



# Advocacy & Accountability

Representing over 3 million people in Massachusetts since 1985

Thursday January 15, 2026  
Remote Connection Via Zoom  
10:00 AM

## ADVISORY BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

### A. Roll call attendance

A commencing roll call was 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)
Brian White	Burlington	Here (remote)
Lucica Hiller	Cambridge	Here (remote)
Stephen Leone	Framingham	Here (remote)
Robert McCue	Holbrook	Here (remote)
Joe Beauchesne	Lynn	Here (remote)
Amy McHugh	Marblehead	Here (remote)
Timothy McGivern	Medford	Here (remote)
Elena Proakis Ellis	Melrose	Here (remote)
Mike Retzky	Needham	Here (remote)
Tom Fitzgerald	Newton	Here (remote)
Mark Ryan	Norwood	Here (remote)

Name	Community	Vote
Mark Ryan	Norwood	Here (remote)
Margaret LaForest	Quincy	Here (remote)
Chris Cole	Reading	Here (remote)
Richard Raiche	Somerville	Here (remote)
Sam Stivers	Southborough	Here (remote)
John DeAmicis	Stoneham	Here (remote)
Patrick Fasanello	Walpole	Here (remote)
Ian McKenzie	Waltham	Here (remote)
David Cohen	Wellesley	Here (remote)
Jamie Dunbar	Wilbraham	Here (remote)
Joseph Lobao	Wilmington	Here (remote)
John Westerling	Worcester	Here (remote)
Maurice Handel	MAPC	Here (remote)
Lexi Dewey	Ct. River Basin	Here (remote)
J.R. Greene	Quabbin-Ware	Here (remote)

### **Board of Directors members:**

*Joseph Foti, Lou Taverna*

### **Advisory Board and MWRA staff:**

*Matthew Romero, Christine Bennett, Abigail Bulman, Nathan Coté; Sean Navin, Colleen Rizzi, Tom Durkin, Stephen Estes-Smargiassi, Jim Coyne, Rebecca Weidman, Matthew Horan, Michael Cole, Katie Ronan, Valerie Moran, Kristin MacDougall, Fred Laskey, Michele Gillen, Hillary Coolidge, Kathy Murtagh, Stephen Cullen, Ethan Wenger*

### **Also in attendance:**

*Lydia Olson (Mass Rivers Alliance), Emily Norton (Charles River Watershed Association), Andreae Downs (Wastewater Advisory Committee), Curtis Quitzau (Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.), Jared Freedman (Office of Senator Jo Comerford), Moussa Siri (Water Supply Citizens Advisory Committee), John Scannell*



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*(DCR), Paul Rybicki (WSCAC), Karen Spencer, Clyde McGraw (Sunrise Senior Living), David Libardoni (Nutter)*

## **B. Action Item: Admission to MWRA Wastewater System (Sunrise Senior Living)**

At the request of the Executive Director and without objection from the Chair, the Advisory Board took an action item out of order to accommodate attendees.

Ms. Colleen Rizzi, Director of Environmental and Regulatory Affairs at MWRA, presented a request for admission of Sunrise Senior Living, a proposed 99-unit senior living facility located in the Town of Sharon, to the MWRA wastewater system via connection through the Town of Norwood. Ms. Rizzi explained that the request was governed by MWRA OP.11 and summarized the project's characteristics, including an estimated maximum daily wastewater flow of 10,000 gallons per day and average daily flow of approximately 6,000 gallons per day.

Ms. Rizzi described the site location, proposed sewer routing, and the evaluation of alternatives, noting that on-site septic was not feasible due to high groundwater and soil conditions. She reported that the applicant exceeded MWRA's inflow and infiltration (I&I) removal requirement, removing approximately 49,000 gallons per day from the Norwood system against a required 40,000 gallons per day. She further noted that MEPA review was not required, Interbasin Transfer Act approval had been granted with a finding of insignificance, required municipal support letters were received, enabling legislation had been signed, and local approvals remained pending.

