

SHARON WATER MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (WMAC) MEETING MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 10, 2005

Prepared by Paul Lauenstein

Present at meeting:

WMAC Chairman Michael Birschbach; WMAC members Lealdon Langley, Paul Lauenstein, Richard Mandell, Rory McGregor, Len Sekuler, Mike Sherman, Jack Sulik and Cliff Towner; DPW Superintendent Eric Hooper; Selectman David Grasfield, Finance Committee member Charles Goodman; and Conservation Agent Greg Meister

Summary of Minutes for the 2/10/05 WMAC Meeting

1. Minutes of January 13 approved with one minor change

2. Open Discussion

- Invite Selectmen to WMAC meeting
- Planning Board initiative

3. Report of the Water Department

- Meeting with Stoughton Water Department
- Meeting with Conservation Commission regarding Canton St. well site
- DEP Withdrawal Permit update
- No intent to revise FY '06 budget according to WMAC priorities

4. Report of the Water Conservation Subcommittee

- FY '06 water conservation budget and cost justification
- Washing machine rebate policy
- Pass two motions
- Meeting with Concord water conservation agent
- Meeting with Energy New England

5. Other Business – Emergency Backup

- Cliff Towner's view of the meeting with the Stoughton DPW

6. Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, March 10, 2005 at 7:30 PM

Detailed Minutes for the 2/10/05 WMAC Meeting

1. Minutes of January 13 approved with one minor change

The minutes of the January 13 WMAC meeting were unanimously approved with one minor change.

2. Open Discussion

Jack Sulik expressed his disapproval of inviting the Selectmen to a WMAC meeting without the prior approval of the WMAC.

Cliff Towner said that Selectmen, like the public, are free to attend WMAC meetings, and inviting them does not require a vote of the WMAC.

Michael Birschbach explained that he had invited the Selectmen to attend the WMAC meeting because of the controversy over the three priorities recommended by the WMAC and approved by the Selectmen. He said Eric Hooper's concerns about these priorities as expressed in a memo to the Selectmen were originally on the agenda, and he felt the Selectmen would be interested in the debate. He explained that the Selectmen were unable to attend on Feb. 10, so discussion of Eric Hooper's memo would be deferred until March 10. Michael Birschbach asked if the WMAC would approve of his inviting the Selectmen to the WMAC meeting on March 10. Consensus was to go ahead and invite the Selectmen.

Cliff Towner asked if any WMAC members were aware of the Planning Board's proposal to build affordable housing on a number of parcels of town land. He said the purpose of this initiative was to increase Sharon's affordable housing and avoid the requirements of 40-B. He said building houses in the Zone IIs of the town's wells will jeopardize water quality, and therefore the WMAC should weigh in on the issue. He added that the Planning Board seemed to be unaware of the potential adverse impact of their proposal on Sharon's water supply.

Cliff Towner said the Planning Board had mapped a number of town-owned lots with one-acre zoning and proposed re-zoning them to build clusters of affordable housing with six houses per acre. With enough affordable housing, the town could meet the 10% affordable criterion, and thereby avoid being subject to 40-B. However, Cliff Towner said these housing clusters will increase the threat to the town's water quality, and therefore the WMAC should carefully investigate this danger. He added that there are good reasons why the town acquired these parcels.

Cliff Towner concluded by saying he would request a hearing with the Selectmen in executive session to personally express his concerns on this issue, adding that he had gifted one of the locations in question, a 7.5 acre parcel, to the town with the understanding that it would remain undeveloped.

Paul Lauenstein asked how the WMAC could learn more about this issue.

Greg Meister explained that part of the Planning Board's proposal entailed swapping about 300 acres of unbuildable wetlands owned by the town for about 300 acres of buildable land owned by the Conservation Commission. He said this aspect of the proposal would not sit well with owners of homes abutting conservation land that they assumed would be permanently protected when they bought their homes. Greg Meister suggested inviting Eli Hauser of the Planning Board to present the Planning Board's proposal to the WMAC.

Richard Mandell suggested inviting all the members of the Planning Board to a joint meeting.

Rory McGregor commented that there might be other reasons in addition to water to oppose the Planning Board's proposal.

