



Advocacy & Accountability

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Thursday, June 11, 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 (in person)
David Manugian	Bedford	Here (remote)
John Sullivan	Boston	Here (remote)
Jay Hersey	Brookline	Here (in person)
Dave Pavlik	Lexington	
Yem Lip	Malden	
Elena Proakis Ellis	Melrose	Here (remote)
Nicholas Rystrom	Revere	Here (remote)
Brendan O'Regan	Saugus	
Richard Raiche	Somerville	
Sam Stivers	Southborough	Here (in person)
John DeAmicis	Stoneham	
Maurice Handel	MAPC	

Board of Directors members:

- Joseph Foti
- Andy Pappastergion
- Lou Taverna

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
- Colleen Rizzi, MWRA



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Matthew A. Romero
Executive Director



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B. MWRA CSO Community Outreach

Michael Rademacher, serving as Chair in place of Richard Raiche, who was not present, introduced the next agenda item, MWRA CSO Community Outreach.

Steve Estes-Smargiassi, Interim Executive Director of the MWRA, provided an update on MWRA's community outreach efforts related to the Draft Updated Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Long-Term Control Plan. He noted that the draft plan was released at the end of April and is currently in a five-month public outreach and comment period.

Mr. Estes-Smargiassi reported that MWRA sent letters and informational materials to state legislators, mayors, town and city managers, and other local officials throughout the service area, inviting communities to meet with MWRA staff for briefings on the plan. MWRA has also scheduled virtual and in-person office hours and is available to participate in additional community meetings upon request.

Mr. Estes-Smargiassi discussed feedback received at a recent public meeting, noting that many questions focused on the benefits of the proposed investments, potential construction impacts, and whether additional CSO controls would result in meaningful improvements in water quality. He emphasized the importance of receiving fact-based comments representing a range of perspectives, particularly regarding affordability, competing municipal priorities, construction impacts, and the relationship between additional investment and measurable environmental benefits.

Committee members discussed opportunities for additional community outreach and the types of meetings MWRA could attend. Mr. Estes-Smargiassi stated that MWRA could participate in meetings ranging from staff-level briefings to public meetings of municipal boards and could also assist communities with factual information for comment letters. Members also discussed the importance of providing communities with concise talking points and other materials to help local officials understand the plan and participate in the comment process.

Discussion also focused on the broader financial pressures facing MWRA and its communities. Mr. Estes-Smargiassi noted that significant investments will be required in the coming years at Deer Island, the Carroll Water Treatment Plant, and other facilities, while construction costs continue to rise. Members discussed how additional CSO costs could place further pressure on rates alongside other local priorities and affordability concerns.

Mr. Estes-Smargiassi also briefly informed the Committee that MWRA is experiencing supply challenges with fluoride used in the drinking water system. MWRA has temporarily reduced its fluoride dosage from 0.7 to 0.5 while working to secure additional supply and evaluating procurement options. He stated that MWRA is coordinating with state public health and environmental officials and does not currently anticipate a need for broader public notification.





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Matthew Romero, Executive Director of the Advisory Board, then provided an update on the Advisory Board's CSO outreach efforts. Abigail Bulman, Community Insights & Engagement Lead, reported that staff have contacted state representatives and senators to offer individual briefings on the Advisory Board's community-level CSO cost dashboard. Staff have begun meeting with interested legislators and municipal officials and plan to expand outreach to additional local officials.

Mr. Romero also discussed a dashboard walkthrough video being developed as an outreach and educational tool. The video is intended to provide legislators, municipal officials, and other stakeholders with a resource they can revisit or share with staff after receiving an initial briefing on the CSO costs.

Nathan Coté, Research & Policy Analyst, presented an additional analysis examining the potential impact of CSO costs on significant industrial users within the MWRA sewer system. Staff used MWRA flow data to estimate the share of community sewer costs attributable to approximately 40 large users with flows exceeding 25,000 gallons per day and incorporated those estimates into the existing CSO dashboard framework.

Ms. Bulman presented related research examining the broader economic importance of Kayem Foods in Chelsea, including employment and local economic activity that could be affected if increasing utility costs contributed to a business decision to relocate. Mr. Romero explained that staff intend to use this work to illustrate how CSO costs may affect not only individual households and municipal assessments, but also major employers and the broader economic interests of MWRA communities.

Mr. Rademacher noted that the updates were provided for informational purposes only.

C. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Romero reported that the Advisory Board had formally transmitted its FY27 Comments and Recommendations to MWRA and expects to receive MWRA's formal responses at the June Board of Directors meeting.

Mr. Romero also reflected on the recent retirement celebration for former MWRA Executive Director Fred Laskey, noting the strong attendance of former colleagues and members of Mr. Laskey's family.

Christine Bennett, Research & Policy Analyst, provided an update on the Advisory Board's interactive budget dashboards. Ms. Bennett reported that staff, working with co-op student Kishan Parida, had added a new drill-down feature to the Current Expense Budget (CEB) dashboard allowing users to explore additional line-item detail. The updated dashboard was expected to be posted to the Advisory Board website following the meeting.





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Ms. Bennett reported that staff had also begun developing a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) dashboard in Power BI. Given the size and complexity of the CIP, staff are working to develop additional ways for users to explore the underlying data and expect to provide an initial preview at the upcoming Advisory Board meeting. As with the CEB dashboard, staff will seek member feedback on the information and drill-down features that would be most useful.

