

2020 Town Report

Report of the **Board of Water/Wastewater Commissioners and Water Department**

The Harwich Board of Water/Wastewater Commissioners and Water Department respectfully submit our Annual Report to the Honorable Board of Selectmen and to the citizens of the Town of Harwich for the year of 2020.

COVID-19

Department operations flowed continuously, while precautions were adopted to include mask-wearing, social distancing and sanitizing protocols due to the pandemic. As with most Town facilities, our office was closed to the public for many months but then moved to appointments only. Whether we were on premises or working remotely, we did not miss a beat! We are fortunate to have technology in place that allowed us to change gears quickly and effectively.

Our rate payers and their ability to pay the first water bill issued during the pandemic was on our minds. In an effort to help, the Board of Water/Wastewater Commissioners extended the due date for the June 2020 water bills. The Water Department regularly offers payment plans in the event a customer is unable to pay their bill. There are also many services available to help those in need and we make it a practice to provide a list of these services when we feel it can help a customer in need.

2020 Public Water Systems Awards

In December of 2020, the Harwich Water Department was recognized by the Senate, House of Representatives, and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection for Outstanding Performance and Achievement in the Medium and Large Community Water System Category in 2020.

Operations

The Water Department offers a wide variety of services from seasonal water turn on/off, new and renewal water service installation, utility mark outs, final readings for property transfers, backflow inspection and much more. Below is a summary of 1,760 services performed in 2020:

2020 Service Activity			
Change Meter	167	Repair/Replace Valve	12
Damaged Box/Gate	2	Service Install/Renew	28
Final Read	289	Service Call/Repair	44
Frozen Meter/Service	0	Site Visit	83
Hydrant Meter Use	15	Troubleshoot	8
Install Meter	39	Turn Off (Seasonal)	279
Leak Investigation	51	Turn Off Service	9

2020 Town Report

Report of the **Board of Water/Wastewater Commissioners and Water Department**

Mark Out Property	396	Turn On (Seasonal)	310
Remove Meter	10	Turn On Service	18

Projects & Accomplishments

2020 was an interesting year, to say the least, but Water Department projects still continued as planned. Please find some of the more notable projects & accomplishments below:

- Water Service Replacement Project along the National Grid Project Route began in 2019 and continued into 2020. Eighty-seven old metal water services along the project route are being replaced with HDPE pipe from the water main to the curb stop. The project route includes Great Western, Queen Anne, Route 39, Main Street, Depot Street and Depot Road.
- Replaced 167 meters in 2020 as part of our ongoing meter replacement program. This was down from 402 meters in 2019 due to the pandemic and ensuring safety of our staff.
- Water Main Replacement on Harden Lane; 600 feet of 2”
- New PFAS regulations resulted in additional sampling; no compounds were detected
- Pleasant Lake Tank Project to increase size of fill pipe began toward the end of 2020 and will continue into 2021

Water Rates and Financial Overview

The Department and our rate payers successfully transitioned to year two (2) of quarterly billing. The move to quarterly billing restructured tiers but did not include a rate increase. In fact, the rates have not increased since March 2015.

In 2020, the Department analyzed anticipated revenues from water rates, assessed operational expenses and capital needs. The undertaking resulted in the necessity for a water rate increase to take place in 2021. Presentation of rate increase, legal notice of proposed increase and a public hearing are all requirements that will be presented in 2021.

The stance of the Board of Water/Wastewater Commissioners, with support of the Department, is to keep rates fair and equitable. Water rate increases become necessary when revenues are unable to keep up with inflation, increases to operational and maintenance expenses and/or when a new capital project must be funded. To see what's on the horizon for capital projects for the next seven (7) years, please refer to the Capital Planning section in our report.

2020 Town Report

Report of the
**Board of Water/Wastewater
Commissioners and Water Department**

In addition to water rates and services, the Department continues to look for other revenue sources as well as ways to run more efficiently and economically.

FY20 Financial Summary

Expenses

Salary and Wages	1,275,464
Supplies, Services & Maintenance/Repair	1,057,550
OPEB Contribution	50,000
Debt	739,688
Indirect Expenses; Insurance & Employee Benefits	<u>702,018</u>
Total Expenses	3,824,721

Revenues

Water Rates & Recurring Services	3,672,392
Service Repairs & Site Visits	71,387
Service Tight Protection Plan	76,900
Solar Revenue	104,081
Backflow Inspection	8,579
Water Service Installation and Renewals	152,417
Late Fees, Interest, Lien Collection & Penalties	53,459
Wireless Communications Lease	126,373
Investment Revenue	<u>25,086</u>
Total Revenues	4,290,675

Articles (ATM19 for FY20)

ATM 19 #18 2019 Ford 550 Truck	76,551
ATM 19 #15 John Deere Excavator	36,953

Water Enterprise Fund Balance Summary

FY20 Fund Balance	1,429,733
FY20 Abatements & Adjustments	10,852

Capital Planning

The Board of Water/Wastewater Commissioners and Department staff continues to evaluate the aging infrastructure, water consumption forecasts, revenue projections, and the current debt

2020 Town Report

Report of the **Board of Water/Wastewater Commissioners and Water Department**

schedule to identify and plan for the future capital needs of the Department. Additionally, due to the pandemic, the Department moved a project article request from FY 2021 to FY 2022.

