

**TOWN OF RYE - SELECT BOARD  
&**

**RYE WATER DISTRICT  
PUBLIC FORUM**

**Sunday, November 6, 2022– 1:30 p.m.  
Rye Jr. High School Cafeteria**

**Select Board Present:** *Chair Phil Winslow; Vice-Chair Tom King; and Selectman Bill Epperson*

**Water District Commissioners Present:** *Chair Art Ditto; Ralph Hickson; and Scott Marion*

**Others Present on behalf of the Town:** *Town Administrator Matt Scruton; Asst. Town Administrator/Finance Director Becky Bergeron; Police Chief Kevin Walsh; Fire Chief Mark Cotreau; Public Works Director Jason Rucker; Health Officer Dr. Gail Snow*

**Others Present on behalf of RWD:** *Superintendent Arik Jones; Chris Berg from Wright-Pierce Engineering; Operator Greg Vaillancourt; and Business Manager Dyana Ledger*

**NH DES Representatives Present:** *Brandon Kernen; Jennifer Mates; and Cindy Klevens*

**I. Call to Order**

Select Board Chair Phil Winslow called the public forum to order at 1:30 p.m. and led the pledge of allegiance. RWD Commissioner Chair Art Ditto formally called the Rye Water District meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Chair Winslow explained that the purpose of the meeting is so the Rye Water District (RWD) and NH Department of Environmental Services (NH DES) can provide an update on the Boil Water Order, which has now been lifted, and to provide an opportunity for the public to ask questions. He asked that everyone hold their questions until the end of the presentation. He also encouraged everyone to sign up for the NH Red Alert System. People who were signed up for this system were notified within an hour of the Boil Order being imposed on the Water District by DES. Notifications through this system include the Town and also anything that may happen along the Seacoast. Police Chief Walsh has the information for signing up, which is a very simple process.

Members sitting at the table introduced themselves to the public. The meeting was then turned over to the Rye Water District. RWD Chair Ditto introduced Brandon Kernen from NH DES.

**Brandon Kernen, NH DES Drinking Water Administrator, introduced Jennifer Mates, NH DES Water Engineer, and Cindy Klevins, NH DES Managing Water Engineer, who have**

been working with the Rye Water District throughout the Boil Water Order. He thanked the residents for attending the meeting regarding the District's drinking water. He noted that on October 12<sup>th</sup>, test results were received that showed that E. coli was present in multiple samples from the water system and a boil order had to be put into place. These results triggered a set of emergency responses required by state and federal regulations that included notifying the public and investigating and mitigating the E. coli in the water system. Rye Water District complied with these requirements and even pulled in additional resources; including, surrounding area water systems, and outside experts to address a complicated problem.

Mr. Kernan continued that he knows that last three and a half weeks have been very stressful for the customers of the Rye Water District. He thanked the staff, town officials, emergency responders, and DES. He's thankful the community has been patient and cooperative. He also thanked the media for playing a key role in getting the information out to the public that there was a boil order in place. The media plays a vital role when there is a public emergency situation.

Mr. Kernan noted that at this meeting, the focus will be on the boil order that was in place over the last few weeks and how it has been addressed. He thinks it's important that this level of interest remain in the water system. This is the community's drinking water. It requires the residents' support and knowledge of what the issues are, so when there are decisions to be made as a community, such as investments in the water system to possibly address manganese, build a more permanent disinfection system, or PFAS, it will be known why residents are being asked to support these investments. He's glad there are so many people present and hope that this level of engagement will continue. It really takes a community effort to make improvements in water system.

RWD Chair Ditto thanked everyone in the Town for their cooperation with the Boil Water Order.

## **II. Current Water Situation in Rye**

A presentation was given by RWD covering information about the Water District system, the Boil Order timeline, corrective action, investigation efforts, and chlorination. It was noted that the meeting will be focused on the bacteria response. PFAS will be addressed at a future meeting. NH DES is holding a meeting on Monday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 p.m. at the Bethany Church to address the Coakley Landfill.

