



HOUSATONIC WATER WORKS COMPANY

SINCE 1897

Dear Neighbors:

October 1, 2021

For over 135 years, the Housatonic Water Works Company has been proud to provide water to the village of Housatonic and surrounding neighborhoods. However, over the last few summers, many of you have turned on your taps and found discolored water, not the crystal clear water you have come to expect.

We know you and your families are frustrated. So are we.

The purpose of this letter is to provide a progress update to you with four key points: why the discoloration occurs, what we are doing to fix it, does the system need \$31million in improvements, and when we think you will see results.

We hope these facts help dispel some of the confusion, rumors, and misinformation that you may have encountered over the past few months.

Why Does the Discoloration Occur? When tap water looks rusty, the automatic presumption is that the cause is deteriorating iron pipes, and that the solution is replacing them. That presumption turns out to be wrong.

During the summer of 2020, we engaged the Cornwell Engineering Group to conduct a detailed assessment of the HWWC's water to determine the cause of the discoloration. Their October 2020 report, confirmed three things:

- First, the water is safe to drink. It does not contain pathogens.
- Second, even when discoloration was at its worst, iron levels in the water remained low — meaning rusty iron pipes are not the cause.
- Third, the actual culprit is elevated levels of the element manganese — which happens to turn water colors ranging from yellow to brown.

Our water comes from Long Pond, and manganese in Long Pond water varies seasonally, with higher levels in the warmer months. (This explains why discoloration occurs in the summer, but not the winter.) Manganese spikes do not occur in Long Pond every summer, but have recently in 2018, 2020, and 2021. This is not a water quality safety issue, but does cause discoloration of the water once the manganese reacts with the chlorine used for disinfection.

What Are We Doing to Fix It? Identifying manganese — rather than rusty pipes — as the cause of the discoloration allowed us to target the right solution. Beginning in the summer of 2020, our engineers have worked diligently to collect and analyze data and identify options for solving the manganese issue identified in the report. Our principal engineers, Lenard Engineering, recommended installing a proprietary KOCH Membrane System for manganese removal. We immediately informed the Town and our state regulators — the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Department

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of Public Utilities (DPU) — that this was our preferred solution. DEP requires us to pilot the membrane system according to their guidelines for a year. In response, we prepared and submitted a pilot plant proposal for their approval last month.

Does the System Really Need \$31 million in Improvements? NO. The periodic episodes of discolored water are caused by manganese spikes in Long Pond, not by rusting iron pipes under the streets. Regardless, we continue to implement our 2016 Master Plan, which guides our long-term strategy for ongoing infrastructure upgrades. For instance, a key addition to our system is our proposed new treatment plant, yet this is expected to cost less than \$2 million. Part of our Master Plan also includes a comprehensive hydraulic study, which is currently inventorying existing conditions and measuring hydrant flows and pressure. The empirical data from that study will help inform our strategic decisions about investing in upgrades to mains and system infrastructure in coming years.

When Will We See Results? We had hoped to have regulatory approvals in time for us to install the membrane technology for summer 2021. Unfortunately, preparation and review take time, which is a factor beyond our control. DEP currently has our pilot program proposal before them, and once approved, we will seek the necessary approval from another separate state agency (the DPU) to authorize us to finance the installation. If the Town supports our DPU petition, we understand that we could have DPU approval within 90-120 days. Our goal is to have the membrane system pilot in place well before temperatures in Long Pond start to rise again next summer.

As many of you know, we hold biannual public informational meetings to keep the community informed about our relevant issues. During our April program we had our engineers and a representative from KOCH Industries on hand to explain the proposed system and answer questions. Our second informational meeting for 2021 will be held via ZOOM on October 14th at 6:00 P.M. . More information is available at housatonicwater.com.

Finally, we are always looking for ways to improve our water distribution system and water quality for the benefit of our customers. We are fortunate to have a highly experienced team of outside attorneys and consulting engineers advising us not only on the manganese matter, but on other strategic opportunities as well. For instance, we are exploring the possibility of securing additional sources of water beyond Long Pond (including new wells that could serve as both primary and reserve supply), conducting a hydraulic study that will inform when and where upgrades to our existing mains may be warranted, and exploring potential synergies with other public water suppliers that could both improve distribution while generating customer savings.

As your community water company, we are committed to resolving the manganese issue in a timely and equitable manner. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we work with our regulators to implement a solution. And we look forward to continuing to serve you and your families for many years to come.

Sincerely,



James J. Mercer



Housatonic Water Works INFORMATION MEETING

October 14, 2021



SAVE THE DATE: Housatonic Water Works Company, in accordance with our Settlement Agreement with the Department of Public Utilities (DPU 15 -179) will be holding our second informational meeting for calendar year 2021 via **ZOOM**.

WHERE: Computer or Telephone

WHEN: Thursday, October 14, 2021

TIME: 6:00 P.M.

Link Address:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88143268109?
pwd=WHRBdUQvVVAzZW8yVzdxWU9FdIFYZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88143268109?pwd=WHRBdUQvVVAzZW8yVzdxWU9FdIFYZz09)

Passcode: 538582

Telephone:

Dial in, voice-only : 929 205 6099

Webinar ID: 881 4326 8109

Passcode:538582

More information available at
www.housatonicwater.com