

**Safe Water Advisory Group (SWAG) A City Council Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 7, 2023 City Hall Conference Room A and via Zoom**

Attending in person: Brian Goetz, co-chair; Councilor Vince Lombardi, Andrea Amico, co-chair, Rep. David Meuse, Elizabeth Barrett, Rosalie Lopresto, Water Commissioner/Rye, Dr. Abby Bline, Silent Spring/Northeastern University. Via Zoom: Kim McNamara, Rich DiPentima. Absent: Laurel Schaidler, Councilor Rich Blalock, Katrie Hillman, Bill McQuillen

Co-chair Andrea Amico welcomed SWAG members to the first meeting of 2023.

Full SWAG meeting recording: <https://youtu.be/OHRTLfHZF8A>

Meeting presentation slides: [SWAG Meeting Slides 6 7 23.pdf \(cityofportsmouth.com\)](#)

1. Water Supply Update & Master Plan – Brian Goetz

Full presentation: [Portsmouth Water – 2021 Year in Review \(cityofportsmouth.com\)](#)

Q. If the differential between water use and demand is 0.16 does that mean we're maxed out?

A. No. The differential is lost water from leaks. Current demand is under 4 million gal/day. Our capacity from all sources can provide 8 million gal/day.

Q. Are you concerned about the proposed jet fuel facility at Pease and the impact on the water system if there were a spill?

A. The City has spoken at hearings and defined what is required of the responsible party for the fuel tanks: double-lined tanks, 24/7 monitoring and alarms, a spill response plan, etc. The City Manager is a member of the PDA Board. The City has issued no policy statement on the project.

2. Minutes for the March 7, 2023 meeting were approved.

3. Water Sampling Overview – Mason Caceres

Presentation: [Day\(s\) in the Life of a Drinking Water Quality Analyst \(cityofportsmouth.com\)](#)

Q. If someone has concerns about their water, who do they call and how is the call handled?

A. Mason is the analyst for the city drinking water systems, for example, and he answers questions and directs residents to the Water Quality Reports and OneStop data. Also will make a site visit, take a test sample and provide the lab results. Most often those questions are about the chlorine taste (required to eliminate bacteria). Sometimes the complaint is a black substance on their faucets. There is no black mold in the water system – that is deposited when water dries. Most likely manganese, which collects on faucets and can be cleaned with bleach or a vinegar/baking soda treatment.

Q. Lead testing: how are test locations selected? State approves based on age of housing stock and other data. Sampling locations given the test kit including a sample bottle, form and instructions. Water draw on cold water that has been stagnant for at least 6 hours. Hot water collects deposits from the water heater which people should not drink.

Q. Has the city considered ozone treatment rather than chlorine?

A. Ozone testing is expensive and complex to implement at multiple sites and we would still need to treat the 200 miles of pipe in the system.

Q. Supreme Court issued opinion change in groundwater protection.

A. Does not affect drinking water source protection. Refer to Conservation Commission.

4. SWAG Membership

There is one open position on the Safe Water Advisory Group. A resident was recommended. Awaiting approval by the Mayor.

5. Lead update –

A small work group of Kim McNamara, Andrea Amico, Rich DiPentima and Hope VanEpps continues meeting to discuss lead initiatives in the City. Since the March meeting the working group:

- Met with lead leaders at NH DHHS
- Presented to the Portsmouth School Board
- Authored a two-part op-ed on lead issues re: need for attention and action
- Conducted a radio interview on Seacoast Currents

Legislation: HB 342 (requiring proof of lead blood test for children to enroll in school) passed the NH House and NH Senate and is now awaiting the Governor's signature.

Portsmouth Water Testing Program: The FY24 budget, passed Jun 5, 2023 includes \$2500 for a program to offer free tap water sampling for lead.

Kim McNamara update on lead:

Received the DHHS lead map of Portsmouth from the state. A press release is prepared about it and we will be discussing when this should go out. (Very soon - we just want to be on the same page as the state.)

Portsmouth does not have a housing inspection program, but do have the ordinance for it. Chief Inspector Shanti Wolph is developing one and Lead will be part of that inspection and certificate of compliance (other cities do this already).

