

**EXHIBIT 2 TO ODR-001-002**

**Summary of the Belfast Water District  
Public Meeting under 35-A M.R.S. §§ 703, 1101, and 6109  
of the Maine Public Utilities Commission Rule  
March 15, 2018**

The Belfast Water District held a Public Meeting for the Proposed Sale of District Water Resource Land on Thursday, March 15, 2018, at the Belfast Boathouse, 34 Commercial Street, Belfast, Maine. Present were the Board of Trustees: Stephen Hall, Chairman; Bruce Osgood, Vice Chairman; Henry Chalmers, Treasurer; Eileen Dubinett, Secretary; Kenneth Colby Horne, Trustee; the District's Superintendent, Keith Pooler; the District's Office Assistant, Suzette Harford; and the District's Counsel, Andrew Hamilton, of Eaton Peabody.

Superintendent, Keith Pooler, started the meeting at 6:33 PM opening introductions; the purpose and information about the public meeting; and the procedural provisions described by the District's Counsel, Andrew Hamilton, of Eaton Peabody. (**Exhibit A to Summary of March 15, 2018 BWD Public Meeting attached**)

After introductory statements, Keith Pooler opened the floor for questions at 6:55 PM.

**Joanne Moesswilde, 287 Lower Congress Street, Customer**

Ms. Moesswilde stated she understands the water in the Little River Reservoir is not for human consumption but is concerned about the value of the land and what it can do for all as far as lifestyle and health for the people of Belfast. She feels the property should be purchased by the City to be preserved as Green Space. She is not in favor of the sale.

**Dana Keene, 27 Cindee Lane, Hyland Estates, Customer**

Mr. Keene stated that he owns a mobile home park with 68 lots. He questions, if the land at 285 Northport Avenue has not been useful for 37 years, it just looks good, then why has the District kept it this long? It costs the ratepayers money. He feels it should be sold no matter what, even if the deal with Nordic Aquafarms, Inc. (NAF) falls through. It is an expense that we are not using. He is in favor of the sale.

Superintendent Pooler replied that the District kept it because it is the District's property. When this opportunity came along, the Board decided that it is not in the best interests of the ratepayers to keep it.

**Andrew Stevenson, 5 Union Street, Customer**

Mr. Stevenson is cautiously optimistic about the sale to Nordic Aquafarms. He stated a concern about the protection of the groundwater aquifer long term. Who else has drawing rights on the aquifer? How might it be managed? And whether the District is confident, there will be a steady supply of water for the citizens of Belfast and any other businesses that might come in later.

Superintendent Pooler, with support from the District's Counsel, Andrew Hamilton, explained the numerous studies that have been done on the wells and the aquifer to support the amount of water available to all in Belfast. Mr. Pooler added that the District owns a substantial amount of wellhead protection property around the wells. This land buffer protects the wells from other usage and allows the District to get all the water upstream from the wells. The groundwater system is protected by the District and state and federal governments under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Mr. Stevenson asked does the District have any future plans to purchase more land upriver from the wellhead to expand our protection?

Mr. Pooler explained that part of his job is to keep an eye out for any opportunity to purchase land or conservation easements around the aquifer. In the last ten years, the District has purchased over 150 acres.

**Rick Bernasconi, 46 Battery Road, Battery Association, Customer**

Mr. Bernasconi asked the District's Counsel, Andrew Hamilton, to explain what happens if the City gets 759 signatures.

Mr. Hamilton read the procedural provisions of the letter to customers and the District's introduction, particularly the portion regarding the right to petition by gathering the signatures of at least 759 Belfast Water District customers.

Mr. Bernasconi then asked Superintendent Pooler about the use of the groundwater wells, based on looking over the pumping records, noting that since 1969 to current day, the "per year" average has decreased. The new facility could require up to 262,000,000 gallons. He is concerned that there is no guarantee that the water in the aquifer will continue to be available year after year.

Mr. Pooler explained that historically these wells were used for industry in the City and were using more volume from the wells. He also noted that several influences increase and decrease the water available at a specific point in time but on average the wells have sustained heavier use. If Mr. Bernasconi is concerned that the aquifer will dry up, that is not consistent with the long-term history of these aquifers and the data that we have.

Mr. Bernasconi repeated that there are no guarantees, and the increase of 262,000,000 is a concern. He then asked about the water discharge that will be coming out of NAF.

Mr. Hamilton replied that the District's concern is only the intake of water from the District. The water discharge is a wholly separate subject that will be addressed by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and commenting state agencies, as well as the City's permitting process.

**Jayne Giles, 15 Tozier Street, Customer**

Ms. Giles asked about the two dams. Who owns them now? Who will own them after the sale? And who is responsible for the maintenance and care of them?

Superintendent Pooler and Counselor Hamilton replied that the ownership of the Upper Reservoir Dam wouldn't change with the sale, it will remain the property of the Belfast Water District. The Lower Reservoir Dam may be part of the agreement. There is a Capital Facilities Evaluation being done on the dam structure by NAF to determine its value and the costs to keep the dam. There are also agencies that have jurisdiction over dam safety and water levels; they would look at whether the dam should be left in place or abandoned.

Ms. Giles then asked what the District may do, if anything, in terms of capital improvements for the dam.

Mr. Pooler replied that the District does not have a budget for dam improvements. Mr. Hamilton replied that it is not currently used or useful to the District since the Goose River Aquifer was developed and used since 1980. It was an important historical vestige of the Belfast Water Company when it was used as a water source, but the District would abandon the dam if it sells the property to NAF and they elect not to acquire the dam. Mr. Hamilton stated that any decision by the District to abandon the dam would only be to abandon its rights in the dam. The City and the State of Maine would have input on whether the dam remains if the District abandons its rights under Maine law.

