

SUBSTANDARD LIVING CONDITIONS SPECIAL COMMITTEE

JANUARY 10, 2019

A meeting of the Substandard Living Conditions Special Committee was held on Thursday, January 10, 2019, at 7:03 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

Alderman Tom Lopez, Chair, presided.

Members of Committee present: Alderman-at-Large Brandon Michael Laws
Alderman Jan Schmidt
Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright, arrived after roll call

Members not in Attendance: Alderman Ernest A. Jette, Vice Chair

Also in Attendance: Don Ware, COO, Pennichuck Corporation
Bernie Rousseau, Pennichuck Vice President Business Dev.
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien
Alderman Patricia Klee

Chairman Lopez

Typically Alderman Harriott-Gathright does our clerking responsibilities. She is not able to attend at this time. Our Vice Chair, Alderman Jette, is up at the Planning Board due to a double conflict. So I have asked Alderman Jan Schmidt to cover and she graciously agreed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Demetrios Mena Good evening my name is Demetrios Mena, my address is 29 Milk Street, Nashua, not far from here. My wife and I invested in our retirement home as we are planning to retire and bought it on Milk Street. We are happy with the home structure but as soon as we moved back in May, this last May, we discovered that there was brown water coming out of the faucets. Not to be alarmed, we went ahead and got a water company to evaluate the water and they told us that there were all these minerals and stuff in it. The fact that our eyes turned red when we took showers and so on became an issue, so we have been living off buying lots and lots of bottles of spring water everywhere. We spend almost \$60.00 to \$80.00 a month buying bottles.

We were very alarmed, we didn't know what to do, we were thinking of buying a big system to filter all the water in, that would cost like \$2,500.00 but then luckily enough I was at CVS the other day and saw the newspaper, the local paper, and it said "Water Problem In Nashua, Brown Water". So here I am at this meeting, hopefully to take away some action items that will let us feel like this is going to be remedied. That's why I am here.

Chairman Lopez

Thank you for your comments. Is there anybody else who would like to make public comment

Laura Palmer Hi my name is Laura Palmer, 160 Concord Street, here in Nashua. I would just like to say I moved to that address late summer of last year. I did notice some problems, strictly with the hot water at that time, not consistently, they did slow progress over time. Once I brought them to the attention of the appropriate people within the property management they did make changes to resolve the issue. I also involved Alderman Klee who has worked extremely hard and continues to for everyone in our community and I thank you so much for that on many levels.

I am happy to report that at least in my specific unit where I live, I no longer, knock on wood, am experiencing brown water. I've since had my water tested from a private source and all the tests came back, passed perfectly. So that's all I have to say.

Chairman Lopez

Very happy to hear that.

Alderman Klee

Very happy.

Al Arena Hi, my name is Al Arena, I'm the property manager for 160 Concord Street and the last several years we have spent quite a bit of time and effort trying to improve conditions like Laura just said. We have through the years installed filtration systems in all of the buildings and we frequently change the filters. We have been working with Pennichuck and they have been very helpful with us. We installed the pumping, flushing out system before the meter with their permission and their cooperation. That has helped. We have also changed many of the plumbing fixtures in the buildings, flushing out water systems, we've changed pumps, hot water tanks and we do believe most of the issues are resolved.

The one issue we have had recently and we don't get too many complaints but once in a while and any time we hear of something we take it seriously of course. Recently there was an issue with the water pressure on the other building and Pennichuck recently came in and took out parts before our meter and the problem seems to be terrific. We are trying to do what we can and Pennichuck has been very helpful and with their cooperation, I think we have resolved most of the issues. Just wanted to put that on the record. Thank you.

Chairman Lopez

Please step up to the mic just to make sure it gets recorded.

Alderman O'Brien

The mic can adjust down.

Chairman Lopez

Oh yes please feel free to adjust it down if you want to.

Frances Michaud We have been having an issue at our home with brown water, it is in our toilet, it is in our sink. I'm not quite sure how to handle the situation.

Alderman Klee

Could you state your name and your address?

Frances Michaud, 70 Cox Street in Nashua. It is intermittent, it will come and go but right now our toilet, the water in the toilet is brown, brown and it also seems to be affecting the plumbing underneath our sink in the bathroom as well. And I just didn't know how we should handle the situation at this point.

