being pleased with Underwood and the way they have treated the district. However, it is a business continuity concern that there are no alternatives in place.

Vice Chair Clement suggested putting out an RFP for an engineering on call firm. She can provide a list of possible vendors. Superintendent Miner spoke of having utilized other companies for projects over the years. Vice Chair Clement commented, if work is anticipated for the next year or so, putting out an engineering on call RFP is a good way to proceed. That basically says we want someone on call; we are not guaranteeing work, but there are upcoming projects. You would request information, conduct interviews and basically identify who would receive any contracts for say the next two years should projects come about.

Continuity would be we have decided to go after this other source. It does not mean that Underwood could not put in a proposal for the on call or do future work, it is just saying we are going to go out and see what is available. We will do interviews and then award work for a period of time to the chosen vendor. There is also the ability to identify a specific project and bid it out. The way we operate with Underwood is basically like an on call. The Commission will determine the length of any contract and when we would want to initiate the RFP.

Commissioner von Schoen spoke of there being timing issues with others as well. He reiterated his concern over the Mitchell Woods pump test. Vice Chair Clement remarked it was the Commission that put that on hold. We had put it on hold and then they brought it back up when discussing the permitting. That discussion was had in January. Commissioner von Schoen questioned if the Commission should be satisfied with a 9-month lead time for a pump test, which we could probably outsource to several other companies. Vice Chair Clement remarked she does not know that she would say the project is behind. Commissioner von Schoen responded he was not saying it is behind but questioning if it is acceptable to wait for 9 months to be able to make decisions. He is not satisfied with that.

Superintendent Miner spoke of a timeframe that was identified back in January, which the Commission was agreeable to. Chair Provencher stated that clarity could be sought at the June meeting. Emery & Garret are doing the ongoing projects, and he does not believe they are late in responses. He spoke of some of the projects that work continues to move along on. He does not see another significant engineering project for which an RFP may be considered in the next year or two.

Commissioner von Schoen would like to see the question of Mitchell Woods resolved. Chair Provencher spoke of the question of power having been addressed. Underwood had confirmed that single-phase power could be inverted to three-phase power by using a Variable Frequency Drive (VFD), however, there may be a maximum motor size/ampereage issue. Superintendent Miner stated Mr. Emery had indicated he would check with an electrical engineer. They have been communicating and have simply not connected. Chair Provencher asked if the pump was sized to know what the horsepower is to understand if we can invert the readily available three-phase power at to that proposed pump's horsepower.

Commissioner von Schoen remarked the process used to be more formal and Emery & Garret here more frequently. We just don't have that level of engagement any longer, and it seems to make the process less efficient.

Superintendent Miner spoke of the outstanding issue being the results of the pump test to determine if PFAS is present. If PFAS is detected notable is that it is within the groundwater management zone.

Commissioner von Schoen stated the desire for the June meeting to provide a clear direction as to when clarity will be provided. If there are concerns in regard to legal proceedings that discussion should be had.

Updated Hydraulic Model

The distribution hydraulic model discussed at the 11-18-24 meeting resulted in a request for clarification of one of the items; "Figure 4, water age map (wells 4&5), on the west end of town there are purple points surrounded by yellow points, which indicates that there is water in the lines that is younger than the surrounding areas but no fresh supply where that purple area is." The question was asked of how that is explained in the model.

Commissioner von Schoen stated a desire to be informed of who is working on discussing with our IT service provider the virtualization of the equipment. That is a discussion we should be having with Block5.

The suggestion was made that future agendas include "possible non-public session" as a regular agenda item (last item).

6. Old Business

Commissioner von Schoen questioned whether contact has been made with the City of Portsmouth regarding a reference for the new software. Director Maher responded she has not yet had the opportunity. Commissioner von Schoen spoke of the desire to compare models. He would like a call to be made to question what they found to be pros and cons. He is also curious to understand if they have an escrow agreement with them.

He understands they did not agree on that, but felt the answer was very superficial. If the City of Portsmouth does not bank on any guarantees with an infrastructure crucial vendor like that he would be very surprised.

Director Maher stated she would reach out to ascertain whether they have made their choice. Commissioner von Schoen remarked were he involved in Portsmouth he would be asking about escrow or bonding. If this business goes belly up or doesn't deliver a functional piece of software the whole City of Portsmouth will experience serious issues. He didn't like the answer as he felt it was very dismissive and factually incorrect.

Commissioner von Schoen spoke of the discussion at the last meeting concerning the warrant article to raise and appropriate \$800,000 for the Equipment and Facilities Capital Reserve. He had suggested a policy/procedure for deciding what that should be. Business Manager Lavoie commented it is based on the CIP as opposed to the fund balance. Commissioner von Schoen added it is not always based on that. He felt the conversation was left open-ended. He questioned if the Commission wished to have a policy, felt

one was needed, etc. Chair Provencher spoke of the discussion of it being based on Underwood's rate study. He questioned whether the intent was to identify in policy that we would follow the recommendations of the rate study.

