



ABINGTON & ROCKLAND JOINT WATER WORKS

366 CENTRE AVENUE
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ABINGTON COMMISSIONERS

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ROCKLAND COMMISSIONERS

DEBORAH L. DOONER
CHAIRMAN

ROBERT CORVI JR.

DAVID SAUCIER

ABINGTON & ROCKLAND JOINT BOARD OF WATER COMMISSION MEETING:

The Abington & Rockland Joint Board of Water Commission held a meeting on April 10, 2024, at 3:37 PM at the Abington & Rockland Joint Water Works Office, 366 Centre Ave, Rockland, MA. Present were the following Commissioners:

Deborah L Dooner, Chairman
John S. Tassinari Jr., Secretary
Robert Corvi
David Saucier
Thomas J. Dion III
Paul Mollica

Also:
Kristel Cameron, Superintendent
Tom Royal, Assistant Superintendent
JoAnne Hall, Executive Administrator
Brian Bezanson, Distribution Supervisor

Mr. Corvi motioned to open the meeting at 3:37 PM. Mr. Saucier seconded the motion, and it was unanimously accepted.

Mr. Dion motioned to accept the minutes from the February 7, 2024, meeting. Mr. Tassinari seconded the motion, and it was unanimously accepted.

The Board set the next meeting date for May 14, 2024, at 3:30 PM. Mr. Corvi motioned to accept the May 14, 2024, meeting date. Mr. Saucier second the motion and it was unanimously accepted.

The Board recognized Paul Spinney regarding a high bill dispute. Mr. Spinney stated his August bill was very high. He stated he had no leaks and cannot understand why the bill was so high. Mr. Bezanson stated the high usage appeared to be off and on for that high billing. Mr. Mollica voted to abate the high billing. Mr. Dion seconded the motion. The vote was two in favor and four opposed to the motion. Mr. Corvi motioned to table the matter until the next board meeting. Mr. Bezanson stated they would test the meter. Mr. Saucier second the motion and it was voted five in favor. Mr. Mollica opposed the motion and voted no.

Mr. Mollica motion to accept the Abington articles as presented by Mrs. Cameron. Mr. Saucier seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

The Board discussed the new proposed performance bond procedure. Mr. Corvi motioned to table the matter until the next Board meeting. Mr. Tassinari seconded the motion, and it was unanimously accepted.

The Board reviewed the March 2024 Financial Report. Mr. Corvi motioned to accept the financial report and thanked Mrs. Cameron, Mr. Royal and Mrs. Hall. Mr. Saucier seconded the motion, and it was unanimously accepted.

Mr. Dion read the following statement:

4/10/24 Response to Remarks Made at the Feb 7th Meeting TJD

The following remarks are mine and mine alone. Mr. Mollica's name is mentioned in the text but only in the context that his name was mentioned in the Feb 7th meeting minutes. He has not seen or read my remarks.

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There is an old saying, "Everyone is entitled to their own opinions, but they are not entitled to their own facts."

For our Feb 7 meeting, Mrs. Dooner added as the last item on the Joint Water Works agenda an entry labeled "Interaction between Commissioners and Superintendent". Before the meeting, I asked her what the item was about and was told, "You'll find out."

Around 5:45pm Mrs. Dooner started the last agenda item by reading a prepared statement she wrote. This turned out to be an opportunity for her to go on a rant to personally attack Mr. Dion and Mr. Mollica that was very heavy on her opinion and very light on facts. Mrs. Dooner's purpose, in my opinion, was to make false charges or misrepresentations aimed to defame and damage Mr. Dion and Mr. Mollica's reputation and character.

Mrs. Dooner started out her prepared remarks by accusing Mr. Dion and Mr. Mollica of "... trying to micro-manage this department. Since day one these members (Mr. Dion and Mr. Mollica) have continually questioned the operation of this department, especially in the area of the budget..."

