



News and Notes

A Publication of the
Advisory Board for MWRA Communities

January 2016



In Memorium

Mary Ann McClellan

"The most gentle and loving person to those who knew her"



1960 - 2016

We are sad to inform you that we all recently lost a good friend and colleague. After suffering from a catastrophic organ failure, Mary Ann succumbed peacefully Sunday afternoon with her family present.

Mary Ann joined the Advisory Board staff in June 1998. In the nearly 18 years of service, she became the backbone of the office

Her demeanor was consistently positive and soothing, providing a balancing and calming influence to all of us. Her attention to detail was remarkable, and even more, she "just made things work" behind the scenes often without anyone realizing it and without asking for or taking any credit.

Not only in the office but outside as well, Mary Ann always greeted everyone with a genuine smile and a friendly "hello." She displayed a truly genuine interest in and affection for everyone she encountered. She gave everything she could to those closest to her. Her unconditional support and love will be truly missed by her friends, family, and colleagues alike.

As her obituary states so well she was, indeed, "the most gentle and loving person to everyone who knew her."

Mary Ann will be laid to rest tomorrow. Details of the arrangements can be found [here](#).

Nut Island Fire Update

On the afternoon of Monday, January 25, a fire broke out in the odor control area of the Nut Island headworks facility in Quincy during maintenance activities. Five MWRA employees were taken to the hospital and treated for smoke-related issues. At this time, all five employees have been released from the hospital.

The fire was exceptionally difficult to put out, particularly because it was several stories underground, and therefore difficult for firefighters to access. It took about 24 hours and extreme measures to extinguish. The State Fire Marshal and Quincy Fire Chief determined that the cause "was a mechanical failure of an industrial circulation fan. The mechanical failure led to a release of a sulfur-based dust cloud, which exploded and lead to the ensuing fire."

MWRA staff will be providing a detailed update to the MWRA Board of

Could Flint Happen Here?

The lead crisis in Flint Michigan has made national news, and triggered public concern about drinking water quality. Much of the issue comes from lead leaching from lead services when coming into contact with drinking water that is corrosive. MWRA Executive Director Fred Laskey recently briefed Advisory Board members on why a situation like Flint is unlikely at MWRA. Compare below the MWRA's situation to that of Flint:

Source of Water

Flint: Recently changed its water source from Detroit to its backup supply (the Flint River).

MWRA: Uses well-protected, stable sources (Wachusett and Quabbin reservoirs)

Treatment Changes

Flint: Began using backup treatment plant with new source. Did not install corrosion control treatment when switching water supplies.

MWRA: Reviews how any changes to water treatment might affect lead corrosion including bench and pilot scale testing. MWRA installed corrosion control treatment in 1996, makes careful adjustments, and continuously monitors the water's corrosiveness.

Taste and Odor Complaints

Flint: Initial reports of poor water quality (taste and odor) were ignored. Data suggesting lead levels in water were elevated were initially dismissed by local and state officials.

MWRA: Tracks customer complaints on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. Every complaint is taken very seriously and is investigated.

Public Information

Flint: Water quality data was not made public. Citizens had to gather their own data.

MWRA: Water quality data is tracked and published on website. Maintains a water quality hot-line with a public health professional to respond to inquiries.

Lead Services

Flint: Almost half the homes in Flint have lead services.

MWRA: MWRA communities report only about 5% of connections have lead. MWRA's zero-interest loan program can be used for communities to fund replacement of lead services on both public and private property.

IN SUMMARY

It is to the MWRA's credit that the agency has had corrosion control treatment for several years, continually monitor water quality, proactively test any proposed changes to treatment, and respond immediately to any taste and odor concerns. The Advisory Board thanks the Authority for its diligence in providing the best tasting drinking water in the country to its ratepayers every day.

Funds for Ratepayers in Governor's Budget for First Time in 13 Years

We are pleased to announce that Governor Baker has included \$1.1 million in Debt Service Assistance as part of his FY17 spending plan. Governor Baker is the first governor in over 13 years to include DSA as part of their budget. In addition, the Governor spared DSA from his 9c cuts recently made to narrow the FY16 state budget deficit.

The Advisory Board wants to thank the Governor, Secretary of Administration and Finance Lepore and Undersecretary Rachel Madden for their efforts. We will work with the House and Senate to ensure inclusion of DSA in the final FY17 state budget.

At the Advisory Board's recommendation, any DSA funds received will "Pay It Forward" to the next year, providing direct reductions to MWRA community assessments.

Mr. Sullivan Goes To Michigan

The Advisory Board's own John Sullivan (Boston Water and Sewer Commission's Chief Engineer) has been tapped by the Environmental Protection Agency to serve as the "point person" to help resolve the water quality crisis in Flint, Michigan. We know the City of Flint will be in good hands with Mr. Sullivan helping out.

Free Grant Writing Workshop

The Commonwealth provides multiple opportunities to apply for funds to help with water resource management. Join us for a one-day workshop to learn some fundamental rules and best practices for developing competitive proposals to bring new money to your local project! The MassBays National Estuary Program and MA Department of Environmental Protection have teamed up with Bay State Roads (a MA Department of Transportation program) to provide this professional development opportunity to municipal and nonprofit staff. Three sessions are scheduled:

March 22, 2016: Holiday Inn Taunton 700 Myles Standish Blvd., Taunton

March 30, 2016: Northern Essex Community College, Lawrence

April 7, 2016: Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge

[Register Here](#)

Registration for Proposals for Cleaner Water: A Grant Writing Workshop is free thanks to funding from the 319 nonpoint source program. Two people per organization limit. Continuing education credits available.

Stormwater Financing Webinar

As part of its Safe and Sustainable Water Resources Research Program, EPA is hosting a free webinar on Financing Opportunities for Implementing Green Infrastructure Projects to Manage Stormwater.

Wednesday, February 24, 2016
2:00 to 3:00 pm EST

[Register Here](#)

Upcoming Events

MWRA
Board of Directors

February 10, 2016
Charlestown – 10:00 am

Adv. Board
Executive Committee

February 12, 2016
Charlestown – 8:30 am

Advisory Board

[February 18, 2016](#)
BWSC – 11:30 am

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