Chairman Lopez

Well thank you for your comments, we appreciate it. Just to clarify some of the roles of the Substandard Living Conditions Committee; it was initially formed in order to address reports of

Substandard Living Conditions in the community. There was a need for Legislation at that time to kind of give the Code Enforcement and Health Departments a little more ability to intervene with landlords that are repeatedly refusing to upgrade, update or comply with their requests. So there was a legislative action when this Committee was originally conceived.

More recently what we have been trying to do is explore common issues that are experienced by both tenants and landlords and talk about what are the strategies? What are the solutions and what are the solutions? You don't have to stand, we are going to talk forever here. It's a bunch of politicians.

So that's the purpose of the Committee is not to finger point or blame or take the side of the landlord over the tenant or the tenant over the landlord or trouble shoot our own City Departments; it is to raise awareness of how all three cooperate together and what resources are available. What is often the case is if people know where to go and what steps to take, they don't get frustrated, they don't escalate and they are able to focus more on solving solutions. So that is kind of what we are all here for.

At this time, I think I'd like to start by having Pennichuck come up and maybe give a presentation on common issues with water and water treatment.

DISCUSSION

Reports of Poor Water Quality in Multi-Unit Apartment Buildings and Motels with Don Ware, COO, Pennichuck Corporation.

Don Ware, COO, Pennichuck Corporation

So it ok if I basically stay right here?

Chairman Lopez

Yes so our audio visual people should be focusing the camera on you right now, so I would just stay right there so they are not trying to track or anything.

Mr. Ware

Well again, thank you for everybody who has come tonight. What I wanted to give ...

Chairman Lopez

You should be sure to give your name also so that when they transcribe they are getting it.

Mr. Ware

My name is Don Ware and I am the Chief Operating Officer of Pennichuck Water Works and with me is Bernie Rousseau. Bernie is our Vice President of the Water Service Company but also operated our water treatment plant for how many years?

Bernie Rousseau, Vice President of Pennichuck

23.

Mr. Ware

For 23 years. So we wanted to talk about, first of all, where does colored water come from? And there are solutions, there are things that can be done.

And most importantly as we get to the end of this, we do want to hear from people and we want to work with people to help develop the solutions.

So where does colored water come from in a typical New England distribution system? There are two sources; there are sources that come from within the piping that leaves the treatment plant and goes to your houses. The piping underground is primarily a combination of iron pipe. Prior to 1937 that pipe was not lined with cement and iron in the presence of water creates rust. The main that your service is tapped off is a 16 inch main that was installed in 1881. That water main has got a build-up of that. Now that is typically, believe it or not, a very stable iron. But as flows change direction or if you have a fire or if you have a broken water main during the summer if there is high usage period, if we got out and flush and you will – and you look at my fingers, you will get a release of rust. And that rust is the source of the orange water you see.

The second source of colored water in most of New England is manganese which occurs naturally in both the ground water and surface water. It is black and when that ... you know up from 1852 up until 2007 there was a modicum of manganese that came out of the rural water, went into the distribution system, we add chlorine that would combine with that and form a little black particle. Or we would combine it with an orthophosphate and you would again form a black scale on the inside of the pipe. Just to give you an example, this is a newer cement lined pipe, you don't see any rust on the inside and never will, but there is some black on the inside of that. That is that manganese that will over time, in this case, this main went in 1942, build-up over time. Now the good news is today the way we treat the water, that doesn't go in, but there is still a lot of this in the system when there is a sudden change in flows in the system it can release colored water. Within people's own homes copper pipe will get lined with the manganese. Some of the older homes still have actual internal piping that is galvanized; it is steel and just like the cast iron, you get a build-up of rust.

Those are potential sources of colored water and when back 23 years ago when I came to work at the company there were about 106 miles of that type of pipe line in the ground. We are down to about 46 miles of pipeline, gradually replacing it over time, about 4 miles a year right now. So we hope to get rid of that last 46 miles over the next ten to twelve years. So we are busy working at it.

So what can you do when you have colored water? The first thing you need to do is call us because we don't know whether you've colored water. When the water leaves the plant it is crystal clear. Even when it migrates through pipe like this on a day-to-day basis, middle of the winter flows are low, nothing comes off that the water that you are getting in your house should be crystal clear. Again you get a fire, or let's think about in the summer when people start turning on irrigation systems, the average usage coming out of the pumpage, coming out of the plant during the winter months is about 8.9 million gallons a day. During the summer we hit 26 million gallons a day. The difference, we've got 3 times as much flow creates 3 times as much velocity and starts stripping that off. Well one of the things we do every late Spring, we go out at night and you will see that we announce and we go out and we send crews out and they open hydrants to try and flush out any loose rust; to try to flush out any loose manganese.

