



Thursday March 19, 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)
Lucica Hiller	Cambridge	Here (remote)
Michael Trotta	Canton	Here (remote)
Cate Fox-Lent	Chelsea	Here (remote)
Stephen Leone	Framingham	Here (remote)
Jamal Jones	Lexington	Here (remote)
Joe Beauchesne	Lynn	Here (remote)
James Finegan	Lynnfield WD	Here (remote)
Yem Lip	Malden	Here (remote)
Amy McHugh	Marblehead	Here (remote)

Name	Community	Vote
Elena Proakis Ellis	Melrose	Here (remote)
Mike Retzky	Needham	Here (remote)
Tom Fitzgerald	Newton	Here (remote)
Margaret LaForest	Quincy	Here (remote)
Chris Cole	Reading	Here (remote)
Richard Raiche	Somerville	Here (remote)
Sam Stivers	Southborough	Here (remote)
Patrick Fasanello	Walpole	Here (remote)
Ian McKenzie	Waltham	Here (remote)
Jamie Dunbar	Wilbraham	Here (remote)
Wilmington	Joseph Lobao	Here (remote)
Maurice Handel	MAPC	Here (remote)
Lexi Dewey	Ct. River Basin	Here (remote)

Board of Directors members:

Andrew Pappastergion, Lou Taverna, Joe Foti

Advisory Board and MWRA staff:

Christine Bennett, Nathan Coté, Abigail Bulman, Matthew Romero, Kishan Parida; Tom Durkin, Matthew Horan, Colleen Rizzi, Stephen Cullen, Denise Ellis-Hibbett, Kathy Murtagh, Katherine Ronan, David Wu, Brian Kubaska, Chad Whiting, Michael Cole, James Coyne, Stephen Estes-Smargiassi, Rebecca Weidman, Frederick Laskey, Devon Winkler, Kimberly LeBeau, Sean Navin, Denise Breiteneicher, Matthew Dam, Michele Gillen, Kristen Patneau, Christian Murphy, Steve Rhode

Also in attendance:

Andreae Downs (Wastewater Advisory Committee-WAC), Moussa Siri (Water Supply Citizens Advisory Committee-WSCAC), William Fadden (WSCAC), Felina Silver (WAC), Craig Allen (WAC), Paul Rybicki (WSCAC), Lydia Olson (WSCAC - Mass Rivers Alliance), Erin Bonney Casey (WSCAC - Ipswich River





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Watershed Association), Daniel Serna (Massachusetts Rural Water Association), Zhenyu Tian (WAC - Northeastern University), Taber Keally (WAC - Neponset River Watershed Association), Warren Kimball (WSCAC), Janet Rothrock (WSCAC), Karen Lachmayr (WAC), Jonathan Smith (WAC), Adriana Cillo (WAC - Boston Water and Sewer Commission), Bill Kiley (WSCAC - Boston Water and Sewer Commission), Susy King (Commonwealth of Massachusetts), Bill Merriam (WSCAC), Paul Lauenstein (WSCAC), Evan Pesut (WSCAC), Kannan Vembu (WAC)

B. Executive Director's Report

Matthew Romero, Executive Director of the MWRA Advisory Board, Mr. Romero noted that the meeting agenda was more extensive than usual due to scheduling shifts related to the CSO Long-Term Control Plan and the MWRA budget presentation and indicated that the meeting would proceed directly to scheduled presentations.

C. Presentation: PFAS and MWRA

Rebecca Weidman, MWRA Deputy Chief Operating Officer for Program Planning and Policy, provided an overview of PFAS regulations, sources, and MWRA's current monitoring and response efforts.

Ms. Weidman explained that MWRA is a passive receiver of PFAS, which enters the system through widespread use in consumer and commercial products. She reviewed both state and federal drinking water regulations, noting that MWRA currently meets all applicable PFAS standards.

On the wastewater side, Ms. Weidman explained that there are currently no effluent limits for PFAS in Massachusetts, though monitoring requirements are expected in future permits. MWRA has proactively conducted sampling of influent, effluent, and biosolids, with results indicating that PFAS is largely attributable to residential and background sources.

She further discussed biosolids management, noting that while PFAS is present, land application remains the primary disposal method. Alternative disposal options, such as landfilling or incineration, are limited and present long-term sustainability challenges.

Ms. Weidman also outlined MWRA's industrial pretreatment efforts, including expanded PFAS sampling requirements for industrial users and new discharge standards for certain facilities.

