



Thursday, March 14, 2024  
Remote Connection via Zoom  
10:00 AM

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

### A. Roll Call Attendance

A commencing roll call voted as follows:

Name	Community	Vote
Michael Rademacher	Arlington	Here (remote)
David Manugian	Bedford	Here (remote)
John Sullivan	Boston (BWSC)	Here (remote)
Jay Hersey	Brookline	Here (remote)
John Sanchez	Burlington	Here (remote)
Cate Fox-Lent	Chelsea	Arrived after vote
David Pavlik	Lexington	Arrived after vote
Yem Lip	Malden	Arrived after vote
Elena Proakis Ellis	Melrose	Arrived after vote
Nicholas J. Rystrom	Revere	Here (remote)
Brendan O'Regan	Saugus	Arrived after vote
Richard Raiche	Somerville	Here (remote)
Sam Stivers	Southborough	Here (remote)
John P. DeAmicis	Stoneham	Here (remote)

### B. Town of Wilmington request for increase to annual withdrawal volume and entrance fee waiver

The Town of Wilmington’s contract is up for renewal, and they have chosen to submit a request to the Advisory Board and the MWRA to increase their annual withdrawal volume from 219 million gallons per year (MGY) to 450.5 MGY. They also requested a waiver of the entrance fee under the amended policy recommended by the Advisory Board and voted by the MWRA Board of Directors.

*A motion was put forward to recommend approval of Wilmington’s application for receiving additional water from the MWRA water system under MWRA operational policy #10 as an “Additional Purchase Community” as noted in Rider One approved by the MWRA Board of Directors on September 15, 2022 for the amounts and reasons noted in the meeting materials provided. It was moved by Rich Raiche, seconded by David Manugian, and added to the omnibus vote at the end of the meeting.*





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John DeAmicis asked how much water Wilmington is currently using and how much will be used going forward. Joe Lobao, Deputy Director of Public Works in Wilmington, stated that Wilmington is currently approved for 219 MGY, or 0.6 million gallons per day, and is requesting an increase to 450.5 MGY, or 1.23 million gallons per day. This has already been approved through the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) and the Interbasin Transfer Act. The Town of Wilmington also believes they meet the eligibility criteria for the entrance fee waiver based on water quality issues, capacity limitations, and long-term liability concerns. In the water quality realm, there are nine wells in Wilmington, five of which were inactivated in 2002 due to contamination. The remaining four wells are impacted by PFAS and chloride concentration problems. The amount Wilmington takes per year varies, depending primarily on weather and seasonal demand, but is generally over 100 MGY, and sometimes reaches over 219 MGY.

John DeAmicis asked what the chances were of Wilmington reaching the full 450.5 MGY. Joe Lobao stated that they are looking long term, mentioning that since their contract is up for renewal, and with the PFAS regulations currently in place and coming in the future from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), there are times when Wilmington will be without their primary water treatment plant while they are changing out the granular activated carbon (GAC) within that plant, which is where the 450.5 MGY request comes from.

John DeAmicis asked if Wilmington will continue to operate their own wells, to which Joe Lobao responded yes.

Lou Taverna asked if this request is in perpetuity or is the 450.5 MGY a one-time ask, in that next contract they may request less. Joe Lobao stated that Wilmington is looking at the problems with PFAS over the next five years, and that it is hard to say what the future looks like in terms of reevaluating. He stated that the contract will be valid for ten years.

Jay Hersey asked if this request was just a water request, and not a sewer request. Joe Lobao stated that this request is separate from sewer.

John Sanchez asked if the fee waiver is only for the increased amount and not for the current amount, which Matthew Romero confirmed is yes.

John DeAmicis asked if this increase will stress the capacity of the MWRA's pipelines. Colleen Rizzi, Director, Environmental and Regulatory Affairs, MWRA, stated that with this increase in volume there is capacity in the system that supplies the systems Wilmington is fed from. In Wilmington's current agreement of 0.6 MGD there is a provision where if they exceed this amount, they must notify the MWRA since until the Section 89 pipe is fully operational the pumps must be operated manually. Should Wilmington become a fully supplied MWRA community in the future, there would need to be further investigation regarding capacity. However, at this current time there is capacity to supply Wilmington without further infrastructure.

## C. Executive Director's Report

Christine Bennett (Policy Analyst, MWRA AB) and Matthew Romero (Executive Director, MWRA AB) have begun interviews for another Northeastern University co-op position for a part-time Summer 2024 and full-time 35 hours per week position in Fall 2024. This lines up with FY25 activities. An offer is planned to be made after interviews are completed Friday, March 15, 2024. Long term there are two full-time positions at





the Advisory Board to fill.

Massachusetts DEP has posted for public comment tentative determinations to adopt variances for combined sewer overflows (CSOs) discharges to the Alewife Brook, Upper Mystic River, the Lower Charles River, and Charles River Basin. There is a 45-day public notice period that ends April 22, 2024. DEP will accept comments during this period and will host two virtual public hearings on March 28, 2024 at 1pm and 6pm. The Advisory Board staff will be publishing a blog post on this and mentioning this to members at the Advisory Board next week. Matthew Romero will be attending the evening meeting and will attempt to attend all of them this budget cycle if time allows. As is common practice, the Advisory Board will be submitting written comments by the April 22, 2024 deadline.