Lealdon Langley said there should be a review of the town's watershed protection by-laws. He added that the designation of Zone II does not by itself exclude housing. It is a question of housing density versus protecting water quality. He added that Title V requires large house lots to spread out the nitrate load, but that zoning in effect in some areas of town predates Title V and allows higher housing densities.

Paul Lauenstein reminded the committee that nitrate levels in the three wells in the Beaver Brook valley are already exhibiting higher nitrate levels than the town's other three wells.

Eric Hooper said Zone II and Title V requirements govern the allowable density to prevent excess nitrates. He said two-acre lots are required for 4 bedroom homes in Zone IIs, unless special nitrate-reducing enhancements are added to the septic system. Eric Hooper added that Governor Romney's "Smart Growth" policy encourages growth near the town center, which is in a Zone II.

Richard Mandell asked what the time frame would be for the Planning Board's proposal. He also asked if a map of the parcels proposed by the Planning Board were available.

David Grasfield answered that the proposal had not gone very far since the initial meeting, which was attended by only four Planning Board members and himself. He added that the proximity to the town's wells to the land parcels in question was cause for concern.

Cliff Towner said it's important to get involved in the early stages.

Rory McGregor suggested setting up a subcommittee to study the matter, and proposed that Cliff Towner be its chairman.

Cliff Towner questioned the necessity of a subcommittee. He pointed out that the Planning Board would probably be willing to come to a WMAC meeting.

Michael Birschbach said a subcommittee might be useful in terms of gathering information.

Paul Lauenstein volunteered to serve on a subcommittee to study the Planning Board's proposal.

Rory McGregor also volunteered.

Cliff Towner agreed to serve as the subcommittee chairman. He said the subcommittee should attend the next Planning Board meeting and report back to the WMAC. He added that he felt that clean water trumps affordable housing, and that the WMAC should be very concerned about the potential consequences to the town's water supply of the Planning Board's proposal.

Cliff Towner questioned the state's ability to force Sharon to allow 40-B developments. He said Sharon could make a case to be exempted from the 40-B law that no other town in the Commonwealth could make based on the threat it poses to the town's water supply. He said he thought it might be possible to obtain a court injunction to stop 40-B development in Sharon.

Rory McGregor asked how the Conservation Commission is responding to the Planning Board's proposal.

Greg Meister replied that the ConCom has taken the position that land donated to the town is off the table. He said if the town violates the wishes of land donors, then others might decide not to donate land to the

town in the future. He added that Gina Maniscalco of the Planning Board will be making a presentation to the ConCom on March 3, and encouraged WMAC members to attend.

3. Report of the Water Department

Pumping Records

Eric Hooper distributed copies of pumping records for January that showed pumping of about 40 million gallons. He also distributed copies of a color bar graph showing average daily water pumping since 1995, and commented that total pumping for 2004 of 586 million gallons was typical.

Meeting with Stoughton Regarding Emergency Backup

Eric Hooper then reported on a meeting with Larry Barrett of the Stoughton Water Department that took place on the morning of February 10. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the feasibility of establishing an emergency connection to Stoughton's water supply, which is supplemented by MWRA. In addition to Larry Barrett and Eric Hooper, WMAC members Paul Lauenstein and Cliff Towner, as well as Selectman Joe Roach and Sharon Water Supervisor Dave Masciarelli attended the meeting.

Eric Hooper distributed copies of MWRA Policy # OP. 05, Emergency Water Supply Withdrawals. He drew attention to the last page, which explains MWRA's billing policy for emergency water withdrawals.

Mike Sherman asked how long Sharon could import MWRA water on an emergency basis.

Eric Hooper replied that the MWRA can provide emergency water for up to 30 days in the event of a non-chronic supply disruption. Before providing emergency water, MWRA requires a DEP declaration of a water supply emergency in the requesting community. According to OP. 05, "The community must provide an initial written statement requesting emergency water supply, describe the situation, and present a plan for resolving it. The Board of Directors shall be notified of approvals granted under this paragraph. At the end of the temporary use, the community must provide a follow-up letter documenting how much water was purchased from MWRA or MWRA water system community, and how the situation was resolved."

Eric Hooper said he was not disputing the need for an emergency connection to MWRA water, but he wanted the WMAC to understand the costs, procedures and restrictions associated with obtaining MWRA water on an emergency basis.