We depend upon gravity. When former Captain O'Brien went out there with his fire truck, they sucked the water out of the main, they would create twice the velocity. So every time there is a fire in the City, you can pretty much be assured that some place there is going to be colored water created. Now we go out after a fire and we typically try and remove that, but if you are drawing water at the time he is drawing water you are going to pull some of that colored water into your house; which is typically if you were to call, I would say – well run your cold water for 15 minutes. If it doesn't clear up it means there is a problem in the street; if it clear up it means likely you've pulled some of that colored water into your house and it is going to be gone.

Also, another time you get that problem is if we have a broken water main. A water main breaks, you get a high rush of water through it and again it'll clean off that rust, it'll clean off that manganese. But as I mentioned, even internal to your service, if you have all copper piping all the way throughout your house or all the way into your building, there is some build-up of that

manganese. You won't find any of that rust, maybe at one point you may have pulled some rust into your service during a broken water event and if you suddenly used, let's say in an apartment complex, the apartment finally gets filled up and it is a Saturday morning and everybody happens to get up, maybe there is some event going on. Perhaps it is the Superbowl and everybody goes and at half-time uses the bathroom at the same time. So the flow is higher than it has been in a long time. That'll clean off that and suddenly people get a shot of colored water.

So again as a homeowner first of all you want to look at it, is it in my cold water and my hot water; preferably is it just in my cold water. Because if it not in your cold water it tells you it is not coming from the street, because the water coming from the street is cold water. It means there is problem with the hot water system. Typically a lot of times that is the fact that you may have at one point or another pulled some material like that into your hot water tank which is a big tank and there is no velocity and that settles to the bottom. It will start to build up and then when somebody uses water it will get cleaned out.

If it is in both, if it is in your cold water it could be coming from the street or it could be coming from within your house. One of the things we need people to do is to call. We are going to come out and especially now, and it is not unusual especially in the north end of the City where the pipes are the oldest and we are still replacing them and we have to go out and in fact we did it with Alderwoman Klee. She called, of course she saw me first and I did want to rap her upside the head and say – why did you wait so long to call? We want people to call. We went out and we flushed her service out, pulled the meter, the water was very colored coming out initially because she had a build-up of manganese, she has copper piping. She is also tapped into a pipe like this where the tap goes in and you get a buildup of rust at the entrance. And so when she went to fill her hot tub or turn her irrigation system on or where the location the pipe is, summer flows came up, she was constantly getting colored water.

You are right on Milk Street? So what I need you to do is I'll get your phone number, or better yet you call our customer service; they will send somebody out and we will work, we will pull your meter, we will flush your service out, ask you to go around and open some faucets and flush your system out while we are there. That should take care of the majority of your problem. That doesn't mean, again, if there is a fire, if there is a broken water main, an unusual event, there will be a time you may get colored water, it should be short. You should experience it very irregularly. Eventually that line on Milk Street is going to be cleaned and lined, you know sometime, again I gave that time frame of 10 to 12 years. We are actually focusing on that right now because it appears to be a source of some individual issues and it goes through some people's backyards in trying to get out into the public right away.

So hopefully if not this year, then next year we will do that. But right now if you are experiencing a problem on a regular basis, you shouldn't be. We need to come in and work with you and I encourage anybody who is a private homeowner or if you are a tenant, give us a call. Clovelly has been very good to work with, they have worked diligently with us, we work with them. Because one of the challenges is you know we want to make sure that the water we are delivering is clear and it looks good and it tastes good. We don't own or control the piping from the street in. So we work with Clovelly, we evaluated their piping, they replaced a lot of the piping outside, some of which they had some old, unlined cast iron. We mentioned 170 where we took out a fitting, when we first flowed the water we could only get 10 gallons a minute. You think about sharing 10 gallons a minute amongst 24 units. They had no idea they had the problem until people started calling. We went in and we worked with them and after they replaced that fitting and paid for it, they are getting north of 200+ gallons a minute through that same service. Huge difference when you think about people sharing 10 gallons a minute, even with low flow showers, 10 low flow showers at 1.3 gallons a minute means you need 13 gallons a minute it means that 3 people on the second floor are running around wondering where their water is.

When we come in it may be that after we are done, again and you flush it may be ok, hot water tanks are steel with a lining. That glass lining will crack in time and you can get rust build-up from

that. Maybe ok it is time to replace your hot water tank, but we are there, again we want to make sure that what is coming into your house should be, again short of a fire or short of a broken water main, should be clear 99% of the time.

