



FY 2024 Annual Advisory Board Accomplishments

Administrative

- Completed FY23 independent audit
- Transferred many account access, permissions, and procedures from James to Matt
 - Quickbooks Online
 - Check printing/processing
 - Paychex (payroll)
 - GrowthLab (CPA)
 - Zoom
- Transitioned from paper check processing to online processing via bill.com
- Outsourced certain HR functions for better privacy and efficiency:
 - Time off and Attendance module (Paychex) to replace paper system
 - FSA/DCAP (Paychex) to replace paper system with internal employee review and administration
- Shifted office to online project management software to more effectively coordinate on projects in hybrid work environment
- Restarted efforts to update and optimize AB website
- Provided training on Advisory Board systems for new employees
 - Zoom
 - Basecamp
 - Website
 - Adobe PDF (information packets and document publication)
 - Dropbox & Dropbox Paper
- Supported public records request from STAB member - coordinated with MWRA, est. 40 hours spent on multiple requests
 - Gathered information to move into compliance with Public Records Request Law changes
- Modified by-laws to formalize standing subcommittees
- Conducted an audit of Advisory Board minutes (all Advisory Board meetings specifically from FY20-FY24 will be uploaded to the website by the end of the week. Executive Committee minutes still need to be audited, but I imagine they'll be done the following week)
- Coordinated with WAC and WSCAC on more joint meetings for more efficiency for MWRA staff
- Began formalizing office procedures and generating documentation for future training and resource purposes





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Personnel

- Updated personnel policies to remove 30% sick time buy-back upon resignation - now only for retirement & death (paid out to estate or beneficiary)
- Posted, reviewed, and interviewed candidates and brought on board first Northeastern co-op (Nate - January 2024 - June 2024)
- Posted, reviewed, and interviewed candidates for full-time Research & Policy Analyst position (Christine Bennett - January 2024)



- Posted, reviewed, and interviewed candidates and ready to bring on board second Northeastern co-op (Kareen - June 2024 - December 2024)
- Implemented background checks for new employees
- Update on future personnel plans for office



2 Griffin Way, Suite A, Chelsea, MA 02150



(617) 788-2050



mwra.ab@mwraadvisoryboard.com

mwraadvisoryboard.com

Matthew A. Romero
Executive Director



Community Outreach and Support

- Held first full Advisory Board field trip since COVID-19 pandemic to the Quabbin Reservoir



- Attended New England Waterworks Association conference
- Met with new Melrose Mayor Grigoraitis to bring her up to speed on Advisory Board's role, activities, and the upcoming challenges facing communities
- TRAC regulations - worked with MWRA to propose an updated fee schedule beginning FY25

2023 Water & Sewer Rate Survey

- Successfully completed 2023 rate survey
 - Leveraged assistance of former intern and skills and experience of Northeastern co-op to finish where James had left off
 - Updated and fixed some prior year errors
 - Had co-op take notes and create documentation for training and reference for future staff

Community Support Programs





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- Approved optional loan-only Phase 15 of I/I Program effective FY25
- Approved Phase 4 of Local Water System Assistance Program
- Approved grant/loan Phase 16 of I/I Program effective FY26
- Modified Lead Loan Program to grant/loan program to accelerate full removal of lead service lines in MWRA water communities

ABTV

- Began gathering footage for installments of revitalized Advisory Board video content
 - Site visit to conduct interviews and take video footage of Diver Assisted Suction Harvesting (DASH) program and its management of aquatic invasive species in MWRA's water supply



- Upcoming site visit to Needham facility to take video footage of Metropolitan Tunnel Redundancy Program presentations and tour of borings taken during initial phase of project
- Anticipated coordination with MWRA staff on upcoming Lead and Copper Rule video to provide resource for communities and information to highlight the upcoming changes to the Lead & Copper Rule and the new grant/loan program
- Selected a Northeastern co-op from June 2024 - December 2024 who has experience in content creation, graphic design, and audio/visual skills to help develop new series and create documentation resources for future reference and training purposes



