



Advisory Board Meeting

Thursday, November 17, 2016
11:30 am

Boston Water and Sewer Commission
980 Harrison Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts

Attendees (Voting Members)

Mike Rademacher	Arlington	Amy McHugh	Marblehead	John DeAmicis	Stoneham
David Manugian	Bedford	Cassandra Koutalidis	Medford	Walter Woods	Wellesley
John Sullivan	Boston	Elena Proakis Ellis	Melrose	Joe Lobao	Wilmington
Jay Hersey	Brookline	John Cosgrove, Jr.	Needham	J. R. Greene	Quabbin and Ware Watersheds
John Sanchez	Burlington	Lou Taverna	Newton	Andy Fisk	Connecticut River Basin
Tim MacDonald	Cambridge	Bernie Cooper	Norwood		
Ralph Pecora	Lexington	Jeff Zager	Reading		
James Finegan	Lynnfield Water District	Brendan O'Regan	Saugus		

Other Attendees

Andy Pappastergion	MWRA BOD	Sean Navin	MWRA Staff	Matthew Romero	MWRA AB Staff
John Carroll	MWRA BOD	Leo Norton	MWRA Staff	James Guiod	MWRA AB Staff
Lexi Dewey	WSCAC	Kathy Soni	MWRA Staff	Lenna Ostrodka	MWRA AB Staff
Andreae Downs	WAC	Matt Horan	MWRA Staff	Cornelia Potter	MWRA AB Staff
Joshua Das	MWRA Staff	Louise Miller	MWRA Staff	William Shaughnessy	Wellesley
Michael Hornbrook	MWRA Staff	Joseph Favaloro	MWRA AB Staff		

38 people were in attendance, including 23 voting members.

**Thursday, November 17, 2016
980 HARRISON AVENUE
BOSTON, MA 02119 – 11:30 AM**

Draft Minutes

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 11:45 am.

A. APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 15, 2016 MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made and seconded to approve the amended minutes of the September 15, 2016 meeting of the Advisory Board. The motion passed.

B. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mr. Favaloro called attention to the planned workshop on December 8 from 9-12 noon on water redundancy at Boston College. Invitations have been sent out, including to mayors and CEOs. He urged members to reach out to other town officials including treasurers and administrators who are not members of the Advisory Board. It will be posted as a

regular Advisory Board meeting, and it is hoped that the meeting will result in consensus on the types of things that would be supported on this project. The subject of water redundancy will be the biggest project in the Authority's capital budget, going forward.

Over the past two years, there have been reports on the issue of mountain biking in the Ware River watershed. There have been significant impacts caused by mountain biking – cutting down trees, creating bridges, causing erosion. Mr. Favaloro observed that it had been expected that the issue would be kept in its proper place, but there is a goal among the mountain biking community to have additional pathways in the watershed. There are existing paths outside the watershed, so biking is not banned everywhere.

The purpose of the watersheds is to filter and protect the drinking water for 2.2 million people in Massachusetts. We have put together a couple of points for discussion with representatives of the Administration: the Authority and the Commonwealth avoided filtration because of a “three-legged stool” approach, which included the building of the Carroll Water Treatment Plant, covered storage, watershed protection (aggressively purchasing lands in all of the basins -- Wachusett, Ware River, and Quabbin), and a significant investment in local infrastructure. If changes to watershed uses are allowed, it begins a domino effect. If the Administration wants to move in this direction, then there should be a guarantee of \$250 million from the Commonwealth to build a filtration plant. Why do we pay nearly \$5 million per year in payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTs) to the communities for the watershed lands (of which \$1.3 million goes to seven communities in the Ware River watershed)? Since 1986, over \$13 million has been spent to acquire watershed land in the Ware watershed to meet the criteria to avoid filtration. If those lands are designated for recreational purposes, the Commonwealth should reimburse the Authority for the funds spent to acquire the land for watershed protection purposes. And once the criteria are opened up for uses of watershed land in the Ware, what is to stop the use of the same criteria for the Quabbin and Wachusett watersheds? Even if mountain bikes are allowed, what is to stop the use of all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiles, even horses? Now is the time to go public with this issue.