The Rye Water District is comprised of three water commissioners and four staff members; which include a superintendent, lead operator, water operator, and business administrator. The RWD staff have been working diligently over the last few weeks to come up with a corrective action to get the Boil Order lifted. Additionally, RWD received support from many people: NH DES staff; Town of Rye Leadership Team; Rye Fire Department; Rye Police Department; Rye Public Works Department; Lions Club; Portsmouth Water Works; Aquarion Water; John Guilfoil Public Relations; Wright-Pierce Engineering; New England Backflow; Electrical Installations; BAU and Hopkins; F.W. Webb; Seacoast Analytical; Underwater Solution; and Harcross Chemicals.

Public water in Rye is supplied by the Rye Water District, Portsmouth Water Works; and Aquarion. RWD has 1702 service connections and serves 4300 people. Three wells make up the current supply for the RWD; Cedar Run Well, Bailey Brook Well, and Garland Well. The Cedar Run and Bailey Brook wells are bedrock wells. The Garland Well is a sand packed well. The RWD Office is located at 60 Sagamore Road and the Garland pump house is at 90 Garland Road. There are three water tanks that service the system; one at Breakfast Hill and two located on Washington Road.

The Rye Water District was established in 1948 and originally received its water from the City of Portsmouth. In 1977, RWD transitioned from Portsmouth water supply to its own supply after the Garland Well was installed. The Bailey Brook Well was installed in 1986 and Cedar Run was installed in 2004. RWD has not had to disinfect the water because groundwater sources do not require disinfection. RWD has never had a boil order before. The District maintains compliance with all NH DES and EPA regulations. Processes and procedures are adjusted as necessary to maintain compliance. The RWD staff conducts regular monitoring and testing for a range of chemical and potential contaminants. This includes monthly sampling and testing for bacterial contamination focused on:

- ***Total Coliform Bacteria (TC)***: Coliforms represent a broad category of bacteria that are always present in the digestive tracts of animals, including humans, and are found in their wastes. They are also found in plant and soil materials.
- ***Escherichia coil (E. coli)***: Bacteria found in the environment, foods, and intestines of people and animals. E. coli are a large and diverse group of bacteria. Most strains of E. coli are harmless while others cause urinary tract infections, respiratory illness and pneumonia, and other illnesses.

#### **Boil Order Timeline:**

- **10/4** – Routine Monthly Samples Collected
- **10/7** – Monthly samples tested positive for coliform, NH DES issues a letter for repeat sample requirements to RWD
- **10/22 – 10/12** – Repeat samples collected, E. coli detected, boil water issued
- **10/12 – 10/17** – Flushing of system and continued monitoring
- **10/17 – 10/18** – Bottle water distribution starts because of continued TC & E. coli positive results from samples
- **10/18 – 10/23** – Chlorinate and flush distribution system and continued source contamination investigation
- **10/24 – 10/27** – Round 2 samples collected, TC detected, mandatory chlorination ordered by DES
- **10/27 – 11/2** – System fully chlorinated
- **11/2 – 11/4** – Back-to-back negative samples obtained and boil water order lifted by DES

Wright-Pierce Engineering was retained by the District during the Boil Order to provide technical expertise for the contamination source investigation. Wright-Pierce first reviewed the current response actions by RWD, which included Level 1 and Level 2 Assessments with DES, inspection of the wells, RWD facilities, water tanks, and distribution system. No source of contamination was detected during the assessments by RWD. Wright-Pierce then moved on to review cross connections in the system, which are not the tanks, wells or RWD facilities, and is

essentially the consumer end of the system. There are two cross connections in the system: high hazard, which are institutional, commercial and irrigation systems; and the low hazard, which are residential.