Bernie Rousseau

That would hold true for the folks did you say you lived at Cox Street #70? I lived at 84 for about 7 years.

Chairman Lopez

Can I just ask you to speak into the mic so they can hear, otherwise the transcriber is going to be "why"! And also make sure you give your name?

Bernie Rousseau

So the same would hold true for Cox Street you know Milk Street relative to Cox is essentially right across Manchester Street so there may have been an issue or might be an issue with the main in Manchester Street feeding out towards Milk and heading up your way up the hill and down to 70, so the same situation holds true, please call us and we will do what we have to do.

Chairman Lopez

Can I just remind everybody that there are no microphones in the audience area so the presentation should be generally directed towards us. Speak into the mic and make sure you give your name because they are writing everything and they don't know whose name it is and I am speaking to you, actually.

Mr. Ware

So we will, my suggestion is when we are done here first of all we will talk with each one of you but again I would encourage you to call our customer service, they will put you in contact with our distribution folks and then they will work out a time where they can work with me because intermittent, if you are having more than 3 or 4 incidents in a year, something is going on either in your service or in your house. Let us flush your service out, let us pull your meter. You go inside, and again I really, we encourage everybody, it is the first thing that customer service people are going to say is – Is it in both your cold and hot water. And if the answer is – It's my hot water – then it's going to be, well that means it is something inside your house, so please work at that side of things. If it is in your cold, we want to make sure that it is not coming from what we own. Again there is that potential build-up of manganese which we will need to come in and pull your meter and flush your service out and while we are there, you work at flushing your internal piping out to clean that out so that you don't have the continual or intermittent problem.

Chairman Lopez

So if you don't mind, I can tell your natural instinct is to talk to the audience, so why not just move over to this seat, that way you can address the Committee and the audience and you won't feel like you have to turn around and stuff. And also I don't think we got your name on record.

Bernie Rousseau

Bernie Rousseau.

I just want to make sure that they get it in the back office. So Alderman Klee, if you want to just describe what you went through in the process?

Alderman Klee

Sure. First I want to truly thank.

Chairman Lopez

I'm sorry, I hate to interrupt, but I just also want to note for the record that Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright has joined us. Please proceed.

Alderman Klee

Thank you. Pennichuck was extraordinarily responsive and I want to reiterate something that he has been saying all along and that is to call. Call them and they will come out. The truth is 10 years ago is when my issue started and that is when they did the flushing that kind of de-flaked the manganese and we started getting that. Then it was once in a while; and then it was pretty regular. I got a call and an e-mail from a constituent that showed me a bathtub that was quite dirty. That's when I ran into Mr. Ware and kind of cornered him and said – Look at this and by the way it is happening to me too. So that I knew that it was and he is right I should have called more often than I did and that lies on me. They did, they came out to my house, they flushed everything and knock on wood or anything close to it, it has been wonderful. My pressure has gone up a little bit and the water has been very clean. I was getting the manganese flakes. For those who wonder what it is, I used to think it was like having mascara in my water. If you were to touch it would leave a black smear wherever it was, whether it was, whether it was in your bathtub or sink.

We had it with both, cold and hot water, that told me that it was my hot water tank so we flushed our hot water tank. I have been cautious telling people to flush their hot water tank because it should be done in a very precise way, like shut off the burner so that you don't create a fire. So if you don't know how to do it properly ask someone and they can help you. As I said they came out and they did mine regularly. I am your neighbor, I live on Maywood Drive so I am just one street down from Milk Street. When it happens in my house it happens to neighbors. It is hard to get people to call. They think that Pennichuck is just going to try to make excuses. They don't make excuses, they come out and they will take your name, they have a great recording system so now they can see if there is a cluster. That is why it is important for us to call, they can't track, they can't fix, if they don't know what is going on.

For those in apartments, I understand that you have anxiety and I have a few people who are having anxiety, from Lillian's, from Clovell's that they will get in trouble. I don't believe that is the case; I think from what you have been doing, you have been very responsive, you do still have one person and I spoke to Mr. Ware about in 160 that is saying that she is still having brown water. I believe she told me that the last time it happened was around New Year's Eve kind of area; Christmas Day and Christmas Eve, which would be more calls for water. So that may be when it is happening. So that may be when it is happening, I don't know.

Mr. Ware

Inaudible.

Chairman Lopez

Excuse me, I have never heard that kind of sound before. I've never heard a microphone do that before. There might be manganese in the microphone.