Richard Mandell asked if Stoughton was receptive to such an arrangement.

Eric Hooper replied that Stoughton would be agreeable, as long as Sharon's withdrawals did not cause negative impacts on Stoughton's water supply.

Richard Mandell then asked which location Stoughton preferred for a hookup.

Without addressing Richard Mandell's question directly, Eric Hooper explained that Stoughton has a permit to withdraw up to 1.4 million gallons daily (MGD), but only uses about 0.4 MGD. That means Stoughton has access to approximately one million gallons a day beyond their own needs. Eric Hooper explained that MWRA uses chloramines to disinfect their water, whereas Stoughton uses chlorine. Chloramines dissolve iron bacteria that build up inside pipe linings. Although iron bacteria present no

health risks, they can discolor water and necessitate lab tests, causing problems for the Stoughton Water Department.

Len Sekuler asked if there were anything Sharon could do to mitigate problems Stoughton might encounter as a consequence of providing emergency water to Sharon.

Eric Hooper replied that Stoughton has no hydraulic model for predicting the impacts on Stoughton's water supply system of suddenly providing large quantities of water to Sharon in an emergency.

Richard Mandell asked if these problems meant that an emergency connection to Stoughton was not feasible.

Eric Hooper said it was not a question of feasibility, but rather a question of cost. He reminded the committee that Sharon already has significant emergency backup resources. He allowed that using fire engines with the accompanying police details would also be costly. He said a cost/benefit analysis is needed.

Michael Birschbach said that, in an emergency, the Selectmen would impose an immediate outdoor watering ban to reduce demand. He said the relevant question to ask is how much water Sharon would need in case of a protracted emergency lasting over a month, and what is the best way to provide it. He added that since Stoughton is agreeable, Sharon should take the next step.

Lealdon Langley asked why Sharon could not purchase water from Stoughton and avoid MWRA restrictions.

Eric Hooper said Stoughton's internal water supply is insufficient for its own needs, so that any water it sells to Sharon would be attributable to MWRA.

Richard Mandell asked if the cost of a pump would be the same for a Cobbs Corner hookup as a Chemung Street hookup.

Eric Hooper said it would be the same. He said Larry Barrett estimated the maximum cost of a hookup at around \$500,000, not counting the cost of the land.

Paul Lauenstein asked if the roadside right-of-way would provide enough space so that a land purchase might not be necessary.

Eric Hooper said that was a possibility.

Cliff Towner said the ball is now in Sharon's court. Sharon should hire an engineer to design an emergency connection, and then present a specific proposal to Stoughton.

David Grasfield said the cost of any possible harm caused to Stoughton's water system in an emergency should be considered in the assessment.

Canton Street Well Site

Eric Hooper next described a meeting with the Conservation Commission (ConCom) regarding wetland impacts at the Canton Street well site. He said he asked the ConCom whether they would grant permission

to construct a roadway 150 feet into the wetland to service a well there. He said he wanted to know if the ConCom would allow the access road to be built before spending \$25,000 on an exploratory pump test. Eric Hooper reported that the ConCom lacked a quorum and no decision was rendered at the meeting.

Lealdon Langley asked if Eric Hooper had checked with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) about building a well in a wetland.

Eric Hooper replied that it was necessary to locate the well in the wetland in order to maintain a 400 foot radius Zone I without any homes in it.

Lealdon Langley said taking the homes by eminent domain to create the Zone I without impacting the wetland is a possibility if absolutely necessary.

Eric Hooper replied that he is opposed to a hostile taking of homes by eminent domain, and suggested instead the possibility of angle drilling.

Greg Meister said ConCom is following up with DEP regarding the Zone I requirements of the Canton Street site. He emphasized the need to make progress in evaluating the site, and said he would try to get a representative from DEP to visit the site.

Eric Hooper repeated that he prefers not to spend money evaluating NSTAR land unless there is assurance that the site is eligible for a permit. He said he did not want to repeat the expensive error made at the Islamic Center site. He mentioned the proximity of the road as a negative attribute of the Canton Street site. He added that if a lower pumping rate and wetland impacts were acceptable, the Islamic Center site should be reconsidered, and that the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Agency (MEPA) recommends an alternatives analysis to compare all possible well sites.