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Legislative

- Overrode Governor's veto of Debt Service Assistance for FY24 budget (later 9ced)
- DSA included in House FY25 budget
- \$1 billion included in housing bill for MWRA system expansion
- Getting trained and set up with InstaTrac to monitor and track legislation
- Water Infrastructure Alliance work
 - Working with members of Water Infrastructure Alliance to leverage housing bill as way to advocate for support for system expansion
 - Coordinating with members to restart Water Infrastructure Committee
- Serving on and reappointed to the gubernatorial Water Management Act Advisory Committee
- Met with Quabbin community legislators and MWRA staff re: Quabbin Equity Bill
- Submitted testimony:
 - Making permanent changes to OML for remote participation (hybrid meetings)
 - Wipes bill
 - Quabbin Equity Bill (Environmental & Natural Resources)
 - Quabbin Equity Bill (Ways & Means)

System Expansion

- Continued to meet with and support MetroWest Communities System Expansion working group
- Met with various communities and groups exploring possible MWRA connections
 - Natick
 - Town of Avon
 - South Shore communities - attended meetings
 - Wayland - Shaft L
 - Billerica
 - 495/MetroWest Partnership

Watershed Management

- Served as Advisory Board designee on Water Supply Protection Trust

Forestry

- Attended public input session for climate-oriented forest management guidelines (2 sessions)
- Drafted and submitted comments for Climate Forestry Committee to consider when drafting recommendations
- Drafted and submitted comments for EEA to consider when finalizing final forestry regulations





Rangers Citation Issue

- Coordinated with fellow Trustee Meehan on historical collecting data on violations to demonstrate worrying trend in the watersheds since loss of citation ability
- Leveraged data to create visuals to better show the story and trends
- Compiled all into a series of recommendations to MWRA to provide both short-term and long-term solutions to the rangers' abilities to adequately enforce the regulations in the watersheds

Environmental

- Represented Advisory Board at NACWA round table with federal and state regulators, utilities, and other stakeholders on the challenges facing wastewater systems

PFAS

- CERCLA comments submitted
- Continued to update member communities on developments with the 3M and DuPont proposed PFAS settlements

CSOs

- Attended CSO Long-Term Control Plan community outreach meeting and argued for keeping costs and impacts on the ratepayers and communities in mind when developing final plans
- MWRA/Cambridge/Somerville CSO Variance Public Hearing
- Submitted comments on CSO variances

DITP NPDES Permit

- Attended listening sessions for DITP permit
- Successfully requested extension of comment period for DITP permit to November 2024
- Worked with outside counsel to put together draft comments for NPDES permit
- Worked with outside counsel to draft community template comment letter for NPDES permit
- Brought Cambridge, Chelsea, and Somerville into Common Interest Agreement with MWRA and BWSC to coordinate on NPDES permit comments specifically related to CSO-responsible communities
- Coordinated with Common Interest Agreement communities on developing responses to MassDEP's Supplemental notice
- Worked with Beveridge & Diamond to develop and submit updated comments on MassDEP Supplemental notice





Comments & Recommendations

- Scheduled and attended FY24 mid-year program briefings with new staff to get them up to speed how the MWRA's FY24 CIP & CEB were proceeding :
- Scheduled and attended background briefings for new staff to bring them up to speed on complicated MWRA budget areas:
 - MWRA Debt Service (2 sessions)
 - MWRA Indirect Expenses (Pension, OPEB, Insurance)
 - HEEC
 - Workers' Compensation program
 - Watershed Reimbursement
 - PFY25 CIP
 - Operations Division Wrap-Up
- Scheduled and attended several Proposed FY25 CEB & CIP budget briefings with new staff to get them up to speed
 - Operations (Environmental, Regulatory, Other)
 - Field Ops Division
 - Wastewater Treatment
 - Administration Division
- Enhanced final Comments & Recommendations document containing better visual representations, more data analysis, and deeper policy discussions