7-Year Capital Plan:

- Fiscal Year 2022
 - New Source Exploration planning and engineering (postponed from FY21)
 - Route 28 Water main replacement design (Lower County to Herring River; may expand to Dennis Town Line to Herring River pending Mass DOT project coordination)
 - Station 8 Generator replacement
- Fiscal Year 2023
 - Route 28 Water main construction
 - New Well Construction
 - (2) Fleet/Truck replacement
- Fiscal Year 2024
 - Pavement Management - Well access roads
- Fiscal Year 2025
 - Paint Pleasant Lake Tank
 - (1) Fleet/Truck replacement
- Fiscal Year 2026
 - Water Main Upgrades - Pipe Discontinuity
- Fiscal Year 2027 – No Project(s)
- Fiscal Year 2028
 - Relocate Water Department Headquarters (Queen Anne Rd.)

System Maintenance

The Department experienced a number of water main breaks in 2020. Regular distribution maintenance helps minimize the impact to residents and businesses during repairs. For this reason, the Department continues its standard maintenance/monitoring programs, which include:

- **Hydrant Maintenance-** Evaluate hydrant coatings & re-paint where necessary to prevent corrosion & remove and lubricate hydrant cups to maintain ease of access in the event the hydrant needs to be utilized for fire suppression
- **Valve Maintenance-** Vacuum valve boxes to guarantee access to the valves operating nut & exercise the valve by opening and closing to verify it is working order

2020 Town Report

Report of the **Board of Water/Wastewater Commissioners and Water Department**

- **Well & Pumps-** Take manual drawdown readings to check the wells specific capacity, which is used to check the wells current capacity to historical data. This information is used to determine if the well is in need of cleaning & redevelopment, or to verify the pump is functioning in the capacity it was designed
- **Water Storage Tanks-** In addition to the daily site visits, monthly tank inspection reports are completed to document a more thorough evaluation of tank conditions. These monthly reports combined with our contracted annual inspection are used to predict future maintenance needs
- **Water Meter Replacement-** The Department upgrades & replaces all customer meters 15 years or older

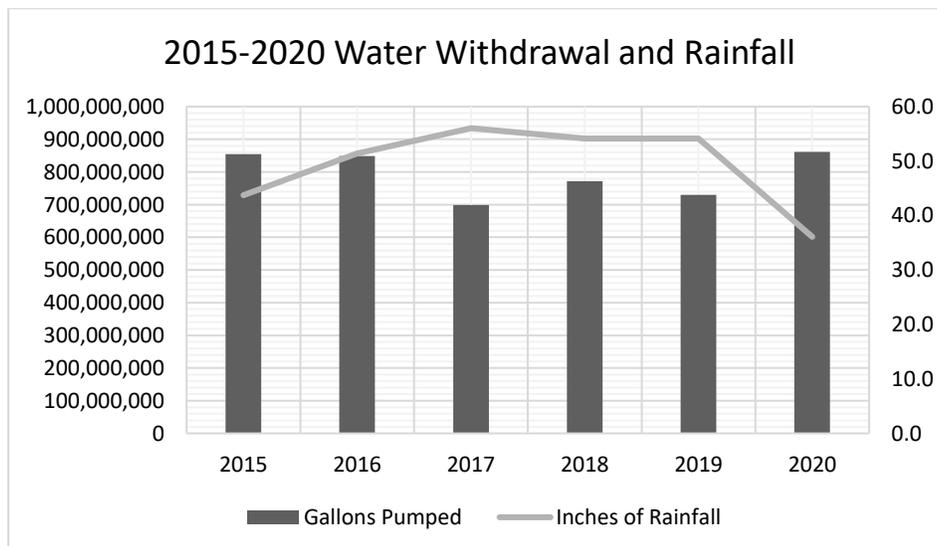
Water System

The original water system was established in 1936. Major expansion projects were undertaken in the 1950s, late 1960s and again in the late 1970s, these expansions made the water distribution system what it is today.

The Water Department operation consists of 14 pump stations, approximately 400 acres of well fields/watershed protection areas, 5 corrosion control facilities, 2 elevated and 1 ground-level water storage tanks and 2 Greensand Water Treatment facilities which provide service to 10,033 metered accounts, 130 fire sprinkler accounts and 1,382 fire hydrants for fire protection.

