



Advocacy & Accountability

Representing over 3 million people in Massachusetts since 1985

Thursday, April 9, 2026

Hybrid Meeting

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	
John Sullivan	Boston	
Jay Hersey	Brookline	
Dave Pavlik	Lexington	
Yem Lip	Malden	Here (remote)
Elena Proakis Ellis	Melrose	Here (remote)
Nicholas Rystrom	Revere	
Brendan O'Regan	Saugus	
Richard Raiche	Somerville	Here (in person)
Sam Stivers	Southborough	Here (in person)
John DeAmicis	Stoneham	Here (in person)
Maurice Handel	MAPC	Here (remote)

Board of Directors members:

- *Andy Pappastergion*
- *Lou Taverna*
- *Joe Foti*

Advisory Board and MWRA staff:

- *Christine Bennett, Research & Policy Analyst, Advisory Board*
- *Nathan Coté, Research & Policy Analyst, Advisory Board*
- *Matthew A. Romero, Executive Director, Advisory Board*

- *Abigail Bulman, Community Insights & Engagement Lead, Advisory Board*
- *Kishan Parida, Co-op Student, Advisory Board*

Also in attendance:

- *Andreae Downs, WAC*
- *Julie Greenwood-Torelli(Cambridge)*



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Matthew A. Romero
Executive Director



B. Executive Director's Report

Matthew Romero, Executive Director of the Advisory Board, briefed the Committee on recent developments.

Mr. Romero reported that MWRA Executive Director Fred Laskey's final day will be May 8, 2026, earlier than previously anticipated. His final MWRA Board and Advisory Board meetings will take place the following week. Mr. Romero noted that Steve Estes-Smargiassi, MWRA Director of Sustainability and Planning, has been proposed as interim Executive Director and is expected to serve through the completion of the search process.

Mr. Romero stated that the interim appointment is expected to provide continuity and stability, with limited disruption to ongoing operations. He also noted that the interim period may allow MWRA staff to explore new initiatives, particularly in areas such as communications and digital strategy.

To support coordination during the transition, Mr. Romero reported that he has initiated regular meetings with MWRA senior staff across departments to maintain communication and ensure continuity of operations.

Mr. Romero also provided an update on debt service assistance for FY26, noting that funding has been received. For FY27's Debt Service Assistance it is expected to follow the typical legislative process through the House, Senate, and conference committee.

Committee members discussed the MWRA Executive Director search process. It was reported that the search committee is beginning its work, with an initial meeting scheduled and further updates expected at the next Advisory Board meeting.

C. Draft FY27 Advisory Board Operating Budget

The Committee reviewed a draft of the FY27 Advisory Board Operating Budget.

Mr. Romero explained that the primary changes reflect a full year of staffing for recently filled positions, including Ms. Bulman, as well as adjustments to co-op hours to align with full-time schedules. He noted that staffing levels remain unchanged overall, with four full-time staff, one part-time administrative position, and two co-op students.

All other budget line items remain largely level-funded. Staff also reported ongoing efforts to review subscriptions and administrative expenses to eliminate unused services and recover costs where possible.

A minor formatting error in the draft budget was noted and will be corrected.





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The draft budget was presented for discussion only and will return to the Committee for approval at a future meeting.

D. Update – Process to elect an Advisory Board representative to the MWRA Board of Directors

Mr. Romero provided an update on the nomination process. He reported that the nomination period remains open and that Lou Taverna has submitted materials to seek reelection. At this time, he is the only declared candidate.

The Executive Committee will serve as the nominating committee, with formal nominations to be considered in May before being brought to the full Advisory Board.

E. Presentation – Draft Updated CSO LTCP Analysis

The Committee reviewed a draft financial analysis of the updated Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Long-Term Control Plan (LTCP).

Staff presented a comparative analysis of the Future Storm Protection (FSP) plan and the Extreme Storm Protection (ESP) plan, focusing on long-term cost impacts to MWRA communities. The analysis extends beyond MWRA's standard financial model horizon of 2050 to reflect anticipated debt service through approximately 2072, highlighting that total costs may be significantly higher than commonly presented figures.