First of all, **micromanagement** is a negative term that refers to a management style that reflects a pattern of behavior marked by excessive supervision and control of employees, work, and processes. To be clear, I have never attempted to direct, control, or supervise any ARJWW manager, employee, work, or processes.

I have advocated and lobbied for items that, in my opinion, would improve our transparency with the citizens of Abington and Rockland. Examples include:

- a new approach to water restriction signs;
- increasing awareness of the senior discount program;
- upgrading our website and updating data frequency;
- regular & timely posting of water quality reports;
- revamped quarterly PFAS post card;
- and installing new boardroom technology.

4/10/24 Response to Remarks Made at the Feb 7th Meeting TJD

I do not believe asking a lot of questions, requesting information, and discussing policies or changes to them rise to the level of micromanagement.

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Mrs. Dooner also claimed during her prepared remarks that Mr. Dion & Mr. Mollica continually questioned the operation of this department, especially in the area of the budget. While Mrs. Dooner may believe this to be true, a look at the record indicates this is false.

Between May 2023 and Nov 2023, we had 7 board meetings where FY2024 Financial reports were presented and discussed by the Superintendent, Mrs. Cameron. The board spent minimal time on these financial reports and there were very few questions.

On Dec 4th, the Superintendent laid out the FY2025 budget. The Superintendent did a very good job logically ~~and methodically~~ going through her 5 budget slides. In this meeting, the board spent extra time reviewing the budget and there were a few more questions than normal. The bottom line was the entire board reviewed the Superintendent's numbers without change and nobody exhibited any contentious behavior.

On Feb 7th, the Superintendent reviewed the 15 or so Water Department Articles with the board. Again, the Superintendent did a good job reviewing each article and answering questions or clarifications requested by the board. There was nothing debatable or contentious about this review. The bottom line was the entire board accepted all the Superintendent's Article recommendations.

I must challenge Mrs. Dooner's claim that Mr. Dion & Mr. Mollica continually questioned the department's budget operation.

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At the conclusion of the Article discussion at the Feb 7th meeting, I lobbied the Board to formally vote to place the Superintendent's requested FY2025 budget and articles on the Abington (and Rockland) Town Meeting Warrant.

I believe that good government practice dictates that a publicly elected board should vote to approve any major expenditure being put before the public body. This should have been a simple formality since the board had reviewed the Superintendent's FY2025 budget without change at the Dec 4th meeting and just accepted the Superintendent's Articles.

4/10/24 Response to Remarks Made at the Feb 7th Meeting TJD

Instead, this request became contentious between board members, the Superintendent and me. It resulted in a 15-minute argument that ultimately ended with the majority of the Board deciding that a vote was not necessary.

While I don't agree with Mrs. Dooner's kerfuffle at the Feb 7th meeting, I do agree with her when she says that with over 75 years of experience between our Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, and Administrative Assistant, that they know how to do their job.

I have never had any major concerns with their operational management of our public water system given each manager's expertise and experience.

However, I do not believe the ARJWW culture is receptive to change. The mantra seems to be that "we have done things this way forever; we don't need to change anything." I have always believed that my job as an elected official on any town board is to ask questions, do my homework, and work with the other members to represent the townspeople in the best way possible.

Franky,
I don't believe this board wants to upset the status quo that existed before Mr. Mollica & I joined the ranks.

Mr. Mollica read the following statement:

Date 4/10/2024

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T. Del Dooner, Chairperson
Jol TASSINARI, Jr, Secretary
KRISTEL CAMERON, Superintendent

From Paul Mollica

RE Response to Minutes from the Feb 7TH, 2024 meeting

I AM ^{FORMALLY} REQUESTING that my response BE
included in the Minutes of BOTH of: (April 10, 2024 meeting)
1) Abington Board of Water Commissioners meeting
2) ARTWE ^{JOINT} meeting

Over the course of my 50 year Professional
Career I have served on various Boards for:

- Whittier Street Health
- South Shore YMCA
- Archbishop Williams High School
- Abington CPA
- Abington Park & Rec
- Thorney Lea Golf Club
- Boston Conservatory of Music
- Carney Hospital

I have served as Board Member, Treasurer,
Head of Finance Committees and Head of Human
Resources. I served with other Board Members

FROM ALL VARIOUS types of Companies^{and} Non Profits who all had great backgrounds / insights that they shared with the various entities. Those entities benefited

BOTH SHORT TERM and long term. in terms of best practices for day to day operations and long term planning.

