



Onondaga County Legislature

DEBORAH L. MATURO
Clerk

J. RYAN McMAHON, II
Chairman

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Deputy Clerk

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PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES – October 9, 2012

A PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE METROPOLITAN WATER BOARD TO AMEND THE CURRENTLY EFFECTIVE SCHEDULE OF RATES TO BE CHARGED FOR WATER AND WATER SERVICE PROVIDED BY THE ONONDAGA COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

IN ATTENDANCE: Legislators May, Dougherty, Meyer, Tassone, Rapp, Plochocki, Liedka, Ryan, Stanczyk, Holmquist, Kilmartin, Knapp, Shepard, Jordan, Williams, Ervin, Chairman McMahon

Chairman McMahon called the 12:55 p.m. public hearing to order at 1:19 p.m. The Clerk read the notice of public hearing, noting that it was duly published.

Holly Rosenthal, Executive Director, Metropolitan Water Board: Good Afternoon. 2012 marks the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Onondaga County Water District and the Metropolitan Water Board, and the 45th year that water has been flowing reliably from Lake Ontario to our community. In this same year, the Cuban Missile crisis was unfolding, Marilyn Monroe was found dead from a drug overdose and the film *To Kill a Mockingbird* was released—or the first James Bond movie for those of you who are more into action flicks. To give you some financial perspective, the average income was \$5,500 and tuition to Harvard was \$1,500.

It is important to understand what an audacious vision MWB was at that time and the bold, focused leadership that was required to deliver on that vision. We are fortunate to be the beneficiaries of a reliable, high capacity, low cost water supply that provides 20MG of drinking water daily to Central New York. A lot has happened in the world since then, with mind-boggling advances in technology that no one could possibly have imagined. Yet throughout most of MWB's 50 years, the system infrastructure has delivered with little attention or improvement. More recently, with the support of the County Executive and County Legislature, we have begun to address critical system needs, but years of limited maintenance and minimal investment have taken a toll and there is a great deal of work to be done. To fail to care for the system creates an unthinkable liability for one of the Community's most important assets—an asset that impacts both public health, and economic wellbeing.

Our community's water is unquestionably, the best bargain around. A half liter of bottled water costs \$0.99 at a convenience store or .25 at Wegmans while a half liter of Onondaga County water costs about 5/100th of a cent from the tap. The average household bill for water is about \$250 annually, while Onondaga County residents can pay twice as much for internet or phone

service, 3X more for cable TV and 7X more for gas and electric service. A friend of mine just returned from Virginia, where her mother is paying 3X the cost of your water and she described the water as "terrible." We take our water for granted and actually, that's just what we want because it means we're doing our job.

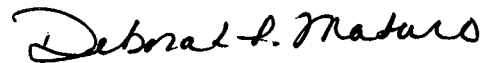
Over the last two years, MWB has worked diligently to reduce employee costs through attrition and realignment of staff, and energy costs through various efficiency measures. MWB is a remarkably lean and efficient water utility with a coconscious and capable staff. In addition to internal management and County Executive oversight, a seven Member Board oversees and advises MWB management and provides input on various matters critical to financial, operations and system integrity. Together, these members represent 128 years of service specific to Central New York's regional water systems. This distinguished and knowledgeable group has reviewed and approved the proposed 2013 Budget balancing the practical needs of the system with careful management of expenses.

In addition to the support of the Board, the MWB retail customers strongly support the 2013 Budget and believe that in the end, it's a "pay me now or pay me later" proposition.

So with the support of the Metropolitan Water Board Members and customers, we ask that you support the MWB Budget so that we can continue our good work and assure water continues to flow safely and reliably to homes and businesses throughout Central New York.

Chairman McMahon asked if anyone further wished to be heard. Hearing none, the public hearing was adjourned at 1:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



DEBORAH MATURO, Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature