



## Advisory Board Meeting

Thursday, June 18, 2015  
11:30 AM

Samuel Hadley Public Services Building  
201 Bedford Street  
Lexington, MA

### Attendees (Voting Members)

Michael Rademacher	Arlington	J. R. Greene	Gubernatorial Appt	Brendan O'Regan	Saugus
David Manugian	Ashland	Bill Hadley	Lexington	John DeAmicis	Stoneham
Jay Hersey	Brookline	Jim Finegan	Lynnfield	Jack Mitchell	Stoughton
John Sanchez	Burlington	Katherine Dunphy	Milton	Carol Antonelli	Wakefield
Tim MacDonald	Cambridge	Thom Donahue	Nahant	Patrick Fasanello	Walpole
Andrew DeSantis	Chelsea	Jeremy Marsette	Natick	Joe Lobao	Wilmington
Blake Lukis	Framingham	Lou Taverna	Newton	Thomas Reilly	Winthrop

### Other Attendees

Mark Van Dam	BWSC	Mike Downey	NE Ctr for Children	Jeff Mahoney	UCANE
Town Acct	Norwood	Fred Laskey	MWRA	Andreae Downs	WAC
Rachel Madden	State A and F	Ria Convery	MWRA	Lexi Dewey	WSCAC
Eric Sherman	Wakefield	Sean Navin	MWRA	Joseph Favaloro	AB Staff
John Carroll	MWRA Board	Tom Durkin	MWRA	Matthew Romero	AB Staff
Andy Pappastergion	MWRA Board	Kathy Soni	MWRA	Cornelia Potter	AB Staff
Joe Foti	MWRA Board	Pam Heidell	MWRA	Travis Ahern	AB Staff
Shawn Murphy	NE Ctr for Children	Joshua Das	MWRA		

Forty-four people were in attendance, including twenty-one voting members.

### Draft Minutes

#### **A. WELCOME**

Advisory Board Chair Katherine Haynes Dunphy called the MWRA Advisory Board meeting to order at 11:30 a.m.

#### **B. PRESENTATION: 30 YEARS IN REVIEW – Fred Laskey, MWRA Executive Director**

MWRA Executive Director Fred Laskey made a PowerPoint [presentation](#) providing an overview of the MWRA's 30-year history. He noted that after the MDC had been deemed unable to fulfill its mission that the MWRA was created as an independent authority and given responsibility for the water and sewer infrastructure serving greater Boston.

Having inherited two obsolete wastewater treatment plants, a system dumping raw sewage into the harbor, miles of leaky water pipes, and a water system demand greater than safe yield, the MWRA was charged with ending the pollution of Boston Harbor and making long-term strategic decisions for addressing water supply and quality. MWRA addressed these needs through its \$7 billion Capital Improvement Program, 80% of which was mandated either by court-order or consent decree.

Mr. Laskey highlighted major accomplishments related to the waterworks system including the completion of the John J. Carroll Water Treatment Plant, the addition of ultraviolet (UV) light disinfection, six new covered storage tanks, and the MetroWest Tunnel providing redundancy for the now-rehabilitated Hultman Aqueduct. In addition to the 81 miles of MWRA-owned pipeline that had been rehabilitated or replaced, the Authority had funded the rehabilitation or replacement of 474 miles of community-owned pipes as well. He provided a series of graphs depicting the remarkable and clearly quantifiable improvements to the water system

including fecal coliform instances, total coliform rule compliance, disinfection by-product levels, lead levels in MWRA communities, and reduced water demand.

On the wastewater side, the completion of the Boston Harbor Project, including the Deer Island Treatment Plant and the Harbor Outfall Tunnel, and the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Control Program (scheduled for completion December 2015) have been some of the major accomplishments. Mr. Laskey similarly showed a series of graphs depicting the measurable results of these major investments on the wastewater system including a dramatic drop off in the metals and solids present in the Deer Island effluent, the virtual elimination of untreated CSOs, as well as a doubling of sewer system pumping capacity.

From a “green” perspective, the Authority has made significant strides as well. Of the \$40 million, \$22 million comes from renewable sources including hydroelectricity, methane utilization at Deer Island, wind, as well as photovoltaic power. The Authority has also made public access a priority, not only at Deer Island, but also at the Alewife stormwater wetland and the MetroWest aqueduct trails.