David Grasfield commended the animated debate and encouraged everyone present to contribute to laying out the town's options. As a Water Commissioner responsible for making a final decision he appreciated the delineation of pros and cons of the various sites by both professionals and volunteers. He added that taking homes by eminent domain would be the last thing he would do, but all options should be laid out for consideration.

Cliff Towner agreed that taking homes by eminent domain should be avoided, and that all potential well sites should be researched.

Lealdon Langley said temporary access to the well site for the purpose of conducting an exploratory pump test could be accomplished using temporary swamp mats instead of constructing a permanent road bed through the wetland.

Greg Meister said Eric Hooper is waiting for ConCom permission before spending money for an exploratory pump test.

Eric Hooper said he wants someone else to put a red "X" on the ground and take responsibility for the exact spot to drill.

DEP Withdrawal Permit Update

Michael Birschbach moved on to the next topic: DEP’s five-year review of Sharon’s permit to withdraw water from its municipal wells currently in progress.

Paul Lauenstein passed out copies of the DEP’s letter to the Sharon Water Department outlining the proposed changes to Sharon’s five-year water withdrawal permit, along with a chart containing the following summarized statistics on Sharon’s water use over the past five years.

	<u>May-Sept</u>	<u>Summer</u> <u>MGD</u>	<u>Previous</u> <u>Nov-Mar</u>	<u>Winter</u> <u>MGD</u>	<u>Ratio</u>	<u>12 mo</u> <u>MGD</u>	<u>12 mo</u> <u>MGD</u>
2000	272,105	1.78	191,044	1.26	1.41	555,010	1.52
2001	301,737	1.97	195,221	1.29	1.53	585,954	1.61
2002	296,212	1.94	192,974	1.28	1.51	580,234	1.59
2003	273,982	1.79	203,673	1.35	1.33	569,142	1.56
2004	287,604	1.88	206,222	1.36	1.39	586,788	1.60
Average	286,328	1.87	197,827	1.31	1.43		
DEP Permit		1.84					

Eric Hooper said he would challenge the DEP draft permit requirements. He said neither of the two principal streams leaving Sharon, the East Branch of the Neponset River to the north and the Canoe River to the south, is classified as stressed. However, in its draft withdrawal permit for Sharon the DEP has applied constraints as if Sharon were located in a medium or high stress watershed. Eric Hooper said DEP has lowered Sharon’s maximum annual water withdrawal from 660 million gallons (MG) to 577 MG, and imposed a summer-to-winter water use ratio of 1.2-to-1. DEP asked for amendments to inaccuracies in Sharon’s 2003 Annual Statistical Report (ASR).

Eric Hooper said DEP’s permit review process takes a one-size-fits-all approach that does not account for the fact that Sharon is not sewerred. He said Sharon’s permit should reflect the fact that its septic systems effectively recycle roughly 70% of the water that the town pumps. He pointed out that one of the primary tools used by towns with sewer systems to comply with DEP restrictions is to repair leaky sewer lines that drain away groundwater infiltrating into the sewer lines. Since Sharon has virtually no sewer lines to repair, this offset is unavailable.

Len Sekuler asked if Sharon would be out of compliance under the terms of the proposed permit.

Paul Lauenstein referred him to the last page of the handout (shown above) that provides a summary of Sharon’s actual usage for the past five years as reported in the ASRs. He pointed out that the usage limits imposed by DEP should be compared with past peak pumping rather than past average pumping to judge whether Sharon would be in jeopardy of violating pumping limits proposed for the upcoming five-year period.

Lealdon Langley asked what other offsets besides sewer repair would be available to Sharon to satisfy the DEP.

Eric Hooper said that if Sharon’s future population growth takes the form of apartments rather than single family homes it would help satisfy the 1.2 ratio requirement, but any growth would lead to an increase in total water usage.

Len Sekuler asked when Sharon’s response to DEP is due.

Eric Hooper said Sharon's response is due by March 15, and that the final permit would probably be issued around the end of April.

