



NEWS & NOTES

A PUBLICATION OF THE MWRA ADVISORY BOARD
NOVEMBER 2008

LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE APPROVED

This month the MWRA Advisory Board approved the 2009-2010 Legislative Package featuring four new initiatives and seven re-files. The new initiatives call attention to the financing needs of the “forgotten infrastructure” of water and sewer, and utilize a variety of strategies to develop funding for infrastructure. The approaches comprise expanding the Bottle Bill to include bottled water (and designating those returns to a water and sewer infrastructure account); instituting a five-cent tax on bottled water (which would be returned to a similar account); funding the Sewer Rate Relief Fund at formula levels as stated in the Massachusetts General Laws; and expanding the septic tax credit to include a tax credit for retail sewer customers. Advisory Board staff met with MWRA Caucus Chairman Ron Mariano and Vice-Chairman Anthony Petruccelli to discuss their leadership in filing the legislation in the upcoming session. Contact Christine Hevelone-Byler at the Advisory Board for more information.

AB STAFF MEETS WITH LEGISLATORS

Since last month’s Editorial (“*Just Say No*”), staff from the Advisory Board met with Legislative leaders from South Boston to discuss the ongoing dispute over the location of an Odor Control Facility as part of the North Dorchester Bay Combined Sewer Overflow Project. State Senator Jack Hart and Congressman Stephen Lynch were willing to hear the Advisory Board’s perspective with regard to the amount of money ratepayers have already paid for this project. In addition to meetings with Senator Hart and Congressman Lynch, Advisory Board staff met with Mr. Joseph Corcoran of Corcoran Jennison Companies to discuss the differences of opinion regarding this project. The Advisory Board maintains that if increased construction costs requested by an abutter will only benefit said abutter, then the abutter should pay the increased costs. Stay tuned to the Advisory Board for continuing developments.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

DECEMBER 4: OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING / 10AM - WELLESLEY

DECEMBER 17: MWRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS / 10AM - CHARLESTOWN

THE MWRA ADVISORY BOARD’S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & FULL ADVISORY BOARD DO NOT MEET IN DECEMBER



MWRA Director of Public Affairs Mike Ralph received a Certificate of Appreciation from Advisory Board Chairwoman Katherine Dunphy at the November meeting. Mr. Ralph recently announced his retirement and was recognized for more than 23 years of service.

BUDGET AMENDMENT ANTICIPATED

Staff from the MWRA plan to file a budget amendment with the MWRA Board of Directors to address the loss of \$15 million, which is the Authority’s share of \$20 million in statewide Debt Service Assistance (DSA). Governor Patrick issued sweeping mid-year 9C cuts to the state budget plan last month, including the entirety DSA, after months of waning state tax revenues. The Board of Directors, Authority staff and the Advisory Board are working together to avoid a mid-year rate increase by making other cuts. The Amendment will be formally transmitted to the Advisory Board for review and comment.

JOINT MEETING OF ADVISORY GROUPS

Over 40 members of the MWRA Advisory Board’s Operations Committee, the Wastewater Advisory Committee (WAC) and the Water Supply Citizens Advisory Committee (WSCAC) met this month to strengthen the ties between the organizations and to provide common information to all three groups. The focus of the meeting was to examine how the water systems and wastewater systems inter-relate, as well as how the committees can work together in mutual areas of interest. This includes more frequent joint meetings, discussion of maintenance of the systems, budget discussions and collaboration on agendas. The three committees agreed the meeting was a success.

If you have any questions regarding topics raised in this newsletter or any other MWRA issue, please contact:
Christine Hevelone-Byler, Government & Media Coordinator • Phone: 617.742.7561 • Fax: 617.742.4614 •

Email: christine.hevelone-byler@mwra.state.ma.us

Web Site: www.mwraadvisoryboard.com