

SHARON WATER MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (WMAC) MEETING MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 28, 2004

Prepared by Paul Lauenstein

Present at meeting:

WMAC Chairman Rory McGregor; WMAC members Michael Birschbach, Lealdon Langley, Paul Lauenstein, Richard Mandell, Jack Sulik, and Cliff Towner; Selectman David Grasfield; Town Administrator Ben Puritz; Fire Chief Dennis Mann; Conservation Agent Greg Meister; Finance Committee member Charles Goodman; and citizen Michael Sherman

Summary of Minutes for the 10/28/04 WMAC Meeting

- 1. History of fire flows by Fire Chief Dennis Mann**
- 2. Review and approve minutes of the September 30, 2004 meeting (with alterations)**
- 3. Elect new officers**
- 4. Discuss mission and goals of the WMAC**
- 5. Review operating policies applicable to town committees**
- 6. Review monthly reports**
- 7. Minutes of past WMAC meetings not posted on the town web site**
- 8. Update on conservation subcommittee initiatives**
- 9. Education of WMAC members on the hydraulic model**
- 10. Water meter replacement and radio meter system contract**
- 11. Review capital plans for current fiscal year and for FY '06**
- 12. New business**
 - A. Avalon Bay**
 - B. WMAC member's right to add agenda items**
 - C. Role of the Water Department in the WMAC**
- 13. Schedule next meeting for Thursday, November 18 at 7:30 PM**

Detailed Minutes for the 10/28/04 WMAC Meeting

1. History of fire flows by Fire Chief Dennis Mann

Sharon Fire Chief Dennis Mann presented a summary of major fires over the last 12 years and the amounts of water they required to extinguish.

Rory McGregor asked Chief Mann for an estimate of the amount of water needed by the Fire Department in a typical year.

Paul Lauenstein suggested making a list of the largest buildings in town, including mitigating factors such as a sprinkler system or proximity to a pond or lake, and estimating the fire flow each might require in the event of a fire.

Cliff Towner responded that the ISO report already covers many of the largest buildings in town. He added that the inability to turn off ruptured gas lines fueled the Green Manor fire, the largest fire on the list.

2. Approve minutes of the September 30, 2004 meeting

The September 30 minutes were unanimously approved with two minor alterations.

3. Elect new officers

Cliff Towner proposed that chairmanship of the WMAC should be rotated annually, citing the value of a fresh point of view. Rory McGregor endorsed this proposal.

Richard Mandell proposed that all committee members not interested in serving as chairman raise their hands. Everyone except Lealdon Langley and Michael Birschbach thereby removed themselves from consideration.

Cliff Towner proposed that a new chairman should be chosen by secret ballot. The votes were submitted to Mike Sherman, who announced that Michael Birschbach received the majority of the votes.

Richard Mandell proposed that a new position of vice-chairman should be established, and that Lealdon Langley should serve in that position. This was agreed by acclamation.

Cliff Towner proposed that a secretary should also be elected, and nominated Paul Lauenstein, who was unanimously elected to that position.

4. Discuss mission and goals of the WMAC

Rory McGregor said the WMAC was formed in the 1990's to advise the Selectmen on water policy issues and provide them with technical input. He said the focus should be on broad policy issues rather than operational detail, citing lawn watering limits and pricing policy as examples of appropriate issues.

Jack Sulik said that the WMAC was formed to look over his shoulder when he was in charge of the Water Department so he would not miss deadlines. He said that although there should be no limits on the committee, the WMAC was not established to micro-manage the Water Department.

Lealdon Langley said the purpose of the WMAC should be to assure an adequate supply of good quality water and sufficient quantity in Sharon.

