



Thursday, January 18, 2024
Remote Connection via Zoom
10:00 AM

ADVISORY BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

A. Roll Call Attendance

A commencing roll call voted as follows:

Community	Designee	Open Roll
Arlington	Michael Rademacher	Here (remote)
Bedford	David Manugian	Here (remote)
Boston (BWSC)	John P. Sullivan	Here (remote)
Braintree	James Arsenaunt	Here (remote)
Brookline	Jay Hersey	Here (remote)
Burlington	John Sanchez	Here (remote)
Canton	Michael Trotta	Here (remote)
Chelsea	Cate-Fox Lent	Here (remote)
Framingham	Steve Leone	Here (remote)
Malden	Yem Lip	Here (remote)
Medford	Timothy McGivern	arrived after vote
Melrose	Elena ProakisEllis	Here (remote)
Milton	Chase Berkeley	Here (remote)

Community	Designee	Open Roll
Needham	John Terry	Here (remote)
Reading	Chris Cole	Here (remote)
Saugus	Brendan O'Regan	Here (remote)
Somerville	Rich Raiche	Here (remote)
Southborough	Sam Stivers	Here (remote)
Stoneham	John DeAmicis	Here (remote)
Wakefield	Eric Sherman	Here (remote)
Walpole	Pat Fasanello	Here (remote)
Wellesley	David Cohen	Arrived after vote
Westwood	Bob Rafferty	Here (remote)
Wilmington	Joe Lobao	Here (remote)
MAPC	Maurice Handel	Here (remote)
Quabbin and Ware	J.R. Greene	Here (remote)

B. Executive Director’s Update, by Matthew Romero

Christine Bennett will join the Advisory Board on Monday January 22, 2024. Christine joined the meeting virtually to introduce herself and is honored to accept the position, mentioning her long history in nonprofit management and training in environmental resource economics where she has graduate level training pertaining to cost-effective wastewater treatment systems for small communities in New Hampshire. She has also been an active municipal volunteer in her community at the state level in Maine. A legislative update was provided related to Governor Healey earlier this month using her 9(c) authority to remove debt service assistance from the Commonwealth’s FY24 budget.

C. Presentation – MWRA Water System Expansion Update – Colleen Rizzi, Director, Environmental and Regulatory Affairs

The MWRA Water System Expansion includes three study areas: Ipswich River Basin (12 communities), South Shore (10 communities), and MetroWest (21 communities). The intent and purpose of the studies is to provide high-level planning to address the feasibility of connecting to the MWRA’s regional water system. This feasibility includes transporting water to communities, how the communities connect, cost of connection, and how long connection would take. The Ipswich River basin study was requested by the





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Baker-Polito administration, the South Shore study was requested by direct legislative appropriation, and the MetroWest study was requested by the communities themselves.

A key question in any discussion of system expansion is whether there is adequate supply to provide to both new and existing users. The MWRA safe yield, that is the amount of water source reservoirs can provide even during periods of extended drought, is 300 million gallons per day (MGD). The average five-year reservoir withdrawals (from 2013 to 2018) are about 203 MGD. Conservative growth for increased population and employment is 29 MGD, and additional demand from existing partial and emergency users is 17 MGD. The conservative estimate of future use is 249 MGD. The available supply for new communities is 51 MGD. Though the overall demands in the studies exceed the available new supply, the intent of the studies is to evaluate if and how water can be provided to communities but with the thought that not all will join the system. Overall demand appears to continue to decrease even as additional systems come online due to continued water conservation and leak detection efforts, thus estimated numbers are expected to hold beyond five years.

The three studies put forth various alternatives, from fully servicing communities to partially servicing. The Ipswich River Basin study cost ranges from about \$130 million to \$1.2 billion with a time schedule from 5-7 to up to 20-25 years. The South Shore study cost ranges from about \$540 million to \$1.5 billion with a time schedule from 10-15 years up to 20-25 years. The MetroWest study is estimated at \$1 billion with a time schedule of 25-30 years, with some smaller projects included at costs in the millions of dollars with time schedules of 5-7 years.

A question was asked about “wheeling”, which is when one community is supplied through another community versus direct connection to an MWRA system. Where a community is interested in wheeling water through another community, these communities must ensure their distribution systems are compatible. Often, system upgrades are required to allow for wheeling, and so conversations must happen between two communities. There are also separate conversations between the MWRA and the potential interested community. Part of the admissions package would be that an agreement between the two communities related to wheeling is in place.

A question was asked what if a community joins the MWRA but initially has no consumption, what would their status be? Becky Weidman responded that they would be a member community even if they were not taking water and not being assessed charges. A community that is wheeling water is also an MWRA community. Becky noted that the MWRA has meters at all entrance points to communities and that the MWRA can assess a community directly regardless of how they are obtaining water from MWRA’s system. This is important as representation on the Advisory Board is based on flow share.