Director Maher noted the rate study report identifies what should be put into the trusts for future endeavors. Commissioner Sabens suggested it to be more of an optics matter than anything else because of the questions raised at the Annual Meeting. It seemed to be the same questions that were asked last year. Perhaps having that document (policy) identifying the purpose for and amount of funds to be set aside would be beneficial.

Director Maher spoke of language taken from the rate study being included in the information provided for the Annual Meeting, however, with the volume of information, perhaps that was a bit lost.

Requested was that a draft policy be provided for review/consideration at the next meeting.

7. New Business

Chair Provencher spoke of the PFAS Results for the Distribution System (April) that note the presence of PFBA at every distribution sample site. Because we had an early breakthrough at our treatment plants, PFBA has been detected throughout the distribution system. He believes the budget accounts for 6-month changeouts rather than 8-month changeouts. Vice Chair Clement clarified that is the budget includes 2 two media change outs per year. Chair Provencher questioned if there was the desire to change the written procedure to match the budget.

Asked, Superintendent Miner stated it to be treatment plants at wells 2 & 9 and 4 & 5 that had breakthroughs. Chair Provencher added 100% breakthrough on LAG vessels 4 & 5 already happened. With Wells 7 & 8 we have 50% breakthrough. It didn't come into the effluent yet. With Wells 2 & 9 and 4 & 5 we are bleeding into the drinking water right now. We just changed 7 & 8 in January. Every distribution system sample site had low-digit PFBA only, with no other PFAS detected. Other cities and towns would probably love to have this quality of water as it is very low in PFAS, but it is there. The highest PFBA shown was 4.3 ppt. Commissioner von Schoen noted that to be a short chain one (not as concerning at low quantities). Superintendent Miner spoke of the changeout scheduled for the following week at wells 2 & 9.

Commissioner von Schoen remarked right now it is the LAG vessel (our insurance policy vessel), which is bleeding through, and will become the lead vessel going forward. He is assuming that bleeding will continue, which means it will contaminate the fresh LAG vessel even faster being a short chain. He feels we have a self-amplifying effect there that will only shorten the lifecycle of any changeout media as far as the PFBA goes.

Chair Provencher asked if the assumption is true. We would be loading the LAG vessel with fresh media with low levels of PFBA first because nothing else is breaking through. Commissioner von Schoen added it does break through faster than any of the contaminates. Vice Chair Clement asked for clarification if what was being questioned was with the PFBA breaking through and going into the fresh LAG vessel, is that shortening the lifespan of that vessel so that it will affect us later down the line with more than the PFBA. Commissioner von Schoen responded no; what he was questioning was whether it would affect the

lifespan of the LAG vessel in terms of PFBA. He believes it does because it gets PFBA from the start while the original LAG vessel did not.

Vice Chair Clement remarked she believes this to be part of why we are doing the pilot test columns for polishing purposes, to see if there is something that works on PFBA better than what we have now. We have talked about the potential for a different media. We have budgeted for 6-month changeouts if we want to condense that.

Commissioner von Schoen suggested this to be an opportunity to prove or disprove the concern. We can now monitor the lifetime of that LAG vessel that will now get hit with PFBA right away once we change out the media. We can see if that saturates faster than the original.

Vice Chair Clement again asked for clarification what was being suggested was after we do the next changeout we will know that PFBA is going in that vessel from day 1. Now we can look at that vessel and see if it breaks through faster than a vessel that didn't have PFBA going into it.

Chair Provencher remarked he does not believe this to be the first time it has happened. Commissioner von Schoen was uncertain that data has been looked at. Chair Provencher noted this to be the first time we have had breakthroughs of PFBA's in every distribution sample site. We have had sporadic ones, but most were non-detect. Superintendent Miner commented it could be coincidental given we are flushing as well. It could be spreading around PFBA in the distribution system because we are flushing. Asked if the flushing began before the samples were pulled on 4-24-25, he stated it started at the beginning of April.

Commissioner von Schoen commented let's keep in mind that the distribution system was not intended to be a gauge for us as to the condition of the filter media in the vessels. It was intended for us to gain a better understanding of how things may be distributed in the lines and if there is residual contamination in the lines. What he is more concerned about is we know when we have breakthrough at the 100% point of each filter vessel. That is really what matters. Once it is there, at one point or another, it enters the distribution system.

What would be interesting for him would be to ask Underwood to tell us what we have learned about using fresh LAG vessel media with PFBA contaminated at the 100% point to the lead vessel that was the former LAG vessel. What can we deduce from the data that was collected and does it make sense for us to use a LAG vessel that is already contaminated at the 100% point showing leak breakthrough of PFBA as the lead vessel going forward without any polishing that specifically addresses PFBA? Does it make sense?

Vice Chair Clement remarked we have the data and she can spend the time needed to go through it. Now that we have run these systems for a couple of years, can we look at the data to see when we have done changeouts to identify if 8 months should be adjusted?

Chair Provencher remarked in Hoosick Falls they do changeouts as soon as the lead vessel breaks through. What we do is say as soon as the lead vessel breaks through has it been in service 8 months or not? If it has only been in service 5 or 6 months and it breaks through we let it run until the 8th month and then we change it. It could be 3 months or 8 months and you get variations based on the time of year, e.g., in the middle of the winter and only using 1.8 million gallons/day where in the summer it can be 4.5 million gallons/day.

