



# Executive Committee Meeting

Advisory Board Conference Room  
100 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Building 39-4  
Boston, MA 02129

Thursday, November 9, 2017  
8:30 AM

## Attendees

|                     |            |                      |                         |
|---------------------|------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Lou Taverna         | Newton     | John Carroll         | MWRA Board of Directors |
| Bernie Cooper       | Norwood    | Joe Foti             | MWRA Board of Directors |
| John Sanchez        | Burlington | Andrew Pappastergion | MWRA Board of Directors |
| Michael Rademacher  | Arlington  | Joe Favaloro         | Advisory Board          |
| Carol Antonelli     | Wakefield  | Matt Romero          | Advisory Board          |
| John DeAmicis       | Stoneham   | James Guidod         | Advisory Board          |
| Elena Proakis Ellis | Melrose    | Lenna Ostrodka       | Advisory Board          |
| Jeremy Marsette     | Natick     | Cornelia Potter      | Advisory Boar           |
| Lou Mammolette      | Chelsea    |                      |                         |

## DRAFT MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 8:41 am.

### **Approval of Executive Committee Meeting Minutes for September 15, 2017**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the Executive Committee for September 15, 2017 (as amended to include the attendance of Mr. Marsette). The motion passed unanimously.

### **Office Update**

Mr. Favaloro opened the report with an update of plans for a workshop on climate change. Staff explored possible dates and speakers but it became apparent that more time would be needed to carry out the workshop in a December timeframe. A revised timeframe of June is now under consideration including addressing the need for assuring a quorum of the Advisory Board for the June timeframe for the annual vote for the Advisory Board's representative to the MWRA Board of Directors.

Another topic that may be on the agenda in another six months is Ashland. The timeframe for this item may shift out as the need to extend the approval for continuing six-month supply of water has been eased by recent rainfall. Another idea under consideration is using the December timeframe to bring the Executive Committee together to have an open discussion to try to gauge where the Executive Committee sees it should be headed. Some of the topics could include system expansion, rates, and other topics. The intent is to have a free-flowing discussion, without recording the remarks or issuing formal minutes of the meeting. He invited suggestions for topics for discussion. Members expressed support for having such a meeting.

Mr. Favaloro also raised a separate issue having to do with the office lease. The landlord has been divesting himself of a lot of his properties, which could result in increased rents and related costs for remaining tenants in the Navy Yard. The locus of these costs may be shifted, after careful consideration, into the Authority's budget. Related to this topic is the plan to conduct desk audits for two of the Advisory Board's positions with the expectation that any changes would be not be reflected until the FY 2019 budget.

With regard to watershed related issues, Mr. Favaloro turned to management of the watersheds, and, more specifically, the issue of filling key positions, due to the retirement of key positions, such as that for Bill Pula (the Director of Operations for the Quabbin Reservoir). This concern gave rise to a suggestion from Mr. Favaloro that the Advisory Board's Executive Committee consider a vote of no confidence in DCR Commissioner Roy. That and some related discussions have led to the state's agreement to hire a Regional Director for the Quabbin area.

Joseph E. Favaloro, Executive Director

The next topic was a presentation of the initial results of the 2017 Retail Rates Survey. Staff opened the presentation noting that the discussion will review where rates have been and where they are going. The rates are presented on a calendar year basis, while wholesale rates are presented on a fiscal year basis. In addition, information is presented on the basis of 61 thousand gallons per household per year, as well as 90 thousand gallons making it possible to compare communities. Staff presented a series of categories for presenting the survey results. On average, combined charges increased by \$1,558 or 2.2% on a calendar year basis. This comes down to \$130 per month on average for combined water and sewer charges.

This is the lowest combined increase since 1994. Looking at the “core communities” that use a majority of the MWRA flow share (81.5%), their average is just a 1% average combined increase. Staff requested members review the draft materials. Communities will be receiving proofs and are being requested to confirm that the data is accurate. The next step is the issuance of an electronic document (with an extra 60 pages this year). An electronic PDF version, on a flash drive, will also be issued.

Members also cautioned about the use of the data to ensure that it does not confuse the message, as compared to actual consumption per person. How the data is used should be approached with caution. Mr. Favaloro also emphasized the need for communities to keep ongoing spending in the 3% wholesale increase range because communities need to continue to preserve the (budget) space to keep growing retail rates to get work done, with issues ranging from lead testing to stormwater. This topic should be on the agenda for next month. Members also pointed out that some communities have enterprise funds that support some of this kind of work.

An additional point was raised by Mr. Mammolette about providing information about the Authority’s assessments and maintenance and redundancy needs. Information about these kinds of projects helps communities understand what these spending needs are and what drives rate increases.

Mr. Favaloro repeated the goal is to pursue ideas about what can Advisory Board staff do better. These topics could be included in the discussion proposed for the meeting of the Executive Committee in December. Topics could include rates, system expansion, what can the MWRA do to help communities, and what can the Advisory Board (and staff) do better. Another idea included consideration of a blanket contract for conducting water quality sampling. He invited members to contact the Advisory Board staff or the Chairman with ideas.

#### **Approval of the Advisory Board Agenda for November 16, 2017**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the proposed agenda for the next Advisory Board meeting on November 16, 2017. The motion was approved.

#### **Next meeting of the Executive Committee**

It was agreed to schedule a special meeting of the Executive Committee for Friday, December 15, 2017, to discuss a variety of topics of interest to the members of the Committee.

#### **Adjournment**

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael W. Rademacher, Secretary