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Thursday June 25, 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)
Daniel Maurer	Ashland	
David Manugian	Bedford	Here (remote)
John Sullivan	Boston	Here (remote)
Jay Hersey	Brookline	Here (remote)
Anthony DeSimone	Burlington	Here (remote)
Lucica Hiller	Cambridge	
Michael Trotta	Canton	Here (remote)
Cate Fox-Lent	Chelsea	Here (remote)
Ernest Lariviere	Everett	
Stephen Leone	Framingham	
David Pavlik	Lexington	
Joe Beauchesne	Lynn	Here (remote)
Lynnfield Water District	James Finegan	Here (remote)
Yem Lip	Malden	Here (remote)
Amy McHugh	Marblehead	Here (remote)
Tim McGivern	Medford	Here (remote)
Elena Proakis Ellis	Melrose	Here (remote)
Mike Retzky	Needham	Here (remote)

Name	Community	Vote
Thomas Fitzgerald	Newton	Here (remote)
Robert Donnelly	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)
Gino Cresta	Swampscott	
Joseph Conway	Wakefield	Here (remote)
Patrick Fasanello	Walpole	Here (remote)
Michael Chiasson	Waltham	Here (remote)
Jeff Azano-Brown	Wellesley	Here (remote)
Jamie Dunbar	Wilbraham	Here (remote)
Joseph Lobao	Wilmington	Here (remote)
Sean Divoll	Worcester	
Maurice Handel	MAPC	Here (remote)
J.R. Greene	Quabbin-Ware	Here (remote)
Lexi Dewey	Ct. River Basin	Here (remote)

Board of Directors members:

Lou Taverna, Joe Foti

Advisory Board staff:

Matthew Romero, Nathan Coté, Christine Bennett, Abigail Bulman, Kishan K. Parida

MWRA staff:

Kristen Hall, Colleen Rizzi, Stephen Estes-Smargiassi, David Granados, Kim Lebeau, Andres Hurtado, Rebecca Weidman, Matthew Horan, Mike Cole, Katie Ronan, Tom Durkin, Sean Navin, Gloria Kazeera, Claudia Baptista, Kristin MacDougall, Dlynzee Damas



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Also in attendance:

Lydia Olson (WSCAC/Mass Rivers Alliance), Emily Norton (CRWA) Andreae Downs (WAC), Moussa Siri (WSCAC), Paul Lauenstein (WSCAC), Brandon Ward (UCANE), Jennifer Pederson (Mass Waterworks)

B. Executive Director's Report

Matthew Romero, Executive Director of the MWRA Advisory Board, reported on the recent Wastewater Advisory Committee (WAC) tour of the Deer Island Treatment Plant. Mr. Romero noted that several legislators and legislative staff attended the tour, providing an opportunity to highlight MWRA operations and strengthen connections with legislative offices. He added that Advisory Board staff have continued that outreach following the tour, particularly regarding other Advisory Board issues and priorities.

Mr. Romero also recognized Kishan Parida, the Advisory Board's Northeastern University co-op student, as he concluded his semester with the office. He thanked Mr. Parida for his work, including helping bring the Advisory Board's financial dashboards to the website in a new interactive format, and wished him well in his future career.

Mr. Romero announced that the Advisory Board's next co-op student, Jo, will begin in July and remain with the office through December.

C. Presentation: Update on MWRA's Local Community Assistance Programs

Kristen Hall, Senior Program Manager for Operations Planning and Policy at MWRA, provided an overview of MWRA's Community Support Programs. Ms. Hall explained that her team manages MWRA's three primary financial assistance programs: the Infiltration/Inflow (I/I) Local Financial Assistance Program, the Local Water System Assistance Program (LWSAP), and the Lead Service Line Replacement Program. The team also manages MWRA's Leak Detection Technical Assistance Contract and Water Conservation Program.