Cliff Towner stated that the purpose of the WMAC should go beyond that. He said there is no point in having a committee that merely reacts to Water Department initiatives. He said the committee should determine long-term water supply objectives, and advise the Selectmen on priorities to reach those

objectives. He said the Water Department's priorities, including pipes, tanks, radio meters, and hydraulic models, are not the highest priorities facing the town's water supply. He said the committee should focus on the Water Department budget, adding that \$1.5 million has been wasted on unnecessary pipes and consultants. He characterized the various HPSD and water tank studies and the ESS report on potential well sites as costly and useless. He said the committee meetings are too contentious, and that committee members are intimidated. He blamed this on Eric Hooper's obstruction of various WMAC initiatives such as conducting exploratory test wells, accelerating the Fe/Mn treatment plant at Well #6, enlarging the Morse Street pipe, and addressing the nitrate problem. Cliff Towner faulted Eric Hooper for promoting a variety of controversial projects, such as a water tank, a high pressure service district, and the hydraulic model, all of which Cliff Towner characterized as needless at this time. He blamed Eric Hooper for giving up on the idea of Sharon being self-sufficient in water supply and advocating instead the importation of MWRA water. He also faulted Eric Hooper for failing to provide the WMAC with relevant information, such as elimination of the pump and vault from the Tiot Street/Edge Hill Road water main project. Cliff Towner said the ultimate responsibility for the Water Department's lack of progress toward addressing the problems facing the town's water supply rests with Ben Puritz, Eric Hooper's superior.

Rory McGregor replied that the Water Department's has made more progress than it might appear, saying that water quality tests were completed this summer at the cemetery near the Canton Street site, and negotiations to gain access to the Gobbi property are ongoing.

Cliff Towner countered that there are additional sites remaining to test, and that progress must be speeded up to preserve these sites from 40-B development. He added that retention of water for rehabilitation of wetlands and recharge of aquifers should be a top priority for the WMAC, since rainwater tends to run out of Sharon due to its elevated topography. He pointed out that Eric Hooper has obstructed recent efforts by the Conservation Commission to accomplish this.

Richard Mandell said the WMAC should push the details aside and concentrate on setting priorities involving water quality, quantity and emergency backup. He pointed out that the WMAC is an advisory committee with no budget or authority. He commented that the WMAC should set the direction for the Water Department rather than reacting to information presented by Eric Hooper.

Paul Lauenstein said the WMAC should focus on providing the Board of Selectmen with specific, actionable recommendations including costs.

Lealdon Langley said the WMAC mission of providing adequate water quantity and quality should go beyond redundancy. He said the WMAC should lead the way to providing water for future growth and preventing degradation of Sharon's water quality. He said nitrates represent the greatest threat to Sharon's water quality, pointing out that nitrates were a factor in preventing redevelopment of the Wilbur School.

Richard Mandell proposed that the WMAC formulate a mission statement for ratification at the next meeting.

Cliff Towner said the mission of the WMAC is not to debate Eric Hooper, but rather to give advice and opinions regarding the town's water priorities to the Board of Selectmen.

David Grasfield endorsed the suggestion that the WMAC focus on setting priorities. He said the committee should not just react to Water Department proposals. The WMAC's recommendations to the Board of Selectmen should be presented as a range of options with reasons for choosing one of them. He

said the Selectmen need the WMAC's input regarding the town's water supply because of the WMAC's perspective and depth of knowledge. He added that the WMAC should go beyond providing advice and remind the Selectmen when adequate progress has not been made. He said more interaction between the WMAC and the Board of Selectmen is needed to produce results.

Ben Puritz said many of the suggestions concerning the mission of the WMAC were constructive. He characterized Cliff Towner's project-specific comments as absolutist and inaccurate. He said the Morse Street pipe project is scheduled for FY '05 and the Fe/Mn treatment plant for Well #6 is scheduled for FY '06. He said water quality data for the Canton Street site had been obtained and discussions had been held with the property owner, NSTAR. He said the proximity of wetlands is an issue at the Canton Street site. Ben Puritz went on to say that last week the owners of the Gobbi property communicated to the town that they would not allow an exploratory test well to be drilled on their land without a court judgement. He informed the committee that the owners of the Gobbi property claimed that the ground water at that site is highly contaminated. He added that it is a mischaracterization to say that the Water Department's actions constitute obstruction. While they would prefer things to move along rapidly, getting a permit to bore a new well typically takes years. He said the innuendo that the Water Department deliberately obstructs progress is inaccurate and inappropriate.