Unidentified Speaker

That microphone is having problems, could you just use a different microphone.

Mr. Ware

So we encourage and in fact, one of the things that it going to come out is we are actually going to send a letter to the various large apartment complexes and say – if you have been experiencing problems, work with us so we can help you get your pipes flushed out. Get those higher velocities, get rid of those intermittent incidents of colored water within your own complex. It'll take some work, but again we will come out there and make sure that all the water that is used during that flushing you are not going to be billed for it, it is not going to show up in your meter and help you do what we do in the streets every year, but do it inside your apartment complex to try to get you to a point where it isn't happening.

Chairman Lopez

So I just want to make an observation, I think your voice is actually so well-projecting it is being picked up on multiple mics. So you might want to just sit down and talk to just the one mic. I have very acute hearing since I am blind as a bat and I can hear it happening again. But thank you for the information, it is definitely very helpful.

Alderman Klee

We are making him sit down now.

Unidentified Speaker

You are correct that has never happened before, both of those microphones are having problems.

Chairman Lopez

So it's not just his amazing speaking voice?

Mr. Ware

I don't need a microphone.

Unidentified Speaker

For the transcription you do.

Alderman Klee

You do.

OVERLAPPING INAUDIBLE DISCUSSION REGARDING MICROPHONES

Alderman Schmidt

If you can turn it away.

I think you have done a really good job of presenting what Pennichuck does and we are all certainly under the impression that if a constituent or a landlord has an issue the first step that they need to take is to talk to Pennichuck. I think there was some confusion as to whether an individual in an apartment complex should make that call or if it should be the complex owner. If you want to elaborate a little bit Bernie?

INAUDIBLE MICROPHONE

Alderman Klee

Excuse me Don, you are going to have to move it is definitely the microphone. You have to move up to either the Mayor's microphone or the President's.

Alderman Schmidt

He just has a great voice it projects wonderfully.

Mr. Ware

It does, it does. As Patricia indicated when somebody calls our customer service it gets logged as a colored water complaint. That then it turn maps over to our JIS system and we have a portal where we can look at where all the colored water complaints are. So you look for clusters, but it is amazing how patient people can be, they don't call. Sometimes, I hate to use it, it is an easy answer. So we had a big, broken water main on Kinsley Street back a couple months ago. That created colored water all the way back, especially up towards the hospital and Exit 5 because of the way the water flowed.

So people were calling in and we were saying – alright we have a broken water main; try to limit your use of water especially hot water and this main will be fixed at 8:00 at night. Tomorrow morning when you get up, run your cold water from 5 to 10 minutes, if it hasn't cleared, give us a call back. We didn't get any calls back; we probably got 35 calls that day relative to – we've got colored water up here, but we knew what the cause of it was. The Fire Department may call you know the morning after a fire and say – we used this hydrant – we can pretty much project depending on the area of the City, we are going to get calls from people with colored water. We try to get out in advance of that but by the time we know that, people have gotten up and taken their morning showers and what not. But we will get out there, we run our hydrant slowly to clear that colored water that has been stirred up, that iron that may be has been sitting at the bottom of the main or the manganese that got broken off the main itself and clear that out.

But call and also you should call, we will look at it, we will log that, if it is in the cold water and we only hear from one person in a 24 unit building we will typically say – it sounds like it is an internal problem. We've only heard from one person, have you called your management company. We like it when a tenant calls, we attach that to the account owned by the management company so we can look at and track did we get one call from that 24 unit building or did we get 5? There is a big difference, you know 5 would indicate that there is a problem that is related to something that may have happened in the distribution system either out in the street or the piping within the apartment itself. But again we want to work, in that case, with the apartment owner to make sure that at the end the water is clear. Did something unique go on?

So we would encourage even the tenants to call.

So that would help just in terms of the investigation of it so I think that is the take-away is that it doesn't have to be like looked at it terms of – well I shouldn't call because I'm not the owner. Pennichuck needs to know so that they can start tracking the nature of the problem.

Alderman O'Brien

Thank you and I agree if there is a problem they should call. So if you can indulge me with two questions. The first one is the most important, the number to call is? Customer Service is they do have a problem with their water systems?

Mr. Ware

So they would call our Customer Service if we determine it is an external problem, then we will connect that customer up with our Distribution Department.

Alderman O'Brien

Ok do you happen to know off-hand sir the number of customer service?

Mr. Ware

So our Customer Service number would be 882-5191. There is also an 800 number but nobody in Nashua needs that in order to make a toll-free call.