Cross connections are a point in a plumbing system where non-potable water may come into contact with potable water. This may be a garden hose in a bucket of water; a submerged outlet of an irrigation system; or a piped connection of public water to an industrial process. There are two different types of backflow types that can occur:

- ***Backsiphonage*** – Low pressure in the system draws water into the distribution system
- ***Backpressure*** – High pressure on the customer side pushes water into the distribution system

Cross connections should be eliminated where possible. Backflow prevention devices protect against instances where cross-connection is necessary. Cross connection examples include: irrigation systems, improperly installed boiler; private well connected to a home that is on a public water system; faucet hose in a kitchen sink; and toilet tank refill line that sits below the water line.

#### **Contamination Source Investigation Steps:**

- **10/12** – RWD/NH DES contamination investigation begins
  - Level 1 and Level 2 assessments; wellhead protection area assessment, district facilities assessment, distribution system assessment
  - Well sources sampled multiple times; no E. coli has been present since the chlorination process has begun
  - Breakfast Hill Tank isolated; exterior/interior inspections of the tank
  - Washington Rd tanks; exterior/interior inspections of the tank
- **10/27** – RWD engages Wright-Pierce to assist with contamination source investigation
- Breakfast Hill Tank will be disinfected per American Water Works Association (AWWA) C-652-11 protocols prior to bringing it back online.
- New England Backflow engaged to perform water service cross-connection surveys and backflow device testing.

To guard against contamination of the system, disinfection of the water can take place. The primary disinfection is at the water source. In order to meet the requirements of the groundwater rule, viruses that could be present need to be 99.99% inactivated. The level of which RWD is disinfecting, with the disinfection contact time and at the level that is required per the state and federal guidelines, will take care of the bacteria. Chlorination and disinfection in this manner provides a secondary disinfection residual that will continue to provide disinfection into the system. If a cross connection happens outside of the sources, there will be additional protection against bacterial contamination.

The state and federal guidelines for testing for the effectiveness of disinfection is to test for Total Coliform and E. coli. Coliform bacteria survive better than most pathogenic organisms, is easy to test for and is less expensive than testing for specific pathogens. The presence of fecal coliform (E. coli) in water samples indicates the possible presence of disease-causing organisms and the need for public notification (Boil Order).

The disinfection that RWD will use and continue to use is chlorine. Chlorine is the most common cost-effective means of disinfecting the water in the U.S. The process has been used for over 100 years across the nation. There are many neighboring towns that use chlorine as its disinfectant for their water: Portsmouth; Dover, Hampton; Newmarket; Exeter; Newfields; Kittery; Seabrook and many others. Over 90% of large community water systems in NH have chlorinated water. It's the standard for disinfection. One of the real benefits is having the secondary (residual) in the system for protection against pathogens in the distribution system.

**What to Expect Moving Forward:**

- Water may have a chlorine “smell.” The chlorine is less than half of the level of typical swimming pool chlorination. There may be a decomposition smell as chlorine interacts with the organic material in the water system. This will fade as more and more water is used.
- RWD staff will optimize chlorination dose to provide effective disinfection while minimizing taste and odor concerns.
- RWD will be continuing to chlorinate for the foreseeable future.
- RWD will continue the investigation in an effort to find the source of the contamination; however, most likely, the cause will never be known.
- RWD is committed to reducing the potential for this type of event to occur again.

**III. Public Comment**

**Questions received from residents by email *(answers emboldened and italicized)***

**Kathleen Clancy, 52 Park Ridge Ave:**

How many wells and tanks?

Where are wells and tanks located?

How is water distributed from wells to tanks to houses?

***These first three questions were answered in the presentation.***

How often are routine water samples taken normally?

***Samples are taken on a monthly basis.***

What if anything has been learned about the source of the bacteria?

***At this time, RWD has not identified the source; however, the investigation will continue.***

**Mike Garvan, 220 Washington Rd:**

What have the coliform readings been during the boil order? I would like to know how high they have been relative to the safe drinking water standard.