Paul Lauenstein commented that the summer-to-winter ratio requirement provides a disincentive to conserve water indoors. He explained that usage in a typical summer month is about 60 MG and in a typical winter month about 40 MG, a ratio of 1.5. If 10 MG per month could be saved by means of indoor water conservation, summer usage would drop to 50 MG and winter usage would drop to 30 MG, causing the ratio to increase to 1.67. Not only would the town be discouraged from promoting indoor water conservation, it would actually have an incentive to open fire hydrants in winter to improve its ratio.

Mike Sherman asked what the consequences would be for violating the ratio.

Lealdon Langley said he thought if the town initiated effective water conservation efforts that these efforts would be taken into consideration by the DEP as an offset to any future violations of permit conditions.

Eric Hooper said the "one-size-fits-all" approach might not work for all towns, and that DEP may have to revise its approach to withdrawal permits for towns without sewers. He said Sharon would be a good laboratory for determining the benefits of water conservation in a town that is almost 100% septic and has almost no sewers. He agreed that the ratio would be difficult to achieve if a serious effort were made to implement indoor water conservation.

Michael Birschbach asked Eric Hooper to provide the WMAC with copies of Sharon's response to the DEP's proposed five-year withdrawal permit.

Eric Hooper said he would be meeting with DEP the following week. He mentioned a web site showing Massachusetts waterways designated as stressed. He also mentioned that DEP assistant commissioner Cynthia Giles is leaving DEP.

Water Department Capital Budget for FY '06

Paul Lauenstein recalled that the WMAC had voted to recommend that the Water Department revise its budget for FY '06 to reflect the three priorities established by the WMAC and approved by the Selectmen: new wells, emergency backup and water quality. Paul Lauenstein asked Eric Hooper if he intended to revise the Water Department budget for FY '06.

Eric Hooper replied that he saw no need to revise the budget, which projects \$500,000 in capital spending. He pointed out that the budget is a means of establishing a total spending limit for the year, but that actual line-item spending during the fiscal year is flexible and usually does not match the budget.

Michael Birschbach asked David Grasfield if the Selectmen had voted on the WMAC's recommendation to request that the Water Department revise its FY '06 budget.

David Grasfield replied that the Priorities Committee vote establishing departmental spending allocations for FY '06 pre-dated the WMAC's recommendation to modify the budget, which makes it more difficult to make changes to the budget at this point. He added that the Finance Committee was scheduled to review the Water Department budget at their upcoming meeting on Monday evening, February 14.

Charles Goodman asked if the committee is aware of how the \$500,000 projected for Water Department capital spending in FY '06 breaks down.

Cliff Towner answered that Eric Hooper had presented all the details at the previous meeting.

Paul Lauenstein commented that there was no allowance in the FY '06 for an emergency backup connection, the second highest priority of the WMAC. He pointed out that Larry Barrett of Stoughton had suggested that the connection could cost as much as \$500,000, and asked how that could be reconciled with the existing budget.

Eric Hooper responded that the High Pressure Service District (HPSD) was nixed because it would only benefit 10% of the town, and would only make a significant difference in the event of a fire emergency. He said the emergency backup is analogous because it would only make a difference if an emergency arose. He said he questioned the priority given by the WMAC to emergency backup because of the low probability that it would ever be needed.

Paul Lauenstein said emergency backup could benefit the whole town in an emergency so it is not analogous to the HPSD.

Eric Hooper replied that homes in the highest elevations of town would be the first ones affected by a water emergency. This is why emergency backup is indeed analogous to the HPSD, which addresses the needs of the homes in the highest elevations.

Greg Meister asked Eric Hooper if he objects to an emergency backup.

Eric Hooper replied that it is a question of competing priorities, and his opinion is that emergency backup is not an immediate priority in view of the low probability of an emergency that could not be dealt with using the means already available to the town.

Michael Birschbach said the Water Department should go ahead with the next step of the process, which is to hire a consultant to evaluate the best place to make the emergency backup connection and provide a cost estimate.

Eric Hooper said Watermark Environmental is currently evaluating the feasibility of Sharon connecting to MWRA for supplemental water. He said this study would probably provide information relevant to an emergency backup connection.

Len Sekuler asked when the Watermark report would be completed.

Eric Hooper replied that it would be done soon, but he is expanding the scope of the study to include hydraulic model analysis of supplemental flow of 500,000 gallons per day from MWRA.

