



Advisory Board Meeting

Thursday, November 15, 2018
11:30 am

Boston Water and Sewer Commission
980 Harrison Avenue
Boston, MA 02119

Attendees (Voting Members)

Michael Rademacher	Arlington	Moe Handel	MAPC
David Manugian	Bedford		
John Sullivan	Boston	Lou Taverna	Newton
Jay Hersey	Brookline	Bernie Cooper	Norwood
John Sanchez	Burlington	John DeAmicis	Stoneham
Robert Higgins	Hingham	J. R. Greene	Gubernatorial Appointee
James Finegan	Lynnfield Water Department		Quabbin/Ware
Yem Lip	Malden	Joe Labao	Wilmington
Elena Proakis Ellis	Melrose	William Shaughnessy	Wellesley
		Chris Seriac	Needham

Other Attendees

Charlie Jewell	BWSC	Matt Horan	MWRA
John Carroll	MWRA Board of Directors	Kathy Soni	MWRA
Jeff Mahoney	UCANE	Leo Norton	MWRA
Andreae Downs	WAC	Joe Favaloro	Advisory Board
Lexi Dewey	WSCAC	Travis Ahern	Advisory Board
Fred Laskey	MWRA	Lenna Ostrodka	Advisory Board
Ria Convery	MWRA	James Guiod	Advisory Board
David Coppes	MWRA	Cornelia Potter	Advisory Board
Tom Durkin	MWRA		

34 people were in attendance, including 17 voting members.

**NOVEMBER 15, 2018
980 HARRISON AVENUE
BOSTON, MA 02119 11:30 AM**

Draft Minutes

A. WELCOME

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 11:36 am and welcomed Advisory Board members and other attendees to the meeting. Henry Vitale, Director of the BWSC, expressed his welcome to attendees. Mr. Taverna thanked Mr. Vitale for his hospitality, as did Mr. Favaloro. Mr. Vitale thanked the Advisory Board for the hard work and dedication in helping the communities to meet the goals and objectives that have to be met every day.

Mr. Favaloro also recognized Kathy Soni who has announced her retirement from the MWRA. He presented a gift recognizing her service over the years. She expressed her appreciation of the recognition and noted that the relationship between the MWRA and the Advisory Board is really working.

B. APPROVAL OF ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 20, 2018

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the Advisory Board meeting of September 20, 2018, including the vote for an Advisory Board member of the MWRA Board of Directors for a three-year term. The motion passed.

C. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mr. Favaloro reported on several activities that had taken place in the recent weeks: there was a rates workshop held by DCR and a meeting of the OMSAP committee. Advisory Board staff also reported on a conference held by the Alliance for Water Efficiency in Chicago. Among the agenda items was the presentation of a model that can forecast rates, which, in turn, can help make rates more sustainable and predictable for specific communities. The model utilizes a lot of data and simulations to forecast such categories as weather as well as the economy. The presentation also provided a website for their model, which will be posted on the Advisory Board’s website. Mr. Taverna also emphasized several highlights from the conference including the importance of water conservation and savings that come from water treatment and delivery, even though that translates into less water sold (and more per unit costs – which, in the long term, saves money).

Advisory Board staff also reported on the recent meeting of the OMSAP committee (Outfall Monitoring Science Advisory Panel). The meeting’s goal was to determine next steps for the monitoring program for Massachusetts Bay, and whether or not past questions had been answered, and what steps need to be taken to change those questions. Attendees were interested in climate change effects, consideration of pharmaceuticals, and microbeads. The OMSAP panel needs to come together to ask what questions may need to be added to the monitoring program. Another speaker was the former director for environmental quality at the MWRA, Mike Connor now based in the San Francisco Bay area. He reported that a similar effort had been discussed in that area’s outfall area and that all the different wastewater facilities have approached the question as a regional approach. The intent is to see where they should go; the emphasis was on wastewater treatment plant discharges although there appeared to be interest on what impacts other discharges may have. Mr. Taverna emphasized that MWRA funding should be focused on the outfall, and not be focused on all other users (dischargers). Mr. Favaloro emphasized that the results of the MWRA research has demonstrated assurances of proof on everything we need to in order to show that MWRA discharges through the outfall have not had a negative impact. The MWRA has a piece, but it is just a piece (it is just a component of the picture of Massachusetts Bay).

Authority staff also reported that some activity in some of the communities, involving the placement of water bottles on people’s steps with questionnaires. Reports include the communities of Peabody, Lexington, Tewksbury, among others. Authority staff cautioned communities about this scam and noted that additional information has been posted to the Authority’s website.

D. PRESENTATIONS

Updates on Harbor Health and Outfall Monitoring

Ken Keay, Senior Program Manager in the MWRA Environmental Quality Department, summarized the results of the latest outfall monitoring report, required annually by the report monitoring program (as required by regulators). The report

describes the results of the previous year's monitoring. It takes roughly a year from the time the data are collected for all of the sampling analyses and the data to be evaluated and the report compiled.

