

**MERRIMACK VILLAGE DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
JULY 21, 2025
MEETING MINUTES
(approved August 18, 2025)**

A regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners was conducted on Monday, July 21, 2025, at 5:03 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

Although the FY25 year-end numbers are not yet finalized, as of the report dated 6-30-25, revenue is \$7,274,456 (115.81% of budgeted amount) and expenses \$5,670,584 (90.28%). Net Ordinary Income is \$1,603,872.

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

Commissioner von Schoen spoke of a previous discussion of the timing of receipt of audit reports and the suggestion that consideration be given to the length of time that has passed since last soliciting audit firms

(12 or more years). Director Maher responded noting MVD has engaged with another firm that has committed to having all of the required information to her by the beginning of October, which is a timeframe significantly earlier than others. The preliminary audit has been conducted. Having those fresh eyes reviewing the documentation has resulted in some adjustments that will be discussed later in the agenda.

Chair Provencher noted the chemical consumption number being less than half of what was anticipated. Director Maher spoke of the need to budget for the worse case scenario. Asked, she indicated prices have remained pretty constant despite the significant increase that had been anticipated.

She remarked, with each year that passes we are able to gain information on actuals and trends, which will assist with budgeting predictions.

Chair Provencher commented with our treatment plants being fairly new, we were uncertain where consumption would go. Superintendent Miner added we came off of treatment plants being down, wells being down, and sporadic kind of operating to now getting into more of a rhythm. Our numbers will be refined as we go.

Noted was that new hydrants have been added in the past year. Director Maher commented on many having been replaced. Commissioner von Schoen questioned the number of hydrants in Town and was informed it has just surpassed 1,000. Asked about the cost of a new hydrant, Superintendent Miner replied the material cost alone is \$2,400-\$2,500. Asked, he stated when a hydrant is down the Fire Department and dispatch are informed, and efforts made to get the hydrant(s) operating as soon as possible (typically within a week's time).

B. Capital Reserve Balance

Net income for all accounts is \$1,711,206. The Unassigned Fund Balance is at \$21,305,432. Actual cash is \$3,621,572 (15.7 % of fund balance). Total percentage considered fund balance is 63.0%.

Over the next few months new projects for main line extensions will be seen.

Trust Activities

Not much change from the last report other than adding new dates and TBD amounts.

C. Billing Software Update

Director Maher stated work continues on what is called the Business Requirements Document (4th draft as of today). This is expected to be the final version that she will sign off on ensuring all requirements are included in the system. She and the Project Manager will fine-tune the new chart of accounts to match the DRA chart.

There are different ways to utilize the system, without having to spell out every little segment as the DRA will, so that the user can print out pyramid reports. They are fine-tuning what goes where in the new system. Once finalized, she will be provided with a sandbox to start using to familiarize herself with the system. They are shooting for financials/potentially payroll to rollout October 1st.

Although she would like the rollout to be earlier, they bring the information in using spreadsheets, and it all depends on how much time she has available between her day-to-day responsibilities and the audit to be able to provide the spreadsheets. It is likely it will be the November/December timeframe when the system goes live.

Asked if a reconciliation will be done with every import of data, Director Maher stated it would. She commented, for her own piece of mind, they will likely do a month of running both the new software and QuickBooks.

Chair Provencher spoke of trending such as chemical consumption, and asked how much prior data will be brought into the new system, e.g., will it convert automatically? Director Maher stated it will not. There will be two years' worth of ending balances. Specific AP information will remain available through QuickBooks as it is on the server. The new software will begin with FY26 data. Will still have QuickBooks data for comparison.

Commissioner Sabens spoke of the mention of the Business Requirements Document asking if she is being held to that. He stated concern with there having been four drafts and a final copy. Director Maher responded it is Phase I. They will do one for each phase. This is just what she wants for financials. They are amendable to changes, which is why they are providing the sandbox to be able to become familiar with the system and recommend any desired changes. Asked, she stated the sandbox and production system will be visually different to avoid confusion.