C. DROUGHT UPDATE/LEAD AND COPPER SAMPLING RESULTS

Michael Hornbrook, Chief Operating Officer, opened up the [presentation](#) noting that most of the state is still in a drought. He pointed out that the Commonwealth, in its reports of the extent of the drought in the state, notes that the MWRA/DCR watershed has its own specific drought management plan. Rainfall has been well below the average, starting in June 2015. The Quabbin has dropped to the “below normal” state as of November 12, although even at “below normal” the reservoir is still at 79% full, and at 91% full at Wachusett there is still over 4 billion gallons of storage in the watershed system. The Authority expects to be back at the normal range in the six- to twelve- month period. During the serious drought of the 1960s, average demand was between 320 and 340 million gallons per day. Now, the demand is about 200 million gallons per day, on an annual average. During this time, the Authority has had some requests from communities for water that we typically do not serve: Cambridge (that is typically not served, but is a member of the system; they are drawing about 10 mgd); Worcester (also a member who typically does not draw from MWRA; they take 15 mgd); Ashland and Cherry Valley Water District take a small amount of water; Burlington is taking an additional amount; Lynn is expected to take an additional amount of water sometime in the immediate future.

A letter has been sent to CEOs and elected officials from Fred Laskey that although there are no immediate restrictions, there should be an increased awareness of water efficiency and water reuse going forward. The Authority is also sending out public service announcements asking businesses to conserve water and use it efficiently. There are indoor conservation brochures that can be used in mailers, and the website provides additional information urging water conservation and efficient use of water. He encouraged communities to have a leak detection survey done or have them updated. He also noted that meter replacement is eligible under the Tier 2 program as part of the water loan program. Communities should also look at any large projects under consideration that may use a large amount of water (such as a ballfield renovation), and consider putting it off. The Authority has in the past done winter drawdowns to freeze invasive

species; that program will not be done this winter, to keep that water in the reservoirs. We are stressing to people to be aware of water, and conserve it when you can; we are in a drought but the Authority is not requiring mandatory restrictions.

Mr. Favaloro observed that engineers and others have provided us with an abundant, deep source of water: it has taken a long time to drop down during the drought and the converse of that is that it will take a longer to build reservoir levels back up. But the drought management plan was developed in the 1980s; the world has dramatically changed. For example the use then was over 300 mgd; now it is 200 mgd. The terms “above normal,” “normal,” and “below normal” need to be reexamined. Mr. Hornbrook noted that the drought management plan is based on the levels in the reservoir, and what is appropriate action to take is based on the level in that reservoir. In the below normal range, when you are at 65%, 70% or 80%, what is an appropriate action to take? If you say to your customers, “You have done a lot of conservation and paid for a large reservoir system,” do you tell them that they should stop using water or place restrictions on them? That is not what we are trying to do. What we are trying to tell them is that we are at a below normal stage, there is a statewide drought, water is precious and should be used but not be wasted. If the level drops down low enough that there might be service impacts, that is when you place mandatory restrictions. Maybe it is the terminology “below normal” that might be leading to a mixed message: we are in a below normal condition but we don’t need to issue mandatory restrictions. John Sullivan noted that communities need to sell water and make revenue.

Joshua Das reported on the status of the lead and lead sampling program. Generally, the news is good, and we have now passed twenty-one straight rounds of the system. The 90th percentile for September was 6.9 ppb which is in line with what we have been doing over the last several years. There are still a few communities, including Malden and Quincy (which had not been over the limit since 2006). This will require a public education program and a lead service line replacement program; both communities are already doing lead service line replacements.

Regarding the school program, there has been extensive testing of all the schools in the service area in cooperation with DEP. The Lab has received over 10,000 sample bottles since the spring. The data has been in line with what was expected: about 5 – 5.5% of the samples have been elevated. About 240 different schools have been sampled; within each school, many fixtures are being sampled. About 73, as of last count, had at least one result over the action levels. All of the results are on the DEP website.

Regarding the lead service line replacement loan program, there are two communities that will be receiving checks: Newton for \$4 million and Quincy is expected to be for \$1.5 million. Also, regarding the Department of Public Health (DPH) program involving homes with a child with elevated lead levels, there will be testing for lead of the water in these homes. The testing will be once a year (next scheduled for September 2017), except for the two communities where lead was detected (Malden and Quincy will be tested again in March 2017).