The MWRA Board of Directors (BOD) has approved the Toxic Reduction and Control (TRAC) fees that were discussed at the recent February 2024 meeting. They are not finalized yet, but the BOD agreed that it is important that TRAC fees are increased over time.

## **D. Advisory Board consent agenda proposal**

Stemming from his time at Massachusetts Port Authority (MassPort), Matthew Romero suggested adopting the use of consent agendas, which is a bundle of items that is voted on, without discussion, as a package. This would consolidate routine and non-controversial agenda items into one agenda item to be “motioned and seconded” to be more efficient with meeting time. No vote was taken on this, but it was agreed that it should be tried.

## **E. Proposed FY25 CIP/CEB review update**

Matthew Romero presented highlights from the Proposed FY25 Current Expense Budget. The combined assessment increase for FY25 is proposed at 3%, compared to FY24’s 2.4%. Major categories of spending were broken down, with Capital Financing being the largest at 56.1%, Personnel-Related Costs at 19%, and Indirect Expenses at 8.2%, the last of which includes retirement and post-employment benefits. The largest increase in the PFY25 CEB is Debt Service at \$17.4 million, Wages and Salaries at \$7.9 million, and the Retirement Fund at \$7.7 million. The biggest reduction is in Chemicals at a reduction of \$8.2 million. Thomas Durkin, CFO, MWRA will discuss defeasance, additions to reserves, chemical pricing, among other topics at next week’s March 21, 2024 Advisory Board meeting.

## **F. Watershed management update**

Christine Bennett discussed the policy topic of climate-oriented forestry initiatives. The Massachusetts Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2050 has a target of reducing net greenhouse gas (GgG) emissions by 85% of 1990 levels, with the remaining 15% sequestered and stored in forests. The plan acknowledges that there is great uncertainty that Massachusetts forests can increase carbon sequestration and storage to meet that goal. The Forests as Climate Solutions Initiative Report, which the Healy Administration released in 2024, is expected to inform a final decision in June regarding Climate oriented forestry management requirements on all state-owned lands. This report includes divided opinions regarding Active Forest Management on watershed lands. The Department of Conservation and Recreation’s (DCR) Division of Water Supply Protection (DWSP) has actively managed the watershed forests since the 1960’s with a goal to create forest resilience against large-scale natural disturbances. This is viewed as an “insurance policy” to prevent against switching to a monetarily and carbon expensive filtration & treatment plant. This active forest management creates forest diversity in terms of age-class, structure, and species which allows quick regeneration after disturbance. Such management can yield more carbon sequestration & storage over the long-term. Focusing





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solely on a forest's ability to capture and store carbon to the exclusion of all other functions, such as resiliency and stream-flows, is a dangerous proposition.

DCR and DWSP have already issued contracts for certain lots on watershed lands, which continue to get cut as the forestry moratorium is in place. The final forestry guidelines are expected to come out soon which will clarify any changes in forestry programs going forward.

Matthew Romero discussed the reclassification and removal of the ability of rangers at DCR to issue written citations and warnings. Rangers are now being told they cannot ask for identification or issue citations at all. General William J. Meehan of the Water Supply Protection Trust (WSPT) has brought attention to this issue at recent WSPT meetings, highlighting the lack of enforcement to remedy infractions on watershed lands. The Advisory Board is interested in assessing what steps must be taken for DCR rangers to be given back this ability, be that increased training or legislative change. John Sanchez has offered to have General Meehan come to an Advisory Board meeting to discuss this issue.

Christine Bennett discussed the legislative topic regarding *An Act Relative to the Quabbin Watershed and Regional Equity H.897/S.447*, which has been referred to committee with a report set to be issued in April 2024. The bill would create the Quabbin Host Community Development Trust Fund for municipal service, public safety, and development needs within Quabbin Reservoir watershed communities. It amends section 5G of Chapter 59 by inserting "said amounts to be held in trust as payments in lieu of taxes shall be made on the total acreage in question that is held by each community;" and it also allows assessment of the MWRA in the amount of \$0.05/1,000 gallons drawn from the Quabbin Reservoir. This would equate to approximately \$3.5 million per year. It also proposes to change the number of Board members who are a resident of the Connecticut River basin who represent water resource protection interests from 1 to 3, and introduces term limits to MWRA BOD, as well as requires the MWRA to conduct a System Expansion Study for the region. A System Expansion is underway and the Advisory Board staff has begun looking into 3<sup>rd</sup> party consultants to determine non-priced benefits that Quabbin communities receive from DWSP lands.