REGULAR SESSION

1. Board of Commissioners to conduct the annual review and signing of the:

- Delegation of Deposit Authority, Recordkeeping and Reconciliation

Director Maher stated the documents are signed annually, identify the procedures to be followed, and allow the Board of Commissioners and Treasurer authority, under State Statute, to delegate responsibilities for the bi-weekly accounts payable warrants.

No changes have been proposed/made since the time of the last review.

Commissioner von Schoen asked about succession planning for the position of Treasurer, commenting he recently spoke with the present Treasurer concerning the potential for another to take on that roll. He noted he was aware, previously, of a community member who had expressed interest, however, was uncertain if that remains the case. As Director Maher has not been contacted by the Treasurer regarding the potential for a change, it was suggested she inquire as to whether there is such a desire, and to make the Board aware of the outcome of that discussion.

- Authorization for Delegation of Payroll Approval Process

No changes have been proposed/made since the last review.

- Authorization for Delegation of Accounts Payable (AP) Approval Process

No changes have been proposed/made since the last review.

Chair Provencher spoke of the prior decision “That the approved AP manifest, will be presented to the Board of Commissioners for review only.” commenting he believed the Board would continue to be made aware when the manifest is available for review. Director Maher responded she believed the Commissioners were being notified of new material being posted and would look into that.

2. Board of Commissioners to review the draft procedures for:

- Rules of the Board of Commissioners
- Rules of the Treasurer
- Fund Capital Reserve Accounts

Director Maher stated the first two were based off the preliminary audit; there was nothing in writing to determine how much they are paid. The point was to have that in writing. While doing that, she felt it helpful to have a summary for each.

Commissioner von Schoen objected to the last item under the heading of “Meetings” where it states: “No member of the Board of Commissioners shall engage in any text messaging, e-mailing, or use of a cell phone or other mode of electronic communication at any time during the course of a public meeting, with the exception of the use of MVD issued laptops, which shall not have wireless capabilities.”

He commented it is fine to add language around no disruptive use, but he objects to no use. He spoke of instances in the past where he looked up documents on the MVD OneDrive on his phone. He provided another example of a question he received from a constituent that he intended to bring up this evening and the desire to look that question up without violating the rules.

Commissioner Sabens suggested the paragraph be removed commenting on uncertainty of whether that would open up personal devices to public view if utilized.

Vice Chair Clement spoke of scenarios such as having children at home that need to be able to reach her in case of an emergency, etc.

Commissioner von Schoen remarked he believes the Commission agrees that the intent is not to be disruptive, however, the Chair has the responsibility of facilitating the meeting and would address any such concerns.

Vice Chair Clement remarked she has heard you should not have your phone out at a public meeting because it could then be subpoenaed based on what you are doing and the assumption that one could be texting with another concerning the discussion at hand.

Chair Provencher stated he shares the concerns noted. He questioned the bulleted item above that, which states “Votes on by-laws, actions and resolutions shall be by call roll votes.”. He asked for clarification that it is not intended to be required for every vote taken. He does not believe that to be required by RSA.

Commissioner Sabens suggested that language also be stricken. Noted was that the Commission follows the requirements of State RSA in that regard. Commissioner von Schoen suggested the language could be

changed to indicate votes would be taken in accordance with State Statute and that the specific statute(s) be identified.

Commissioner Sabens spoke of the bullet item addressing the order of business to be followed questioning whether that is necessary in a procedural document. Director Maher remarked the language comes from State RSA. Commissioner Sabens asked if the specific language is required by RSA noting additional items are identified within the agendas.

Commissioner von Schoen suggested the document be run by legal counsel.

Asked if the order of business should be stricken, Commissioner Sabens suggested it be determined whether it is applicable to the Board. He questioned if the way the agendas are prepared satisfies the requirements, e.g., should the Superintendent's report be identified under new business? He also requested the specific RSA be cited.