***The measure for coliform and/or E. coli is either present or absent. It's not a parts per million level. It's either there or not there.***

**Jim Porter**

Have you investigated to see if the replacement of the water line on Wallis Road was the cause of the infiltration of E. coli into the system?

*The water line project on Wallis Road has not been connected to RWD's existing distribution system. The only thing that has been done on that project is the installation of piping by the means of directional drilling. Even if it was connected, it would not be allowed to be operated until it was super-chlorinated and bacteria tested.*

**Laurie Holbrook**

We have two hydrants on our street that have not been opened (and usually are twice each year). After flushing, we typically get low pressure for a day or two, and the chlorine smell comes through to the house taps.

Why aren't ALL hydrants being opened (as we've been told they are in numerous bulletins), and also with all the chlorination going on, how come we aren't smelling chlorine in the water as we normally do?

*The Normal flushing process takes place in April and October. The flushing starts at the wellhead area and proceeds across town. In a normal situation, the work is started at the high zone (Washington Rd/West Rd) and then a backflush is done to the wells before moving forward into the system. At the same time, RWD is chlorinating, which is also part of the process. Sediment is being disturbed in the system and by introducing the chlorine, it's knocking out any potential contaminants that are harmful to the system. During the recent process, it was targeted at getting a shock chlorine residual out to the system.*

When the situation is cleared up, what should each household do?

*As part of the Boil Order posting on the Town's website, a list of things that should be done inside the household has also been posted.*

The horse farm(s) on West Road typically push manure toward the back of the property, which has a small running brook, and is adjacent to the Garland property and well/Aquaphor.

Has anyone expressed concern about this practice and whether it can cause this current situation in times of drought and then subsequent runoff once rain begins again?

*RWD has identified this as a problem and have talked to the Department of Agriculture. It's hard to pin down exactly who is responsible for managing this process. It is a concern and RWD is aware of it.*

Is there any chance that the new development at the top of Washington Road was hooked up incorrectly and may be causing the problem? (The hydrant there is covered with a sign that says "Out of Order.")

*During the process of that development, RWD staff was on site when the connections were made to the main line, and the installation of the hydrant. The "Out of Order" hydrant has nothing to do with the E. coli situation. The hydrant has been operated a couple of times. The valve to the hydrant has been shut off and was paved over, but it is not an issue to the system. RWD staff has done a visual check at the property of the meters and the backflow preventers and nothing appeared to be out of place.*

**Melissa Doerr**

What caused the emergency? *RWD is still working on this.*

What has been done to repair the root source other than flushing and chlorinating the system?

***The root source cannot be fixed because the cause is unknown at this time. RWD will continue to work on this. However, the appropriate chlorination system has been installed to ensure the water is meeting the standards.***

What work is being done on the water lines near Petey's Restaurant and has that work had anything at all to do with the contamination?

***The work to date near Petey's on Wallis Road has not been connected to the system.***

Where is the opinion from the outside environmental engineering agency that was retained?

***Wright-Pierce Engineering is still working on the investigation and hasn't developed an opinion yet.***

What strains of E. coli were found?

***E. coli is not characterized. It's either present or absent.***

How/when will the routine chlorination system be installed and fully operational?

***The system has been installed and is fully operational.***

What will be the regular testing schedule of the water going forward?

***RWD is required to sample on a monthly basis for bacteria contamination and will continue to do so.***

Per the RWD "Requirements for New Water Installation," there is an asphalt coating on the outside of the system pipes that is vulnerable to continuous exposure to chlorine; please provide an expert opinion on this.