In discussion, members emphasized the importance of source control, with several noting that PFAS regulation at the manufacturing level would be more effective than placing the burden on wastewater utilities and ratepayers. Questions were also raised regarding federal regulatory efforts, with Ms. Weidman noting that EPA action has been limited, leaving states to take the lead.

D. Presentation: Updated CSO Long-Term Control Plan

Colleen Rizzi, MWRA Director of Environmental and Regulatory Affairs, along with David Wu, Director of Environmental Quality, and Matthew Horan, Deputy Director of Finance and Treasurer, presented an update on MWRA's revised Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Long-Term Control Plan.





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Ms. Rizzi explained that the updated plan reflects changes made since the October 2025 presentation, incorporating stakeholder feedback and further evaluation of alternatives. The revised proposal focuses on achieving elimination of CSOs in a “2050 typical year” across the Charles River, Mystic River, and Alewife Brook, while balancing water quality improvements with cost and constructability considerations.

She outlined the recommended alternatives for each water body:

- **Charles River:** The updated recommendation includes additional infrastructure, notably a 10-million-gallon storage tank at the Cottage Farm facility and expanded sewer separation in the Back Bay. The original preferred alternative was a 2.5 million-gallon tank. An additional storage conduit was also added. These changes increase the level of control to eliminate CSOs in a typical 2050 year. The estimated cost is approximately \$690 million, with a projected implementation timeline of 28 to 33 years.
- **Mystic River:** The recommended alternative includes a significantly larger storage tank (7.4 million gallons, increased from 2.7 million gallons in the prior proposal) and 95 acres of sewer separation. This alternative achieves zero CSOs in a typical year and is estimated to cost approximately \$260 million, with a 5 to 7 year implementation period.
- **Alewife Brook:** The recommended alternative remains unchanged from the October proposal, as it already achieved elimination of CSOs in a typical year. Ms. Rizzi noted that further increases in the level of control would involve substantially higher costs and diminishing returns.

Mr. Wu provided an overview of water quality impacts, emphasizing that CSOs are only one of several sources contributing to pollution in these water bodies. He explained that stormwater and upstream sources represent a larger share of pollutant loading, particularly for bacteria indicators such as *E. coli*. Modeling results indicate that eliminating CSOs alone would not result in fully swimmable or fishable conditions, as stormwater inputs remain significant.

Mr. Wu also highlighted that while CSO discharges can produce short-term spikes in bacteria levels, these impacts dissipate relatively quickly—within approximately six hours in the Charles River and 24 hours in the Mystic and Alewife systems. He noted that stormwater events occur far more frequently than CSO discharges and therefore represent a dominant driver of water quality conditions.

Discussion among members focused on the relative contributions of stormwater versus CSOs, and the potential tradeoffs associated with increased sewer separation. Members raised concerns that full or expanded sewer separation could result in greater volumes of untreated stormwater entering receiving waters, potentially offsetting some water quality gains. MWRA staff acknowledged that while sewer separation reduces CSO discharges, it may increase direct stormwater inputs, and that quantifying these impacts remains an area for further analysis.

Mr. Horan reviewed the financial implications of the proposed plan, emphasizing the significant cost increases associated with higher levels of CSO control. He explained that while the recommended “typical year” alternative is estimated to cost approximately \$1 billion in future dollars (through 2042)



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for MWRA's share, total borrowing costs over the entire financing period through 2072 could reach approximately \$2 billion when accounting for interest and financing.

He further noted that increasing the level of control to larger storm events (e.g., 5-year or 25-year storms) would substantially increase total costs to approximately \$4.5 billion and \$5.6 billion, respectively. These higher-cost alternatives would place considerable pressure on MWRA rates and could impact the agency's financial flexibility and bond rating.

Mr. Horan also emphasized that a significant portion of these costs would be borne by ratepayers beyond the current planning horizon, with approximately 59% of debt service occurring after 2050. He noted that these costs would be in addition to MWRA's existing capital program, including major investments in system maintenance and redundancy.

Board members discussed the balance between environmental benefits and affordability, with several noting the importance of clearly communicating both the expected water quality improvements and the financial impacts to communities and ratepayers. Members also highlighted the need to present diminishing returns associated with higher levels of control, particularly in light of the dominant role of stormwater in overall water quality.

MWRA staff noted that the updated plan is expected to be submitted in April 2026, at which point a public comment period and public hearing will be scheduled.

