



## NANTUCKET TOWN ASSOCIATION MEETING

February 27, 2024, at 4:00 pm

Meeting held in the Learning Lab of the Atheneum and by Zoom

### DRAFT MINUTES FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Attendance in the Atheneum: Barbara G. Cohen, Mary Anne Easley, Campbell Sutton, Anne Terry, Henry Terry, Barbara von der Groeben.

Attendance by Zoom: Barbara Bund, Doris Hanna, Mary Longacre, Gail Norton, and Bill Seay. The Zoom link was <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87455121153>.

Guest: Mark Willett, Director, Wannacomet Water Company.

Thanks to the Atheneum, Samantha Aguiar, for hosting the meeting. which was recorded and the link to the video is included here:

[https://youtu.be/fDOue\\_Xkz4o](https://youtu.be/fDOue_Xkz4o).

#### **I. Call the February 27, 2024, Nantucket Town Association Meeting to Order.**

President Henry Terry called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm.

#### **II. Approval of minutes of the Meeting of January 23, 2024.**

Henry Terry asked for approval of the minutes of the meeting of January 23, 2024; Anne Terry moved their approval, Barbara G. Cohen seconded them, and the vote to approve was unanimous.

#### **III. Treasurer's Report.**

Mary Longacre gave the Treasurer's report, which is attached. The starting balance was \$4,069.87, which was increased by dues payments of \$1060.00, and decreased by previously approved donations of \$800.00 and a fee payment of \$19.23, giving an ending balance of \$4,320.64. 38 members have paid their 2024 dues and were thanked by the Treasurer. Mary Longacre also noted that the Association's dues of \$270.00 to the Nantucket Civic League were now due. The report and approval of payment of Civic Association dues was accepted upon a motion made by Bill Seay, seconded by Anne Terry, and approved unanimously.

#### **IV. and V. Old and New Business. None**

#### **VI. Guest Speaker. Mark Willett, Director, Wannacomet Water Company. [mwillett@nantucket-ma.gov](mailto:mwillett@nantucket-ma.gov).**

After an introduction by Henry Terry, Mark Willett began by saying that he wanted to give a brief overview for 2023 and then move to plans for 2024. Last year was the largest supply ever; they pumped 738 million gallons in the year and added 135 new connections. Over the past five years they have been adding

about the same number of new customers each year. Last summer, in addition, was the hottest on record; the hotter and drier that it is, the more water is consumed, mostly for irrigation, also, though, for outdoor activities and boat washing. Among the new customers are the large apartments on Old South Road and the smaller condominiums and houses in the same development. A project to redo water supply to the sewer plant is on hold; however, three miles of water main are or will be installed west of the airport to alleviate the PFAS (Secretary's insert: per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, see the EPA article for more information: <https://www.epa.gov/pfas/pfas-explained>) contamination of residential water wells.

He noted that the low rainfall for Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard has led to planning for drought conditions. While not here and not now, if drought persists, they will implement water-use restrictions. Recent rain storms may have alleviated the problem. Currently, they are focusing on supplying safe drinking water to customers and not on replacing aging water mains. Campbell Sutton asked about potential new connections in the area around the airport and the reply was seven. She asked also about Madequecham Valley and was told that this upgrade was mostly finished. Mark Willett added that this work was costing, roughly, one million dollars per mile of water main installed, which includes roadway restoration.

Campbell Sutton asked about the partition of water use, domestic versus irrigation. Mark Willett answered that they can tell this if the user has separate water meters for each type of use. An irrigation meter avoids sewage charges for this water and, thus, saves the homeowner money. Meters are now read remotely and with programmable readers that can flag unusual water use. He talked about how useful are the new meters but that they are expensive and need a plumber to install them. He reflected also on forth-coming technology of new meters including the ability to turn water off for times when the house is vacant. State grants have been explored but, as of yet, to no avail.

He went on to say that it has been a good year. The new well is working well and there is plenty of water for Nantucket. He spoke also about the State's regulation of pumpage amounts and the penalty for exceeding their limits. While reflecting on the complexity of the water distribution system, he was asked if there is concern for saltwater incursion into Nantucket's aquifers. Yes, they do monitor this but, so far, have seen no indication of a problem. The ancient creation of Nantucket, during the last ice age, laid down a substantial reservoir of water that is now around two hundred feet below the ground surface. It is substantial and unaffected by surficial contamination above it.

Mary Longacre said that she had heard that there is a very large lens of water deeply buried under the entire east coast. Mark Willett said that this supposition has not been proven but that there is enough believe in the existence of a freshwater aquifer beneath the sea floor that research grants have been sought for deeply drilled test wells. She went on to a larger issue of water exports, either as an ingredient in exported crops or, more directly, as bottled water. Would Nantucket allow a bottler to draw water for sale in bottles? His answer began with a reflection on how pure was the glacial melt water in Nantucket's aquifer. There have been entrepreneurs who have explored the commercial opportunities in bottling Nantucket's water but, as of now, they are only hypothetical. He did note, though, that the water is owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and any commercial bottler would need to get permission from the Commonwealth and its Department of Environmental Protection. Nantucket's water department would do its best to protect water quality and quantity. Because of this question, he reflected that their principal concern is to protect the water. Keeping saltwater away is important because desalination is very expensive. Nantucket's water is so pure that there is no need for any form of treatment; water going into customer's

homes is untouched from the aquifer to the customer's tap. On the Cape, where there are many water quality issues, they can share resources from town to town; Nantucket has no such flexibility.

Campbell Sutton asked about the airport's plan to create a sight-and-sound berm with PFAS-polluted soil. In general, Mark Willett replied, anything to do with PFAS is regulated by the Department of Environmental Protection and that includes the work being done at the airport. He spoke philosophically about the need to research the impact of modern chemicals such as Teflon and to educate the public about using them. His final comment on PFAS was a personal one. He is a boat owner and will be preparing it soon for the next season; the cleaning products that he uses will need to be PFAS free and this may mean reading container labels carefully before buying one.

As he prepared to finish, a general conversation arose over the earlier discussion of the concept of selling Nantucket water as a bottled product. In general, the group hoped that this would not happen or that the cost of bottling and shipping would be prohibitive. Mark Willett added a new and important point. At their offices just off the Milestone Rotary, they have a large faucet for filling large bottles in case anybody on a private well wants to drink Nantucket water. The group thanked Mark Willett for his informative talk. It was now time to adjourn.

## **VII. Adjournment.**

A motion to adjourn was made by Anne Terry, seconded by Mary Anne Easley, and approved unanimously; the meeting adjourned at 4:36 pm.

**\*Next meeting will be on March 26, 2024. It will be hybrid with an in-person meeting in the Atheneum and a virtual one via Zoom; if one uses Zoom, the address is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87455121153>.**

Lee W. Saperstein, Secretary, [saperste@mst.edu](mailto:saperste@mst.edu).

**FEBRUARY 27, 2024, TREASURER'S REPORT**

Available Balance at last report: \$ 4,069.87 on 01/23/24

Income, Dues Received.	\$ 330.00 through Paypal
	<u>\$ 730.00 checks</u>
Total Income.	\$ 1,060.00

Expenses:	\$500.00 Donation to Nantucket Atheneum
	\$300.00 Donation to NFFRA
	<u>\$19.23 PayPal Fees</u>
Total Expenses.	\$819.23
Balance as of 02/25/24:	\$4,320.64

38 members have paid their 2024 dues so far  
2 members have paid in advance for 2025  
2023 had 54 paid memberships  
2022 had 49 paid memberships

Respectfully submitted, Mary Longacre, NTA Treasurer