***The coating on the outside of the pipe is to protect against corrosion as it sits in the ground. The coating is not on the inside of the pipe because chlorination would strip that off.***

**Mary Nadolny:**

Why isn't there some kind of municipal warning system? Not everybody's WIFI works all the time. We learned of this situation from our neighbor, NOT the Rye Water District. ***There is a system in N.H. called Code Red which is set up to send out alerts. It can be a state-wide alert, but can also be individualized for communities and specific homes. Messages go out by text, email, or by a phone call. Most of the town departments have a social media page. The Rye Police Department has a Facebook page, Instagram, and Twitter. The goal is to have multi-layer communication throughout the Town. The Rye Water District also has a notification process. RWD will continue to update customers' information to have the most current contact numbers.***

**Meghan Bouchie**

What is the plan for testing moving forward?

***RWD will continue to test on a monthly basis as required.***

Has there been a conclusive determination of the root cause? *Not yet.*

Is the routine chlorination plan/system already in place? *Yes*

Are levels of chlorine in the water safe for infants? *Yes*

Will an outside consulting firm be held on retainer for future problems?

*Yes. Wright-Pierce is RWD's engineering contractor and the district has an open contract with the firm.*

How do you plan on improving communications to residents in the future?

*RWD will continue to work on this effort.*

### **Michele Jones**

Why were Rye residents not notified sooner when the Oct. 4 samples came back contaminated?

*The October samples came back positive for total coliform. When there is a positive hit for total coliform, resamples have to be taken. Samples have to be taken at the original sample location plus one upstream and one downstream. Most times, those samples come back clean. In this case, E. coli was detected and that is when the Boil Order was issued. Public notification happens when E. coli is detected, not coliform. It is not uncommon for systems, especially the August/September period of time, to get a hit of coliform. If the samples come back clear, there is nothing to be done from that point forward.*

Why was the boil order lifted on Friday, Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>, at 2pm when we received an update at noon that very same day with positive coliform results and to continue to boil water?

*The update that was issued at noon was actually for Thursday and it was talking about the results that were issued on Wednesday, which said the system was clean of total coliform and E. coli. The Boil Order was lifted after proper notification was received from NH DES that they had lifted the order.*

### **Mindi Messmer**

Why, when EPA requires re-testing within 24 hours of a TC+ test, did it take 6 days to collect repeat samples (10/4 and then 10/10).

*Samples were taken on 10/4 and it took three days, which was 10/7, to get the results. The results were received around 11:00 am on 10/7, which was a Friday. In this case, an additional 24 samples were required to be taken, which takes a total of about 8 hours. DES had identified that as being a potential problem to get the samples to the lab on Friday afternoon when there is no one there on Saturday to process them. As Monday was a holiday, the resamples were taken on Tuesday 10/11. The verbal results were received from DES on Wednesday, 10/12 and the Boil Order was issued.*



**Questions taken from the public at the meeting:**

**Renee Gifroy, 39 Colburn Rd.,** asked what the next steps are in the investigation of the source and what steps the residents should take.

*As part of the investigation, Wright-Pierce has engaged New England Backflow to conduct cross connection surveys and backflow testing. They will be testing all the existing backflow prevention devices and the facilities that utilize those. In addition, a couple of locations where E. coli was present will be investigated. The thrust of the action taken is the permanent chlorination of the system.*

**David Rimbach, 731 Washington Rd.,** asked about the concentration level of the E. coli detected?

*E. coli levels are not tested. It's either absent or present. Currently, there is no E. coli.*

**Shari Cohen, 399 South Rd.,** expressed her concerns about the levels of manganese and PFAS in the water.

*The Rye Water District will be addressing PFAS at a separate meeting in the near future.*

**Del Record, 260 Grove Rd.,** asked if the junk cars that are stored near the Garland Road wellhead are free of hydraulic, gasoline, oil, and other contaminants, as well as the washing machine and other junk on the Rye Water District property.

*This is not known.*

**Ann Fox, 73 Washington Rd.,** spoke about the need to provide better and more information to the residents about the water.

