

Tour of MaineWater Managed Fryeburg Facilities

Part 2, Questions and Considerations

Please note wording shaded in lilac was eliminated from Part 1 and appears here.

by Edy Kizaki, August 9, 2025, Saturday

On Thursday, members of the Fryeburg Water District Board of Trustees attended a tour of the MaineWater (MWC) managed facilities in Fryeburg, owned by the privately held Fryeburg Water



Company (FWC) and which the State of Maine has mandated Fryeburg Water District (FWD) having the ability to purchase the water company to be owned by the people of the water district. Our tour was given by Peter Vasapolli, Superintendent of the Fryeburg Water facilities for MaineWater Company. MWC manages the assets for the Fryeburg Water Company, owners and controllers of Fryeburg's water system and furnishing water extraction rights to Poland Spring/Nestle/Blue Triton/PrimoBrands since the 1990's. During the time since corporate bulk water exports has begun,

the town water has migrated from the pristine Poland Spring water to using Wells 2 and 3 which are not considered to be of as good quality (some town residents worry about the proximity of Well 2 to the town transfer station which probably is full of contaminants). Since the contract between FWC and Nestle (sold to BlueTriton in 2021 and now owned by Primo Brands. Is PrimoBrands a subsidiary of Nestle Waters North America? Since Primo Brands was formed from the merger of BlueTriton Brands [formerly Nestlé Waters North America] and Primo Water Corporation and the merger was completed in November 2024, Primo Brands is a separate entity, not a subsidiary of the former Nestlé Waters North America, but obviously Nestle is still a major player in this company, often considered to have been formed to change the name Nestle which was getting so much bad publicity due to their numerous manipulations to maintain their water empire without due input from the people living where the water is extracted, communities who resent their rights being ignored).

) mandates that the town residents' water needs come first, this is seen as a corporate grab by many town residents, who would rather still be using the pure delicious water from Well 1 which seems possible if the utility was publicly owned and the water the town used to enjoy still be available to the residents first. However, the main concern of many in the community who question the current structure is for the health of our aquifer over the long term and that our recharge rates are on a slow decline.

Our tour was informative and the information Superintendent Vasapolli gave us sounded reassuring about our water quality, although that information of course is subject to independent fact checking. Fryeburg residents have a long history of having to questions the “facts” about our water so it is only reasonable that there is some uneasiness about the information we are given by those running the system, who work for FWC. First we visited Well 2 where there is a treatment building, treating for PFAS as well as the regular treatments, and our group was briefed on the equipment and procedures involved. After that, we walked down to the wellhead and took a look at it. We heard about the upcoming demolition of the current garage and the construction of the new treatment building, at which time the current treatment building will become a storage unit or a garage.



The new treatment building is being constructed because the current building and contents were put up fast to ensure good water quality meeting the requirements for a maximum level of PFAS for the Fryeburg Fair and the plan was to replace it with a more comprehensive treatment building once the dust settled. One notable feature is that the current building does not have back-up power so equipment and feeds must be reset by hand in the event of a power failure. There is redundancy due to Well 3 having backup power and the ability of MWC to switch the town's water source from Well 2 to Well 3 and back as they wish and very quickly. Once the bigger treatment facility at Well 2 is built this redundancy will be even more robust.



Due to the expense of this expanded treatment building no “old pipe replacement” projects will take place until the year after it is done, and then at least a couple of the 2-foot pipe streets are due to be replaced. It is planned that the new building will be in place by next August, or December 2026 at the

latest. We are checking on how much of the revenue generated by customer payments to the FWC are used for maintenance and expenses, as well as bank payments for the loans taken out to fund projects, and how much is utilized as stock distributions to the stock holders. FWC investment was in place of bank loans, so if FWC were not receiving funds back as “repayment” some or all of that would be going to a bank or government agency which makes loans to water companies for necessary repairs and updates. In our discussion the same day, MWC executive Mike Cummins pointed out that luckily for everyone, there was a lot of grant money available to address PFAS concerns and the treatment facilities didn’t cost the district a lot of money (looking for actual figures). Questions about rate increases will also be submitted, how the repairs, expenses of filtering out PFAS, and building the new facility will potentially increase ratepayer bills.

Some details that were interesting are how the huge storage tank inside the treatment building is filled with materials which strains out the PFAS before sending the water to the water customers. (There will be two tanks larger than this in the new facility.) There are three monitoring points, high on the tank, midlevel, and lower down. These are used to check if any PFAS is present in the water. Currently even the highest one (where the water is not yet filtered through all the material) shows a zero level of PFAS in the water after filtering through the top of the tank. In addition chlorine is added (to take care of microbes that could cause illness), fluoride is added (a practice some but not all water districts follow, as it was the cheapest way to make sure all kids got access to fluoride for their teeth back in the 80’s when the practice was started) and Caustic Potash is added for PH adjustment. Any questions about the actual chemistry involved are welcome, but it’s beyond my personal knowledge so those will be directed to Peter and we’ll get back to you with a response. Or he welcomes direct contact if you have questions.