## G. Water & Sewer Retail Rate Survey update

Nathan Coté, MWRA Advisory Board's co-op, gave an update on the 2023 Annual Water and Sewer Retail Rate Survey progress. In recent weeks, MWRA communities have been reached out to with the aim of verifying water and sewer rate formulas. Charts were presented showing annual water and sewer bill amounts and water usage, using both 120 hundred cubic feet (HCF) and 2022 DEP actual usage as reported by individual communities. Boston and Cambridge had the lowest household water usage per year at 46.75 and 46.77 HCF/year, with Weston being the highest at 148.08 HCF/year. Combined annual water and sewer bill amounts placed Burlington lowest at \$373.03/year and Marblehead at \$1,729.91 per year based on 2022 DEP actual usage HCF. A draft of the slide presentation featuring these draft charts will be sent out to Executive Committee members, and in the coming week draft pages of the 2023 Water and Sewer Rate Survey will be sent to individual communities for review prior to publication. Work on the national comparison and non-MWRA communities will be released sometime later as MWRA communities are the primary focus at this time.

## H. Legislative update

Matthew Romero discussed the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) comments on the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), which the Advisory Board has previously submitted comments on the MWRA's concerns on being liable for cleaning up PFAS chemicals rather than the actual polluters. NACWA is suggesting MWRA community members to use their



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Matthew A. Romero  
Executive Director



template letter to send to legislators, which Matthew suggested as well.

Christine Bennett and Matthew Romero will be attending the New England Waterworks Association conference in April 2024. Matthew encouraged the committee to suggest other conferences and organizations that the Advisory Board should get involved in to elevate their profile and mission going forward. Matthew also has a meeting with members of the Water Infrastructure Alliance and Administration Officials on Friday March 15, 2024 to discuss the Water Infrastructure Finance Committee, which the Healy Administration has indicated they are interested in revitalizing the Committee, which the Advisory Board has participated in in the past.

## **I. Lead & Copper Rule update**

On April 1, 2024 at 10:30am, the Operations Committee will providing updates on the soon to be finalized Lead and Copper Rules and their potential impacts on communities. The MWRA and Advisory Board staff have been coordinating on discussion points and possible proposals to bring the Executive Committee and then the Advisory Board concerning additional funding for the Lead Loan Program, as well as potentially changing the structure of the program to encourage communities to completely remove lead from their systems. If lead is not entirely removed from systems, the MWRA will incur capital costs to install infrastructure for adding orthophosphate, as well as chemical costs. Once orthophosphate is added to the system it is difficult to cease doing so. Communities are encouraged to attend the meeting as these changes may affect them directly.

## **J. Process to elect an Advisory Board representative to the MWRA Board of Directors**

*A motion was put forward to approve the opening of the nomination and election of an Advisory Board representative to the MWRA Board of Directors scheduled for a vote on the meeting of May 16, 2024. It was moved by Rich Raiche, seconded by David Manugian, and added to the omnibus vote at the end of the meeting.*

Andy Pappastergion, Vice Chair of the Board of Directors, is running for his tenth term on the BOD, having originally been elected to the BOD in 1997. He stated that if elected this may be his last term, which would total 30 years on the BOD. Any member can participate in this election and can submit their resume prior to the process for electing a member.

## **K. Approval of the Advisory Board meeting agenda for March 21, 2024**

*A motion to approve the March 21, 2024 Advisory Board agenda was put forward. It was moved by John DeAmicis, seconded by David Manugian, and added to the omnibus vote at the end of the meeting.*

## **L. Approval of February 8, 2024 Executive Committee meeting minutes**

*A motion to approve the February 8, 2024 Executive Committee meeting minutes was put forward. It was moved by Rich Raiche, seconded by David Manugian, and added to the omnibus vote at the end of the meeting.*

## **M. Adjournment**

*A motion to adjourn was put forward. It was moved by David Manugian, seconded by John DeAmicis, and added to the omnibus vote at the end of the meeting.*







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An omnibus roll call vote took place on the following items:

- Approval of Wilmington’s application for receiving additional water from the MWRA water system under MWRA operational policy #10 as an “Additional Purchase Community” as noted in Rider One approved by the MWRA Board of Directors on September 15, 2022 for the amounts and reasons noted in the meeting materials provided.
- Approval of the opening of the process to receive nominations for candidates for the MWRA Board of Directors representative to serve a term from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2027 scheduled for a vote on the meeting of May 16, 2024.
- Approval of the March 21, 2024 Advisory Board agenda
- Approval of the February 8, 2024 Executive Committee meeting minutes
- Meeting adjournment

The roll call vote was as follows:

Name	Community	Vote
Michael Rademacher	Arlington	Yes
David Manugian	Bedford	Yes
John Sullivan	Boston (BWSC)	Yes
Jay Hersey	Brookline	Yes
John Sanchez	Burlington	Yes
Cate Fox-Lent	Chelsea	Yes
David Pavlik	Lexington	Yes
Yem Lip	Malden	Yes
Elena Proakis Ellis	Melrose	Yes
Nicholas J. Rystrom	Revere	Yes
Brendan O’Regan	Saugus	Yes
Richard Raiche	Somerville	Yes
Sam Stivers	Southborough	Yes
John P. DeAmicis	Stoneham	Yes

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.



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