Mr. Romero also noted that Mr. Parida would conclude his co-op with the Advisory Board at the end of June. A new co-op student will join the Advisory Board in July and will focus initially on work related to the annual Water and Sewer Retail Rate Survey.

D. Legislative Update

Mr. Romero provided an update on recent legislative outreach. He reported that the Advisory Board and Wastewater Advisory Committee (WAC) recently hosted a joint tour of Deer Island focused on energy initiatives. Several legislators and legislative staff attended, providing an additional opportunity for Advisory Board staff to share district-specific information on potential CSO costs and continue outreach following the event.

Mr. Romero also provided an update on the Mass Ready Act, noting that former MWRA Executive Director Fred Laskey had discussed with the Speaker of the House the provisions of greatest concern to MWRA prior to his retirement. Staff will continue to monitor the legislation as it moves forward.

Mr. Estes-Smargiassi reported that MWRA was tentatively planning a special Board of Directors meeting for July 10 in the Quabbin area to provide an opportunity for legislators from the region to meet with Board members and discuss their concerns. Committee members discussed the decision to hold a separate meeting rather than incorporate the discussion into a regularly scheduled Board meeting. Mr. Estes-Smargiassi explained that the meeting was being arranged as a courtesy to legislators and would allow sufficient time for discussion without interfering with the business of a regular Board meeting.

Mr. Romero also reported that the Governor's Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) Commission is seeking public feedback and that the Division of Local Services has made information available regarding listening sessions and the submission of comments. Advisory Board staff will distribute the information to members following the meeting.

Mr. Estes-Smargiassi discussed differences between MWRA watershed PILOT payments and the Commonwealth's broader PILOT program. He noted that MWRA is required to pay the full calculated amount for its watershed properties, while state PILOT payments to municipalities are subject to legislative appropriation and may therefore be funded below the calculated amount. Members discussed the importance of ensuring that the Commission receives input from communities experiencing shortfalls under the broader state PILOT program.





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E. Advisory Board FY27 meeting schedule

Mr. Romero reviewed the proposed FY27 Advisory Board meeting schedule and asked members to notify staff of any known conflicts, including conferences or other events that could affect attendance.

Mr. Romero noted that the schedule may require adjustments as MWRA finalizes its Board of Directors meeting calendar, including possible changes to the July schedule and the potential cancellation of the August Board meeting.

Mr. Romero also reported that Advisory Board staff have been discussing an additional community workshop with MWRA focused on leak detection, tentatively planned for October, when no regular Advisory Board meeting is scheduled.

Mr. Estes-Smargiassi encouraged members to identify any new leak detection technologies being used or considered by their communities so that MWRA staff can incorporate those topics into the workshop. He noted that MWRA continues to evaluate how newer technologies may supplement or, where appropriate, serve as alternatives to existing leak detection requirements.

F. Advisory Board summer field trip

Mr. Romero provided an update on planning for the Advisory Board's annual field trip. He reported that staff are considering moving the field trip to October to coincide with the anticipated formal dedication of the Fred Laskey Pump Station and Covered Storage facility.

Mr. Romero noted that additional time is needed to complete signage associated with the dedication. Moving the event to October may also provide a greater opportunity for legislators and other invited officials to attend, supporting the Advisory Board's ongoing legislative outreach efforts.

Staff will provide additional information once the date and plans are finalized.

G. Action Item: Approval of the June 25, 2026 Advisory Board meeting agenda

A motion was made to approve the Advisory Board meeting agenda for June 25, 2026, as presented. It was moved by David Manugian, seconded by Sam Stivers, and added to the omnibus roll call vote at the end of the meeting.

H. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the following minutes was put forth:

- April 9, 2026 Executive Committee meeting minutes
- May 7, 2026 Executive Committee meeting minutes
- May 7, 2026 Executive Committee Executive Session meeting minutes





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It was moved by David Manugian, seconded by Sam Stivers, and added to the omnibus roll call vote at the end of the meeting

I. New Business

None.

J. Executive Director Annual Evaluation

Mr. Romero referred Committee members to the year-end summary provided in advance of the meeting, which outlined the Advisory Board's activities and accomplishments over the past year.

Mr. Romero invited members to provide feedback on areas where they would like the Executive Director or Advisory Board staff to devote additional attention in the coming year. He noted that work related to the updated CSO Long-Term Control Plan represented a significant focus during the past year and that staff expect to continue CSO outreach while also expanding attention to other priorities in FY27.

Mr. Rademacher asked whether members had any questions or comments. No additional discussion was raised.

K. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was put forth. It was moved by David Manugian, seconded by Sam Stivers, and added to the omnibus vote.

L. Omnibus Roll Call Vote

A motion to take up an omnibus roll call vote was put forth. It was moved by David Manugian, seconded by Sam Stivers.

An omnibus vote took place on the following items:

- Approval of the June 25, 2026 Advisory Board meeting agenda
- Approval of the April 9, 2026 Executive Committee meeting minutes
- Approval of the May 7, 2026 Executive Committee meeting minutes
- Approval of the May 7, 2026 Executive Committee Executive Session meeting minutes
- Adjournment

The following vote took place:



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Matthew A. Romero
Executive Director



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Elena Proakis Ellis	Melrose	Yes (remote)
Nicholas Rystrom	Revere	Yes (remote)
Brendan O'Regan	Saugus	
Richard Raiche	Somerville	
Sam Stivers	Southborough	Yes (in person)
John DeAmicis	Stoneham	
Maurice Handel	MAPC	

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.



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