



water works

The Plainview Water District Newsletter

The Making of a Water District: A Bit of History

The Plainview Water District was formed in 1928, when it became a special improvement district in the Town of Oyster Bay, encompassing all of Plainview and Old Bethpage. Until 1953, all water consumed was purchased from a neighboring district. There were no wells, tanks, administrators or maintenance buildings, just a limited number of water mains.

Development of the Plainview Water District progressed from 1953 to its current status as an efficiently operated water district, with the implementation of 11 deep wells, 3 ground-storage tanks and a 1.25 million-gallon elevated tank.

Plainview Water District has provided many years of dedicated service to the communities of Plainview and Old Bethpage. Today, potable water meeting all local, state and federal standards is furnished to more than 10,500 accounts through approximately 130 miles of water main serving approximately 35,000 residents.



Your Questions Answered

The Inner Workings of the Plainview Water District

Many of our consumers have inquired as to what the responsibilities of the various positions are within the Plainview Water District. We hope you will find that the information in this article provides increased clarity and understanding, and that it will give you a deeper appreciation for everything that goes into ensuring the superb quality of water that Plainview and Old Bethpage residents enjoy.

People are often misled into believing that supplying water is easy, due to the fact that, as consumers, all they have to do is turn on their faucets and clean, fresh water comes out of the tap. Yet the supplying of clean, fresh, potable water is a science unto itself. It takes education, dedication and years of experience in order to produce water that meets all of the federal, state

and local regulatory requirements placed upon public water suppliers.

The following section will hopefully explain not only the responsibilities of the various positions, but just what it takes to become a commissioner, superintendent or water plant operator. It takes more than just getting hired; it requires a long process (in some cases in excess of 10 years) to become familiar with the water supply system and to obtain the required New York State Department of Health certifications that allow a Plainview Water District employee to perform his/her job functions. Water district personnel functions range from providing maintenance to operating a computerized Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) and billing system.

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Where Were You?

The winter season has been exceptionally harsh to residents of New York. This edition of *Where Were You?* is dedicated to the hardworking District employees who brave the elements to make sure that consumers of the Plainview Water District have a plentiful supply of clean drinking water 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, even during emergencies such as water-main breaks. Where were our service providers this winter? The following photo display shows just a glimpse of what it is like to be an employee of the Plainview Water District working in treacherous conditions. To serve your needs, these employees are performing their duties in terrible and hazardous weather – stepping up to the challenge every day.



February 7, 2011; 26 degrees, partly cloudy



February 1, 2011; 29 degrees, freezing rain



February 10, 2010; 30 degrees, blizzard conditions

Renovations Mean Better Service for Plainview Water District Residents

Plainview Water District is in the process of rehabilitating several treatment plants in the area, and continues to facilitate maintenance work at our water wells and storage tanks. Through these efforts, residents will benefit from enhanced services and more efficient operations. As always, the Plainview Water District takes pride in supplying the highest quality of water at the lowest rates possible to the residences of the District.

We invite you to learn more about the ongoing improvements by visiting our website, www.plainviewwater.org, where you'll find PWD Trivia. Try a sample question right now:



The District is replacing the roof on its two-million-gallon ground storage tank (built in 1960) located at the Haypath Road side. What is the approximate anticipated cost?

(a) \$ 100,000 (b) \$ 350,000 (c) \$ 500,000 (d) \$ 800,000

Answer: (d) \$800,000! The ground storage tank is pre-stressed concrete tank that over years has been repaired to maintain its viability and stability to continue to store potable water. It has come to the point where the roof is in need of replacement and this will be no small task as evidenced by the cost.

The Inner Workings of Plainview Water District

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Administration

Board of Commissioners – The Plainview Water District has a three-member Board of Commissioners – a chairperson, a secretary and a treasurer – who must reside within the district and are elected by residents of the District. Commissioners are elected to three-year terms, one Commissioner each year. The Board of Commissioners oversees the financial stability of the District, implements policies and approves expenditures.

Superintendent – The superintendent is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the District and supervises a team of trained personnel. The superintendent reports to the Board of Commissioners. In order to become a superintendent of a water district, one must obtain a NYS Grade I-B Water Operator certification, which requires a minimum of 10 years of water supply experience. This certification must be renewed every three years, and the superintendent must earn a minimum of 30 contact (education) hours during this three-year period in order to maintain the certification. In addition, the superintendent must first pass a rigid Civil Service exam and do well enough to be appointed from the list.

Your current superintendent has almost 25 years of experience in the water-supply field. In addition, he holds a bachelor's degree in engineering, and a Master of Science degree in environmental science, and has completed coursework toward his Ph.D. in environmental science. He has also completed numerous certification courses in areas related to homeland security and emergency preparedness and teaches water operator certification courses to other industry professionals.

He is involved in the Long Island Water Conference and was chairman in 2010. He will also become a trustee of the NYS section of the American Water Works Association beginning in April 2011.

Field Operations

Water Plant Operators – A water plant operator controls and maintains the machinery and equipment of a water plant and allied pumping stations that are utilized in a water purification and distribution system. The operator is also responsible for maintaining adequate water pressure throughout the District's system, and for maintaining the proper dosage of chemicals in the water supply to ensure its purity.

A water plant operator must maintain a minimum of a NYS Grade II-B Water Plant Operator certification. Many of the Plainview Water District operators have in excess of 10 years of experience and hold NYS Grade I-B Water Plant Operator certifications. This certification must be renewed every three years, and the operator must earn a minimum of 30 contact (education) hours during this three-year period in order to maintain the certification.

Water Servicer – A water servicer maintains and makes repairs to various field equipment and installations of a municipal water system. In addition, the servicer maintains and repairs water mains, service lines, hydrants, valves and meters. A servicer will also be called upon to locate and tap water mains for new service lines and will inspect a consumer's plumbing for possible leaks or other damage associated with high-consumption investigations.

A water servicer must maintain a minimum of a NYS Grade II-B Water Plant Operator certification. This certification must be renewed every three years and the servicer must earn a minimum of 30 contact (education) hours during this three-year period in order to maintain the certification.

Office Operations

Office Manager (Secretary to the Board) – The office manager directs and performs all aspects of office management operations. Under the direction of the superintendent, the office manager exercises considerable judgment in the directing of subordinate professional and clerical personnel engaged in all aspects of office operations. The office manager also acts as the secretary to the Board; in this capacity, he/she performs all administrative duties required by the Board of Commissioners.

Account Clerk – The account clerk performs clerical work involving the compilation and maintenance of financial accounts and records. The account clerk must possess a working knowledge of accounting procedures and is responsible for the accurate performance of these procedures. The account clerk must post to ledger accounts of expense and appropriation records and prepares all summary statements. The account clerk must pass a Civil Service exam and do well enough to be appointed from the list.

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Or Current Resident

More Trivia About the Plainview Water District

The Plainview Water District is scheduled to paint the 1.25-million gallon elevated water storage tank located at the Donna Drive site.

What would you guess is the approximate anticipated cost?

- (a) \$250,000 (b) \$1,250,000
(c) \$500,000 (d) \$3,000,000

Answer: (d) \$3,000,000! Maintaining a public water supply is an expensive proposition, and the painting of an elevated tank, usually every 15-20 years, is no exception. The high cost is due to many factors such as height, location (residential area, commercial area, open fields) and any additional repair work required to maintain the tank up to regulatory requirements.



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by visiting our website, www.plainviewwater.org.