Len Sekuler asked if Eric Hooper were aware of what kinds of emergency backup arrangements other towns had made.

Eric Hooper said the Neponset River Watershed Association (NepRWA) is promoting cooperation among towns, but water withdrawal permit constraints may limit the ability of any given municipality to assist another in an emergency.

David Grasfield commented that disagreement is healthy, and helps arrive at a solution that will be in the town's best interest. He said it appeared to him that the emergency backup project is feasible and that it is mostly a question of cost at this point.

Michael Birschbach advocated putting a line item in the FY '06 budget for an emergency backup connection.

Eric Hooper said he did not want to be locked in, but he would look into including funds for an emergency backup connection in the FY '06 budget.

Financial Review

Chuck Goodman asked about items budgeted but not expended. He questioned the practice of earmarking large sums appropriated in prior years but still unspent. He referred to \$443,000 comprised of a variety of encumbered sums dating back several years.

Eric Hooper said Chuck Goodman had tipped his hand with respect to the upcoming FinCom review of the Water Department budget, and that he would prepare accordingly.

Chuck Goodman commented that all departments are treated equally by the FinCom.

4. Report of the Water Conservation Subcommittee

Paul Lauenstein recalled that in recommending the expenditure of \$50,000 for water conservation in FY '05, it failed to provide Eric Hooper with specifics on how the money should be spent, which made it difficult for Eric Hooper to justify this budget item to the Finance Committee. This year the water conservation subcommittee prepared an itemized budget for water conservation in FY '06. This budget proposes \$68,000 for water conservation: \$33,000 in cash expenses and \$35,000 in water bill credits for rebates on water efficient fixtures and appliances. In addition, Paul Lauenstein prepared a cost-justification for water conservation. These two documents were distributed to all present at the meeting.

Paul Lauenstein explained that the water conservation program included the following components:

- Public relations
 - Water bill inserts
 - Newsletter
 - Extra page on water conservation in the Consumer Confidence Report
 - Web site
- Rebate program
 - Water-efficient washing machines
 - Low-flow dual-flush flapperless toilets
- Water audits (outsourced)
 - Target heavy users
 - Provide toll-free water conservation hotline
- Showerhead and faucet aerator giveaway
 - Free with water audit

- Sold at cost without water audit

- Education

- Project WET training for teachers

Paul Lauenstein added that pricing would have to be adjusted to compensate for Water Department revenue losses attributable to water conservation. He said summer rates should be increased in recognition of the fact that the cost of providing sufficient water to the town is driven by peak summer demand. He also said pricing changes should shift the burden of paying for Sharon's water away from light users and toward heavy users to provide them with incentive to find ways to reduce their water usage.

Michael Birschbach suggested that adding water conservation to the town web site might cost less than a separate water conservation web site produced by an outside vendor.

Jack Sulik questioned whether the 100 water audits budgeted could be completed in a year.

Mike Sherman said an effective water conservation program requires continuity and consistency of the message. He said 40% of free showerheads never get installed.

David Grasfield suggested that the water audit program could be applied to schools and municipal buildings to save water and set an example.

Lealdon Langley suggested contacting the Office of Technical Assistance to get help with reducing water use in public buildings.

Eric Hooper asked if the purpose of water conservation is environmental protection, how would the subcommittee propose to measure the benefits of a water conservation program to the environment.

Lealdon Langley replied that environmental effects are not appropriate performance criteria for a water conservation program, adding that said every gallon conserved benefits the environment. He also pointed out that conserving water can delay or eliminate the need for costly new wells or spending large sums to import water. He added that Sharon could use a water conservation program as a regulatory offset since it has no sewer leaks to repair. He said measures such as gallons saved, audits conducted, and rebates awarded are practical and appropriate measures of the effectiveness of a water conservation program.

Greg Meister asked Eric Hooper why he questioned the need for water conservation.

Eric Hooper replied that he felt that if the town spends money on water conservation to benefit the environment, then there should be some way to measure the benefits of the program to the environment.