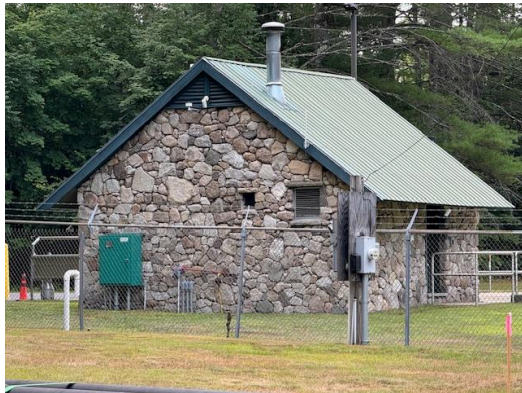
After seeing the Well 2 treatment building we walked



down the hill, covered in green grass and surrounded by

forest, to see the actual building that houses the Well 2 wellhead. On the way we passed the original pumping site, which belongs to Poland Springs/Blue Triton now Primo (Primo now has legal ownership of Poland Springs) and was replaced by the pumping station up near the treatment facility. Next to the pumping site is the current “spring,” which is picturesque and according to Peter has fish living in it.

Leaving Well 2, we saw the current Poland Springs building that pumps the water and loads it into the trucks.



Next we visited Well 3, a few minutes down the road. It is in good shape, with back-up power, higher capacity pipes and larger meters as well as a computer system that provides a variety of monitoring reports. MWC uses water from both wells



and there is not a set schedule as to which well is used at any given time, not much information was given us on how they decide which well to use. Peter commented that there is zero evidence of PFAS in the Well 2 monitoring system so they consider it to be on a par with the water in Well 3, although Well 2 without the treatment is not considered usable or as high quality and is not as clean. Because of the

treatment it is considered completely usable and safe. He also commented that the water before treatment is still higher quality water than what they get in some other districts he manages.

STATE OF MAINE
Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Center for Disease Control & Prevention

Home → Healthy Living → Health and Safety → Drinking Water Safety

Drinking Water Safety

The Maine CDC works to ensure safe drinking water in Maine, to protect public health, by administering and enforcing drinking water and subsurface wastewater regulations, providing education and technical and financial assistance.

Drinking Water Consumers
Public water system customers, private well owners and users

Public Water Systems
Water utilities, mobile home parks, nursing homes, schools, factories, restaurants, campgrounds, etc.

Program Partners
Laboratories, training providers,

Drinking Water Professionals

The Maine Drinking Water website was discussed, and how MWC interacts with Maine Drinking Water (which does assessments called a Sanitary Survey which they do for all the Maine water systems) to maintain good practices and high water quality. Peter suggested we all visit the

[Maine Drinking Water Website Data and Reports](#) to see how their reporting is presented. He told us many of the water quality questions we asked would be answered by accessing this site,

although it must be stated that the current lawsuit brought against Maine Drinking Water due to a Nestle's employee being appointed to their board questions the accuracy of the data. The lawsuit is ongoing and the situation prompts some local residents to question if the Maine Drinking Water data is complete. This should be researched and discussed in our future meetings.

An upcoming evaluation of the tanks FWD has to keep a proper water reserve will take place next week. Maine Drinking Water alerts the water company to any issues and potential issues, best practices, and suggests improvements for better quality. An interesting detail is that the tanks are quite high up, leading to strong water pressure in the system. This is not a problem as the system can handle it. The locations of the storage tanks are on Oxen Pull Road and Chautauqua Hill.

The group discussed the types of pipes used in the Fryeburg system, age and qualities of the different kinds of pipes, and the implications of each type of pipe. We were given information on the most recent break and how that was handled (about 18 months ago, DOT was drilling to install a weather monitoring system on the roadside and drilled into and burst a large PVC pipe.) We were given information on the water testing for aquifer level and water quality, and discussed where the sample sites are. Two sites mostly used currently are an old age home in town (near the Fairgrounds and which is probably a newer building with newer pipes) and the FWC offices. We asked what happened to the quality of the water after leaving the pumping station and passing through the pipes of various ages and conditions in the town system. Peter explained that the water quality in each home will depend on the pipes it passes through on the way to the home from the pumping station, so residents must check their own water quality if they want to know how the journey is affected by the pipes on the way from the pumping station to their homes. That is up to the residents to research and determine. This leaves us with the question of how the current pipes in the system affect our final water quality and how we can determine the water quality in our homes without paying for expensive tests for our household water.

MaineWater seems to be doing a professional job, Superintendent Vasapolli was careful to remind me that FWC is referred to for any decisions on spending and planning, while MaineWater does the daily and routine management of the water system.

Blue highlight is new wording from Part 1...Part 2 of this blog will examine some of the questions Trustees and residents have about the system's quality and cost. Since FWD is mandated to be able to purchase the Fryeburg water system for a public utility owned by the water customers, we have the obligation to consider all these questions seriously and public

comment is essential to understand our town's water situation and needs. Sincere thanks to Peter Vasapolli and his staff for the tour and their careful attention to our questions! Future discussion: Differences in the four types of pipes being used and how to decide (if the town residents were able to make these decisions) how to balance costs vs. quality of our system. Currently any upgrades or repairs that represent a non-standard expense are proposed by MWC to FWC and FWC will decide on the cost vs. value, what kind of pipes to use for example. This is disturbing to town residents since FWC does not share their profit margin or how they make cost-based decisions with the customers. FWD Trustees have asked for financial transparency from FWC but have not received a response as of this time.



The Evergreen "spring"! Peter says fish live here, and Steve saw a frog.