

Special Membership Meeting (Virtual) Minutes
March 6th, 2022

The meeting on Zoom was called to order at 11:05 AM by Paul Stewart-Stand, President

Present: 40 Voting Members and 5 other community members.

Also Present: Bob Wasp from Wasp Engineering

- 1- Bob Wasp described his extensive credentials and background in water supply system, including a stint as the Assistant Commissioner of the Westchester Department of Health. Bob stated that from this background he knew the ups and downs of the regulatory system. He spoke briefly about the status of our water system as being run by Ron Arnstein and Drew Orr. Bob spent considerable time talking about the PFOAs problem, describing the EPA's role in the background of the present standards. Bob described his examination of DOH and GBCA records, and stated that our water system has always been in compliance with DOH standards. Bob stated that the GBCA water system is now involved with the recently enacted NYS standards for PFOAs contamination, and this was where he chose to focus his report.

Bob stated that although the Main Street well had previously tested slightly above the PFOAs limits, the latest round of tests put it below those limits. He stated that the DOH response was to continue to insist that we install a filtering plant, even though both wells are now passing.

Bob stated that the DOH has not been forthcoming with information on the PFOAs situation that he requested from them. The local Health Department is supposed to be providing technical and other assistance to water systems and users. The Westchester Health Dept. is not doing so. Nor are the State Health Dept or the State DEC.

Bob stated that although our present water system has some items, such as the storage tanks, which may require attention in the near future, the most pressing problem is the PFOAs situation. He went on to discuss our present situation, and possibilities for future operation, including selling the system entirely to an outside operator, or having an outside operator run the system. He stated that he did not feel that the closing of the system, with the water users all going to private wells, was a viable option without legal involvement.

Bob stated that the DOH response to our proposed solutions to the PFOAs problem have consistently been negative. He mentioned that the Ion exchange resin filtering system that we proposed, which appears to be an inherently superior system, was also rejected by DOH with the onerous demand that before they would even look at it a "pilot study" would have to be conducted. A "pilot study" is an extremely expensive proposition which would be far too costly for us to undertake. The DOH insists on carbon filtration systems which are far more costly to maintain, and probably don't work as well. Bob advised that we get local political figures involved, and band together with other water systems that are facing the same problems, before doing anything.

Bob stated that our having a privately owned rather than municipally owned water system renders us ineligible for all sorts of monies that are available to the municipal systems.

2- Questions, etc.

A question on the cost of drilling individual wells for the approximately 60 homes on the present water system vs the cost of keeping and running the existing system for the next 10 years. Bob put the cost of drilling a well at approximately \$7,000, but could not predict the cost of keeping the system for 10 years.

Is it legally possible to go to private wells? Bob said essentially maybe, but not without legal and political help.

In our existing system what needs to be replaced now, what can wait, how long, costs? Bob stated that all of these items require further study before any decisions can be made.

If we hire an outside company to operate our system can they also do repairs and upgrades? The answer is yes.

Under our present system if Ron and Drew are not available and there is a problem what happens? Drew answered that a company such as CEMCO will provide immediate emergency service.

Drew mentioned that the DOH now says that, since the Branch Street well has continually tested negative for PFOAs, it now only needs to be tested yearly rather than quarterly. Bob stated that this is actually an incorrect procedure: quarterly testing should be required according to DOH requirements.

Bob stated that he would be available going forward to answer questions and provide guidance.

Could each homeowner on the water system install and maintain carbon filtration instead of installing a carbon filter on the whole system? Bob stated that the DOH would not allow that.

It was pointed out that some of the properties on the water system may not be able to install wells on their lots due to setback, distance from septic system, and other requirements. Bob agreed that this would have to be investigated before considering the private well option. Drew noted that up to 3 homes can be on a single well, so if one property could not support a well, perhaps 2 or 3 could share a single well on one of the properties.

Has any testing been done at the faucet in homes? Bob said not to his knowledge.

It was pointed out that the report we received did not cover what was in the original proposal such as: an analysis of the current system, an analysis of upgrades needed and/or recommended, cost projections for all, and a spread sheet detailing all possibilities and their projected costs. The PFOAs problem should have been billed as additional services, and done in addition to providing what the original proposal called for. Bob replied that he chose to concentrate on the PFOAs problem, feeling that it took precedent over the other items.

One person who is not on the water system reported that the DOH had tested their water at their outside tap, and installed a carbon filtration system at State expense, which is maintained at State expense, all with no time limit specified.

Having completed his verbal report to the community, and having answered all questions put to him, Bob left the meeting at this point (12:25 PM).

3- Community discussion

Martha Levites moved, seconded by Lesli Klainberg, to form a committee of the Membership, which will include the existing water committee, to examine the hiring of an outside water company, and to explore retaining some kind of legal / political help to move us forward on the PFOAs issue, with this committee to report back to the Membership in April.

Jeremy Schneider moved, seconded by Dan Fast, to Table the motion until the April Membership meeting. Martha clarified her motion and Jeremy then withdrew his motion to table.

In favor: 30; Opposed: 0; Abstaining: 2; Motion carried.

Volunteers for the committee: Kassie Keehn (already on the Water committee), William Edwards, Chris Rietsch, Patrick DePaula, Russell Gordon, Martha Levites, Chris McNally, Elliot Sokolov. Drew Orr, Ron Arnstein, and Dan Fast are all already on the Water committee. William Edwards was volunteered to chair this committee.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 1:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted: Dan Fast, Secretary