Cliff Towner responded that the Morse Street pipe had originally been scheduled for FY '04, but that Eric Hooper had attempted to delay it until FY '09 in order to avoid revealing that replacing this pipe alone might eliminate the need for a new water tank. It was upon the recommendation of the WMAC that the project was brought back to FY '05. As for testing the Canton Street site, Cliff Towner said that no permit is needed to drill exploratory test wells as recommended by the WMAC almost a year ago, and that there was no excuse for the Water Department's inaction. He said a more sustained test would show that the water at the Canton Street site is pristine, and that any traces of iron in previous samples probably came from the faucet where the samples were taken.

Ben Puritz said the wetlands near the Canton Street site posed an environmental issue.

Cliff Towner replied that the wetlands were man-made by the railroad bed, and therefore would not preclude development of a well. He added that five ballfield irrigation wells were drilled hastily last year by the Water Department, yet no exploratory test wells for finding a new source of drinking water have been drilled since the WMAC's recommendation almost a year ago. He pointed out that the town has built only one new well in the last 29 years.

Ben Puritz reminded Cliff Towner that the owners of the Gobbi property have not allowed access to their land for drilling an exploratory test well despite good faith efforts at negotiation, and therefore it is unfair to fault the Water Department for lack of progress at that site.

Cliff Towner responded that in that case it is up to the town's leaders to force the property owners to allow access in the interests of the town's water supply. He asked if the town has requested documentation of the property owners' claim that the aquifer is contaminated.

Ben Puritz replied that this documentation has been requested.

Greg Meister asked Lealdon Langley if 21-E reports about hazardous waste contamination is public information that might shed light on the property owner's claim that the Gobbi site is contaminated.

Lealdon Langley replied that he thought information about hazardous waste contamination sites is available on the DEP web site. He added that whenever a hazardous waste site changes hands, a Licensed

Site Professional (LSP) audits the site and produces a 21-E report documenting the nature and extent of the contamination.

Richard Mandell reminded Ben Puritz that the WMAC has a vacant seat, and asked why there has been no action on an application by a citizen interested in filling the vacancy. He commented that it took five months for his own application to be accepted.

Ben Puritz replied the matter would be addressed promptly.

Greg Meister criticized the lack of progress by the Water Department in developing a new well for the town. He said years have elapsed since the Islamic Center well site was rejected. He asked why the Water Department stopped evaluations at all other sites after the Islamic Center site was rejected. He said that a consequence of this inaction was that Sharon no longer has adequate redundancy in case of well failure. He questioned the Water Department's preoccupation with pipes, tanks and radio meters, adding that some potential well sites have already been lost, another consequence of inaction. He said exploratory drilling should begin immediately. He said that the limited pumping of a 2.5" exploratory test well done long ago at the Canton Street site should be followed up with an 8" exploratory test well and a more extended informal pump test for which no permit would be required. Much useful information could be learned in this way about the potential of the site. He said he is tired of the litany of excuses offered by the Water Department for its failure to act.

Ben Puritz said ownership of the Canton Street property by NSTAR is an issue.

Greg Meister replied that the town does not necessarily have to own the property, but must only have control of it. He said the proximity of the road is not desirable, but not a fatal flaw.

Lealdon Langley said ownership of the land would be preferable.

Ben Puritz said that if a site evaluation subcommittee were formed, he would be happy to sit down and discuss what could be done.

Rory McGregor said that a site evaluation subcommittee of Mike Birschbach and Lealdon Langley already existed, but that its third member, Roger Thibault, had resigned from the WMAC.

Lealdon Langley accepted part of the blame for lack of progress. He said the site screening exercise had taken some time, but there was now a need to move forward with testing at the available sites.

Jack Sulik brought the discussion back to the mission of the WMAC. He said the mission statement should broadly allude to issues of water quantity and quality without getting into the specific issues facing the town's water supply today.

Rory McGregor proposed that each member of the WMAC write a mission statement, and then list their top priorities for immediate action for discussion at the next WMAC meeting.

Cliff Towner agreed that the mission statement should involve water quantity and quality. As for priorities, he said that last March the water table had dropped alarmingly to a level typical of July, and heavy April rains luckily averted a crisis. He emphasized the need to retain water in Sharon's aquifers to maintain consistent quantity and quality of drinking water, as well as to prevent wetlands and streams from drying up. He added that we must also build new wells and address the nitrate issue.

David Grasfield reiterated his interest in more communication between the WMAC and the Board of Selectmen. He invited the WMAC to present and discuss their proposals in person at Selectmen's meetings.

Richard Mandell said the WMAC should be notified when there are issues on the Selectmen's agenda pertaining to water.

Ben Puritz noted that the agenda for each Board of Selectmen meeting is posted on the town web site, www.townofsharon.com.

Michael Birschbach said the WMAC needs a clear, concise, empowering mission statement. He said it should clarify the role of the WMAC in providing advice to the Selectmen about water supply, and address communication and follow-up with the Selectmen.

5. Review operating policies applicable to town committees

Rory McGregor said the WMAC policy on information gathering by committee members had been discussed under new business as reflected in the minutes of the September 30 WMAC meeting. He asked for guidance from Ben Puritz and David Grasfield as to the policies of other town committees, and asked if there were any protocol for members to approach DPWs in other towns.

David Grasfield responded that as far as he knew there are no legal restrictions to approaching any public officials. He said that committee members should use their judgement with regard to notifying the Sharon Water Department and the Selectmen of their actions. He said it would be wise to keep other WMAC members in the loop as well to avoid duplicating efforts. He added that whereas committee members may identify themselves as members of the WMAC, they should be careful not to speak on behalf of the committee unless they had been authorized by the committee to do so.

Ben Puritz agreed with David Grasfield, and recommended that committee members notify the DPW and the Selectmen of their communications with outside parties as a courtesy.

Cliff Towner asked if he called the Mansfield Water Department to ask a question should he notify the Selectmen and the DPW.

Ben Puritz answered that there is no legal requirement to do so. It is just a matter of courtesy and coordination.

Lealdon Langley said that as a public servant working for the DEP he takes calls from people with a variety of purposes. Sometimes it's a legal matter and sometimes it's just informational. He said that when the caller identifies himself as a member of a group, it helps him decide how to handle the inquiry.

6. Review monthly reports

Paul Lauenstein, referring to monthly well pumping and tank level data circulated to the WMAC members by the Water Department the day before the meeting, noted that the defective data from Well #3 had been corrected back to January, 2004. However, he said he wanted to know when the discrepancies between actual and reported pumping at Well #3 began in order to make adjustments, if necessary, to the pumping records for 2003.

Lealdon Langley said correcting the records is a matter of serious concern. He said he wanted a better explanation for when the problem occurred.

Michael Birschbach asked if the Water Department had responded to the request made at the July 29 WMAC meeting for a breakdown of “unaccounted-for” water and “other area” water.

Rory McGregor reported that the Water Department did not intend to re-file a revised the Annual Statistical Report (ASR) for 2003 to correct errors itemized at the May 6 WMAC meeting. Neither would they attempt to explain the sharp increase in unaccounted-for water in 2003 as requested at the July 29 WMAC meeting, except to repeat the previously offered explanation that unaccounted-for water oscillates up and down from year to year because of the 6-month billing cycle.

Paul Lauenstein responded that he felt this was unacceptable, particularly in view of the discovery, subsequent to May 6, of erroneous Well #3 pumping data. The ASRs constitute a historical context for evaluating each year’s results. To knowingly allow errors to remain in the record would undermine conclusions drawn from any studies of past results, making policy decisions more difficult.