Mr. Rousseau

The 882-5191 would be the best number to call.

Alderman O'Brien

So it is 882-

Mr. Rousseau

5191.

Alderman O'Brien

882-5191 and perhaps maybe the Chair, we might be able to put that up on Channel 16 to help you to get the information out on that. And I see our friends from the Telegraph are here. But if the Chairman will indulge me with my second question – we discussed manganese and rust in the water and that is understandable. But I think that the people at home who have experienced this really would like to know if the water is still potable?

Mr. Ware

Iron and manganese currently have no standard from a drinking water or safety perspective; they do from an aesthetic perspective. So when you see that color it is well over the aesthetic limits, which means that your water is going to taste horrible and it is going to look horrible and you certainly don't want to take a bath in it. If somebody takes a drink of it it is not going to be harmful, but it is not going to be very tasty though.

So your tea will taste terrible.

Alderman O'Brien

Or use RX. Do they still make RX?

Mr. Mena I will also that beyond the aesthetics of the color of the water we also sense there is an odor to it.

Chairman Lopez

Sir you are going to have to give your name and number again, name and address, this is not the Public Comment period, but make your comments briefly.

Mr. Mena Yes my name is Demetrios Mena, 29 Milk Street in Nashua. The water we get is brown, sometimes it persists for a couple of hours but then eventually it clears up and it is in fact the cold water yes, but also we detected a smell. From my old chemistry days I think it is like methane, something like that, and that is what makes it a little more fearful for us.

Mr. Rousseau

Iron sir will definitely impart a greater odor than manganese, so if the water is brown I would suspect that it would be an elevated level of insoluble iron and I would expect that would pick up an odor. Not necessarily methane, I haven't heard that before, or nothing as pungent as say hydrogen sulfide gas which has a rotten egg odor, but insoluble iron will impart an odor and you would pick that up.

Chairman Lopez

Thank you for sharing. So there are definitely some commonalities and for these to be so familiar it does mean that they do happen on a pretty regular basis but there is knowledge and a procedure for it and they don't necessarily represent a health risk, is my understanding.

Mr. Rousseau

That is correct.

Chairman Lopez

I did reach out to our own Health Department. Their assessment was there are no health concerns at this time and they were out of the City tonight so they are not concerned either with the specific situations that were brought. But again, I think a good step, if you are concerned about your water's portability or safety is to immediately call Pennichuck and let them know something is going so they can investigate.

Alderman Klee

Yes I would just like to make one more comment. One of the things from a personal point that when we experienced the manganese and so on, was the little filter on your faucets, the strainers, they would fill up with these little particles. So sometimes you will notice that your faucets are coming as fast so we had to take it off and just clean it. So sometimes it is those little things, but if you are finding those particles you really should be calling Pennichuck and I can't reiterate that enough. Call Pennichuck, speak to them about it, if you want to change those little screens, I don't know how the complex feels about you doing it when you are a tenant; but for personal homeowners that is one of

the things that I would say. And again, we lived with it for way too long and it did come and go. I laughed about it, I adjusted my life, I knew that if we were running a lot of water, I didn't do laundry because otherwise my whites were orange. So we had rust and so on

Chairman Lopez

So do not adjust your life.

Alderman Klee

Do not adjust your life, do not use me as an example, do exactly what they are telling you to do. Call.

Chairman Lopez

And I know it was also commented that Infrastructure is concerned. Sir, would you mind waiting until the end? And then just make public comment. You also have an opportunity to speak to Pennichuck right afterwards. But Infrastructure is an element as well and Pennichuck is working on updating that as well; we have some 100+ year old pipes.

Mr. Rousseau

That is correct and Don is our Chief Operating Officer as you know and was our Chief Engineer for a number of years. He is very familiar with the footage of pipe in Nashua, the pipe that has to be replaced and the pipe that has been replaced. What is it about 40 something miles?

Mr. Ware

Yes we over the last 23 years we have replaced just a little over 60 miles of the 106 miles of the unlined cast iron water main that is there. We are currently replacing at a rate of about 4 miles per year and people say – well why don't you just replace it all tomorrow? It is about \$1.5 a mile to replace. So about \$6 million dollars a year is invested in replacing that water main that has an impact on what people pay. But again, that water main is still sound and it shouldn't yield colored water a lot of times. There are areas where again you may see due to the nature or location of the pipe that we need to get to it earlier rather than later.