2017 represented the 26th year of the outfall monitoring. There was concern originally that the Harbor Cleanup work would result in improvements to the Bay at the expense of the Harbor, requiring that there be a baseline monitoring and reporting program during the years before the long outfall construction was complete. Discharge monitoring requirements were also added to the NPDES permit. A set of 33 questions were included in the list of requirements. The reporting provided information to address questions such as: are you affecting the Bay? Have you cleaned things up? The Authority can now answer those questions. The permit conditions also have allowed for modifications and amendments to the monitoring and reporting requirements, over time. These changes have allowed for continued savings while addressing the monitoring questions and meet permit requirements. He provided a brief summary of the permit monitoring results. Among topics presented were nitrogen discharges, total solids discharged, water quality, and sediment monitoring (and oxygen levels). Also monitored were winter flounder health. He also reported on public outreach activities, such as conferences, speaking with school groups and universities, and symposia.

Going forward, there should be consideration of any questions that don't need to be continued and whether there new issues emerging around which monitoring questions should be developed. At the OMSAP symposium described earlier, it was emphasized that any new monitoring questions must have a relationship to the outfall discharge (and, for example, not just be connected to broader questions involving climate change.) There are many questions now that are being raised but were not on the radar screen thirty years ago. There are other contaminants that have since been banned (like DDT) and are no longer of as much concern as had previously been the case. And climate change was not an issue to the degree that it has become today. Moving forward, there can be expected to be disagreement as to how strong a potential linkage is between some questions. He ended his remarks by noting that the attendance at the symposium involved many of the people who participated the early meetings (but not in the last five or ten years) were present. The level of consensus that the outfall has been a success story was heartening to see and the level of threat perceived coming from the MWRA is nowhere near the level that it was twenty years ago. MWRA is in a very strong position as we move forward. There are all sorts of data to show that it is not harmful on the environment.

2018 Annual Water and Sewer Retail Rate Survey

James Guidod of the MWRA Advisory Board staff provided a presentation of the survey results for the 2018 survey year. For FY19, there was an increase of wholesale assessments to the communities of 3.07%. This year the average retail rate increase to the communities was 2.80%. This translates to an average water and sewer bill of just over \$1,600 (using the AWWA standard of 120 HCF (still considered an industry standard)).

Mr. Guidod also acknowledged the local, state, and federal data provided by Leo Norton at the MWRA. Using these standards the average household water and sewer bill in the MWRA service area was estimated at \$880.

See the Prezi presentation and draft report materials.

Information was also provided about stormwater. There will be additional discussion going forward regarding how communities will be tackling this challenge. So far, four communities in the MWRA service area have instituted the stormwater fee (as compared to expectations that more communities would be instituting fees this year). Staff expect to be expanding efforts to discuss how communities are tackling the challenge of dealing with stormwater.

Recent Weather and Rain Events

David Coppes, Chief Operating Officer of the MWRA, provided a presentation (similar to one given the day before to the MWRA Board of Directors) regarding recent weather events and impacts on the MWRA system. The presentation focused on reservoir levels and spilling activities to reduce the rising water levels resulting from recent, multiple heavy rain events. [See the presentation.] MWRA is now spilling at a rate of 90 million gallons per day at the Quabbin Reservoir. Levels are currently 97-98% full. At the Wachusett Reservoir, the November 3rd storm brought 2.5 inches of rain. It was followed by another rain event, leaving the reservoir levels very high. A crest gate serves to help manage the water and to release it to the Nashua River below, allowing controlled management of the rising water levels at the reservoir. Also, a backup reservoir system allows several reservoirs upstream of the Sudbury River to be used for controlling spillway elevations during high rain conditions.

On the wastewater side, five rainstorms have resulted in 8 to 9 inches of rain at the headworks facilities in just over a two-week period (two plus months' worth of rain in a short period of time). The good news is that the MWRA Combined Sewer Overflow treatment facilities have all operated flawlessly (and without a single sanitary overflow). More information is posted to the MWRA webpage as well as the required reporting to the regulators. It is clear that 2018 will close out as a wetter than normal year. The average rainfall is 46.06 inches of rain per year (over the last 33 years). So far this year, through October, rainfall has been over that level.

Operations Committee

The Chairman of the Committee, John Sanchez, announced that a meeting of the committee is being scheduled for the second week of January – January 8 – at 10 am at the Grand View Farm in Burlington. Topics are expected to be a preview of the master plan and an update on wastewater metering.

Updates from the Executive Director

Joe Favaloro closed with a short report on the legislative strategy for the coming year. When the House and Senate take their seats in January, staff will work to build consensus and introduce the Advisory Board to the new representatives and senators, and speak about the MWRA's plans to embark on a the mega water redundancy project, which is critical for economic development in communities. It is important that the legislature buy into this project, as well as continue to support Debt Service Assistance).

Also planned is a meeting in December of the Executive Committee to discuss a number of important issues, and develop ideas on how to address those issues. Called a "spaghetti session" to see if the ideas "stick" (or gain support), the meeting is being scheduled for Friday morning, December 7.

E. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 12:56 pm. It was seconded and passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Rademacher, Secretary