Ms. Hall began by reviewing the general funding process used for the three primary financial assistance programs. Communities first define the project area and scope of work, with MWRA encouraging communities to target projects that will provide the greatest benefit. She noted that communities can coordinate MWRA-funded projects with other planned work, such as roadway projects, or combine water and sewer improvements on the same street to maximize the value of associated construction and paving work.

Communities must receive the appropriate local authorization before MWRA can distribute funds because the financing requires the issuance of a bond. Ms. Hall emphasized that MWRA could reimburse eligible project costs retroactively, but only for costs incurred after the date of the community's authorization vote. Communities may therefore complete a project and seek reimbursement afterward or receive MWRA funds in advance and provide project updates as work progresses.





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Ms. Hall explained that MWRA distributes funds quarterly, generally in February, May, August, and November, and applications should be submitted at least one month before the anticipated funding date. Once distributed, funds are deposited into a Massachusetts Municipal Depository Trust (MMDT) account designated for the applicable program. MWRA monitors activity in these accounts throughout the project and periodically requests project updates to ensure that funds are being spent as anticipated. Interest earned on MWRA funds must also be used for an eligible project.

Israel Alvarez, Project Manager, then provided an update on the I/I Local Financial Assistance Program. Mr. Alvarez explained that the program was established in 1993 to maintain and reduce infiltration and inflow in the regional sewer system. More than \$1 billion has been authorized for the program through 16 funding phases. Through June 2026, approximately \$633 million had been distributed for 723 I/I projects, including planning, investigations, studies, design, and construction. More than \$47 million was distributed during FY26, the largest amount distributed in a single fiscal year since the program began.

Mr. Alvarez explained that phases one through eight have been fully distributed, while funding remains available through phases nine through sixteen. Most of the current phases provide 75% grant funding and 25% interest-free loans with a ten-year repayment period, while phases 13 and 15 were established as 100% loan phases to provide interim funding while additional grant and loan phases were being developed. Approximately \$221 million in program loans has been repaid to MWRA to date.

Ms. Hall reviewed the extent of work completed through the I/I program. Communities have reported more than 2,600 miles of sewer inspected by television, along with flow isolation and smoke testing, inspections of more than 70,000 manholes and approximately 79,000 buildings, and extensive rehabilitation work. Completed work has included cured-in-place pipe lining, spot repairs, repairs to more than 20,000 service connections, sealing of approximately 4.8 miles of underdrains, rehabilitation of nearly 25,000 manholes, replacement of approximately 4,100 manhole covers, redirection of more than 550 sump pumps, and disconnection of more than 5,800 downspouts.

Ms. Hall also discussed the long-term effect of I/I reduction efforts on flows to the Deer Island Treatment Plant. While noting that changes in rainfall, population, water consumption, CSO management, and other factors make it difficult to isolate the precise effect of individual I/I projects, she explained that the overall trend in average flows to Deer Island has declined. She emphasized that I/I reduction is also an ongoing maintenance effort and that continued investment is necessary to prevent extraneous flows from increasing as collection systems age.

Claudia Baptista, Project Manager, provided an update on the Local Water System Assistance Program. Ms. Baptista explained that LWSAP provides zero-interest loans repaid over ten years for eligible local water system improvements. The program began with a \$30 million pilot in FY98 and has subsequently expanded through four phases. Nearly \$1 billion has been authorized, with approximately \$670 million distributed for nearly 700 local projects. During FY26, MWRA distributed approximately \$36.4 million to about 20 communities.

Ms. Baptista explained that individual community allocations are calculated based on water use share and the community's share of lined pipe. Approximately 65% of the funding in both phases three and





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four remained available. Eligible projects commonly include water main replacement and rehabilitation, engineering and construction administration, water storage facility improvements, and certain lead service line work. Through June 2026, the program had helped finance approximately 653 miles of lined pipe. A more limited Tier 2 component of the program can also support nontraditional projects, including meter replacement and GIS mapping.

Ms. Hall reviewed the timing of LWSAP funding phases and explained that phase three is approaching the end of its funding allocation period while phase four is entering its third year. She stated that MWRA does not anticipate a fifth phase for at least several more years and will consult with the Advisory Board regarding the timing and funding level of a future phase as utilization of existing funds progresses.