Paul Lauenstein went on to say that Eric Hooper, as head of the Water Department, should be able to provide the WMAC with a better analysis of why the 76.6 million gallons of unaccounted-for water was so much higher in 2003 than in previous years. As for the 38.4 million gallons of Other Area water usage, Paul Lauenstein said that it should be relatively easy to itemize since it should be based on documented estimates of water used for fire fighting, hydrant flushing, etc. He said that accurate, detailed information about how water is used and how it is lost is important to formulating a water conservation strategy for the town.

Rory McGregor advised Paul Lauenstein to rephrase his request and submit it to the Water Department.

Lealdon Langley commented that around 1999 the literature reflected the ability of water departments to consistently achieve less than 10% unaccounted-for water, down from 15%, and that the high figure presented for Sharon in 2003 deserves a better explanation. With respect to the ASR, he commented that the gallons per capita daily (gpcd) calculation is erroneously based on Sharon’s total population. Instead, the population should be adjusted for the number of residents on private wells. He said this statistic is of interest to the water conservation subcommittee and should be corrected on the ASR.

7. Minutes of past WMAC meetings not posted on the town web site

Rory McGregor gave Paul Lauenstein a stack of past WMAC meeting minutes that have not been posted to the town web site, asking that they be returned eventually to Rory McGregor.

David Grasfield requested that any meaningful information gleaned from these minutes be shared with other WMAC members and the Selectmen.

8. Update on conservation subcommittee initiatives

Lealdon Langley apologized for not sending a letter to the School Department regarding Project WET as he had promised at the previous WMAC meeting. He said he would get it out within a few days.

Rory McGregor said he had visited the Town of Acton water web site (<http://www.actonh2o.com>) about water supply in response to Paul Lauenstein’s suggestion that Sharon should consider a similar web site. He asked if other committee members favored moving forward with this idea.

Paul Lauenstein said he had obtained an estimate from Rick Dumont, the designer of the Sharon Friends of Conservation web site, who said producing a web site for Sharon similar to Acton's might cost in the range of \$3,000 to \$6,000. Paul Lauenstein asked whether other committee members felt that an expenditure of this size could be cost-justified in terms of water saved.

Richard Mandell said that the intangible benefits of having a web site for disseminating water-related information would be hard to quantify in dollars and cents.

Rory McGregor said that it might be possible to organize a group of high school students to produce a web site as a community service project for the town. He offered to investigate this possibility. Richard Mandell offered to use his connections as a retired high school teacher to assist Rory McGregor in recruiting students to get the job done.

David Grasfield endorsed the idea of involving the young people of Sharon in designing a water supply web site. He added that the Scouts might be good candidates for a community service project like this.

Lealdon Langley asked Ben Puritz if any town employees might be able to help.

Ben Puritz replied that Don Hillegas, head of the Data Processing Department, would be the person to contact.

Paul Lauenstein commented that he thought the Data Processing Department was typically very busy, based on his interactions with them in posting the meeting minutes. Ben Puritz agreed that they probably would not have enough extra time to design a web site.

Paul Lauenstein made a motion to recommend inserting a gpcd lookup table in the water bills. He said he obtained price estimates for printing, stuffing, sealing, and maintaining ZIP sequence of 1,000 inserts totaling approximately \$125 per month. Given the six-month billing cycle, that would total about \$750 to provide every rate-payer with a copy in his or her water bill.

The committee voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Paul Lauenstein suggested that the WMAC should review the Water Department's rebate policy, and decide if it should include rebates for low-flow toilets and other water-saving home improvements. He added that he once bought a low-flow showerhead from the Water Department but it produced a jet of water instead of a spray, so he did not use it. He suggested that the committee should research low-flow showerheads, find a good model, and have the Water Department provide them free to water customers.

Lealdon Langley said he would like to approach the Building Inspector, Joe Kent, and ask him to promote the rebates offered by the Water Department in the course of performing his duties.