Part of the planning process is looking at where we are getting those clusters of calls so when nobody calls, I'm sorry the water that leaves the plant is crystal clear. It couldn't be any clearer, you can look down through 30 feet of it, I can look in and see just to the bottom and it is just clear as can be. That is why need people to call.

Mr. Rousseau

For the folks that are concerned Mr. Chairman about the 40 or so miles of pipe that are left, please know that in our treatment process we make adjustments to water quality, PH and some chemistry additions to slow down, it will never eliminate it completely but it will drastically nearly eliminate this tuberculation that you see in the line. Those nodules that you see in the unlined cast, are known as tubigals and that is what plugs the line. But adjusting the PH and adding some treatment process, that nearly eliminates that until we get there and get that other 40 miles out.

Chairman Lopez

So practices that we didn't know about in the past still have an impact today but we have refined the process greatly and new plumbing and new piping don't have the same susceptibility.

That's correct because Don talked about the fact that it was unlined cast, now we have a different type of piping product we use cement lined ductile iron pipe or we use plastic.

Chairman Lopez

But no matter what we do, Mike could be putting out a fire and ruin everything.

Mr. Rousseau

And that is correct because you do have a lining of iron and manganese, primarily manganese even in this cement-lined pipe. Because even though iron and manganese is a naturally occurring, I don't want to call it a contaminant, but a naturally occurring mineral in New England's water, it is soft corrosive water. You are correct, you are still going to have that potential lining in a new main. And if you know Nashua Fire & Rescue come along and change the velocity in that main, or there is a break, you are going to get a scouring effect and potentially pick it up in the home.

Alderman O'Brien

Mr. Chairman if I may, the Fire Department is very good for many reasons and one in particular in the winter we do report the hydrant usage because they have to come to check to make sure the hydrant does not freeze. I have to say we do have a very good operating system with the hydrants, very rarely do we have a frozen hydrant, due diligence that they do come out to check that the hydrant is draining and they are ready for the next fire which is keenly important. But you've got to remember we are purchasing trucks that have the capability of pumping over 2,000 gallons a minute and if you look at a fire and the prolonged time, that is awful lot of water that is moving at a fast speed and this is what knocks off some of the tuberculation and it is understandable how it happens. These things are pumping beasts, the trucks are and they work quite well.

Chairman Lopez

I don't think any neighbors are going to stop you and be like "wait, wait, wait, you're messing up my shower over here". You guys do what you need to do and just let the neighborhood know afterwards.

Alderman O'Brien

But it does unfortunately, it is one of those things that happens. But the fortunate thing is that it does seem, and I am sure Mr. Rousseau would agree, as Mr. Ware, it is temporary after the fire is out the system goes back to what they call a normal operating pressure and it seems to stabilize itself at that time.

Chairman Lopez

Are there any questions from other members of the Committee? Alright, well I would like to thank Pennichuck for coming and presenting in such detail. I would like to thank Alderwoman Klee for all the work she has done in resolving the specific issues that were brought here. And I would like to thank members of the community for coming out to provide insight. As Pennichuck said, if they are aware of the problems then they can treat them, likewise with the Board of Aldermen, each one of you has a local Alderman who represents you and if we are aware of issues, whether it is just not being sure of who to talk to or where to go if something happens with your quality of life; or if it is a larger issue where you are taking the steps and you are not seeing result. It is just good to know your Alderman and make sure that you are working with them so that we can address that on behalf of the City.

I guess that is it for our discussion of the dirty water episode. We have another period for public comment unless any Board Members have another issue they would like to bring up for discussion?

Alderman Klee

I would just like to reiterate my thanks to Pennichuck for everything that they've been doing. They have been very tolerant of my continual e-mails and my questions, they have been great. Thank you.

Chairman Lopez

So now if anyone would like to make public comment, feel free to step up to the mic and remember to say your name and address, even if you said it before just because the transcriber has to write it again. So you are saving them for having to look up what they just wrote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Laura Palmer from 160 Concord Street. Thank you guys from Pennichuck for being here specifically and for all of you for being here, it is very important. My particular questions right now are for when members of the community come that are here, many that are not, water is kind of a big deal. So just for a point of clarification to Pennichuck, there was some reference to some letters that were going to be sent out? Mail them to all members of the communities, so for example like myself who is a renter will I see that or does the property manager company get that letter?

Chairman Lopez

So Public Comment is meant to be uni-directional so maybe phrase them rhetorically in the future, but who knew?

Mr. Ware

So the letter will be going out, so a couple things, we send out a newsletter which goes out and it gets posted on our web site and that will go out this Spring, but the letter that I was talking about specifically will be going to the owners of apartments.