Mr. Romero emphasized that program allocations do not represent funds already borrowed and held by MWRA for individual communities. MWRA borrows funds in response to actual community requests and therefore cannot transfer unused allocations from one community to another. He noted that the timing of new phases must balance the needs of communities that utilize their allocations quickly with the overall utilization of the program across participating communities.

Andres Hurtado, Project Engineer, provided an overview of MWRA's Leak Detection Program and Water Conservation Program. Mr. Hurtado explained that MWRA tracks community compliance with the requirement to conduct water system leak detection surveys every two years. MWRA currently maintains a contract through April 2027 that communities may use to satisfy this requirement at a rate of \$165 per mile. MWRA manages the agreement and pays the contractor, with the participating community reimbursing MWRA one year later.

Mr. Hurtado also described MWRA's water conservation outreach. MWRA has updated its water conservation brochure to include information on water conservation, reducing lead exposure, fats, oils and grease, and residential infiltration and inflow. MWRA also provides communities and residents with water-saving fixtures and materials, including showerheads, faucet aerators, and leak detection tablets, at no charge.

In response to a question from Andreae Downs, WAC Executive Director, regarding similar leak detection work for sewer systems, Ms. Hall explained that MWRA does not maintain an equivalent sewer leak detection contract. Stephen Estes-Smargiassi, MWRA Executive Director, noted that communities conduct Sewer System Evaluation Surveys (SSES) that include evaluation of flows and conditions within local sewer systems.

David Granados, Project Manager, provided an update on the Lead Service Line Replacement Program. Mr. Granados explained that the program was launched in 2016 with an initial \$100 million allocation providing zero-interest loans with ten-year repayment terms. The program requires full replacement of lead service lines and can also support replacement of lead goosenecks and investigations of service lines with unknown materials.

In 2024, MWRA added another \$100 million to the program and introduced a 25% grant component. Communities are eligible for the grant portion when the private side of a lead service line is replaced at



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no cost to the homeowner. Communities that do not fully fund the private-side replacement remain eligible for zero-interest loans. Unlike the I/I and LWSAP programs, the Lead Service Line Replacement Program does not establish individual community allocations or caps.

Mr. Granados reported that 22 communities had received approximately \$76 million for 67 projects. Since the program revisions, more than \$32 million has been distributed, and approximately \$124 million remains available for future eligible projects. Collectively, MWRA's water programs have helped fund more than 9,700 lead service line replacements and approximately 1,700 lead gooseneck replacements.

Mr. Granados also provided an update on community service line inventories following the October 2024 federal inventory deadline. The number of identified lead service lines had decreased from approximately 14,000 to 12,000, galvanized lines requiring replacement had declined from approximately 2,800 to 2,400, and service lines of unknown material had declined from approximately 75,000 to 64,000. He noted that changes in the number of identified lead lines do not directly correspond to the number of replacements because investigations can result in previously unknown lines being reclassified as lead.

Mr. Granados reviewed upcoming regulatory requirements, including annual customer notifications for properties with lead, galvanized-requiring-replacement, or unknown service lines. He highlighted November 1, 2027 as an important upcoming deadline, when public water systems will be required to submit baseline inventories and, where applicable, lead service line replacement plans. Replacement rates will then be established using the number of lead, galvanized-requiring-replacement, and unknown service lines.

Michael Rademacher, Arlington, asked how communities could be treated under the regulations when unknown service lines are investigated and ultimately determined not to contain lead. Mr. Estes-Smargiassi explained that final EPA compliance guidance remained an important consideration and that a failure to meet applicable requirements could result in a violation and associated public notification requirements. Mr. Granados emphasized the importance of reducing the number of unknown service lines before the November 2027 baseline inventory because lines determined not to contain lead before that point would not factor into the initial replacement-rate calculation. He added that replacement performance is expected to be evaluated using a three-year rolling average and that inventories will continue to be updated as communities investigate unknowns and complete replacements.

