

# York Water District ‘in great shape’

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By Deborah McDermott

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YORK -- The York Water District is well managed, “in great shape and positioned for great customer service with high quality water for the next 20 years.”

That was the overall analysis of a recently released YWD master plan that is expected to guide operations for decades to come. The district received a \$15,000 state grant and hired Jeff Musich of Wright-Pierce Engineering to prepare the plan. He recently presented his findings to selectmen.

He said there have been a number of improvements since the last district master plan in 2004. Key among them, the district has replaced old, unstable cast iron pipes with modern-day plastic pipes, which are larger to allow for greater flow, said Musich. “York is far ahead of its contemporaries” in removing iron pipes, he said.

As a result, “fire protection in York is above average. The larger and newer pipes are great, and it helps with insurance ratings,” he said.

The pond allows for “plenty of water in town. And the treatment plant capacity is large enough and robust enough to meet projections” of future use, he said.

Another effort worth noting, he said, is the work the district has done to protect its watershed.

“Chases Pond is a real jewel, and the protected land has resulted in high water quality,” he said. He said he knows the district is working “to secure the remaining land parcels in the watershed, but they are very few” in number. He said many municipalities, particularly in more developed areas south of York, “are really struggling” to maintain adequate watershed protection. He also applauded the district for its effort to actively patrol the land and educate visitors about the rules.

Future challenges are “not major and not capital driven.” As the leadership of the district ages, it will be important to undertake succession planning. This is an issue not only in York but industry-wide, he said. Existing iron pipes should be replaced in the future as well.

Finally, he said, the district needs to get a handle on the impacts of climate change on the pond, the watershed and the entire system.

“Eventually, it will affect the yield you can pull out of the reservoir,” he said. The district should look to develop a plan “to start monitoring climate change to try to understand how it will affect the district’s ability to provide clean water.”

Copies of the report are available at [www.yorkwaterdistrict.org](http://www.yorkwaterdistrict.org), with hard copies available at the Water District office on Woodbridge Road and at Town Hall in the town manager’s office.