David Grasfield added that members of the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) should also be encouraged to promote the rebates. He said the ZBA is in a position to require homeowners to install water-conserving improvements as part of a list of conditions. He added that there should be an email address on the water bill insert for customers to obtain further information about the rebate program.

Greg Meister suggested that the Board of Health should also be recruited to promote the rebate program.

Paul Lauenstein reported that he had attended a rollout of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs' (EOEA's) Water Assets Study at Bridgewater State College on October 27. This study of 131 communities in the Rte. 495 belt just outside of the urban area served by MWRA is an attempt by the state to assist towns in predicting their maximum future water needs and identifying potential well sites. It relies on GIS maps to represent relevant data in a visually understandable format. He said Water Division Supervisor Dave Masciarelli had also attended the rollout, and picked up the maps and other information specific to Sharon. Paul Lauenstein said he thought the WMAC should be aware of this new information because it is relevant to issues such as new wells and a new master plan.

Rory McGregor suggested that WMAC members could contact Dave Masciarelli to review the Water Assets Study materials for Sharon.

9. Education of WMAC members on the hydraulic model

Rory McGregor presented literature describing a course on hydraulic models that committee members might consider taking to better understand how Sharon's hydraulic model works. He said the \$2,000 cost of the course might be underwritten by the Water Department in the interest of promoting understanding of the hydraulic model by the WMAC.

10. Water meter replacement and radio meter system contract

Rory McGregor said that a new RFP for a radio read meter system is on hold pending a written explanation from the Inspector General's office of their reasons for staying the award of the contract to Ti-Sales.

Ben Puritz said that a new RFP that fully comports with all requirements of the Inspector General's Office will be generated by Weston & Sampson for the Water Department. He said the new RFP will include fixed-based systems, and include a requirement for a pilot study.

David Grasfield said he recently received feedback from the Inspector General indicating that the original award to Weston & Sampson to prepare the radio meter RFP was not consistent with the statute. He questioned whether Weston & Sampson were the best choice of vendors to prepare the next RFP, given the problems that arose with the last one.

Paul Lauenstein made the following motion:

MOTION:

The WMAC recommends that the Selectmen instruct the Water Department to take advantage of free pilot installations to evaluate the reliability and effectiveness of available systems in helping conserve water before issuing another RFP for a radio read water meter system.

The evaluation should include interviews with vendors, case histories from other towns, and trials of available technology to determine its effectiveness and practicality in Sharon. It should be conducted by a committee including Water Department employees, WMAC members, & FinCom members. It should be completed within one year.

Paul Lauenstein said that the Ti-Sales' drive-by system chosen in the original selection process could not be cost-justified by reduced meter reading costs, and lacked water conservation capabilities that could help cost-justify a million-dollar system. He said the multi-disciplinary committee should analyze new

technologies such as fixed network systems and acoustic leak detection from the standpoints of both water conservation and cost-justification, and determine the needs of the town before writing a new RFP. He added that the chosen system lacked the E-coder option, which has proven to be popular and effective for leak detection in a pilot installation in Opelika, Alabama.

Jack Sulik said he opposed the motion because it would delay implementation of a radio read meter system by a year, and that Eric Hooper is capable of procuring a good system for the town.

Lealdon Langley pointed out that the Ti-Sales system is not compatible with all brands of water meters, and would limit Sharon's options with respect to future water meter purchases.

Richard Mandell asked how sample homes would be selected for a pilot study to assure that the sample would be representative.

Rory McGregor said the consequence of delays in procuring a radio meter system is that Water Department manpower would continue to be required to read the meters manually.

Michael Sherman commented that the current trend in technology is away from proprietary systems and toward open architecture.

The motion was passed by a 6-1 margin.

11. Review capital plans for current fiscal year and for FY '06

Paul Lauenstein said he thought the WMAC did a very good job reviewing the Water Department's capital spending plans in January, 2004. He asked why the operating budget was not similarly reviewed.