Mr. Granados encouraged communities to align their planning and public communication with a goal of becoming lead-free by 2032 in order to avoid potential additional treatment requirements, while noting that all lead service lines must ultimately be replaced by 2037. He reminded members that MWRA funding is available both for replacement of lead service lines and for investigations needed to determine the material of unknown service lines.

Ms. Hall concluded by directing members to the Community Support section of MWRA's website for program guidelines, applications, funding information, and staff contacts. She also noted that MWRA is reviewing its leak detection regulations under 360 CMR 12, which date to 1991, to account for changes



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in technology and industry practices. MWRA anticipates additional outreach in the fall, potentially including a workshop to gather community input on useful technologies and approaches.

Mr. Romero thanked Ms. Hall and the Community Support team for the presentation and noted that the Advisory Board would include links to MWRA's Community Support resources in its meeting follow-up materials.

D. Committee Reports

a. Executive Committee – Richard Raiche

Richard Raiche, Chair, turned the Executive Committee report over to Matthew Romero, Executive Director, for an update on the annual Advisory Board field trip. Mr. Romero announced that the field trip will be postponed until October this year to coincide with the formal dedication of the Fred Laskey Pump Station and Covered Storage Facility. MWRA named the facility in honor of former Executive Director Fred Laskey prior to his retirement.

Mr. Romero explained that postponing the trip will provide additional time for MWRA to complete and install the new facility signage. The Advisory Board also intends to build on its recent legislative outreach by inviting legislators, other elected officials, and representatives from member communities to participate in the field trip. Additional details will be provided as plans are finalized.

b. Finance Committee – Elena Proakis Ellis

Elena Proakis Ellis, Finance Committee Chair, provided an update on the Advisory Board's financial dashboards. Ms. Proakis Ellis noted that a new dashboard page provides a more detailed breakdown of operating budget expense categories and line items, and that several changes have been incorporated in response to user feedback. The dashboard has also been updated to include FY26 budget performance through May 2026.

Ms. Proakis Ellis reported that a dedicated personnel expenses page is under development. She noted that personnel spending and the relationship between actual and budgeted staffing levels have been areas of particular focus for the Finance Committee. A preliminary Capital Improvement Program budget dashboard has also been developed and currently includes FY25 data. Advisory Board staff continue to welcome feedback as the dashboards are refined.

Ms. Proakis Ellis also reported that MWRA had released final FY27 water and sewer assessments to member communities earlier in the week. She encouraged members who had not received their assessments to contact Advisory Board staff for assistance.

Ms. Proakis Ellis concluded by recognizing Kishan Parida, the Advisory Board's Northeastern University co-op student, for his contributions to the development of the financial dashboards during his time with the office.

c. Operations Committee – Michael Rademacher



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Michael Rademacher, Operations Committee Chair, provided an update on the Advisory Board's outreach related to MWRA's Draft Updated CSO Control Plan. Mr. Rademacher reported that Advisory Board staff have continued meeting with member communities and other stakeholders to discuss the plan, answer questions, and encourage participation in the public comment process.

Mr. Rademacher reminded members that Advisory Board staff are available to meet directly with local officials, including mayors, town managers and administrators, municipal finance staff, and elected boards. Communities interested in discussing the Draft Updated CSO Control Plan were encouraged to contact the Advisory Board office to arrange a meeting.

Mr. Rademacher also reported that the Advisory Board has added a walkthrough video explaining how to use the CSO Dashboard and navigate the information presented. Members were encouraged to review and share the video and dashboard with interested officials and stakeholders in their communities.

Advisory Board staff have also begun preliminary analysis of the potential impacts of the CSO plan on large facilities and major sewer users within MWRA communities. Mr. Rademacher noted that this work remains ongoing and will continue to be refined as additional information becomes available.

