

Housatonic Water Works Informational Meeting

October 16, 2024



HOUSATONIC WATER WORKS COMPANY
Since 1897

A Path Forward



Ensuring Sustainable
and
Affordable Water

Introduction



James Mercer, Treasurer of Housatonic Water Works.

Jed Nosal and Jesse Reyes , Womble Bond Dickinson.

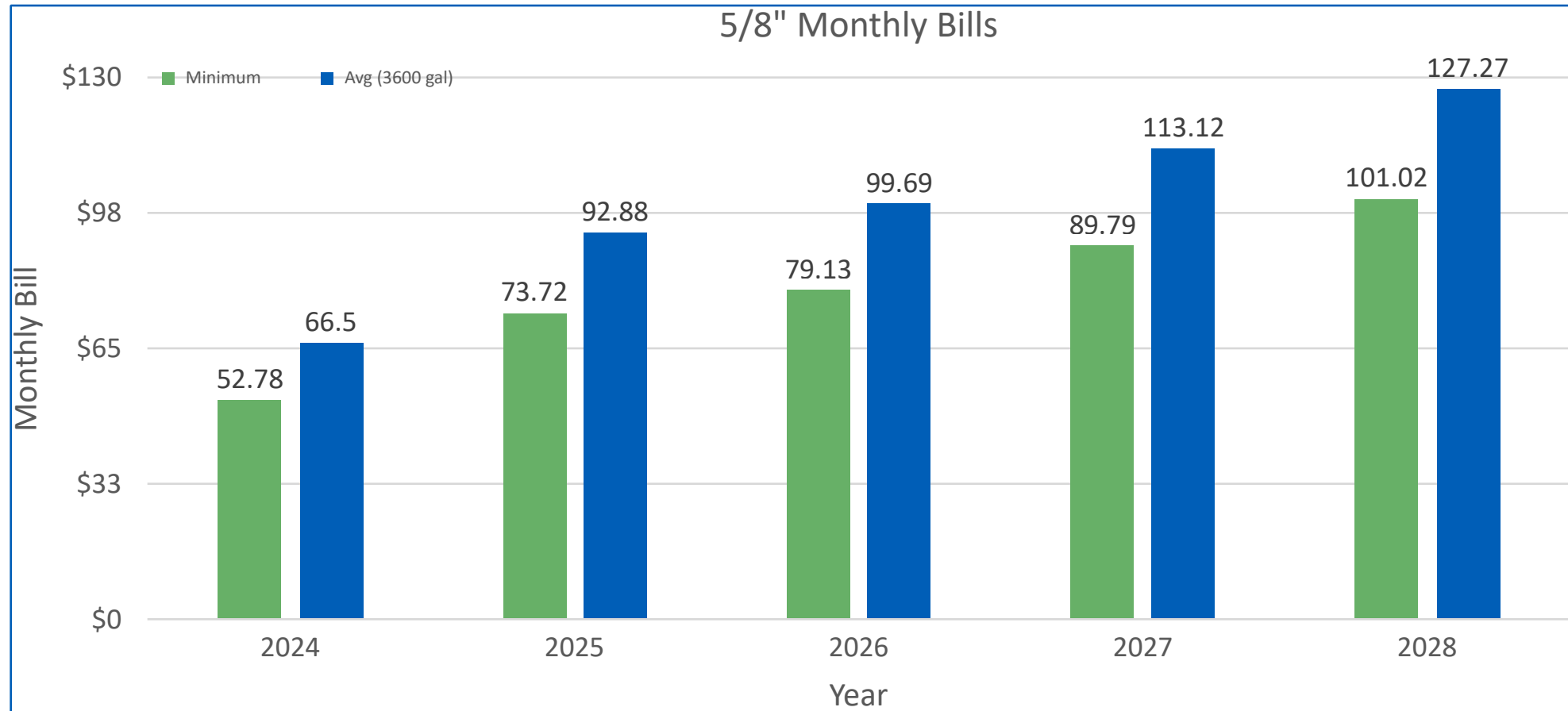
Over the past few years, there has been significant controversy surrounding Housatonic Water Works. The information circulating has included a mix of facts, flawed narratives, and even fantastical claims. Our goal tonight is to move beyond these past controversies and chart a path forward for sustainable and affordable water services for both Housatonic and the entire Great Barrington community. Following the presentation, there will be a question-and-answer period.