Kim has signed a confidentiality agreement with NH DHHS to receive notification of elevated levels in Portsmouth children. This will allow us to pinpoint properties under orders, or needing inspection for a faster response than a routine inspection program.

Q. School Board considered adding a lead test question to the K entry form, but that question is already asked. Pediatricians are reporting but <50% of children are being tested.

Comment: Not all special ed problems result from lead – also drug issues in state.

Q. ID the 40 children? Locations shown on map? Based on housing stock age.

A. Individual children not identified. Neighborhoods not addresses.

Anything we can do to protect children <6.

Q. Where are children tested?

A. Not the issue.

Q. WIC program? Pediatrician?

A. Lab is required to report to State.

6. EPA PFAS regulation update – Dr. Abigail Bline, Silent Spring Institute (with input from Dr. Laurel Shader)

Full presentation: [Hyannis CAB meeting \(cityofportsmouth.com\)](https://www.cityofportsmouth.com)

Highlights:

Changes in PFAS guidelines and standards over



Year	PFOA	PFOS
2009	400 ng/L	200 ng/L
2016	70 ng/L (combined)	
2020*	12 ng/L*	15 ng/L*
2022	0.004 ng/L	0.02 ng/L
2023 (proposed)	4 ng/L	4 ng/L

*NH maximum contaminant level (MCL)
Note: ng/L = parts per trillion (ppt)

Note: 2022 numbers refer to guidelines, not standards.

Proposed EPA MCLs compared to state levels



	PFOA	PFOS	PFNA	PFHxS	PFHpA	PFDA	Sum PFAS	PFBA	PFHxA	PFES	GenX (PFPO-DA)
EPA (proposed)	4	4	10*	9*						2,000*	10*
CA	10	40									
CT	70	70	70	70	70		70 (5)				
MA	20	20	20	20	20	20	20 (8)			2,000	
ME	20	20	20	20	20	20	20 (8)				
MI	8	16	6	51					400,000	420	370
MN	35	15		47				7,000		2,000	
NH	12	15	11	18							
NJ	14	13	13								
NY	10	10									
NC											140
OH	70	70	21	140			70 (5)			140,000	700
PA	18	14									
VT	20	20	20	20	20		20 (5)				
WA	10	15	9	45						1,300	

A note on guidelines versus standards



Guidelines

- ✓ Examples:
 - ✓ Health advisory level (HAL)
 - ✓ Maximum contaminant level goals (MCLGs)
- ✓ Based only on health effects data
- ✓ Does not specify routine monitoring
- ✓ Not enforceable

Standards

- ✓ Example:
 - ✓ Maximum contaminant level (MCL)
- ✓ Also consider feasibility, costs vs benefits
- ✓ Requires routine monitoring by public water supplies
- ✓ Enforceable

EPA 2023 proposed levels for PFOA & PFOS



Compound	Proposed MCLG	Proposed MCL (enforceable levels)
PFOA	Zero	4.0 parts per trillion (also expressed as ng/L)
PFOS	Zero	4.0 ppt

- Based on health alone, EPA's conclusion was that PFOA & PFOS standards should be zero (maximum contaminant level goal, or MCLG)
- Based on minimum reporting levels labs can achieve, EPA concluded PFOA & PFOS maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) couldn't be less than 4 ng/L
 - MCL (standard) considers health *and* feasibility

A hazard index analogy



No individual PFAS exceeds its own standard...

...but together they exceed the upper limit

Developed by Dr. Laurel Schaidler, Silent Spring Institute

Q. Is it accurate to say that 80% of PFAS contamination is found elsewhere than in drinking water?

A. Level depends on location.

Q. Are pediatricians testing for PFAS?

A. No. Most do not know how to test or interpret though the National Academy of Science has recommended that those who were highly exposed eg Merrimack and Pease should be tested.

Comment: Legislature discussing setting up testing through public health programs in those locations.

Q. Any results yet from Testing for Pease?

A. Individual participants have received their results. Community Aggregate Report due in June.

7. PFPrA update – Andrea Amico

Presentation: [SWAG Amico PfrA Presentation June 7, 2023.pdf \(cityofportsmouth.com\)](#)

8. Public Comment

No comments from public. Adjourned at 8:45 pm