Mr. Rademacher reported that MWRA has begun a series of office hours related to the Draft Updated CSO Control Plan. The first session had been held earlier in the week, with additional virtual and in-person sessions planned through September. Members and interested stakeholders were encouraged to participate, and Advisory Board staff will continue sharing information regarding upcoming sessions.

Mr. Romero directed members to MWRA's joint CSO planning website for project materials, information on upcoming office hours, and submission of public comments. He also highlighted the Advisory Board's CSO Dashboard as a separate resource for examining the potential community-level financial impacts of the plan.

E. Legislative Update

Matthew Romero, Executive Director, reported that Advisory Board staff have continued legislative outreach following the recent joint Advisory Board and WAC tour of the Deer Island Treatment Plant, which was attended by several legislators and legislative staff. Mr. Romero noted that outreach has also continued regarding the Draft Updated CSO Control Plan.

Mr. Romero provided an update on the Massachusetts Resilient Environment and Development Act, or Mass Ready Act, the environmental bond bill. He reported that the House had released its version of the legislation, which removed both the proposed Quabbin Community Trust Fund and the additional MWRA Board of Directors seat designated for a representative from the Quabbin region.

Mr. Romero also noted that the House version reduced the number of communities affected by provisions of the legislation from 13 in the Senate version to the original 11 communities. However, the legislation continued to require those communities to pay \$50,000 annually for the two-year period included in the original language.



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Mr. Romero reported that the legislation would next proceed to conference committee to reconcile differences between the House and Senate versions. He noted that former MWRA Executive Director Fred Laskey had raised several of these issues during recent meetings with legislative partners prior to his retirement. The Advisory Board will continue monitoring the legislation as the conference committee process moves forward.

F. MWRA Interim Executive Director Update – Stephen Estes-Smargiassi

Stephen Estes-Smargiassi, MWRA Executive Director, provided an update on MWRA activities, beginning with continued outreach related to the Draft Updated CSO Control Plan. Mr. Estes-Smargiassi emphasized the importance of communities and other stakeholders participating in the formal public comment process before the record closes at the end of September. He noted that MWRA is meeting with mayors, town managers, municipal officials, community organizations, and other interested groups to ensure that they understand the proposed plan and have an opportunity to provide informed comments.

Mr. Estes-Smargiassi noted that the financial impacts of the CSO program will extend beyond the CSO communities themselves, as sewer communities throughout the MWRA system will contribute toward the cost through their assessments and ultimately through local sewer rates. He stressed the importance of making communities aware of these potential impacts before decisions regarding the plan are finalized.

Mr. Estes-Smargiassi also discussed outreach to organizations interested in recreational use of the affected rivers and parklands. He explained that construction of certain CSO facilities could temporarily disrupt parkland and, in some locations, result in permanent restrictions. Given the limited locations where some facilities can be constructed, he encouraged interested community organizations to become involved in the process while there remains an opportunity to influence decisions before requirements are incorporated into future regulatory orders.

Mr. Estes-Smargiassi noted that approximately one-third of participants at MWRA's June public meeting were attending a CSO planning meeting for the first time. He said the meeting generated questions regarding the purpose, benefits, locations, and potential impacts of proposed facilities. He emphasized that MWRA is seeking fact-based public input and encouraged members to identify local organizations or officials that would benefit from meeting directly with MWRA staff.

In response to a question regarding Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) review, Mr. Estes-Smargiassi stated that he anticipates some projects will ultimately undergo MEPA review due to their scale. However, he noted that some project requirements may already be established through Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) orders by that point, reinforcing the importance of participating during the current public comment period.

Mr. Estes-Smargiassi next reported that MWRA's annual Water Quality Report had been released and was available both by mail and on MWRA's website. In addition to reporting on drinking water quality and lead, the report includes a focus on system resilience and water conservation under the theme "Every Drop Counts."





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Mr. Estes-Smargiassi noted that the region remained unusually dry, with the preceding six months among the driest periods experienced in more than a century. Quabbin Reservoir was at slightly below 83% capacity. While MWRA was not in drought conditions, he encouraged customers to remain mindful of unnecessary water use, particularly outdoor watering.