The Authority has used innovative technology when possible, but even with the high level of planning that goes into each project, Mr. Laskey acknowledged some instances where there were surprises or setbacks.

Overall, the first thirty years were a success for the Authority, and Mr. Laskey hoped that the next thirty would be as well. He ended by reviewing the results of thirty years of hard work and investment, including having no permit violations at Deer Island for eight years in a row, securing a B+ water quality rating from EPA for the Charles River, the cleanest urban beaches in the country according to a Save the Harbor/Save the Bay report, the fastest growing zip code in the country (Boston’s waterfront), as well as being named the “Best Drinking Water” in the country by the American Water Works Association.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Laskey thanked the Advisory Board and its staff for their continued participation and collaboration on the MWRA’s mission.

**C. PRESENTATION: ADVISORY BOARD VIDEO – 30-YEAR TIMELINE – Joseph Favaloro, MWRA Advisory Board Executive Director**

MWRA Advisory Board Executive Director Joseph Favaloro noted that there had been some frustration on staff’s part in recent years that the Advisory Board was often not recognized as a separate entity from the MWRA. Notably, the Advisory Board presents the Legislator of the Year Awards each year, and invariably the letter from at least one recipient’s office would thank the MWRA instead. Therefore, staff sat down to explore new ways of helping those less familiar with the organization to make this distinction.

Mr. Favaloro stated that Communications Director Matthew Romero noted that while the new video format of the Green Sheet had been well received that the series was limited to financial topics, and suggested creating a new series using the same video format approach. Staff decided to name the series “Just the FAQs,” playing off of the acronym for “frequently asked questions,” and the first such [video](#) was released just last week to serve as a brief “calling card” and explanation of who the Advisory Board is and how it is separate and different from the MWRA. Mr. Favaloro asked Mr. Travis Ahern, Policy and Finance Analyst, to introduce the

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<sup>1</sup> AWWA’s 2014 “blind taste test” named Boston Water and Sewer Commission (an MWRA customer) in first place, and named MWRA’s submission second.

Advisory Board’s second video, which provides an overview of the Advisory Board’s accomplishments over the last thirty years.

Mr. Ahern noted that the 30-Year video was much longer than the “Just the FAQs” videos would generally be moving forward, but that many topics were covered at a rate of less than one minute per year, which was good. He noted that while these two initial videos would be outliers, the overall goal of the series moving forward would be to take complex topics or frequently asked questions – for example, co-digestion – and provide a brief explanation or simple answer. Staff then played the [30-Year History video](#).

Mr. Favaloro thanked the Advisory Board members for all of their dedication, contributions, and support over the last thirty years. He also thanked his staff, in particular Mr. Ahern, for their efforts in making this video possible.

Mr. Favaloro also noted that the MWRA was hosting a party to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary that evening at the Metropolitan Waterworks Museum, and informed members that there would be commemorative magnets available for them after the meeting. Most importantly, he emphasized that the gala (including the magnets) had been fully funded by ticket sales, not ratepayer funds.

**D. PRESENTATION: RECOGNIZING RACHEL MADDEN’S CONTRIBUTION TO RATEPAYERS**

Chairman Dunphy presented a plaque and thanked Ms. Rachel Madden, former MWRA Director of Administration and Finance, for nine years of service to the MWRA and its ratepayers. Mr. Favaloro echoed her thanks, noting that he had enjoyed working with Ms. Madden throughout the years.

Ms. Madden thanked the Chair and the Advisory Board and commended the organization on the active role it played in shaping MWRA’s budgets and policies. She noted that in her new role as Undersecretary of Administration and Finance that she had already used some of her knowledge of MWRA issues to further one of Governor Baker’s initiatives. Executive Order 562 was focused on reviewing regulations that may be onerous and overly burdensome and stifling economic opportunities. She used information the Advisory Board put together on the stringent Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) regulation of molybdenum concentrations in biosolids as an example of the types of issues that could be reviewed under this executive order. She invited any attendees or their communities to submit suggestions for regulations to be reviewed.

**E. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Executive Committee** – Katherine Haynes Dunphy

**❖ ACTION ITEM: DRAFT LETTER ON TAX-EXEMPT BONDS**

Mr. Favaloro drew members’ attention to the handout that had been provided for a vote of the Advisory Board. If approved, the letter would be sent to the Massachusetts congressional delegation urging them to take no actions that would remove or undermine tax-exempt financing for municipal bonds. The effects upon the MWRA, as well as its individual communities, would be onerous at best, devastating at worst.