What all these entities share with the ARTWE is that they all did a relatively good job in carrying out the day to day activities of their organization.

The difference between all of the entities I mentioned with the ARTWE is that all of those entities had Board Members from all professional walks of life with all different points of view based on how those organizations work, all the lessons that they learned over the years, all the problems / opportunities they dealt with, what recommendations worked and what didn't, their ability to plan for the short term and long term needs of the organization and used all of that experience to help the organization that they served as a Board Member, Trustee, Commissioner etc. Please note this type of interaction is not an example of micro managing.

In my EXPERIENCE all of the entities that I served on and been involved with benefited from my experience and background as a commercial Loan officer, Team leader, Division Head and Regional President at Bank of America and Webster.

Except the ARTWE.

I think that the three (3) biggest mistakes that exist in Society today include:

- 1) People thinking that Trump was the last election after 62 challenges/recalls that found no merit
- 2) Banning books from Schools/Libraries
- 3) Refusing to discuss any topic on any issue or in other words shutting off discussion.

With all that said I am pleased that this April meeting will be my last. In my final analysis I have made zero contribution to the ARTWE unlike all of the 8 other organizations that I served on. and was thrilled to have my involvement. And disappointed when I retired/resigned from them same.

Thank you for hearing me out. and good luck to everyone.

Mr. Mollica asked about the AIA schedule of values. Mrs. Cameron stated the engineers take care of that.

Mrs. Cameron gave a status update on the website and stated she was not happy with it.

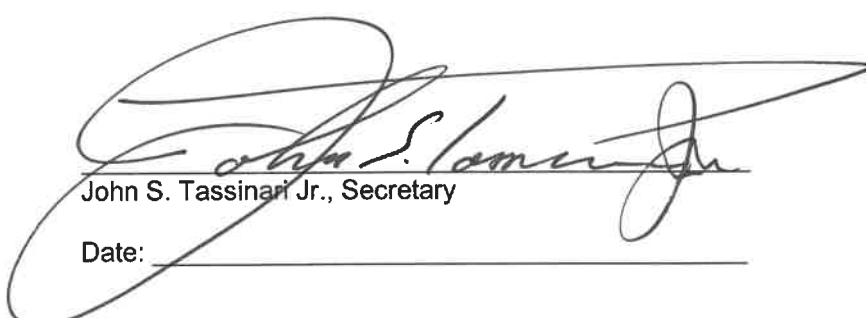
Mr. Mollica made a motion that the ability of the chair to shut off discussion requires a 75% approval of the other board members or five commissioners. After a discussion, Mr. Mollica withdrew his motion.

Mr. Tassinari thanked Mr. Dion and Mr. Mollica for their time on the Board and their service to the Town of Abington.

Mrs. Cameron presented the Superintendents Report. She informed the Board of the following.

- At the Abington Town Meeting, on April 1, 2024, our articles and budget were voted on and accepted.
- An update for Abington's website and social media. This will also go out in Rockland for the newsletter, etc.
- ASR was completed at the beginning of the month and submitted to the DEP.
- Continued to change out meters for more accurate billing and revenue.
- Water main breaks
- A flood at the office, insurance company handling the claim.
- Sanitary survey rescheduled.
- Lead service line replacement draft was submitted 3/29/24.
- The maintenance mechanic resigned.

Mr. Corvi motioned to adjourn at 5:01 P.M. Mr. Saucier seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.



John S. Tassinari Jr., Secretary

Date: _____