*The Rye Water District holds a public meeting with the Commissioners the first Wednesday of the month. They also hold an annual meeting at the end of March for residents to vote on warrant articles and the budget. The meetings are publicized and residents are encouraged to attend. Rye Water District also issues a Consumer Confidence Report on an annual basis, which contains information on the samples that have been taken on the water.*

**Joe Cummins, 990 Washington Rd.,** suggested having a list of the residents' questions with the answers on the RWD's or Town's website. He also spoke about letting the residents know the moment that coliform is detected in the water, so they can make the decision on whether or not to drink the water.

**Elizabeth Sanborn, 16 Dow Lane,** spoke about the flush of water that came through the system a few weeks before the E. coli was detected. She asked if this could have been the cause of this outbreak.

*RWD staff does not believe that had anything to do with this situation. Water District operators were exercising valves as required. The valves will build up sediment and perhaps some of what was received was that sediment. In the future, residents are encouraged to call the District if they are having any issues or concerns about the water.*

**Brian Fitzgerald, 31 Fairhill Ave.,** asked if the residential connections have backflow preventers built-in.

*There is a residential dual check valve which is located just after the meter. Most residential check valves are not testable.*

**Suzanne Barton, 114 Clark Rd.,** expressed her frustrations over having to chlorinate the water system.

**John O'Brien, 23 Seaglass Lane,** asked where the initial E. coli was found.

*E. coli was found on the repeat samples for 235 Parsons Road, 1257 Washington Road, and 271 Lafayette Road. Repeat samples have to be pulled from the original site with five upstream and five downstream.*

**Jaci Grote, 124 Washington Rd.,** asked what residents can do to help the Water District with regard to the interconnections between homes and the water system.

*There are many situations to consider; such as, hoses being connected properly and the operation of irrigation systems. It's important for residents to remember that irrigation systems are high hazard cross connections. The check valve after the meter is not a high hazard device. Residents are encouraged to call the District if they have any questions.*

**Lindsay Gray, 9 Acorn Acres,** asked about leaks in the distribution system. She also asked what is being done to measure the pressure in the system. Is there an instance where there could be negative pressure coming through those leaks?

*Negative pressure would exist from either a main break or hydrant operation during a fire. There was a fire about a month and a half ago, but the flow didn't cause depressurization. Annually, RWD does a leak detection for the whole district, which is sponsored by the State. Any leaks that are found are repaired immediately.*

**Steven Borne, 431 Wallis Rd.,** asked if DNA testing has been done on the E. coli. He expressed concerns about the leachfields in the Parsons Creek Watershed and anything flowing into the system.

*The Wallis Road project is being done because this is an area of high concern. There was a substantial break in this area back in 2016. There haven't been any events that have indicated that backsiphonage would be an issue. The Water District does not do DNA testing.*

**Paul Goldman, 1190 Washington Rd.,** spoke in regards to the levels of chlorination to the system being done at levels that are not objectionable to the quality and taste of water in Rye. He urged RWD to find the root cause of the E. coli, so proactive and problem analysis can be done to prevent it from happening again.

*The target induction of chlorine into the system is 1.5 parts per million, as required by DES. At the farthest end of the system, RWD is required to have .2 parts per million. The highest level of dosing allowable in a distribution system is 4 parts per million. Rye Water is significantly lower than what is allowed. Some residents may notice the chlorine more than others because their properties are located closer to the point of entry for the chlorine.*

**Melissa Doerr** asked why the District has not chlorinated thus far.

*RWD has groundwater sources which are not required to chlorinate. A system served by surface water, more than likely has some type of treatment. If RWD starts PFAS treatment, chlorination will be required anyway.*

**Ms. Doerr** asked if there has been pushback on not chlorinating in the past.

*RWD has not been required to chlorinate and the residents have not wanted it. At this time, there are only four systems in the State of NH that don't chlorinate. At the present time, two are under a mandate to chlorinate, so there are only two systems.*

**John Nadolny, 10 Young Lane,** asked if a failed septic system could be a potential cause for this sort of contamination. With the notion of how many failed systems are in the Parsons Creek Watershed, is this an issue with respect to contamination?

