

# MWRA ADVISORY BOARD

## WATER AND SEWER UPDATE

JUNE 1990

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News and information on MWRA water and sewer programs, projects, and policies. Provided as a service to cities and towns by the Advisory Board.

- \* Norfolk County Jail and House of Correction
- \* Commonwealth Budget Legislation approved by House
- \* MWRA to assist with protection of the Cambridge Reservoir
- \* Advisory Board reviews MWRA FY91 Current Expense Budget
- \* MWRA establishes an Industrial Permit Fee Advisory Committee
- \* Advisory Board Operations Committee holds monthly meetings
- \* Status of Water Supply
- \* Editorial - "DEEP POCKETS" - Joe Favaloro.
- \* Leak Detection Program Update
- \* Calender of events

### NORFOLK COUNTY JAIL AND HOUSE OF CORRECTION

The State is currently building a new correctional facility, located on the Route 128 median strip in Dedham. After reviewing all the options on how to supply potable water service to the facility, the State Department of Capital Planning and Operations (DCPO) has proposed that water be supplied by the MWRA. The connection would be made to the Needham water distribution system, which is supplied by the MWRA. The proposal, however, has met with opposition from officials of the Dedham/Westwood Water District (DWWD), who believe that, since the facility is located in Dedham, it should be connected to the DWWD-supplied Dedham distribution system.

The estimated average daily water usage of the facility is 35,000 gpd, with a maximum of 47,000 gpd, depending upon the inmate population. The sewer services are expected to be connected directly to the MWRA interceptor and charged through the Town of Dedham. The DCPO states that their proposal is the least costly to the state and the most efficient. Officials from both the DCPO and DWWD are currently negotiating to reach an agreement in this matter. The MWRA Advisory Board is also reviewing the matter very closely because, under Section 8d of Chapter 372 of the Acts of 1984, the Advisory Board must approve all extensions to the MWRA delivery area.

## FY91 COMMONWEALTH BUDGET LEGISLATION (H5700)

The Massachusetts House of Representatives recently approved budget legislation that contains several provisions that affect the MWRA and its ratepayers.

The bill, H5700, fails to appropriate funds to reimburse the MWRA for costs related to the Clinton Wastewater Treatment Plant. Under current law, the MWRA should receive \$500,000 from the Commonwealth for operations and maintenance of the plant. The legislation also does not contain an appropriation of \$491,250 to reimburse debt service for projects initiated prior to 1986.

Moreover, Section 235 of the approved bill provides for a revised formula for calculating the MWRA watershed assessment. The revision, which calls for an additional 25% PILOT (Payment in lieu of taxes) payment, will cost the MWRA \$450,000 more per year. Also, Section 56 identifies a specific date for paying the FY90 watershed assessment--4/1/91--while Section 235 states that the annual assessment will be due by 6/30 each year from now on. This means that in FY91 the MWRA must pay both FY90 and 91 watershed assessments, at an additional cost of \$3.9 million.

Other provisions are: annual payments to the State Retirement Board of approximately \$1.3 million; annual assessments of approximately \$200,000, to help defray the cost of issuing reports on the MWRA's financial activities to the House and Senate; and proposed upgrades to the MDC telecommunication system that would cost the MWRA between \$30,000 and \$40,000.

The above costs total \$6.9 million and, when combined with additional monies the Commonwealth owes the MWRA, and has yet to pay--Clinton, at \$4.6 million; state grants, at \$5.6 million; and chemical and debt service reimbursement at \$2.6 million\*--makes a grand total of \$19.7 million. This amount of course will be added to the ratepayers' already onerous burden.

The Bill, H5700, Commonwealth Budget Legislation is currently under review in the Massachusetts Senate.

## MWRA BOARD VOTES TO ASSIST IN CAMBRIDGE RESERVOIR WATERSHED PROTECTION

The MWRA Board of Directors recently endorsed watershed protection measures for the Cambridge Reservoir and voted to provide MWRA staff assistance for watershed protection. They also agreed to contribute \$26,000 toward funding an ongoing Watershed Protection Committee.

The City of Cambridge receives most of its water from its own sources, Hobbs Brook and Stoney Brook, with only a small portion

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\*See Advisory Board comment to Nov. 21, 1989, CIP budget amendment.

supplied by the MWRA. It is important to protect the Cambridge Reservoir because, if that source of supply becomes contaminated, the impact on the MWRA system will be great.

A study by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council--the Cambridge Reservoir Watershed Protection Plan--which was recently completed as a part of its local source program, is the foundation of the MWRA Board of Directors support. The study identifies threats to the reservoir system from stormwater runoff, underground storage tanks, dumping of hazardous wastes, road salts, wastewater discharge, and leachate from landfills.

In addition to the MAPC study, the Board of Directors voted to support MWRA staff technical assistance for the regulation of underground storage tanks and hazardous materials, to cooperate with the State DPW to establish effective controls for runoff from Routes 2 and 128, and to cooperate with the DEP to establish tighter controls on industrial and commercial drainage.

The MWRA strongly urges all user communities in the vicinity of the watershed area to assist in the protection of the water supply.