Ms. Palmer Not homeowners, is there some way homeowners wouldn't – this is obviously affecting local homeowners?

Mr. Ware

Right so like I said, there will be a newsletter that goes out, that we usually do on either a quarterly or semi-annual letter talking about this and again reminding people of again process, how it occurs, what they should do. And then after they've run that cold water and they still have colored water, to give us a call.

Chairman Lopez

Additionally, I would also point out that this is televised so this will help a little bit and our friend at the Telegraph over there is right in the back so he is covering all this. So I am sure that we make sure that he puts whatever needs to be put into the paper.

Ms. Palmer Thank you everyone, sincerely. So I'm sorry sir, I didn't catch your name?

Mr. Rousseau

Bernie Rousseau.

Ms. Palmer I'm sorry it is supposed to be directed in general, I'm still learning.

Chairman Lopez

Rhetorical question.

Ms. Palmer Rhetorical question but not really. So if I understand correctly based on the mileage of pipes that you spoke to earlier, it sounds like you alluded to 10 to 12 years-ish before everything will be replaced?

Mr. Ware

That is about the target.

Ms. Palmer That's a really long time for people to continue to have to deal with issues like that. That is a lot of expenses. That is I know another topic. But on a personal note as someone that lives close to the source, being Pennichuck Waterworks initially, I did have my water tested but one thing that you did speak to sir is PH levels, and I don't know exactly what you treat with and what for, that's not my field obviously. But I do know that my PH was on the higher side and I'm concerned if my water is safe now or further on as you continue with the process, do I need to be concerned that my water is going to continue to be safe? Are you going to be adding more chemicals as people report more problems?

Mr. Rousseau

No we shouldn't have to, as Don mentioned if you or other individuals were to call, the process that we would undertake to take care of your problem would be purely physical. In other words, we would go in, remove the meter and flush it. We wouldn't make any chemical additions nor would we make any chemical adjustments as we replace those water mains. What we do is we have a fairly precise PH range that we like to operate in, we use a product called sodium hydroxide to accomplish that. We used to use lime years ago, and how we use sodium hydroxide and that gets the PH to where we want to be, primarily for corrosion inhibition.

Ms. Palmer I believe that was it, thank you again.

Chairman Lopez

Ok typically it is supposed to be public comment but those are really good questions and none of us thought to ask them so now the public knows, so thank you for your time.

REMARKS BY ALDERMEN

Alderman O'Brien

Thank you, Mr. Chairman I would like to say as a former member of this Committee I would like to compliment you for bringing this discussion up tonight because this is really what we intended this Committee to do. And social media, that is the other thing that Alderman Klee and I and I am sure several other Aldermen here have seen on this and this is a good way to tackle the problem.

And even coming from Greater Boston and we love our dirty water, we really don't want to drink it. So I would like to thank Pennichuck for their very frank discussion and coming here and getting the proper information out. My final, to basically say is I would like to repeat the number and the Customer Service number is 882-5191. That is very important if we are going to solve this issue they need to identify the problem in order to solve it is the main thing that I am taking away from this this evening.

So again, I'll repeat it again, 882-5191 and that will get you ahold of Customer Service at the Pennichuck and hopefully we can get this, no pun intended, but cleaned up.

Mr. Rousseau

And Chief that is 24 hour availability.

Alderman O'Brien

Very good, thank you.

Chairman Lopez

So Nashua means "beautiful river with a pebbly bottom" not dirty water, so we would prefer it to be clean here. Were there any other remarks by members of the Aldermen?

Alderman Harriott-Gathright

First of all I apologize for being late I had some family issues and I thank my colleague for filling in for me as well. But I do have a question, if you call because you think there is a water issue and Pennichuck comes out, but you determine that it is not Pennichuck's issue, is the tenant or the person that owns the home charge for that visit?

Mr. Ware

No.

Chairman Lopez

Easy answer.

Alderman Harriott-Gathright

Very easy answer, yes. And I think that people don't always realize that because I did have a problem and it took me months before I called. And it wasn't my problem it was a problem, they changed my meter and everything and the noise went away. So I think people wonder, especially if you are a homeowner, am I going to be charged?

Chairman Lopez

I agree and that is part of why we wanted to have this meeting here and make sure people understood.

Alderman Harriott-Gathright

So thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN SCHMIDT TO ADJOURN
MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared closed at 7:55 p.m.

Alderman Jan Schmidt
Committee Clerk, pro tem