Mr. Estes-Smargiassi also discussed MWRA's participation in Sail Boston and noted that Deer Island would provide public access for viewing the Parade of Sail. He highlighted Deer Island's role not only as critical wastewater infrastructure but also as an important public recreational resource, with public access areas offering views of Boston Harbor and the city.

A member congratulated Mr. Estes-Smargiassi on receiving national recognition from the Lead Service Line Replacement Collaborative for his work assisting communities with lead service line issues. Mr. Estes-Smargiassi also reported that MWRA had received an award from the Water Research Foundation recognizing the Authority's longstanding participation in research projects that have helped inform major MWRA investments.

Mr. Estes-Smargiassi reminded members that MWRA's membership in the Water Research Foundation extends access to MWRA water and wastewater communities. He encouraged communities to take advantage of the research and other member resources available through the organization and to contact MWRA if they need assistance obtaining access.

Mr. Romero returned to the Draft Updated CSO Control Plan and emphasized the Advisory Board's efforts to encourage meaningful participation in the public comment process. He noted that the Advisory Board will consider its own formal comments in September and will provide communities with template letters that can serve as a starting point for local comments. Advisory Board staff are also available to work directly with communities to tailor comments to their individual circumstances.

Mr. Romero emphasized that individualized, fact-based comments would be more useful than identical form letters. Mr. Estes-Smargiassi encouraged communities to provide information regarding competing local financial needs, including schools, roads, public safety facilities, stormwater improvements, staffing pressures, and other municipal investments. He noted that this local context can help demonstrate how additional CSO costs would interact with the other demands placed on limited municipal resources.

G. Action Item: Approval of Advisory Board meeting minutes from May 14, 2026

A motion was made to approve the Advisory Board meeting minutes from May 14, 2026, as corrected. It was moved by Maurice Handel, seconded by David Manugian, and added to the omnibus roll call vote at the end of the meeting.

H. New Business

None.

I. Adjournment + Omnibus



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A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. It was moved by David Manugian, seconded by Maurice Handel, and added to the omnibus roll call vote. A motion was made to conduct the omnibus roll call vote. It was moved by David Manugian and seconded by Maurice Handel.

The items included in the omnibus roll call vote were:

- Approval of the Advisory Board meeting minutes from May 14, 2026
- Adjournment of the meeting

The following roll call vote took place:

Name	Community	Vote
Michael Rademacher	Arlington	Yes (remote)
Daniel Maurer	Ashland	
David Manugian	Bedford	Yes (remote)
John Sullivan	Boston	Yes (remote)
Jay Hersey	Brookline	Yes (remote)
Anthony DeSimone	Burlington	Yes (remote)
Lucica Hiller	Cambridge	
Michael Trotta	Canton	Yes (remote)
Cate Fox-Lent	Chelsea	Yes (remote)
Ernest Lariviere	Everett	
Stephen Leone	Framingham	
David Pavlik	Lexington	
Joe Beauchesne	Lynn	Yes (remote)
Lynnfield Water District	James Finegan	Yes (remote)
Yem Lip	Malden	Yes (remote)
Amy McHugh	Marblehead	Not present
Tim McGivern	Medford	Yes (remote)
Elena Proakis Ellis	Melrose	Yes (remote)
Mike Retzky	Needham	Yes (remote)

Name	Community	Vote
Thomas Fitzgerald	Newton	Yes (remote)
Robert Donnelly	Norwood	Yes (remote)
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)
Gino Cresta	Swampscott	
Joseph Conway	Wakefield	Yes (remote)
Patrick Fasanello	Walpole	Yes (remote)
Michael Chiasson	Waltham	Yes (remote)
Jeff Azano-Brown	Wellesley	Yes (remote)
Jamie Dunbar	Wilbraham	Not present
Joseph Lobao	Wilmington	Yes (remote)
Sean Divoll	Worcester	
Maurice Handel	MAPC	Yes (remote)
J.R. Greene	Quabbin-Ware	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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