Water Withdrawal

The Water Department pumped 861,316,806 million gallons of water from our wellfields during 2020. Most of the water pumped was withdrawn from Chatham Road and Depot Road wells.



2020 Town Report

Report of the **Board of Water/Wastewater Commissioners and Water Department**

Water Quality

The Harwich Water Department is constantly striving to provide its consumers with the best water possible. The water provided to the residents of Harwich is tested numerous times a month for a variety of contaminants. Harwich Water Department continues to provide water that meets or exceeds State and Federal standards. The results of this testing are located within the Annual Water Quality Report on the Department website. Iron and Manganese levels in the untreated source water have, in the past, caused unfavorable aesthetic qualities in the water. Sources containing these impurities were infrequently pumped. Since the addition of the Bruce Cahoon Greensand Water Treatment Facility and North Westgate Treatment Facility, these minerals are no longer affecting the water quality.

Nitrogen and Phosphorus in fertilizer are the greatest concern to water quality. Generally speaking, lawns need less fertilizer than advertised and there are multitudes of fertilizing alternatives available today. While water quality in Harwich is excellent, let's do our best to keep it that way and protect our precious resource.

Service Tight Protection Plan

As property owner, you are responsible for the repair and maintenance of your water service, and until a problem occurs, you could incur thousands of dollars in repair costs. Harwich Water offers a Service Tight Protection Plan which covers the costs of repairs to your service in the event of a sudden leak. The cost is \$17 per quarter for an annual fee of \$68. You can enroll and learn more by visiting harwichwater.com or by calling the department for a brochure.

Drought Management and Conservation

The Water Department has drought management signs throughout the Harwich Community. During peak season please refer to the signs around town as well as notices on our website for drought notification. We continue to encourage our customers to be diligent in conserving water even if the supply is abundant.

It is important to keep in mind that the average person uses 80-100 gallons of water per day on the following activities:

Bathing & Hygiene	15 gallons per day	Kitchen	7 gallons per day
Housekeeping	1 gallon per day	Laundry	8 gallons per day
Irrigation/Watering	70 gallons per day	Toilet	19 gallons per day

2020 Town Report

Report of the **Board of Water/Wastewater Commissioners and Water Department**

To review your metered water bill, divide your water usage by the number of days in the billing period (approximately 90 days) and by the number of residents of your household to determine your average.

High Consumption and Irrigation Systems

The majority of our high consumption calls come in after the October bill is received. When we receive these calls, the irrigation system usually has been shut down for the season and the seasonal home is vacant. We cannot stress enough the importance of becoming familiar with your irrigation systems to anticipate this expense. You may need the help of your irrigation company to determine the number of zones, number of heads in each zone, frequency of zones running, and how much water is used for a full cycle and/or each day, each week, each month, etc. Consumption should be monitored on a regular basis by checking your water meter reading so if an issue exists it can be corrected immediately. All water that passes through the meter is the responsibility of the homeowner, and who wants to pay for water that is lost?

We would also like to remind our customers who do have an irrigation system that a testable backflow device must be installed on the line that feeds your irrigation system. This device is put in place to protect containments from being pulled back into the public water supply. More importantly, it is a waste of our precious water resource.

Civic Ready to Replace Voice Broadcast System

Civic Ready is a mass communication service available to Town citizens to receive emergency and routine notifications. Civic Ready allows you to manage your own notifications and how you wish to receive them, whether by voice, text, and/or email. Civic Ready has replaced the Town Voice Broadcast System and went live on November 18, 2019. To Sign Up for Civic Ready, please visit www.harwich-ma.gov/home/pages/notifications.

As the Water Department transitions over to CivicReady we will continue to use the Voice Broadcast System. We encourage you to sign up on CivicReady at your earliest convenience and be sure to select Water Department Notification. Moving forward it will be the responsibility of the resident/water customer to keep contact information current in CivicReady.

Board of Water and Wastewater

As the Department transitions to Water/Wastewater, and in following suit with the Town of Harwich Charter, our (3) Water Commissioners were sworn in as Water/Wastewater Commissioners in 2020. The 2021 election will bring an additional two (2) members onto the Board of Water/Wastewater Commission, making it a 5-member board.

2020 Town Report

Report of the
**Board of Water/Wastewater
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Conclusion

As we begin 2020, the Board of Water/Wastewater Commissioners would like to thank the dedicated staff and further extend our appreciation to all Town Departments, Town Committees, Boards and Residents for their continued support.

Sincerely,

Board of Water/Wastewater Commissioners

Gary Carreiro, Chairman

Judith Underwood, Vice Chairman

Allin Thompson, Clerk