E. Committee Reports

a. Executive Committee – Richard Raiche

Chair Raiche reported that one of the Advisory Board's three seats on the MWRA Board of Directors, currently held by Mr. Taverna, is up for re-election. He noted that the Executive Committee will serve as the nominating committee for this position, as in past years.

Mr. Raiche stated that the process will be open to all interested candidates, and members will be invited to submit a cover letter and resume for consideration. He noted that Mr. Taverna has expressed interest in continuing in the role and has submitted materials for review.

Mr. Romero added that staff will distribute Mr. Taverna's materials to the Board and coordinate the nomination process. He also noted that the election is scheduled for the May meeting and will require strong attendance, as it is conducted on a one community, one vote basis.

b. Finance Committee – Elena Proakis Ellis

Elena Proakis Ellis, Finance Committee Chair, deferred to Ms. Bennett for an update.

Ms. Bennett reported that the February financial dashboards have been uploaded to the Advisory Board website. Mr. Romero added that staff are continuing to develop enhancements to the dashboards and expect to present an updated version in the coming months.





c. Operations Committee – Michael Rademacher

Mr. Rademacher reported that there was no update from the Operations Committee.

F. MWRA Energy Program Updates

Mr. Romero noted that, due to time constraints and the length of earlier presentations, the scheduled energy program update would be deferred.

Ms. Downs announced that the Wastewater Advisory Committee (WAC) will host a tour of Deer Island on May 15, focused on MWRA's energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives. She noted that an invitation will be distributed and that advance RSVP will be required.

Mr. Romero indicated that staff will circulate additional details to Advisory Board members.

G. MWRA Executive Director Update

Frederick Laskey, MWRA Executive Director, provided a brief update on agency activities.

Mr. Laskey reported that MWRA has been diverting water from the Ware River system and refilling the Sudbury Aqueduct system following seasonal maintenance and invasive species control efforts. He also noted that a recent fire at a Deer Island digester was quickly contained due to coordinated response efforts from local fire departments.

Additional updates included ongoing work at the Neponset pump station and a new initiative to install solar panels at the Norumbega covered storage facility.

Mr. Laskey also announced that he will be retiring on May 8, 2026.

Mr. Romero acknowledged Mr. Laskey's upcoming retirement and noted that the Advisory Board looks forward to recognizing his service at the April meeting.

H. Action Item: Approval of Advisory Board meeting minutes from February 26, 2026

A motion was made to approve the Advisory Board meeting minutes from February 26, 2026, as presented. It was moved by David Manugian (Bedford), seconded by Michael Rademacher (Arlington), and added to the omnibus roll call vote at the end of the meeting.

I. New Business

No new business was raised.

J. Adjournment + Omnibus

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting and conduct the omnibus roll call vote. It was moved by David Manugian (Bedford) and seconded by Michael Rademacher (Arlington).

The items included in the omnibus roll call vote were:





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- Approval of the Advisory Board meeting minutes from February 26, 2026
- Adjournment of the meeting

The following roll call vote took place:

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Michael Rademacher	Arlington	Yes (remote)
David Manugian	Bedford	Yes (remote)
John Sullivan	Boston (BWSC)	Yes (remote)
Jay Hersey	Brookline	Yes (remote)
Lucica Hiller	Cambridge	Yes (remote)
Michael Trotta	Canton	Yes (remote)
Cate Fox-Lent	Chelsea	Yes (remote)
Stephen Leone	Framingham	Yes (remote)
Jamal Jones	Lexington	Yes (remote)
Joe Beauchesne	Lynn	Yes (remote)
James Finegan	Lynnfield WD	Yes (remote)
Yem Lip	Malden	Yes (remote)
Amy McHugh	Marblehead	Yes (remote)

Name	Community	Vote
Elena Proakis Ellis	Melrose	Not present
Mike Retzky	Needham	Yes (remote)
Tom Fitzgerald	Newton	Yes (remote)
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Chris Cole	Reading	Yes (remote)
Richard Raiche	Somerville	Yes (remote)
Sam Stivers	Southborough	Not present
Patrick Fasanello	Walpole	Yes (remote)
Ian McKenzie	Waltham	Yes (remote)
Jamie Dunbar	Wilbraham	Not present
Wilmington	Joseph Lobao	Yes (remote)
Maurice Handel	MAPC	Yes (remote)
Lexi Dewey	Ct. River Basin	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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