Members of the project team were introduced, including representatives from Sunrise Senior Living, legal counsel, and the project engineer. The project team emphasized the project's limited system impact, precedent for similar connections in the area, and the importance of the project in meeting senior housing needs.

No questions were raised by Advisory Board members.

*A motion was made to approve the admission of Sunrise Senior Living, located in the Town of Sharon, to the MWRA wastewater system via connection to the Town of Norwood, with a maximum average daily flow of 10,000 gallons per day, subject to MWRA Operating Policy 11 and any additional conditions recommended by MWRA staff, including payment of the entrance fee. It was moved by David Manugian (Bedford), seconded by Michael Rademacher (Arlington), and a roll call vote also took place as follows:*



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David Manugian	Bedford	Yes (remote)
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Jay Hersey	Brookline	Yes (remote)
Brian White	Burlington	Yes (remote)
Lucica Hiller	Cambridge	Yes (remote)
Stephen Leone	Framingham	Yes (remote)
Robert McCue	Holbrook	Yes (remote)
Joe Beauchesne	Lynn	Yes (remote)
Amy McHugh	Marblehead	Yes (remote)
Timothy McGivern	Medford	Yes (remote)
Elena Proakis Ellis	Melrose	Yes (remote)
Mike Retzky	Needham	Yes (remote)
Tom Fitzgerald	Newton	Yes (remote)
Mark Ryan	Norwood	Yes (remote)

Name	Community	Vote
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Margaret LaForest	Quincy	Yes (remote)
Chris Cole	Reading	Yes (remote)
Richard Raiche	Somerville	Yes (remote)
Sam Stivers	Southborough	Yes (remote)
John DeAmicis	Stoneham	Yes (remote)
Patrick Fasanello	Walpole	Yes (remote)
Ian McKenzie	Waltham	Yes (remote)
David Cohen	Wellesley	Yes (remote)
Jamie Dunbar	Wilbraham	Yes (remote)
Joseph Lobao	Wilmington	Yes (remote)
John Westerling	Worcester	Yes (remote)
Maurice Handel	MAPC	Yes (remote)
Lexi Dewey	Ct. River Basin	Yes (remote)
J.R. Greene	Quabbin-Ware	Yes (remote)

## C. Executive Director’s Report

Matthew Romero, Executive Director of the MWRA Advisory Board, opened his report by acknowledging the retirement announcement of Fred Laskey, MWRA Executive Director. Mr. Laskey addressed the Board, reflecting on his tenure, the Authority’s evolution, major infrastructure and environmental accomplishments, financial stewardship, and the importance of continued vigilance by the Advisory Board on behalf of ratepayers. Several Advisory Board members and staff expressed appreciation for Mr. Laskey’s leadership and service.

The Executive Director then introduced new Advisory Board staff, including Abigail Bulman, Community Insights and Engagement Lead, and Kishan Parida, a Northeastern University co-op student supporting budget review efforts.

The Executive Director provided updates on the MWRA’s updated CSO Long-Term Control Plan, including the Authority’s request for an extension through April 30, 2026, and encouraged members to attend upcoming public meetings and remain engaged given the significant cost and ratepayer implications. He noted an upcoming MWRA Board of Directors meeting scheduled for February 4, 2026.

No questions were raised.

## D. MWRA Watersheds Annual Update



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Mr. John Scannell, Director of the Division of Water Supply Protection at the Department of Conservation and Recreation, presented the annual watershed update. He reviewed the structure of the watershed protection program, staffing, regulatory oversight, and planning framework.

Mr. Scannell highlighted recent initiatives including a climate change vulnerability assessment for watershed natural and physical assets, forest resilience analysis, forest monitoring improvements, and participation in statewide climate forestry efforts. He discussed the use of drones and thermal imagery to estimate deer densities and confirmed that results aligned with traditional pellet count methods.

Additional updates included infrastructure improvements such as window replacement at the Quabbin Administration Building, shoreline stabilization and restoration work at the Old Stone Church, elimination of direct stormwater discharges to Wachusett Reservoir, invasive species management efforts, and public outreach initiatives.

