



OFFICE OF  
THE BOARD OF

# Water & Sewer Commissioners

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## IMPROVEMENTS TO SOMERSET'S WATER QUALITY AND DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS

The Somerset Board of Water & Sewer Commissioners is pleased to announce the following: continuation of the vitally important Fire Hydrant Repair/Replacement Program, the start of construction of the Hot and Cold Lane Water Storage Tank THM Removal Project in March 2023, and the expected start of construction for Upgrades to the Reservoir Levee and Gate House Project this Summer 2023. Funding for these projects is provided mostly through grants and low interest loans with matching funds from the Somerset Water Department (SWD) as may be required by the awarding agencies. These projects will improve water quality, enhance fire safety, and increase the useful life of the reservoir. It is the continuing objective of the Commission to be proactive and to take necessary steps to address issues before they become problems.

The Board acknowledges the good work of Representative Haddad and Senator Rodrigues in helping us acquire these grants and low interest loans.

**Fire Hydrant Repair/Replacement Program** – The purpose of this program is to ensure that all 800+ fire hydrants connected to SWD's water distribution system are in top notch operating condition. All hydrants will be evaluated to determine condition and suitability for service, maintained as necessary to ensure proper operation when needed, or replaced if damaged and beyond cost effective repair. The SWD has ordered 100 new Mueller fire hydrants in anticipation of the number of hydrants that will need to be replaced. The Somerset Fire Department (SFD) has been working very closely with the SWD throughout the hydrant evaluation process. Ultimately, the SFD will be responsible for ongoing hydrant evaluation and maintenance and SWD will be responsible for hydrant repair and replacement.

**Hot and Cold Lane Water Storage Tank THM Removal Project** – Consistent compliance with THM (Trihalomethanes) removal is a goal that the SWD has been striving to achieve since the closure of the Brayton Point power plant. Our water storage reservoir, water treatment plant, and distribution system were designed with sufficient capacity to provide water to the Town as well as the two power plants: Montaup and Brayton Point. When these plants closed, most recently Brayton Point, the demand for water went down by approximately 2 million gallons per day. This underutilization of our facilities means that the treated water is not used rapidly enough. The water remains in tanks, pipelines, etc. for an extended period of time, resulting in higher levels of THM than water quality standards allow. THM are a product of the disinfection process and can be exacerbated by warm temperatures as well as contact time between the disinfectant and organic material. The Hot and Cold Lane THM removal project will include taking one of the two storage tanks on the site out of regular service, since it is not needed, and outfitting the other tank with specialized equipment designed to strip the THM from the water and exhaust it harmlessly to the atmosphere. The addition of this equipment, plus the reduction of stored water volume, will bring THM to acceptable levels on a consistent basis. The second phase of this project, currently under design, will add a new water pressure booster pumping station to the site.

This station will ensure adequate water pressure to the surrounding community as well as the ability to increase fire flow when needed. The third phase of this project calls for the cleaning and lining of the existing cast iron pipeline in County Street that runs North to Dighton. It is anticipated that approximately one to two miles of pipeline will be cleaned and lined in this phase of the work. The proposed start date will be Spring of 2024. Automatic flushing devices will be added to this pipeline. These devices will allow the pipeline to flush itself automatically to prevent the treated water from sitting for too long and forming THM. The result of this project is to consistently meet THM water quality standards year-round.

**Upgrades to the Reservoir Levee and Gate House Project** – The levee that surrounds our reservoir, which is located behind the water treatment plant, is made up of a compacted soil berm surrounding a concrete core wall. Over the years, the soil has settled, and the berm is not as high as it was when initially constructed back in 1960. This project calls for the restoration of the berm by restoring, and even increasing, its height to a greater elevation than originally designed. This elevation increase will make the levee able to resist overtopping better than the initial design. The other component to this project is the upgrading of the gate house. The gate house controls the flow of raw water from the reservoir to the water treatment plant. In the gate house there are three sluice gates positioned vertically at strategic elevations. This arrangement makes it possible to draw water from three different depths of the reservoir. Over the years, these gates have deteriorated to the point where they are difficult to operate and can no longer achieve a watertight closure. The gate house upgrade will include new sluice gates and operators to restore operating efficiency, and a new lower inlet “snorkel” to allow access to the lower depths of the reservoir.

These projects do not represent the end of the improvements needed to upgrade the SWD treatment and distribution facilities. Due to the age of our facilities, and more stringent water quality standards, capital improvements will be an ongoing necessity. The Commissioners are committed to the pursuit of grants and low interest loans to help defray the cost of future capital improvements, thereby keeping rate increases to a minimum.

The Board of Commissioners appreciates the Town’s support of our efforts to improve water supply quality and wastewater effluent standards. Please contact our office at 508-679-2731 with any questions that you may have.

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