Rate Increases and Capital Projects



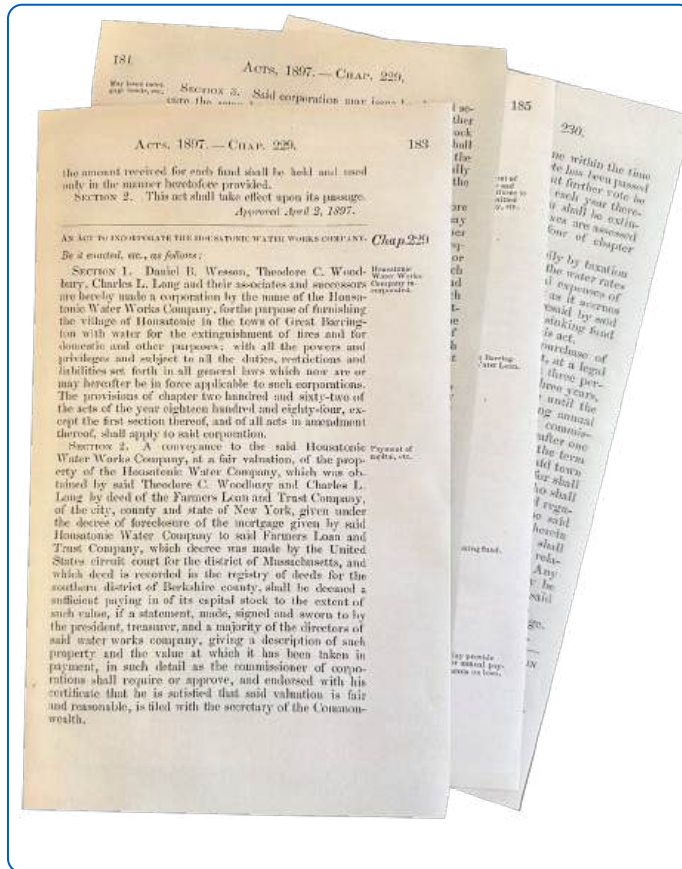
Phase	Date of Increase	Amount of Increase	Increase Over Prior Year	Capital Project
1	August 1, 2024	\$ 129,153	18.00%	Two Stage Disinfection Process - HAA5's
2	August 1, 2025	\$ 336,043	39.68%	Manganese Removal Greensand Filtration
3	August 1, 2026	\$ 86,693	7.33%	Interconnection with Great Barrington Fire District
4	August 1, 2027	\$ 171,050	13.47%	Water Storage Tank
5	August 1, 2028	\$ 180,240	12.51%	Main Replacements

Customer Impact





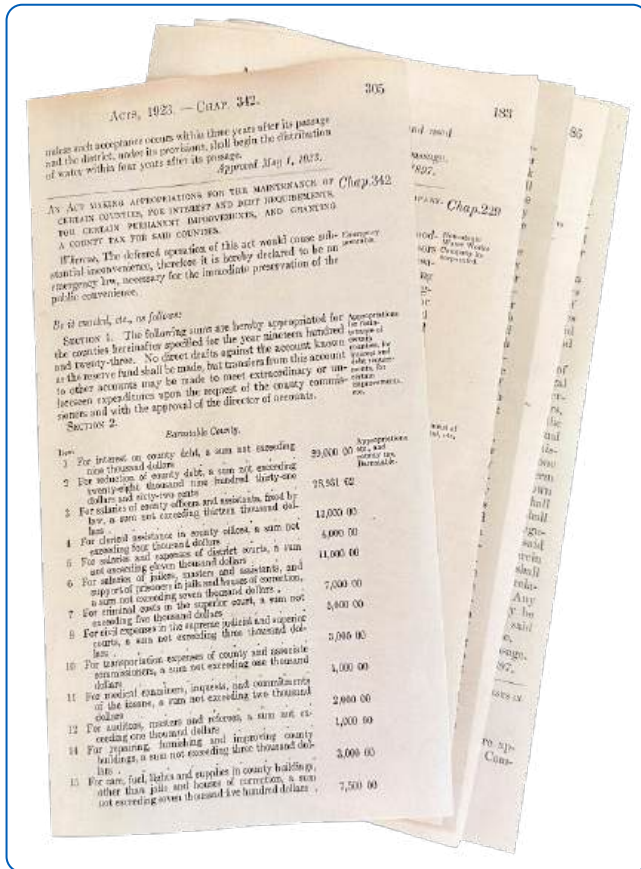
HWW Company Charter 1897



Housatonic Water Works Company (HWW) was established by legislative action in 1897.

- Created to meet the growing water needs of Housatonic's thriving industrial and agrarian community.
- Authorized a private company to manage and supply water to the area.
- Provided legal framework for HWW's operations, governance, and water distribution and acquisition.