**Chris Wright, 356 High Street, Customer**

Mr. Wright asked about the Board posing the question: Is this a good idea for the community? He would like to know if there were any reservations or downsides to this sale?

Superintendent Pooler replied, yes, there were good questions by the Trustees when first approached about the sale, especially the sentimental value of the property. The Board, the Superintendent, and its advisors then looked at the offer and the possibility of having a large customer with additional revenue, to help with infrastructure improvements and keeping the water rates low for the customers. They felt spending money on the dams that are not being used, is not a good idea for our customers. Mr. Pooler couldn't recall any other downside risks.

Counselor Hamilton expressed that the Board of Trustees addressed the need to assure that there would be no net harm to the customers of the District as a result of the sale. He explained that Belfast is very involved and that these agreements are not only with the Water District but also with the City of Belfast. The City has expressed a consistent and strong interest in the economic development potential of NAF.

**Andrew Stevenson, 5 Union Street, Customer (2<sup>nd</sup> set of comments/ questions)**

Mr. Stevenson asked about the 6-year water agreement with NAF to purchase a guaranteed amount. He asked if NAF sold the property to another entity, what happens to this agreement?

Counselor Hamilton advised, after reviewing the Water Supply and Purchase Agreement during the meeting, that NAF may not assign this agreement without the prior written consent of the Belfast Water District. He pointed to Section 8 of the agreement and read its provisions in response to Mr. Stevenson's question.

**Alicia Gaiero, 147 Northport Avenue, Customer**

Miss Gaiero spent the day in the library, writing an essay on a dam in Yosemite National Park. She wrote about the intrinsic values of the environment. She feels it is important to preserve a beautiful place, such as this property, but not at the expense of the economic development that could come to Belfast with this sale. She doesn't feel that the Belfast Water District should hold on to a piece of land that is no longer in use. She is currently a college student, studying water rights of water districts. As a younger member of the Belfast community, she sees this sale as an economic opportunity for students to return to the Belfast area. She is in favor of the sale.

**Martha Conway-Cole, 61 Northport Avenue, Customer**

Ms. Conway-Cole asked about the lower dam. If it is abandoned, does the Lower Reservoir empty completely?

Counselor Hamilton explained the abandonment doesn't always mean the removal of the dam. It may mean a change of ownership to the City or the State. If neither the City nor the State wants the dam, then that's when it evolves further, and you have to answer the question, what happens? Dam abandonment proceedings take many things into account. NAF is in the due diligence process now, which may take time up to 18 months.

**Larry Theye, 286 Northport Avenue, Customer**

Mr. Theye expressed his appreciation for the best water he has ever had and that we are wonderful neighbors. What happens if this deal falls through? His understanding is that the deal is based on NAF finding enough water and other factors.

Superintendent Pooler replied that if NAF doesn't find enough water on the land, that the deal will not go through. The Belfast Water District will continue to own the property.

**Ridgely Fuller, 47 Village Road, Noncustomer**

Ms. Fuller lives in a community of 35 homes that are currently on wells. What happens if this Village community and all other Belfast homeowners on wells need to be on the water system? Is the Belfast Water District anticipating enough

water for that and future expansion?

Superintendent Pooler replied that the District had taken all the future possibilities into account and there have been numerous studies on the history of the aquifer. Yes, even after the sale, there will be over 400,000,000 gallons leftover for future expansion and new development.

Ms. Fuller also expressed how happy she is with the information about the wells and how adequately protected they are by the land that we own. However, should the residents be concerned about the Water District starting to sell off their land? Are we setting a precedent? She didn't realize the sale of Water District land could be used as a money maker for Belfast.

Mr. Pooler replied that citizens of Belfast should not be concerned. The District has only sold land and will only sell land that is not used or of no value to its customers.

**Mary Jean Crowe, 12 Vine Street, Customer**

Ms. Crowe expressed her unhappiness with the changes in the City. She spoke about zoning changes that will be happening around town and how people will be affected by them. She believes that water is a human right, and we are selling it off. She stated that she moved here because she thought it was a special place but doesn't understand what is going on. The City is changing in the wrong way, it's all about money, and she is sick of it. She is not in favor of the sale. Ms. Crowe concluded by reading a portion of an editorial in today's paper, the Republican Journal.

An unnamed attendee asked what the zoning changes are that Ms. Crowe is referring to.

Superintendent Pooler and Counselor Hamilton referred the question to the City of Belfast's Planning Director, Wayne Marshall. Mr. Marshall spoke about the zoning changes. There are four being considered, and he referred people to the City of Belfast's website, the letter sent to all citizens of Belfast, future City Council meetings, and a hearing on March 20, 2018.

**Debbie Smith, Perkins Road, Customer**

Ms. Smith asked what happens to the aquifer around the Little River?

Superintendent Pooler replied that he has no information or data that there is an aquifer at or near the District's Little River property.

**Joanne Moesswilde, 287 Lower Congress Street, Customer (2nd set of comments/questions)**

Ms. Moesswilde stated that she was walking on the trail near the Upper Reservoir and saw two drilling rigs. If they are not buying the Upper Reservoir, why are they there?

Superintendent Pooler and Counselor Hamilton explained that the District gave NAF permission to look for water at the Upper Reservoir. If they find water, that's another chapter, and any talks will be subject to the same proceedings as we are doing now.

Ms. Moesswilde stated that the possible sale of the Upper Reservoir amplifies her concern.

Superintendent, Keith Pooler, adjourned the Public Meeting at 8:03 PM.