Commissioner von Schoen addressed the first bullet item under the list of duties for the Treasurer and questioned if it is the Treasurer who is the master account owner that can give online account access. The response was to bank accounts, yes.

Commissioner von Schoen commented he is uncertain if he agrees with that noting that the Commission has very little control over what ability a private citizen appointed to be a Treasurer has in terms of cybersecurity. He feels more comfortable with someone that is part of the organization when it comes to controlling procedures and online habits, that the Superintendent or Business Manager has the final authority and the master account ownership of our bank accounts.

Business Manager Lavoie responded it cannot be controlled solely. There have to be two signatures. Asked, Business Manager Lavoie stated the Treasurer manages who can have access to the online accounts. Asked if that is done through the online portal of the bank or if the Treasurer appears in person at the bank and provides the approval in writing for the bank to set up access, Director Maher stated there to be a form that is required to be filled out that is sent to the offices of the Bank.

Commissioner von Schoen stated his concern was that he would not want any treasurer to be able to go online of a bank and create a user profile for someone.

Vice Chair Clement commented she recently performed this action for the library, and it is all one form, e.g., she could not gain access to anything online until she was added to the accounts.

Commissioner von Schoen noted the 5th bulleted item under duties that states, "Invest excess funds in accordance with the District Investment Policy (RSA 41:29 IV)", and asked is that not what the Trustees of the Trust Funds do for us? Director Maher stated this to be related to funds outside of the trust funds.

Regarding the document titled "Procedure to Fund Capital Reserve Accounts (Trusts)", Director Maher noted this to be the document requested by the Board.

The document outlines how the Board determines the rate for the new budget season, CIP projects for the new year (and planned out for the next 10⁺ years), and how much of the Unassigned Funds are to move to the Trusts.

The question was raised of the timing of the last review of the Master Plan. It was suggested the Master Plan be reviewed by the Board.

Commissioner von Schoen addressed the “paragraph titled “Policy Definition”, which states in part: “These trusts can ONLY be used for what was voted on that its intention is, which was determined in a previous Board of Commissioners (BOC) meeting.” He questioned whether the intended use was identified at a previous BOC meeting or a previous Annual Meeting.

Superintendent Miner stated it to be voted on at the Annual Meeting. That change will be made.

Commissioner von Schoen commented the procedure identifies the way decisions are reached, but does not include any multipliers, e.g., any numbers. He believes it will allow the Board to point to a procedure that basically says what we base our decisions on, but it doesn’t quantify.

Commissioner Sabens suggested the procedure could be more specific as to how we calculate those numbers. Director Maher stated it is calculated by the engineers using those four items.

Commissioner von Schoen commented on his belief it would be a policy as opposed to a procedure. Commissioner Sabens noted the policy definition included within the procedure.

Commissioner von Schoen commented from a policy level documentation, it says this is what we intend to do and what we base our decision on. It doesn’t say take 10% of the CIP, Master Plan, etc. It doesn’t say that.

Director Maher stated it defines the four items that you use to determine not only future but immediate need.

Commissioner von Schoen reiterated this should be a policy not a procedure. He added it is good enough for him to be able to say we are not pulling the number wildly out of our sleeve but is also open enough that we don’t lock ourselves into a procedure we are not comfortable with. He is acceptable to that.

3. Superintendent’s Report

Maintenance:

- Treatment Facilities
 - Wells 7&8 Water Treatment Plant Lead Vessel is scheduled to be changed out August 12th.
- Distribution
 - The crew has been working on finishing up on backflow testing and continuing with hydrant maintenance.

Leak repair Mainline/Entrance

- We have had a couple of entrance leaks; nothing too difficult minimal overtime.