*No.*

**Mr. Nadolny** asked the town representatives if they are aware of how many systems have failed and/or refused to comply with the septic ordinance.

*Currently, there are 30 systems who have failed to comply.*

**Mr. Nadolny** asked what action is being taken by the Town with respect to enforcement.

*Property owners are being notified by the Building Inspector's Office. They have a deadline to comply. If they do not comply, Town Counsel will be engaged to enforce compliance.*

**Ben Tweedie, 45 Random Rd.,** asked if residents will be responsible for paying for three weeks of non-potable water.

*The average residence is charged \$133.00 for 50,000 gallons. If the residence goes over the 50,000 gallons, it goes into a tiered system and it increases from there. The District cannot refund all the customers in the District.*

**Don Cavallaro, 6 Random Rd.,** commented that the PH of the water can be affected by chlorination. There are a lot of older homes in Rye. The lead in fixtures didn't change until 1987. He asked if the chlorination will cause more etching of lead out of anyone's system. He assumes there are no lead pipes in the Distribution system.

*Presently, there is a survey required by EPA to locate any lead pipes, if any, in the system. The Water District was established in 1948 and the standard during that time period was copper. Prior systems that were established in the early 1900's have a good possibility of having lead service lines. As RWD moves forward, they will identify, if any, lead service lines that are out in the system. Chlorine is a corrosive agent. RWD's lead and copper sample schedules will be changing from this point forward. The District monitors the PH on a monthly basis, similar to the routine samples. The PH will tell whether the water is corrosive in specific areas. The target range is 7.1 to 7.2.*

**Steve Carter, 620 Wallis Rd.,** expressed concerns on going back to only testing on a monthly basis.

*RWD will continue to sample on a monthly basis. However, from this point forward, RWD will also be testing the wells for compliance, where they were not being done before. Outside of compliance sampling, the District does a tremendous amount of general analysis sampling also.*

**Terri McGee, 7 Forest Green Rd.,** asked if there will be any sort of water shortage, due to the tanks having to be emptied for cleaning. She also asked if anything can be done about the hard water situation.

*The water levels are good at this time. The tanks will be filled at a slow process, just as they are drained slowly. There have been rain events lately that have brought the severe drought down to a moderate drought. Also, the use is outside of the high use season. Irrigation systems is what puts a big demand on the system. In terms of hard water, the hardness is caused by calcium and magnesium. The two bedrock wells have no hardness to them whatsoever. The Garland Well, which is a gravel pack well, tends to have a high hardness. When the water is pumped into the system, it's not just pumped with one well all the time; it's mixed. Hardness tests have been done out in the system and it's been found to be 70 to 75, which is on the low end of hard water.*

**Joe McDonough, 5 Random Rd.,** asked if RWD has ever chlorinated the system.

*RWD does chlorinate the water during flushing cycles, which are done in April and October. Prior to 1977, the water that was in the Rye Water District was Portsmouth water and that is chlorinated. After the Garland Well was established in 1977, the District discontinued using Portsmouth water and it became non-chlorinated at that time.*

**Mr. McDonough** questioned the water sources all becoming contaminated at the same time.

*The three water tanks did not become contaminated. There was absolutely nothing wrong with the Washington Road tanks. The sample that showed E. coli was at the sample site at the meter building at that tank site. General analysis samples were pulled from the tanks and did not show any E. coli. The sample site at the Washington Road site was chosen so that if anything like this was detected, it could be known immediately and the tank could be shut down. The District has the equipment put into place to allow for this to be done. There was never a sample taken directly from the tank that detected E. coli.*

**Cybele Grier, 1311 Ocean Blvd.,** asked if DNA testing could be done to determine if the source of the E. coli is in fact from human waste versus animal.