Staff emphasized that the purpose of the analysis is to provide a clearer understanding of the scale and direction of potential financial impacts, particularly at the community level, and to support informed decision-making by local officials and stakeholders.

Committee members discussed the methodology and assumptions used in the analysis. Staff noted that the approach was reviewed with MWRA financial staff and determined to be reasonable, though not part of MWRA's official reporting.

Members discussed the importance of presenting the information in a way that clearly conveys total costs and trade-offs, including impacts on community sewer assessments. Members cautioned against oversimplifying costs and emphasized the need to maintain focus on overall financial impacts.

The Committee also discussed the development of additional materials, including breakdowns by fiscal year and supporting documentation to assist communities in interpreting the data.

Staff reported that the analysis will be finalized and presented to the full Advisory Board, followed by broader outreach to local officials and legislators, including supporting materials and explanatory resources.





The Committee also discussed an upcoming CSO-related event hosted by external advocacy organizations. Members expressed concern that the event may not provide a balanced perspective and agreed that participation was not necessary, preferring to engage through formal public processes.

F. Proposed FY27 Comments & Recommendations Preview

Mr. Romero provided a preview of draft FY27 comments and recommendations.

He reported that the proposed MWRA budget includes a combined assessment increase of approximately 3.1%, with a higher increase on the water side than the wastewater side.

Discussion focused on ongoing pressures related to personnel costs, hiring challenges, and long-term financial obligations, including CSO investments and future water system capital needs.

Mr. Romero noted that MWRA continues to face challenges in staffing, with hiring efforts largely offsetting attrition but not significantly increasing overall staffing levels. He also highlighted concerns regarding upcoming retirements and the potential loss of institutional knowledge.

Mr. Romero indicated that additional analysis and recommendations will be finalized and presented to the full Advisory Board.

G. Action Item: Approval of the April 16, 2026 Advisory Board meeting agenda

A motion was made to approve the Advisory Board meeting agenda for April 16, 2026, as presented. It was moved by Maurice Handel, seconded by John DeAmicis, and added to the omnibus roll call vote at the end of the meeting.

H. Action Item: Approval of the March 12, 2026 Executive Committee meeting minutes

Mr. Romero noted that minor edits had been submitted to the March 12, 2026 Executive Committee meeting minutes.

A motion was made to approve the minutes as amended, authorizing staff to incorporate the noted edits, by Sam Stivers, seconded by John DeAmicis, and added to the omnibus roll call vote at the end of the meeting.

I. Executive Session





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The Committee deferred the planned Executive Session regarding the Executive Director’s contract renewal to a future meeting to allow additional time for preparation and review of materials.

J. New Business

No additional items were raised under new business.

K. Adjournment and Omnibus Roll Call Vote

A motion to adjourn and take up an omnibus roll call vote was put forth. It was moved by Maurice Handel, seconded by John DeAmicis, and added to the omnibus vote.

An omnibus vote took place on the following items:

- Approval of the April 16, 2026 Advisory Board meeting agenda
- Approval of the March 12, 2026 Executive Committee meeting minutes, as amended
- Adjournment of the meeting

The roll call vote was as follows:

Name	Community	Vote
Michael Rademacher	Arlington	Yes (remote)
David Manugian	Bedford	
John Sullivan	Boston	
Jay Hersey	Brookline	
Dave Pavlik	Lexington	
Yem Lip	Malden	Yes (remote)
Elena Proakis Ellis	Melrose	Yes (remote)
Nicholas Rystrom	Revere	
Brendan O’Regan	Saugus	
Richard Raiche	Somerville	Yes (in person)
Sam Stivers	Southborough	Yes (in person)
John DeAmicis	Stoneham	Yes (in person)
Maurice Handel	MAPC	Yes (remote)

Respectfully submitted,

David Manugian, 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.