Mr. Pat Fasanella, the Advisory Board representative from Walpole, suggested that all member cities and towns use this letter as a boiler plate to similarly write to the congressional delegation individually.

A motion was made **TO APPROVE THE DRAFT LETTER TO CONGRESS RELATING TO KEEPING THE TAX-EXEMPT STATUS OF MUNICIPAL BONDS.** It was seconded and passed by unanimous vote.

**Finance Committee** – Bernard Cooper

❖ **STATUS: FY16 BUDGET REVIEW PROCESS**

Mr. Romero noted that staff had formally transmitted its *Comments and Recommendations on the Authority's proposed FY16 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and Current Expense Budget (CEB)* as voted by the membership in May 2015.

Advisory Board staff then made a presentation to the Administration and Finance Committee of the MWRA Board of Directors before its first meeting in June 2015. MWRA staff was in the process of drafting formal responses to the Advisory Board's recommendations, which should be received soon.

Mr. Favaloro noted that Authority staff had indicated that their final proposal to the Board of Directors would be a combined rate assessment increase of 3.4%, which was consistent with the Advisory Board's aims this year. Mr. Romero noted that this increase was the combined increase, and that the increase to water assessments would be significantly higher than sewer assessments. He highlighted this specifically for member communities that may receive only water service from MWRA. MWRA staff had ensured that the water assessment increases would not be higher than the preliminary increases transmitted in March 2015.

**Operations Committee** – Lou Taverna

❖ **ACTION ITEM: PURSUANT TO OP#11, NEW ENGLAND CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S REQUEST TO INCREASE SEWER DISCHARGES FROM 6,000 GALLONS PER DAY (GPD) TO 12,500 GPD INTO THE FRAMINGHAM SEWER SYSTEM**

Mr. Favaloro provided a brief history of the New England Center for Children's (NECC) time as an MWRA wastewater customer, and noted that the requested increase was relatively modest, but did require a vote of the Advisory Board to move forward.

Additionally, NECC would be responsible for coordinating with the Town of Framingham to realize a 4-to-1 reduction in inflow (not infiltration) to the Framingham wastewater system, as well as pay an entrance fee calculated for the increased flow.

Mr. Mike Downey of the NECC provided a brief overview of his organization and its mission, and thanked the Advisory Board for its consideration, as well as the Town of Framingham for its help with this matter.

A motion was made **TO APPROVE A REQUEST FROM THE NEW ENGLAND CENTER FOR CHILDREN, PURSUANT TO MWRA POLICY #OP.11, ADMISSION OF NEW COMMUNITY TO MWRA SEWER SYSTEM AND OTHER REQUESTS FOR SEWER SERVICE TO LOCATIONS OUTSIDE MWRA SEWER SERVICE AREA, TO INCREASE SEWER DISCHARGES FROM 6,000 GALLONS PER DAY (GPD) TO 12,500 GPD INTO THE FRAMINGHAM SEWER SYSTEM. NECC WILL REALIZE A 4-TO-1 REDUCTION IN INFLOW TO THE FRAMINGHAM WASTEWATER**

**SYSTEM AND PAY AN ENTRANCE FEE CALCULATED ON THE INCREASED FLOW.** It was seconded and passed by unanimous vote.

❖ **PRESENTATION: ANNUAL CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORT (CCR)** – Joshua Das, Project Manager, Public Health and Stephen Estes-Smargiassi, Director, Planning and Sustainability

MWRA Project Manager Joshua Das noted that this year’s Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) had already been sent out and should be arriving soon.

He reminded members that while the CCR included URLs directing readers to additional information online, the decision had been made, with Advisory Board concurrence, to continue sending out a paper version of the CCR. The only other option would be a postcard-sized mailing, which would not save the Authority a significant amount of money; additionally, this is the one opportunity that MWRA has to communicate directly with its customers.

Communities are also able to include their own letter as part of the CCR mailing to their residents. Mr. Das noted that he had copies of the CCR from each community if anyone wanted to view them after the meeting.

**F. ADJOURNMENT**

**A MOTION WAS MADE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 1:35 P.M.** It was seconded and passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

William P. Hadley, Secretary