Media Contact: Nick Lawler, General Manager, 978-520-2222

For Release: September 13, 2023

LELWD Completes Construction of Project to Filter PFAS from Public Drinking Water

Treatment Plant & Pipeline Project $4.2 Million Under Budget

LITTLETON – A ribbon-cutting ceremony today celebrated the completed construction of a $20.25 million water treatment project to remove a newly regulated chemical contaminant from the town's public drinking water supply. The project finished $4.2 million under budget and consists of a new water treatment plant and a new transmission pipeline.

The 10,000 square-foot Whitcomb Avenue Water Treatment Plant will filter per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, a family of chemical compounds with associated health risks, and iron and manganese, two naturally occurring nuisance minerals. The plant can filter up to 1.8 million gallons of water per day from the adjacent Whitcomb Avenue wells and the Spectacle Pond well located 3.5 miles away.

"From the day we discovered PFAS in the Spectacle Pond well, the community has rallied and supported the construction of this plant to ensure clean, reliable drinking water. A single treatment plant to serve two well sites was the best, most cost-effective option. We congratulate the LELWD team for bringing this project in under budget in a very challenging bidding and construction environment," said Chairman Ivan Pagacik of the Board of Commissioners of the Littleton Electric Light and Water Departments.

The ceremony also dedicated the building in memory of the late Meg Fraser Romily, who served 27 years as the Operations Assistant for the water department. Romily, who unexpectedly passed away in December 2022, embodied the spirit of public service that drives LELWD in its mission to deliver reliable electric and water service to its

communities. A plaque affixed to the building will preserve her memory and honor her dedication to Littleton.

“Meg embodied dedication to community service and stands as an example of the commitment shared by all her colleagues to do our very best for the people we serve. PFAS may be the single biggest challenge ever faced by public water suppliers, and we have solved a very complex problem by remaining focused on our mission of public service,” said Nick Lawler, P.E., LELWD’s General Manager.

While the ribbon-cutting marks the end of construction, the commissioning of the filtration systems is now underway. The iron filters are fully online, and the manganese filters are in the process of being brought online in September. It is expected the PFAS filtration will be fully operational in November. The plant uses granular activated carbon to remove PFAS and biological filtration to remove iron and manganese.

BACKGROUND

- The project broke ground on June 16, 2021.
- The project received a 20% forgiveness grant from the Commonwealth in March 2022, which saves ratepayers $4 million. The project also received a $200,000 grant from MassDEP for design and testing.
- The remaining $16 million is financed with a zero-interest loan from the State Revolving Loan program. The loan will be repaid by water ratepayers, and no Town of Littleton tax revenues are used to pay for the project.
- The project completion will relieve water restrictions necessary after the discovery of PFAS in the Spectacle Pond well during voluntary testing by LELWD in 2019. Since then, use of the Spectacle Pond well has been reduced and its waters blended with the Beaver Brook wells’ output to lower the PFAS levels below the state’s maximum containment level of 20 parts per trillion.
- PFAS are manmade chemicals, associated with various health risks and known for their nonstick properties and durability in the environment.
- Iron and manganese are naturally occurring minerals that can affect the taste and appearance of tap water and removing them is a first step in removing PFAS.