Administrative

- PFAS Watermain Extensions (MVD)
 - The Palmeri / Gerard Drive and Wilson Hill / Mullikin Road PFAS Water Main Extension Project construction is scheduled to start around August 18th. A neighborhood informational meeting is planned for Wednesday, July 23rd at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall Meeting Room. A notice was hand-delivered to all residences in the project area on the 15th and two message boards were deployed today to notify residents of the upcoming meeting. MVD, Underwood, Steve Granese (contractor), and NHDES will be in attendance. We will go over construction plans/dates, well sampling, and rebate program.

Asked if there will be any complete road closures required, Superintendent Miner stated he has been assured one lane will be kept open. Flaggers will be present, and details will be present, as required. The plan is to do Wilson Hill Road and Mullikin Road first followed by Mary Paul and Gerard.

- Farmer & Mason Roads PFAS Water Main Extension Project bid opening was on the 15th. There were nine bidders, with the apparent winner being Cardillo & Sons with a total base bid of \$1,273,502.40.

The bid came in \$633,000 under the estimated budget.

Vice Chair Clement questioned whether this project will be done this year and was told that is what has been expressed as the interest. The project is funded entirely through grants.

- Intern Tour
 - Superintendent Miner has been working with Leo Laviolette, Assistant Director, Public Works Department, Town of Merrimack, to set up another intern tour this year. Being considered is August 12th (same date as the 7&8 changeout).
- Energy Evaluation
 - Offered by NHDES - energy efficiency training and energy audit. MVD was asked if there is interest in doing an energy audit (no cost). Superintendent Miner has indicated an interest and is awaiting information on dates.
- NHDOT Salt Letter
 - NHDOT went before the Town Council on the 10th. The Chair and Vice Chair were in attendance. The Town Council is still in favor of the reduction in sodium and chloride, but before the NHDOT will do anything, we will need to get the School Board on board and sign the letter the Town signed. Town Manager Micali and Superintendent Miner are working to get on the August 4th School Board agenda.

Chair Provencher spoke of an email sent out last week requesting the item be put on the August 4th agenda. Business Manager Lavoie commented on there having been discussion of the request.

- As follow-up from the Commission meeting on the 10th concerning the low-salt signs on the State portion of Continental Boulevard, their records show that this was done by the NHDOT back in 2008. The State did a pilot project for low-salt use.

Superintendent Miner commented it was misheard on the tape that NHDOT is not supposed to be salting out there. Mention was made that they were salting and the plowing the salt off into the gutter. Vice Chair Clement remarked that NHDOT asked why was a call not made. She questioned if we should monitor during any precipitation and readying to call and send emails.

Superintendent Miner commented NHDOT went from an initial promise to use less salt to adjusted door in trucks based on pounds per lane mile. They never changed their practice of salting every pass they make.

Asked if the pounds per lane mile is only for when a salt truck is driving down the road salting or for the entirety of the storm. They could limit their salt application as they are putting it down and go twice as many passes and put the same amount of salt down. Business Manager Lavoie remarked NHDOT stated they only salt at the peak and end of the storm. Chair Provencher stated his belief that NHDOT said they would be going to salt only at the beginning and end of a storm. He does not think they said they are doing that now.

Vice Chair Clement remarked they were talking about something they were going to do and then all of a sudden it was we're not going to do anything until the School Board sends the letter. Business Manager Lavoie noted the meeting minutes are posted online.

Superintendent Miner remarked that the NHDOT stated that the plowing contractors will not salt. Only NHDOT trucks will salt going forward. Superintendent Miner added originally, they were only supposed to have DOT trucks plowing that road. Vice Chair Clement added they were also talking about having the trucks that have electronic equipment for a certain amount of salt. They also said that if the trucks are too old, they don't have that. It seemed very unclear. There were no promises made.

Superintendent Miner remarked they have gotten better but every time they are out plowing they are dumping salt and doing it three trucks wide/staggered. They are each dumping salt and overlapping with every pass.

Chair Provencher stated he mentioned that to NHDOT. NHDOT only said if they were made aware of it they could do something about it. Chair Provencher indicated he stated to the Town Council & NHDOT that MVD has not been able to measure any success in terms of improvement in the effects in the wells.