David Grasfield informed the WMAC that Eric Hooper planned to present his capital spending plan for FY '06 at the Selectmen's meeting on November 2. He said better communication is needed between the WMAC and the Water Department regarding the capital spending plan.

Rory McGregor concurred, saying the WMAC should be involved in formulating the capital spending plan.

12. New Business

A. Avalon Bay

Cliff Towner said he would like the committee to discuss the water needs of the 200-unit Avalon Bay project on Norwood Street, which he said would require at least 15 million gallons per year. He pointed out that the project would tie in to Norwood's MWRA sewer leading to the Deer Island treatment plant in Boston Harbor. He said it would be better for Sharon if the project used MWRA water rather than putting this additional demand on Sharon's overtaxed wells. He said that water used by Avalon Bay would not re-enter Sharon's aquifers, as does water supplied to most of Sharon's homes that have septic systems. He said both Norwood and the MWRA are in favor of supplying Avalon Bay with MWRA water. He suggested that the WMAC recommend to the Selectmen that MWRA water rather than Sharon water be used to supply Avalon Bay, thus preventing the loss of 15 million gallons annually from Sharon's aquifers.

David Grasfield said it is important to note that Avalon Bay is a Local Initiative Program (LIP) development, not a 40-B. Sometimes called a “friendly 40-B” a LIP is an affordable housing development that is endorsed by the local municipality. He said Avalon Bay made a presentation to the Board of Selectmen at which both wetlands impact and water supply were discussed. He said that the WMAC should get involved in discussions about this proposed development because of its potential impact on the town’s water supply.

Cliff Towner asked how the Interbasin Transfer Act would affect the decision.

Lealdon Langley commented that MWRA water transferred from the Quabbin Reservoir to Avalon Bay would represent an interbasin transfer, but since Norwood’s water supply already comes from Quabbin, it would probably be allowed, especially considering that Avalon Bay’s wastewater would be disposed of by MWRA in the Boston Harbor basin. He said that the question of whether supplying Avalon Bay with Sharon well water represents an interbasin transfer is hard to answer. The Avalon Bay development is in the Boston Harbor basin. Some of Sharon’s wells are located in the Boston Harbor basin while some (Wells #5 and #7) are in the Taunton basin. Since the water from all six of Sharon’s wells is mixed in the four tanks and the water main grid, it might be hard to argue that none of the Taunton basin water would reach Avalon Bay in the Boston Harbor basin, thus representing an interbasin transfer. Lealdon Langley added that the Massachusetts Water Resources Commission has made its Guide to the Interbasin Transfer Act available on the internet.

Jack Sulik doubted that the Interbasin Transfer Act would be an obstacle to Avalon Bay obtaining Sharon well water.

Greg Meister questioned whether it was more appropriate for Avalon Bay to approach the Selectmen or the WMAC regarding their water needs.

B. WMAC member’s right to add agenda items

Cliff Towner said that WMAC members have a right to put relevant issues on the WMAC agenda.

C. Role of the Water Department in the WMAC

Rory McGregor noted the absence of Eric Hooper at the meeting and asked if it were necessary to have a representative of the Water Department at WMAC meetings.

Cliff Towner said the Water Department has an obligation to keep the WMAC informed of its activities and its plans.

Paul Lauenstein agreed that the Water Department should do a better job of providing the WMAC with information. He noted that last April when he called the Water Department to ask when the Annual Statistical Report would be available, he was surprised to hear that it had been completed in February. He said the Water Department should routinely provide WMAC members with this kind of relevant information.

Ben Puritz said that he gathered from these comments that a Water Department presence was needed at the WMAC meetings.

David Grasfield suggested that agenda items involving the Water Department could be grouped at the beginning of each WMAC meeting to minimize the time commitment required of Eric Hooper.

Rory McGregor once again cautioned the committee not to try to micro-manage the Water Department. He said the WMAC is driven by presentations by Eric Hooper that provide an overview of the main functions of the Water Department.

13. Schedule next meeting for Thursday, November 18 at 7:30 PM