



**OUR MISSION, QUALITY AND COST – THE INSEPARABLE TRIO**  
*Norm Labbe, Superintendent (nlabbe@kkw.org)*

It could be said that 2017 was just another year. It could also be said that 2017 was full of challenges, successes and to some degree, as of yet undetermined outcomes. For better or for worse, the latter is the truer statement. Although we did have a “regular” year, with near record water production, a healthy amount of main extensions and infrastructure replacement and success on several initiatives, we were once again challenged by things that we didn’t expect. So is the genesis of the first item, as follows:

***Our legacy of “better living through chemistry”***

This is the short version of a much larger story. As you may have heard about over the past year, a growing number of both public and private groundwater supply sources have been contaminated by a family of man-made chemicals known as PFAS (polyfluoroalkyl substances). One recent local case involves Portsmouth New Hampshire’s groundwater supply that has been contaminated by PFAS used at the former Pease Air Force Base in fire suppression foam. These chemicals have been in widespread use for decades, in products ranging from Teflon to Scotchgard and from microwave popcorn bags to post-it pads. PFAS were the poster child for the cliché “better living through chemistry”. The problems with these chemicals are they don’t easily break down in the environment, they are very water-soluble and they are suspected of causing adverse health effects. Getting to our issue, a small amount of PFAS has been detected in one of our groundwater supplies. The source of the contamination is still being investigated. Even though this family of chemicals is not yet regulated by the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), last year we decided to shut the well down after the USEPA set a voluntary Health Advisory of 70 PPT (parts per trillion – note that one part per trillion is one millionth of one part per million or 0.000000000001). The USEPA’s Health Advisory is based

upon the assumption that a lifetime of exposure at or below that stated level will not cause adverse health effects. Being that our well’s water had less PFAS than that of the Health Advisory (averaging about 50 PPT) and that the well had been in service for less than five years, we are confident that the health of our customers has not been compromised in any way by the PFAS. Since last summer we

**Our Mission is to provide the highest quality drinking water and customer service at the most reasonable price**

have been conducting pilot tests to determine the best water treatment protocol for the removal of the PFAS. We are nearly at the point of planning to go full-scale with a treatment process that uses granulated activated carbon (GAC); not unlike what is used in typical residential faucet-mounted water filters. For a description of our water treatment strategy, see *GAC Filtration 101* on Page 3. If this has gotten you wanting more information, the long version of this story is on our website at [www.kkw.org](http://www.kkw.org).

***Everything has a price***

Yes, we are a non-profit organization; that doesn’t mean we are immune to cost increases and from surprises such as the one mentioned above. Rather than beat around the bush, yes, we’re planning a **6.6% across-the-board water rate increase to take effect this April, our first increase in three years.** For more information on this, see *Water Rate Update 2018* on Page 2. For an interesting article that describes our non-traditional way of keeping costs down for our customers, see *Water Tanks* on Page 4. Also related to the cost of doing business, on Page 4 is the return of *Beneath the Surface*, with a narrative explaining some of our operational challenges and an outline of our ongoing infrastructure replacement plans for 2018.

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