Chair Provencher spoke of the hope the item will be able to be put on the August School Board agenda.

Superintendent Miner mentioned Steve Landry offered to attend the meeting with the School Board.

Chair Provencher asked if there was information related to the scheduling of a salt mitigation meeting. He asked about the report on the amount of salt being used by the Town and DOT, and whether that information is being provided. Business Manager Lavoie responded that the salt report is being reviewed by DES. Following that, a steering committee meeting will be scheduled during which they will present the information to the remainder of the membership.

Superintendent Miner noted camera installation will begin September 2nd (all locations). Asked if video is being preserved, it was stated the information will be stored on a separate network (will go through Block 5). Will be triggered recording (believed to be motion activated).

Asked how protected the cameras are from being breached from the outside, Superintendent Miner stated he posed that question and was told if it is just a recorder there is no way to breach. There will be additional discussions regarding the equipment.

4. Board of Commissioners to re-review Change Order #2 for Mitchell Woods for additional sampling

The Change Order was for the additional task of analysis of water quality samples for PFAS compounds collected from four different surface water locations on the Mitchell Woods Conservation Property.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER CLEMENT TO APPROVE CHANGE ORDER #2 FROM EMERY & GARRETT DATED JUNE 18, 2025. FUNDING SOURCE IS THE GENERAL ENGINEERING FUNDS WITHIN THE OPERATING BUDGET

SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER VON SCHOEN

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

5. Board of Commissioners to review and discuss solar panel options

On-Premise

It is a 20-year commitment. It starts with graduated lease payments to MVD for **all 3 sites** (maintenance facility and in areas of wells 2 and 3 - if sites are approved and viable). The first year lease payment is \$100,000. In subsequent years, the annual lease payment increases; years 2-4 by \$1,500, years 5-8 by \$1,600, years 9-12 by \$1,700, years 13-16 by \$1,800, years 17-19 by \$1,900 and year 20 by \$2,000.

It does not generate any power for the MVD buildings. Power is exported to the Eversource system and MVD receives lease payments for use of the land.

Commissioner Sabens commented that amount of increase does not seem fit when considering what an annual increase may be if renting the property.

Asked, Business Manager Lavoie clarified the solar would be ground units. It would have to be all three sites to generate the lease payments identified. That would require clearing of trees in the area of well 3.

Off-Premise

The Group Net Metering (GNM) payments *only* would start as early as 2026. Provides GNM credits towards the Eversource bill or a check from the solar farm, which could be used to offset utility expenses.

MVD could choose to do just the GNM portion by contracting with an off-site solar farm.

MVD uses about 1.9 million kWhs but would only contract with them for 75-80% so that we are not compensated for more than we use on an annual basis. That would take the bulk of our energy and force it into this contract for 20 years. We would be unable to seek out better pricing, etc.

Asked if they install solar panels with this option as well, Business Manager Lavoie responded they do not. Commissioner Sabens spoke of the presentation provided at the 2-24-25 meeting during which it was explained:

“Solar developers can put up a solar farm somewhere within New Hampshire within the Eversource territory, become a group host, and solicit members within the public entity realm to be members and essentially be assigned as an off taker to that solar farm. Any excess generation the solar farm makes is then shipped to Eversource’s distribution system. Eversource has to pay them. At that point they get paid and the group members receive a financial benefit as part of being that off taker for the solar developer. If the solar developer were shipping their power into Eversource’s distribution territory absent the group/member setup, they would only receive payment in avoided costs, which is a smaller percentage of what they are getting paid by tariff by Eversource if they are a group host renewable source.

The relationship is you have a developer who constructs a solar farm and has to go out and gain members to allocate as off take members, which greatly enhances their revenue for having the solar farm installed. The solar farms have to be financed (large) and in order to do that often times in consideration for working with the host, members have to sign on to a relatively long-term deal; 15-20 years.