Vice Chair Clement stated she would be interested to see if there is a consistent amount that can be identified in terms of the number of gallons we are putting through these vessels before they break through. Chair Provencher agreed that would be good information to have.

Commissioner Sabens commented on the patterns of the report; on 1-25-23 there was breakthrough. Vice Chair Clement noted the timing to be when we were giving up Evoqua. Commissioner Sabens added the 7-31-23 findings may have been the same case. Then if you go to 7-23-24 you can see that those numbers are elevated, not on all but most. What happened on those dates and is there correlation?

Commissioner von Schoen remarked you can't go by the distribution system data because that might be contaminated with Pennichuck water, which has PFAS in it. We can only refer to vessel sample points. Chair Provencher added we do know when we have used Pennichuck Water. That is just another variable there. Again, Pennichuck's water has PFOA and we haven't had a detection of PFOA in the distribution system since we've had the treatment online.

If we start having to run Pennichuck water we are going to have PFOA in the mix. Chair Provencher added that is the concern of having Pennichuck as a permanent viable makeup water source. Vice Chair Clement remarked we could look at these numbers and say the last two years we have been able to take the changeout and bring them above the line and not pay for them out of reserve. As long as we are not using Pennichuck water maybe we say we are going to try to change the media as soon as it breaks through the lead vessel and see what that looks like for a year. We could do something like that without a huge financial impact. We have not utilized that fund as much as we had predicted and the changeouts are more cost effective than they were when we started this with Evoqua. It may help us in the long run and might have more changeouts without having the PFBA in the vessel from the start.

Commissioner von Schoen remarked he believes our engineers have all the data they need and it would be great to get their advice.

Chair Provencher reminded the Commission of the desire for running a pilot test to see if what is coming through our lead vessels can be polished. The problem is the concentration in the PFAS breakthroughs are so low. Vice Chair Clement remarked we are always using GAC and the polishing was also to see if we use something else in the LAG vessel, is there something that would do better with the short chains breaking through and causing us to change vessels sooner, etc. Chair Provencher remarked if we did a polishing test on what was breaking through the LAG vessel we would have to let the pilot test run through the tiny little pilot test device, but we would be feeding all of that PFBA water into our distribution system during the pilot test.

He suggested Keith Pratt, P.E., President, Underwood Engineers, be given advance information of the desire to identify if this data can be used to produce something to optimize the timing of when we do changeouts.

Commissioner von Schoen spoke of a previous discussion of using the LAG vessel as a polishing vessel not as a GAC vessel; making one a lead and GAC and the other a polishing vessel. The question is are we trying to be too good for our own good? We do all the pilot testing, but would it be worthwhile for us to start talking with Underwood to say we have a feeling about one of the more suitable resins out there that are physically compatible with the type of vessel that we have.

Vice Chair Clement remarked when we were looking at media and even when planning the pilot part of the discussion there was not a definitive solution. There are a bunch of promises on paper, but since we are so far ahead of the curve, there was nothing that said it would be promising enough on those short chains to make us want to set up for it.

Commissioner von Schoen was uncertain that is what he remembers from the latest discussion. He is aware that using resin for the whole barrage of different types of PFAS is not suitable because resin is very expensive and it will get hammered with the stuff that GAC can take care of well. The argument has been that in the past we used GAC to take the brunt of the contaminant load and then have a resin as the polishing media as a LAG vessel. He wants to ask Underwood if there is a resin out there that we can pump into our LAG vessel today that is physically compatible with the shape, bed volumes, etc. of that LAG vessel that we can fill the LAG vessel with and use so we can replace the GAC every so often, but we don't care about the short chain any longer because we have the LAG vessel full of resin that keeps sucking it up. He would like to know if that is an option.

Vice Chair Clement stated her belief when discussing the pilot, they were saying there wasn't enough information available because all you have to go on right now is the vendor's word. There are not enough communities sitting in our spot saying we have short chain breakthrough and we want to polish out the short chains because we are still on the leading edge of the filtering altogether.

Superintendent Miner commented on having received the wrong nozzles for 4 & 5 (same vessels for 2 & 9). We have a set of nozzles for resin in the same vessels. Technically, we could take one of the nozzles and convert one of the vessels so that we stay with GAC in one and resin in the other. Chair Provencher stated his recollection Underwood has said and from his understanding in the industry you cannot put resin in a GAC vessel because the geometry of the vessel is all wrong. It will not work. You will have early breakthrough. For the amount of resin you are buying, you will not use most of it because the PFBA is going to channel right down the middle of the resin bed and you will waste most of that resin because of the configuration.

Asked when the pilot testing will conclude, Superintendent Miner stated he would seek that information.

8. Questions from the Public/Press – None

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER SABENS TO ADJOURN
MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER VON SCHOEN
MOTION CARRIED
5-0-0

The May 19, 2025, meeting of the Board of Commissioners was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Submitted by Dawn MacMillan, Recording Secretary