*The samples are no longer available, as they go to the lab and there has been no further hits of E. coli. There's a hold time on a sample. Once a sample is drawn, it has to be sampled within 72 hours. Samples are not kept in-house by the Water District.*

**Charlotte Dura, 559 Long John Rd.,** asked if it's reasonable to wait an entire month to test after coming off an E. coli problem.

*RWD took samples last week and will be taking the normal monthly samples within the next week or two. Those are the requirements from DES. If the residents want more testing, it can be put forth as a warrant article to be approved by the public at the District's annual meeting.*

**Tom Mack, 1064 Washington Rd.,** commented that the things that would need to be done to find the source is a long investigation, which may be months, and RWD may not find the issue. It could even be a combination of the drought and the wells being fully taxed and drawing in surface water. It's a complex situation that will take a long investigation to try to figure out. Mr. Mack noted that he's a hydrologist.

**Joann Price, 19 Parkridge Ave.,** spoke about the Water District's master plan and the infrastructure needs of the District. She encouraged residents to attend the RWD monthly meetings and to get involved. Mrs. Price also spoke about the information in the Consumer Confidence Report.

*The Consumer Confidence Report is published yearly for water test results that are generally taken at the end of the fourth quarter. The information in the report is based on the prior year's results and is the most up-to-date information available.*

**Jessica Mayer, 45 Random Rd.,** asked about the costs that this situation has created for the District.

*The overtime expenses were handled through emergency management, which is exactly what that department is for. RWD has a capital reserve fund that can be used for emergency actions and this would fall under that category. The bottled water that was purchased by the Town will be covered by the Rye Water District to help eliminate some of the costs to the Town. The public relations firm did their work pro bono for the Town as part of public outreach.*

**Mindi Messmer, 291 Washington Rd.,** commented about the timing of the samples and communication to the residents if there is a total coliform hit. She expressed concerns about PFAS in the water.

**Maureen Murtagh, Ocean Blvd.,** expressed concerns about the time it took for residents to be notified about the total coliform and E. coli detection. She also asked if there is any way that RWD can let the community know about retesting after a coliform hit on a sample.

*RWD needs more advice before making any policy changes; however, it will be discussed.*

**Mr. Cavallaro** asked if the Water District is reaching out for state and federal funds for water upgrades.

*RWD has a hard time getting grants because of Rye's economic stature. RWD has put in for a loan, over the past six years, for the water treatment plant, but have never made the cutoff. If the treatment plant is built, chlorination would be part of the treatment plant. Right now, chlorination is done at the wellhead for the Garland Well, and the Bailey Brook Well.*

**Lindsay Beynon, 30 La Mer Rd.,** asked if the residents should be comfortable how drinking the water going forward.

*NH DES confirmed that the water is safe to drink and that is why the Boil Order was lifted. Not only did the testing results show it, but there is now the other safety net of having disinfection residual in the system.*

**Julie Fehrstrom, 304 Wallis Rd.,** asked if there is any relationship between the water closures this past summer at the beaches and the Town's water supply. She also asked if testing by the Water District changes during those times.

*Testing does not change during those times. Surface water is different than bedrock well water. The water from the ocean would not affect the wells on Garland Road. The RWD system is tested on a monthly basis for contamination of the system. The system is protecting its water internally.*

RWD Commissioner Scott Marion thanked the Water District staff for all their work throughout this process. He also thanked the cooperation of the Select Board and Town Departments. He encouraged the residents to stay involved.

Select Board Chair Winslow thanked the residents for attending the meeting. He also thanked NH DES for attending, along with Health Office Dr. Gail Snow and the town staff.

#### **IV. Other Business**

*None*

## **Adjournment**

At 3:30 p.m., Selectman Bill Epperson moved to adjourn the Select Board meeting. Seconded by Tom King. Select Board all in favor.

At 3:30 p.m., Rye Water District Commissioner Scott Marion moved to adjourn the Rye Water District meeting. Seconded by Ralph Hickson. RWD Commissioners all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Dyana F. Ledger