Essentially what you would be doing is receiving a financial offset on your Eversource bills or perhaps a direct check from the solar farm. You really don’t have to do anything; there is no capital investment involved, nothing you have to do except sign on and continue using electricity.”

MVD would receive the GNM credits beginning in year 1 for \$17,600 with yearly increases from \$300 to \$500 concluding year 20 at \$25,500.

Both on and off-premise

\$2,737,400 combined lease and GNM payment broken out over the 20-year commitment is averaged at \$136,870/year or \$11,405/month (beginning payment \$117,600/last payment \$158,100).

It was reiterated that MVD would be locked into a 20-year contract. Commissioner von Schoen remarked that it means that we could not utilize any of the land for polishing vessels, generators, etc.

Business Manager Lavoie added, if the decision is made not to cut down trees, the amounts quoted are lessened.

Asked if the MVD currently negotiates for electric rates, Business Manager Lavoie stated Access Energy searches for the best deals on our behalf. However, if going this route, that ability would no longer exist for the 75-80% associated with this agreement.

Commissioner von Schoen commented he has been and continues to be skeptical of this. It ties us into something for 20 years when we cannot predict what we may need that space for. He would have been supportive of installing our own array and taking advantage of solar. It is often feeding the rest into the system, but as we learned that doesn’t buy us much because there is no tax advantage as a public entity. Aside from the environmental benefits, it is not helping us financially. We’re not in the business of spending funds to gain environmental benefits on that level.

Business Manager Lavoie reiterated the matter of cutting down trees.

Vice Chair Clement commented after time, if things change, and we could take advantage of putting our own array up at a lesser cost, she may be interested in taking another look.

Commissioner von Schoen stated he is all for protecting the environment and for solar, but it just seems this application/use case is not a good one.

Commissioner Sabens asked if there is an approach to phase MVD into solar through buying and putting up our own array, e.g., covered parking, etc. Has that type of approach been reviewed and would that be beneficial?

Business Manager Lavoie remarked that would go through the same programs. Now we would just be moving it to the roof of an enclosed structure. Can we generate some of our own power yes, but then we would have solar panels on the roof that we would have to maintain.

Chair Provencher noted the budget for the last fiscal year included \$347,000 in electrical costs.

Vice Chair Clement commented if looking at the on-premise option if the best-case scenario came to be resulting in gaining \$100,000/year, in 20 years, electricity isn't going to be \$350,000/year. We will still only be getting \$100,000 or so a year. Commissioner von Schoen remarked this should be tied to some kind of cost index and not fixed today.

Chair Provencher remarked it doesn't appear to make sense at this time and may result in constraints.

Commission von Schoen stated what they are offering is basically a 1% increase/year. We would be locked in for 20 years, cut down trees, lock down our land, etc. It would be interesting if we were to own the panels ourselves and produce our own electricity. The problem with that is traditionally that usually only paid off if you received the tax credits for it, which we would not. With the tax credit going away, even residential users would have to look at the numbers to see if it is beneficial financially.

Commissioner von Schoen commented he does not think the Commission has had information regarding those figures available. Opinions were noted from the first provider that presented some 2-3 years ago. At that time, the presenter had indicated for MVD, as a public entity, it didn't make sense to go with the self-owned model because you don't get the tax credit. He is uncertain we ever learned what the number would be if we were to consider that approach. He indicated he is fine with tabling this for a year and seeing what happens when the tax credits run out and new numbers are out in the market.

Vice Chair Clement commented that might change the cost of solar panels as well.

6. Board of Commissioners to review the minutes from the June 16, 2025, regular BOC meeting and Non-Public Minutes

Board of Commissioners Meeting June 16, 2025

The following amendments were offered:

Page 11, Line 2; replace “might” with “money”

Page 11, Line 3; replace “chained” with “chains”

Page 10, Line 43; insert “with our engineers” following “meeting monthly”

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VON SCHOEN TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SABENS
MOTION CARRIED
5-0-0**

Board of Commissioners Meeting – **Non-Public**. June 16, 2025

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VON SCHOEN TO ACCEPT, AS PRESENTED
MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ALLEN
MOTION CARRIED
5-0-0**

7. 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.