Members asked questions regarding invasive species management planning and drone use. Mr. Scannell responded and noted that the invasive species management plan was being updated and would build upon prior work.

The Chair thanked Mr. Scannell for the presentation.

## **E. 2025 Annual Water & Sewer Retail Rate Survey**

Mr. Nathan Coté, Research & Policy Analyst, presented the results of the 2025 Annual Water and Sewer Retail Rate Survey. He reviewed the survey methodology, including use of the 120 hundred cubic feet benchmark, and summarized system-wide water, sewer, and combined rate trends.

Mr. Coté discussed average rates across MWRA communities, noting that at the 120 HCF benchmark the average annual water charge in 2025 is approximately \$839, the average annual sewer charge is approximately \$1,259, and the average combined water and sewer bill is approximately \$2,099, with an average year-over-year increase of about 4.4%. He highlighted the wide range of charges across communities, from under \$1,000 to more than \$2,900 annually, and explained the use of self-reported household consumption data and Local, State, and Federal cost estimates to provide additional context.

He also described supplemental survey questions addressing workforce development, regulatory pressures, capital planning, stormwater fees, and enterprise funding. Mr. Coté noted the continued expansion of non-MWRA community coverage, the inclusion of national comparisons, and emerging challenges related to separate stormwater utilities. The presentation concluded with a discussion of potential future enhancements to the survey.

## **F. Committee Reports**

### **a. Executive Committee – Richard Raiche**



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Mr. Raiche reported on the Advisory Board's winter holiday gathering, noting it was a successful opportunity for informal discussion among members and staff.

## **b. Finance Committee – Elena Proakis Ellis**

Christine Bennett, in place of Elena Proakis Ellis, reported that the MWRA Board of Directors had transmitted the FY27 Capital Improvement Program budget, including a 25% spend rate adjustment supported by the Advisory Board. Staff would begin review, with the Current Expense Budget expected later in February. The committee noted ongoing monitoring of CSO-related costs and encouraged members to attend upcoming public meetings.

## **c. Operations Committee – Michael Rademacher**

Michael Rademacher reported on the December meeting of the 8(m) Working Group focused on protecting MWRA infrastructure. Discussion topics included improving notification processes, coordination with Dig Safe, GIS data enhancements, and regulatory considerations. Follow-up actions were underway.

## **G. Action Item: Approval of Advisory Board meeting minutes from November 20, 2025**

*A motion was made to approve the Advisory Board meeting minutes from November 20, 2025, as presented. It was moved by David Manugian (Bedford), seconded by Maurice Handel (MAPC), and added to the omnibus roll call vote at the end of the meeting.*

## **H. New Business**

None.

## **I. Adjournment + Omnibus**

*A motion was made to adjourn the meeting and conduct the omnibus roll call vote. It was moved by Maurice Handel (MAPC), seconded by David Manugian (Bedford). The items being voted on in the omnibus roll call vote are:*

- *Approval of the Advisory Board meeting minutes from November 20, 2025*
- *Adjournment of the meeting*





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The following roll call vote took place:

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Brian White	Burlington	Yes (remote)
Lucica Hiller	Cambridge	Yes (remote)
Stephen Leone	Framingham	Yes (remote)
Robert McCue	Holbrook	Yes (remote)
Joe Beauchesne	Lynn	<i>Not present</i>
Amy McHugh	Marblehead	Yes (remote)
Timothy McGivern	Medford	Yes (remote)
Elena Proakis Ellis	Melrose	Yes (remote)
Mike Retzky	Needham	Yes (remote)
Tom Fitzgerald	Newton	Yes (remote)
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Jamie Dunbar	Wilbraham	Yes (remote)
Joseph Lobao	Wilmington	Yes (remote)
John Westerling	Worcester	<i>Not present</i>
Maurice Handel	MAPC	Yes (remote)
Lexi Dewey	Ct. River Basin	Yes (remote)
J.R. Greene	Quabbin-Ware	Yes (remote)

Respectfully submitted,

David Manugian, Secretary

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



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