#### **ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDS CUTS IN MWRA FY91 EXPENSE BUDGET**

The Advisory Board recently reviewed the MWRA's proposed Current Expense Budget for FY91. Preliminary estimates by the Authority called for a budget for the year starting July 1st at nearly \$225.3 million. Revenues would include some \$27.2 million to come from other charges, investment income, and unspent amounts from previous years. Most of the budget -- \$198.0 million -- would come from rates, a proposed increase from this year of 15.8% or nearly \$27.0 million.

The Advisory Board recommended a series of actions, which, if accepted, would have cut that increase back by \$19.5 million. Among the recommendations were:

- \* Reduce estimates for wages and salaries by adjusting vacancy rates, saving at least \$800,000.
- \* Revise estimated debt service payments downward by nearly \$6.4 million.
- \* Scale back estimates for insurance premiums by over \$400,000.
- \* Reduce estimates for removal of grit and screenings by \$500,000.
- \* Cut back on amounts budgeted for education, training, and meetings by \$200,000.

The Authority has accepted close to 68% of the dollar amount recommended by the Advisory Board, or \$13.3 million. But increased costs for scum treatment at Deer Island, expanded office space, and transfer of several capital projects to the current expense budget were only partially offset by more favorable estimates of investment income and some other savings, bringing actual reductions to \$12.7 million. In sum, rates will increase by almost \$14.3 million, or 8.35% for FY91.

## INDUSTRIAL PERMIT FEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Following a request by the MWRA Board of Directors, an Industrial Permit Fee Advisory Committee was established. This committee will assist the MWRA staff in the development of permit fees, which will be charged to industries that discharge wastes into the MWRA wastewater system. The committee will be comprised of representative from the MWRA, industries, municipalities, and public interest groups. This diverse participation will insure that a broad range of views are considered in developing the permit fee structure.

The Advisory Board was very instrumental in the development of this Advisory Committee, because in each of the last two MWRA budget reviews (FY90 and FY91) the Advisory Board recommended that the Authority establish a fee program to recover costs of permit issuance, and sampling and testing. The Advisory Board will also serve as an active member of the Advisory Committee.

## OPERATIONS COMMITTEE HOLDS MONTHLY MEETINGS

The MWRA Advisory Board's revamped Operations Committee has been conducting monthly meetings. The purpose of this committee is to discuss issues regarding water and wastewater operations. The topics, which are currently under discussion, are as follows:

- \* The Proposed Extension of the MWRA Water Delivery Service Area - to include the Town of Bedford and the new Norfolk County Jail and House of Correction.
- \* The Proposed MWRA Domestic Retrofit Program.
- \* Wastewater - Secondary vs. Advanced Primary Treatment.

The Operations Committee has dedicated itself to becoming actively involved in the technical side of all water and wastewater issues, which effect the MWRA communities.

## STATUS OF THE WATER SUPPLY

What a difference a year makes! At this time last year the talk around the MWRA water district was of DROUGHT and WATER SUPPLY EMERGENCY. The Quabbin Reservoir was operating at 68.4% capacity, which was well below normal operations and slowly approaching emergency status. This year, however, due to the conservation efforts in the communities over the past 12 months and the cooperation of Mother Nature, the Quabbin is operating at 93.8% capacity. This amounts to an average savings of 40 million gallons per day over the past year.

One may conclude the realization has come that water is definitely one of our most valuable resources and must not be wasted. If we all work together to conserve it, we can insure that our water supply will always be in sufficient quantity to service the needs of our communities.

" DEEP POCKETS " AN EDITORIAL BY JOE FAVALORO

Say "MWRA" to the Legislature, and what pops out in reply must be "Deep Pockets." Our Legislature is at it again, determined to have the MWRA live up to that nickname. House 5700 will wring every single dollar it can out of the MWRA. Add the cost of that legislation--\$6.9 million--to the dollars never paid for Clinton, the state grants promised and never received, and so on, ad nauseum, and you get the picture.

Unfortunately for the MWRA's ratepayers, the Legislature has apparently forgotten that those "deep pockets" are lined with their hard-earned dollars. As it is, they must carry, virtually alone, the well-nigh intolerable burden of cleaning up Boston Harbor.

Yet, at the same time that the state is increasing our costs, it wants us to help lower theirs. The Advisory Board is being asked to approve an extension of the MWRA water delivery system, through Needham, to serve the new prison at Norfolk. While we would like to help the state save money, we think the state should show ratepayers the same consideration, by making their burden lighter, not heavier.

Representative government isn't just about electing people to office. It also means standing up to them when necessary. I urge every one of you to contact your Representative and Senator to let them know you want them to become part of the solution, not the problem. Tell them to take their hands out of our pockets by eliminating those components in the budget that increase costs to the ratepayer--and while they're at it, to appropriate the dollars they owe us.

LEAK DETECTION PROGRAM UPDATE

As of May 15, 1990	Miles of pipe surveyed	5629.3
	# of leaks detected	2166
	Estimate leakage detected	28.0 MGD
	Leakage repaired	25.6 MGD

CALENDER OF EVENTS

June 20	Sewer users meeting, Waltham.
June 21	Advisory board meeting, Boston at 11:30 AM, guest speaker - Julie Belaga, Regional Director EPA.
June 27	MWRA Board of Directors meeting.
July 18	MWRA Board of Directors meeting.
August 15	MWRA Board of Directors meeting.
August 23	Advisory Board Field Trip to Fore River Staging Area (Tentative).