Mitchell Woods PFAS Status and Power Supply

What remains uncertain is if the horsepower was confirmed. Commissioner von Schoen noted it was confirmed that it could be done but not if it matches the horsepower.

Chair Provencher requested administration follow up with Underwood so that the question can be addressed.

Updated Distribution Hydraulic Model from Underwood to Include Unaccounted for Water

Commission will be provided with excerpt from 11-18-24 meeting minutes.

8. Old Business

Chair Provencher called attention to the NH DES newsletter article titled “Merrimack Village Water District nets EPA AQUARIUS Award”. MVD was awarded the “Excellence in Innovative Financing” award from the U.S. environmental Protection Agency (EPA) AQUARIUS program. MVD was nominated for the award by NH DES.

9. New Business

Commissioner von Schoen referred to the information provided regarding PFAS monitoring and stated the desire to confirm for Wells 2 & 9 that the LAG vessel had breakthrough not just for PFBA and PFHxA but also PFOA. With PFBA and PFHxA we are a little bit casual because they are short chains and current advisory levels are in the hundreds. If he reads the report right, PFOA broke through starting in January.

Chair Provencher did not believe that to be the case. He receives the monthly reports from MVD's sampling of the raw water wells and water treatment plants, and he does not believe there has ever been any PFOA breakthrough. The sample names in the water quality reports are hard for the public to distinguish between raw well water and treated water. Commissioner von Schoen noted he was looking at the PFOA line and 1.04 on 1-16-2025 on vessel 1, which is labeled as the LAG vessel, 0.855 in February and 1.61 in March. Noted was that whatever is to the right of the column is the LAG information.

Chair Provencher remarked he can confirm that by memory as he is on the e-mail list and receives information on every new PFAS sampling that is collected.

Commissioner von Schoen remarked the lab reports we receive from Granite State Analytics say MVD 2, but don't specify whether or not it's raw water. It is a bit confusing. Looking at the data, it was clear it was not finished water because the PFOA was in the 20s and there is no way it is in the 20s in finished water.

Business Manager Lavoie will look to have raw and treated water labeled on future sampling reports.

Chair Provencher spoke of the existing MVD procedure for changing out LEAD vessel GAC media after it has been in use 8 months but not sooner if there is breakthrough. He believes the budget accounts for changeouts every 6 months. Vice Chair Clement remarked, depending on how the year falls, sometimes we do it twice. We always budget for two occasions. Asked if the desire is to formalize it in the procedure for it to occur every 6 months instead of every 8 months as present.

Business Manager Lavoie stated her belief the current practice is solid.

Commissioner von Schoen noted for Wells 7&8, the LAG vessel has been in service for 5 months and 100% port has PFBA breakthrough. First detection was 1-16-25. It was put in service 3 days before. We allowed the Lead vessel to be saturated with PFBA but we wait until either our 8 months are over or until breakthrough is projected at 100% port of one of the other compounds. By that time, we allowed so much PFBA to leach through the lead vessel that the LAG vessel is already starting to be loaded up with PFBA, which in return shortens the lifetime of the LAG vessel when it changes into the Lead vessel. It is almost a compounding thing because now breakthrough is sooner and contaminates the LAG vessel even sooner. We are getting to the point, if we are looking at PFBA, that we almost have to replace both medias every so often to start over fresh so as not to oversaturate the LAG vessel from the first day on.

In that regard, we do need to update the policy. Chair Provencher added he believes it would be less costly to switch it to 6 months as opposed to changing out both vessels at once. Commissioner von Schoen questioned if there should be a threshold for PFBA in the LAG vessel effluent that determines when we replace both media. Chair Provencher remarked this would happen immediately here. Commissioner von Schoen added maybe not if we have a threshold that we determine. The argument of the EPA is that PFBA and many of the short chains have a much higher tolerance level or the body has a much higher tolerance level, and they get flushed out. Whether or not that is true he did not wish to debate.