Washing machine rebate policy

Paul Lauenstein raised the issue of the washing machine rebate program, saying that the Energy Star list being used by the Water Department to award rebates include washing machines ranging from under 15 gallons per load to over 40 gallons per load. He also criticized Water Department's practice of making residents go to the DPW office and pay for copies of the rebate list in order to find out which models qualify, despite the fact that the list is readily available on the internet.

Paul Lauenstein then made the following two motions:

MOTION 1

The WMAC endorses the attached FY '06 water conservation budget of \$33,000 in cash outlays for public relations, water audits, telephone hotline, low-flow showerheads, and education, and \$35,000 in water bill credits for rebates on water-efficient washing machines and low-flow toilets. The WMAC recommends that the Selectmen instruct the Water Department to incorporate this water conservation budget into their FY '06 Proposed Schedule of Water Department Capital Projects.

MOTION 2

The WMAC recommends that the Selectmen instruct the Water Department to revise the rebate policy for water-efficient washing machines. The current policy of offering rebates for all washing machines on the Energy Star list should be restricted to include only models on the Energy Star list satisfying the following criteria:

1. Less than 15 gallons per load
2. At least 3 cubic feet capacity

Both motions passed unanimously.

Meeting with Concord water conservation agent

Paul Lauenstein reported on a meeting he had with the water conservation agent for the Town of Concord to find out more about their water conservation program. He showed the committee the Consumer Confidence Report distributed by the Town of Concord, which includes a special insert explaining the need for water conservation and offering tips on conserving water. He also showed the committee Concord's water conservation newsletter, and Concord's fact sheet on lawn irrigation systems. He reported that Concord's overall water consumption has dropped by approximately 7%, and peak summertime consumption has dropped over 20% as a result of water conservation efforts.

Meeting with Energy New England

Paul Lauenstein also reported on a meeting he had with Energy New England (ENE) regarding their water audit program. ENE is located in Foxboro and offers residential water audits to towns for \$110 per audit, which includes free installation of low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators. ENE's residential water audits include water conservation strategies for lawn irrigation systems. ENE also offers commercial and municipal water audits. A number of towns such as Concord, Acton and Reading have used ENE's water audit services.

5. Other Business – Emergency Backup

Cliff Towner offered a view of the meeting with Larry Barrett of the Stoughton DPW that was at odds with Eric Hooper's previous presentation to the WMAC. Cliff Towner said that Eric Hooper's presentation of MWRA Policy # OP. 05 left the impression that these procedures would impede Sharon from obtaining water quickly in an emergency. He said Larry Barrett made it clear in the meeting that in an emergency the water would be provided as rapidly as necessary to protect public safety and prevent

interruption of Sharon's water supply. Administrative aspects such as billing would be sorted out after the emergency had been dealt with.

Cliff Towner said Larry Barrett spent the first 15 minutes of the meeting describing Stoughton's experience with joining the MWRA system to obtain supplementary water. Stoughton was forced to join MWRA because they were using their emergency connection on a regular basis for supplementary water. Cliff Towner said that after Larry Barrett realized that Sharon was only interested in an emergency connection, he (Larry Barrett) described his anguish over an incident when fire hoses ran out of water at a church fire in Stoughton. Cliff Towner said that Larry Barrett emphasized the importance of avoiding that kind of scenario. Cliff Towner said that Larry Barrett was very supportive of an emergency hookup for Sharon, and asserted that the water supply community always responds rapidly in cases of genuine public emergency.

Eric Hooper responded that the water Sharon would take via an emergency hookup to Stoughton would effectively be MWRA water since Stoughton's wells are not sufficient to supply all of Stoughton's needs. Therefore, MWRA policies would govern how quickly Sharon could access water in an emergency, and how much it would cost.

Michael Birschbach reiterated that the important thing is to provide adequate emergency backup for Sharon's water supply.

Jack Sulik said he opposed the emergency connection to Stoughton when it was estimated to cost \$250,000 because the town already has sufficient emergency backup. Referring to Larry Barrett's highball estimate of \$500,000, Jack Sulik said the more it costs, the more he is opposed to an emergency hookup to Stoughton.

Richard Mandell said the Water Department should take the next step and hire a consultant to determine the optimum way to build an emergency hookup to Stoughton's water system, and provide an accurate cost estimate.

6. Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, March 10, 2005 at 7:30 PM