D. Operations Committee Updates – Michael Rademacher, Chair

The Operations Committee recently met to discuss the status of several grant/loan and loan-only programs. The first is the Local Water Supply Assistance Program with a proposal to add a Phase 4, which would be like previous phases. This new phase would be a loan-only phase of \$300 million beginning in FY25. It was presented to the Executive Committee last week and voted to be presented at today’s meeting for discussion. David Manugian supports the new phase but notes that with a significant capital cost coupled with lower water consumption, wholesale users may see a significant rate increase and asked the MWRA to work with communities in advance of rate setting as these communities set their budgets for next year. A motion was put forward to recommend that the MWRA authorize Phase 4 of the Local Water Supply Assistance Program with the current terms and conditions with a total amount of \$300 million. Somerville



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Matthew A. Romero
Executive Director



motioned and it was seconded by Bedford, then added to the omnibus roll call vote at the end of the meeting.

At the same Operations Committee meeting the I/I Financial Assistance Program loan-only optional Phase 15 proposal and grant/loan Phase 16 were discussed. Some communities have expended all of their current Phase 14 funds, which spurred this discussion. The motion is to recommend that the MWRA authorize both a 0% interest loan-only optional Phase 15 of the I/I program to begin in FY25 at a total of \$100 million as well as to authorize a 75%/25% grant/loan Phase 16 of the I/I program to begin in FY26 at a total of \$125 million. This was motioned by Bedford, seconded by Somerville, and added to the omnibus roll call vote at the end of the meeting.

At the same Operations Committee meeting the Lead Loan Program was discussed. Conversation turned on MWRA's flagging the program for future discussion because of the upcoming changes to the lead and copper rule and the way it might affect communities. Staff will be meeting with MWRA staff and going over the different options that may exist to increase the amount of funding for the program, to change the makeup of the program or how it works, to try to incentivize communities to get all the lead out of their systems.

E. Finance Committee Updates – Elena Proakis Ellis, Chair

Elena Proakis-Ellis noted that preliminary assessments will be coming out next month, kicking off the review season for the Advisory Board. Matthew Romero noted there will be a public hearing in February where MWRA staff will do a formal budget presentation of the CIP and CEB. The meeting will be a joint meeting with WAC and WSCAC, which the AB is coordinating closely with in order to give them timely presentations and updates as well as to reduce repetition and cost to ratepayers by not having MWRA staff make the same presentation more times than necessary.

F. New Business

MWRA and MWRA Advisory Board staff are in early talks about reviewing and updating TRAC fees for the next five years beginning in FY25. Years ago, the AB recommended to MWRA that they increase the fees which at that point hadn't been increased since 2012. The original recommendation was to tie increases to an external index, but this was deemed not legally feasible. So instead MWRA set the fees for a five-year period through FY24, so FY25 would begin a new five-year cycle and we hope to accomplish this before FY25 bills go out.

G. Omnibus Roll Call Vote

An omnibus roll call vote took place including the following:

- MWRA authorize Phase 4 of the Local Water Supply Assistance Program with the current terms and conditions with a total amount of \$300 million
- recommend that the MWRA authorize both a 0% interest loan-only optional Phase 15 of the I/I program to begin in FY25 at a total of \$100 million as well as to authorize a 75%/25% grant-loan Phase 16 of the I/I program to begin in FY26 at a total of \$125 million.
- Meeting adjournment





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Advisory Board Member	Designee	Vote
Arlington	Michael Rademacher	Yes
Bedford	David Manugian	Yes
Boston (BWSC)	John P. Sullivan	Yes
Braintree	James Arsenault	Yes
Brookline	Jay Hersey	Yes
Burlington	John Sanchez	Yes
Chelsea	Cate-Fox Lent	Yes
Framingham	Steve Leone	Yes
Malden	Yem Lip	Yes
Medford	Timothy McGivern	Yes
Melrose	Elena Proakis-Ellis	Yes

Advisory Board Member	Designee	Vote
Milton	Chase Berkeley	Yes
Needham	John Terry	Yes
Reading	Chris Cole	Yes
Saugus	Brendan O'Regan	Yes
Somerville	Rich Raiche	Yes
Southborough	Sam Stivers	Yes
Stoneham	John DeAmicis	Yes
Wakefield	Eric Sherman	Yes
Walpole	Patrick Fasanello	Yes
Wellesley	David Cohen	Yes
Westwood	Bob Rafferty	Yes
Wilmington	Joe Lobao	Yes
MAPC	Maurice Handel	Yes
Quabbin and Ware	J.R. Greene	Yes

H. Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Raiche, Advisory Board Secretary

These minutes reflect the discussion of the meeting. The Advisory Board maintains audio recordings of Executive Committee meetings that are available upon request.