There is no enforceable Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for short chains like PFBA, there are only health advisories, and they are significantly higher than any of the traditional PFOA and PFOS, etc. He questioned if a number should be identified and it should be determined, unless reaching that level, we are okay with it. He is not even certain he wishes to go down that path because someone could later say this is not healthy.

Vice Chair Clement commented fiscally we could switch tomorrow and go to 6 months easily. If we put other things in place where we will change out more frequently than 6 months then we need to figure out what it is so that we can budget for it.

Chair Provencher commented he had suggested the 8 months because we could predict that for budgeting purposes. One could ask the question if it is in the budget for 6 months why aren't we implementing it in 6 months? Vice Chair Clement noted it was a matter of the 8 month changeout you couldn't make in a fiscal/financial year; it didn't work. Chair Provencher added it would result in fluctuations in the budget from year to year.

Commissioner von Schoen stated he would be more pleased with 6 months than he is with the 8 months.

Asked, Superintendent Miner stated his belief that changing it to 6 months would not be more of a burden on staff.

Commissioner von Schoen was prepared to make a motion to address the change to 6 months. Vice Chair Clement suggested a motion could be made at this time and staff asked to bring forward to the next meeting any required amendments to documentation.

Superintendent Miner commented because of the breakthrough with 7&8, he was considering asking for a changeout every 3 months to get it back on track with two fresh filters and see what that does as far as delays in breakthrough.

Commissioner Sabens requested a proposal be provided for the next meeting so that the Commission is aware of what the numbers look like.

Commissioner von Schoen agreed that a change to the procedure can be made and presented to the Commission at the next meeting. Vice Chair Clement remarked if looking at the fiscal year and changing out vessels 7&8 in a month (even if 3 or 4 months later you are already enough into the fiscal year), 6 months from that would be almost the next fiscal year. You would still only have 2 changeouts in that year.

Commissioner von Schoen commented to be clear we are looking at low single digits at PFBA. The health advisory, which is not even enforceable, is in the hundreds or even a thousand. The mandate was pretty clear; people don't want any PFAS.

Commissioner Sabens commented from a policy perspective of the Board there is the desire to be clear we are doing whatever this changeout is and eliminating that oversaturation. We can do a policy from that perspective. Business Manager Lavoie stated that could be done.

A document will be brought before the Board at the next meeting.

Commissioner von Schoen spoke of chatter around chlorine smell and taste. He tried to explain if you taste chlorine that means it is doing its job. Asked, Superintendent Miner stated no complaints have been received. The MVD is required to chlorinate. Asked, he stated MVD does not fluorinate the water.

Vice Chair Clement commented when she first moved to Merrimack, she asked that question and learned that her well water has naturally occurring fluoride in it as a mineral. Whether it makes it all the way to your home in any measurable quantity or is filtered out in the other processes, well water does have naturally occurring fluoride in it.

10. Questions from the Public/Press – None

NON-PUBLIC

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER SABENS THAT THE BOARD, BY ROLL CALL, GO INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION PURSUANT TO RSA 91-A:3 II (a) THE DISMISSAL, PROMOTION OR COMPENSATION OF ANY PUBLIC EMPLOYEE
MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ALLEN**

A Viva Voce Roll Call Vote was taken, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Erin Clement, Scott Sabens, Dan Allen, Wolfram von Schoen, Don Provencher

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Nay:

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MOTION CARRIED

The Board entered non-public session at 7:20 p.m.

The Board reconvened at 7:29 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VAN SCHOEN TO ADJOURN

MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ALLEN

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

The July 21, 2025, meeting of the Board of Commissioners was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Submitted by Dawn MacMillan, Recording Secretary