

HB 495 Seacoast Drinking Water Commission Meeting, February 10, 2023

Commission members present: Representative Jaci Grote, Representative Mike Edgar, Representative Dennis Malloy, Representative David Meuse, Brandon Kernen, Danna Truslow, Brian Goetz, Pat Bickford, Joe Ayotte, John Storer, Carl McMorran, David Moore, Anne Lightbody, Kathy Hollister, Bob Kelly, and Pat Bushway.

Guests: Amy Hudnor, DES, and Harvey Pine, DES

The meeting was called to order at 2PM by Vice Chair Edgar. The minutes of the November 18th meeting were reviewed, and no changes were made.

Amy Hudnor and Harvey Pine presented an update on the Seacoast Private Well Initiative beginning with Madbury where 105 people attended the workshop, 90 sample kits were distributed and 84 kits were returned. The presentation included results for arsenic, radon, lead, sodium, and four PFAS compounds, and the percentages of exceedance for each. Carl McMorran asked if well depth is available, and the presenters said that it is. In response to a question from Representative Malloy, the presenters said that compounds tested included PFOA, PFOS, PFHxS, and PFNA in the test results as well as the likely source of the contaminants and which of those are more likely to be a health concern.

Madbury residents who participated received an email survey to get their input on the process. DES also surveyed those with exceedances to determine what they're doing in response. Some said they're working on it, and some said they have treatment systems in place. Rep Malloy asked if "treatment system" was defined, and Ms Hudnor said that it was not and those could include from some basic and to some very elaborate systems. Further discussion suggested that a common understanding of "treated" be established including when it was done. John Storer expressed a concern that private companies might take advantage of homeowners with an exceedance and Ms Hudnor said that DES can help with recommendations for treatment to help prevent that.

The Exeter/North Hampton workshop was held Jan 11<sup>th</sup> and 115 kits were distributed and 107 were returned, are being processed now. The Stratham workshop will be on Feb 22 and given the number of wells, they expect a large turnout. Ms Hudnor said they can handle a large number and have allowed

interested residents from nearby towns to participate, explaining that this is a pilot program to determine if it should be expanded to the rest of the state. She added that people have asked questions, but don't seem panicked by their test results. Pat Bickford from Madbury added that the town also didn't get a lot of questions. David Moore from Stratham said that he'll share the information about the Madbury experience to encourage participation. Mr. Pine added that PFAS exceedance qualifies for assistance in paying for remediation. Rep Grote asked about help as towns are tested and Ms Hudnor said that information is in the state's "Be Well Informed" report, and that additional help is available.

Next were the reports from the sub-committees established at the December 2022 meeting. Brian Goetz, chair of the Interconnectivity Committee, presented the committee's report. He referred to a study that was done several years ago on interconnectivity and suggested that the study be revisited. If state funding can be obtained, the committee suggests 1) Updating the study, 2) Expanding the scope of the study, and 3) Expanding the geographic area of the study. The study can include a review of existing and needed connections, agreements between communities, and water demand and sources throughout the region. Brandon Kernan the support and approval of the Commission would help to get the study updated. Representative Edgar said that the committee should continue to define the study and the commission will approve at the next meeting. Brian Goetz said that the committee should refine a request for proposal to send to qualified firms. The RFP would include water quality and quantity and water systems compatibility in view of issues such as fluoridation. A possible source of funding at some point could be those held responsible for contamination.

The next report was from the Hazardous Waste Committee presented by Danna Truslow, the committee chair. She said that much of what this committee does will be passed to the Education and Communication committee to get it out to the municipalities. The committee discussed collaboration among communities on household hazardous waste disposal. Currently towns do their own, and a more centralized and coordinated approach could be more effective and efficient. That might be accomplished with funding from DES and involvement of the Regional Planning Commissions. The committee also discussed problems like contaminants from storm water runoff. Representative Meuse asked about properly disposing of household items that contain PFAS like Teflon pans.

Brandon Kernen said that there's an ongoing work to get funding for efforts to limit exposure now but the long-term solution is to keep the contaminants from being produced. Danna Truslow added that in the interim we can educate people about products that can be hazardous.

Representative Dennis Malloy, chair of the Education and Communication Committee, presented the committee's report. Committee members felt that more guidance from the commission is needed to determine where to focus their efforts in order to prioritize their time, expertise, and experience. Rep Malloy said the committee can start with presentations the commission has received that they can be useful to the municipalities. Brandon Kernen said that there is an RFP for a program to get information out on the value of public water systems. John Storer added that it's difficult to get people's attention even with events such as Drinking Water Week.

In lieu of a Water Efficiency Committee, Brandon Kernen compiled a list provided to the commission members of resources available pertaining to water efficiency and conservation. Carl McMorran added that water system operators also have available information. The discussion followed that there is adequate water if summer lawn watering is limited, but that some businesses don't want that. John Storer brought higher users paying higher rates to encourage using less, but not all customers will respond to that and some expect to pay for an irrigation surge. Ann Lightbody asked if the list is weighted toward supply and less on demand, and Brandon Kernen replied that the emphasis is on supply during drought conditions primarily. He added that some systems might have some reluctance about conservation because the usage provides income to operate the system.

Representative Meuse provided an overview of legislation in the system. He discussed several bills that deal with PFAS and testing, a bill on testing and reporting of wells with real estate transactions, and a bill to support preventive care for people exposed to PFAS. Rep Malloy asked if water quality issues are resonating with the members and Rep Meuse said that he thinks they are, and that these are non-partisan issues that significantly impact a large number of communities especially in southern NH. Rep Edgar added that he feels people are becoming more aware and reaching out to their elected officials about the problems. Rep Meuse also stressed the importance of getting the wording of a

bill right to that it gets the needed support, and that having the commission's support for a bill can really be beneficial. John Storer mentioned an upcoming event on March 8<sup>th</sup> for members of the legislature presented by NH Water Works.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15.