Past Acquisition Initiatives



Act to Incorporate Housatonic Fire & Water District (1923)

- **Governance:** Created a Board of Directors to oversee operations.
- **Revenue Generation:** Enabled charging for water usage and levying taxes on property owners.
- **Franchise Purchase:** Authorized the potential acquisition of the Housatonic Water Works Company.
- **Was not put into effect**

Tighe & Bond Study 1977



Evaluation

Conducted to evaluate the potential municipal purchase of the Housatonic Water Works Company.

- **Feasibility:** Assessed the practicality of the municipal acquisition.
- **Costs:** Evaluated the financial implications of purchasing the Housatonic Water Works Company.
- **Benefits:** Analyzed potential advantages of public ownership, such as improved control over water rates and service quality.

Proposal Overview



Town of Great Barrington Facilitates the Creation of the Housatonic Water District (HWD)

Town's Role in Establishing HWD

- Lead the initiative to form the Housatonic Water District.
- Coordinate with local stakeholders, government agencies, and community members.
- Oversee the administrative and logistical processes involved in its establishment.

Additional Advantages

- Leveraging State and Federal Funds for Capital Improvements
- Identify and secure state and federal funding.
- Allocate secured funds towards essential infrastructure upgrades and expansions.
- Ensure efficient use of funds to improve the water system.

Acquisition of Housatonic Water Works



Funding and Transition Process

- Initial purchase funded by **all** taxpayers.
- Establish a new water district as a freestanding entity.
- Temporary town management transitioning to a completely independent water district.
- Responsibility for expenses shifting to water service users within the new district.
- Future integration possibilities with GBFD.

Consolidation with the GB Fire District



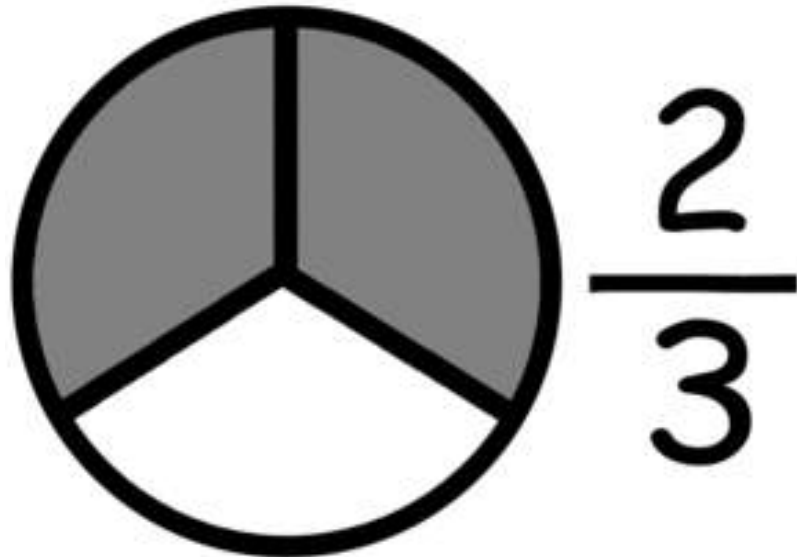
Long Term Goal:

Merger between the Housatonic Water District and the Great Barrington Fire District.

Benefits:

- Ability to access state and federal funds/grants for consolidation and resiliency
- Provide efficient, sustainable, and equitable water services to the entire community.

Acquisition of Housatonic Water Works



Vote Needed to Acquire

1. **Charter Formula:** Binding decision by the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities (DPU).
2. **Direct Negotiation:** Flexible and potentially faster but may face subjective challenges.
3. **Eminent Domain:** Legal mechanism for municipalities to take ownership of private companies for public use. Efficient and bypasses negotiations and DPU but involves legal challenges and compensation requirements.



Long-Term Alternatives to Explore

- Housatonic Water Works (HWW) holds rights to develop wells within the aquifer area identified by Ward F. Mott, a pioneering hydrologist from the University of Massachusetts.
- Town property donated by GE, located within HWW's franchise and the aquifer zone, presents an opportunity for future well development.
- Partnering ensures the development of sustainable, long-term solutions for water management. And by working closely together, the Town of Great Barrington, Housatonic Water District (HWD), and the Great Barrington Fire District (GBFD) can create a resilient and efficient water system that benefits the entire community for years to come.