D. ADVISORY BOARD ANNUAL WATER AND SEWER RETAIL RATE SURVEY

James Guidod, Finance and Policy Analyst, gave a [presentation](#) on the current draft of the annual Water and Sewer Retail Rate Survey. The finished document is expected soon. Wholesale rates in the service area increased by 3.34% for 2016 (a lower increase than the 3.4% in 2015), while average retail rates rose from 3.1% to 3.5% to just over \$1,500 (for the combined rate). Data is presented in terms of water use of 60,000 gallons per year and 90,000 gallons per year.

New in the document are materials on community treatment of stormwater (looking to communities outside the service area where more activity has been underway), with notes and approaches used as well as links to the communities for more information. Three of the MWRA sixty communities have put into place stormwater fees in some form. By way of comparison, of twenty-five (“national” i.e., outside of Massachusetts) communities outside the service area, seventeen

communities have put some kind of program in place. Advisory Board staff acknowledged the contributions of Leo Norton of the MWRA's Rates and Budget Department staff for additional residential data from communities.

Recently, there was a conference in New Hampshire relating to stormwater and fees, providing information on approaches to stormwater in EPA's Region I. Advisory Board staff attended the meeting. The director of the Wastewater Advisory Committee also noted that its upcoming December meeting will address stormwater as well. Lenna Ostrodka, Community Specialist, noted that going forward, an emphasis is researching resources that Advisory Board staff can provide for member communities. Of the more than two thousand stormwater utilities in the nation, fifteen of those are in New England. Planned is a compilation of data and tools for estimating budgets for stormwater, including an outfall catchment calculator. Attendees and speakers came from the private sector, directors of public works, representatives from EPA and from the New England Environmental Finance Center. Another theme of the conference was how to determine what the problem is (rain is not a problem until when it hits the ground). Also discussed was the importance of communities getting started since the permit is going into effect in July. Also essential is determining what a community's "tipping point" would be. The variety and flexibility of BMPs were also discussed, such as rain gardens and catchment basins, as was the importance of involving stakeholders at all levels.

E. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee – Advisory Board Legislative Strategy: In January the new two-year legislative cycle starts. Working closely with the MWRA, the Advisory Board staff has been thinking about what the past legislative strategy has been and what it should be moving forward. This is a process that has really evolved from assembling a package of more than twenty bills to a plan that does not include the filing of any bills at this time. Access, opportunity, and timing are the tools needed, rather than filing a legislative package at the beginning of the two-year cycle. With that in mind, meetings have been scheduled with specific legislators on the pros and cons and where to move forward, as well as developing a coalition with private and public entities. The approach continues to evolve. It was felt that no specific action item was necessary at this time.

Stoughton's request for an adjustment on their entrance fee: Mr. Favaloro reviewed the request which had been proposed in a letter that the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs received from the Town of Stoughton regarding their entrance fee payments. At the time Stoughton joined the MWRA's system, there were two different approaches for making entrance fee payments: the payment can be made all up front, or the MWRA could be paid in installments, with interest. The interest language speaks to the average fixed cost for MWRA borrowing. Two years ago, Stoughton came forward with a request to reexamine the interest rate. Based on that, the MWRA's review concluded that the interest rate was no longer the 4.43% that the town was paying, but was 4.34%. Based on a vote of the Board of Directors two years ago, a further rate update concluded that the applicable rate was now 3.95%. Stoughton has made all but the five remaining payments, which would result in a reduction of about \$22,000 for their remaining entrance fee payment (based on the pre-established precedent). In response to a question from Joe Lobao from Wilmington as to whether that community's remaining payments would also be reduced from the 4.34% it was now paying to 3.95%, it was acknowledged that that should be the case. **A motion was made to approve the reduction of the Town of Stoughton's and the Town of Wilmington's entrance fee amounts to reflect the updated interest from 4.34% to 3.95%. The motion carried.**

Worcester wholesale water changes: the planned speaker was unable to attend the meeting.

Operations Committee: Mr. Sanchez gave a quick update of the Operations Committee meeting earlier in the morning. An action item to include additional items as eligible for funding under the I/I Grant/Loan Program. A sense of the committee will be reported to the Executive Committee at its next scheduled meeting in January and forwarded to the full Advisory Board meeting, also in the first of the year, either January or February.

Finance Committee: There was no further report (other than the presentation earlier in the meeting on the Water and Sewer Rates Survey).

F. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MADE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 1:05 pm. It was seconded and passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Rademacher, Secretary