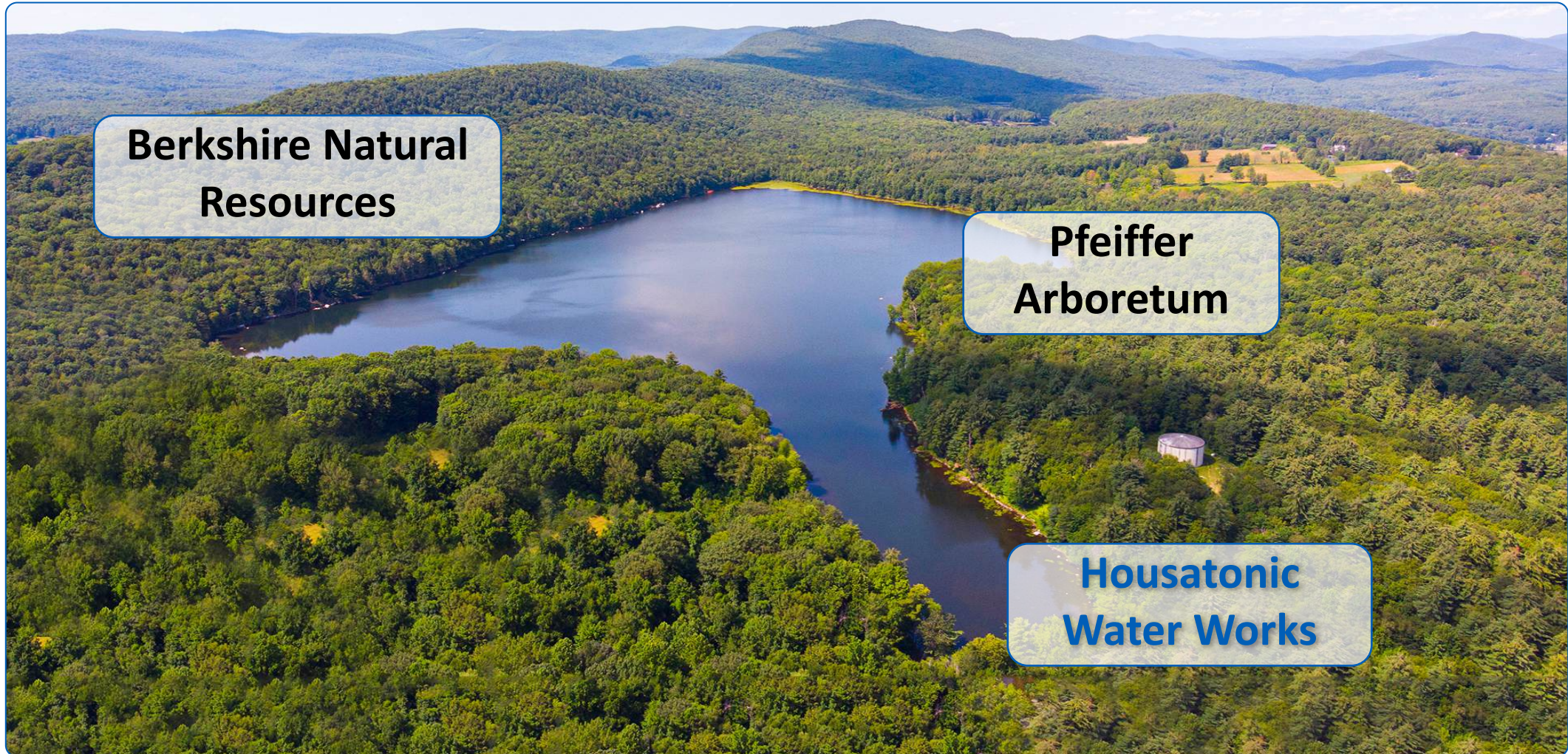
Future Considerations



Should it become more cost effective to transition from an open surface supply to wells, particularly considering the impact of climate warming.

Long Pond could be developed into an important recreational area for the town. Berkshire Natural Resources and the Pfeiffer Arboretum border Housatonic's property.

Integration With Natural Recreational Areas



Berkshire Natural Resources

Pfeiffer Arboretum

Housatonic Water Works

Conclusion



We believe that acquiring Housatonic Water Works is a strategic investment for the Town of Great Barrington and its residents. We can ensure a resilient, efficient, and sustainable water management system that meets the towns' current and future needs.

Acquisition and ultimate consolidation with the Great Barrington Fire District would further optimize natural resources, and foster strong community relationships, all while supporting environmental and recreational goals.

Together, we can build a unified water system that guarantees reliable water access for every resident for generations to come.

Questions



HOUSATONIC WATER WORKS COMPANY
Since 1897