



Advisory Board Meeting

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2018
11:30 AM

WELLESLEY FREE LIBRARY
530 Washington Street
Wellesley MA 02482

Attendees (Voting Members)

Michael Rademacher	Arlington	Lou Taverna	Newton
John Sullivan	Boston	Bernie Cooper	Norwood
Jay Hersey	Brookline	Jeff Zager	Reading
Blake Lukis	Framingham	John DeAmicis	Stoneham
Robert Higgins	Hingham	Eric Sherman	Wakefield
Ralph Pecora	Lexington	Patrick Fasanello	Walpole
Jim Finegan	Lynn Water District	William Shaughnessy	Wellesley
Yem Lip	Malden	Joe Lobao	Wilmington
Moe Handel	MAPC	JR Greene	Gubernatorial Appointee
Amy McHugh	Marblehead	Barbara Wyatt	Gubernatorial Appointee
Elena Proakis Ellis	Melrose	Andy Fisk	Gubernatorial Appointee
Chris Seriac	Needham		

Other Attendees

Andrew Pappastergion	MWRA Board of Directors	Kathy Soni	MWRA
John Carroll	MWRA Board of Directors	Matt Horan	MWRA
John Cosgrove	Needham	Louise Miller	MWRA
Paul Mullens	Wellesley College	Joseph Favaloro	AB staff
Walter Woods	Wellesley	Matt Romero	AB staff
Andreae Downs	WAC	James Guiod	AB staff
Lexi Dewey	WSCAC	Lenna Ostrodka	AB staff
Tom Durkin	MWRA		

38 people were in attendance, including 23 voting members.

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WELLESLEY, MA 02482
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Draft Minutes

The Chairman welcomed the attendees and called the meeting to order at 11:37 am. The Chairman thanked Walter Woods and Bill Shaughnessy of Wellesley for their hospitality in hosting the meeting.

A. APPROVAL OF ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES FOR JANUARY 18, 2018

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the Advisory Board meeting for January 18, 2018. The motion carried.

B. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/ PRESENTATION: RECOGNIZING MICHAEL HORNbrook’S SERVICE TO MWRA COMMUNITIES

Mr. Favaloro made a presentation in recognition of the upcoming retirement of MWRA Chief Operating Officer, Michael J. Hornbrook, for his twenty-nine years of service to the organization, ratepayers, and the environment. Following remarks expressing his appreciation for Mr. Hornbrook’s contributions, Mr. Favaloro presented him with a mug inscribed with Mr. Hornbrook’s name, and the following: “in recognition of twenty-nine years of service to the ratepayers and to the environment.” Mr. Hornbrook expressed his thanks to everyone in the room and the importance of the role of the Advisory Board including the input, feedback, and criticism (when necessary). It is that two-way street that allows the Authority to better serve (the communities).

In addition, Mr. Favaloro recognized John Carroll for his upcoming 90th birthday. In turn, Mr. Carroll acknowledged Walter Woods, attending the meeting as a guest, who will be celebrating his 100th birthday in July.

C. PRESENTATION: ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CHALLENGES OF PROTECTING OUR WATERSHEDS

The Deputy Commissioner of the Commonwealth’s Department of Conservation and Recreation, Priscilla Geigis, introduced the speaker, John Scannell, Acting Director of the DCR Division of Water Supply Protection. Ms. Geigis, in introducing Mr. Scannell, expressed her thanks for the opportunity to make the presentation and noted that Jonathan Yeo (who had previously served as the Director of the Division of Water Supply Protection) has moved on to a position with the City of Newton, and wished him well in his new position. Mr. Scannell has been the long-time Regional Director for the Wachusett and Sudbury Watersheds, and, more recently, the interim director for the Quabbin Watershed. Mr. Scannell is now the Acting Director of the Division of Water Supply Protection. Ms. Geigis noted that filling this position is important and interviews for the position are planned for the next day, with the goal of filling the position “very quickly.”

Mr. Scannell opened his remarks with a reminder that the goal is to protect the watersheds of the Quabbin, the Ware River, and the Wachusett, plus the backup supply in Sudbury, to provide clean water to the metropolitan Boston water system, and to protect the environments of those watersheds (and which represents a “fair chunk” of the open space in the central part of the state). The state is charged with maintaining and operating the facilities, including the dams, which is done in partnership with the MWRA to preserve the water supply and the quality of the water in the watersheds and the reservoirs, to fulfill the watershed and management requirements under both state and federal drinking water regulations and to implement any specific directives of the legislature including the state’s watershed protection regulations.

The agency is guided by the watershed protection plan, which the agency is required to write (update) and submit to DEP every five years. The current plan was prepared in 2013; staff is currently preparing the 2018 plan which will take effect at the beginning of the fiscal year, in July. Within that plan, staff lays out a series of programs that demonstrate to DEP and EPA regulators that staff are effectively managing the watershed system. He displayed a list of the watershed control programs that are shown to DEP that demonstrate the things that the staff do that allows staff to assure the regulators that the watersheds are being protected from threats. He reviewed accomplishments for each of the categories.

Among the categories of programs were: land acquisition (to protect critical parcels within the watersheds): within the last fiscal year, 705 acres were added to the watershed holdings. Most purchases in the Ware watershed occurred through a separate, legacy grant program (140 parcels). Where the state purchases watershed preservation restrictions, the land is inspected regularly and staff meet with owners to explain and clarify the restrictions on those properties. Such lands

are not owned by the state and do not require PILOT payments. Newsletters twice a year also provide updated information to the landowners.

This past year (finishing in January), staff completed the land management plan for the watersheds. The plan is now a comprehensive one that covers all of the watersheds (as compared to the separate plans that had been prepared in the past). Such a scope allows staff to synchronize agency policy across all of the watersheds. While this approach is different from the previous approach, the plan, and how the agency is maintaining the property, has remained somewhat unchanged.

With regard to the forestry program, the goal is to have a healthy managed program and a high quality of water by maximizing forest resistance and have resilience to weather, insects, and other things to ensure a healthy, active forest going forward. There is a patterned approach allowing for an “uneven age,” a variety of species in the forest so that it can better withstand possible impacts. In this past fiscal year, 25 lots were sold in the three active watersheds. Each year proposals are put forward for the following fiscal year; 27 new forestry lot proposals for fiscal year 2018 were presented for public comment and adoption.

With regard to wildlife management, the goal is to protect the water quality, the infrastructure, and to protect rare and uncommon wildlife habitat. One of the most time intensive and important program is the gull management program on both the Quabbin and Wachusett reservoirs. This program has been in operation since 1993, when water quality problems at both reservoirs were identified as directly related to roosting gulls at the reservoirs at night. By implementing this program, staff have been able to maintain water quality to meet the federal standards. Other wildlife management activities include monitoring eagles and loons and addressing beaver flooding issues and animal burrowing issues at the dams, as well as monitoring a number of other animals and birds. There are other specific areas referred to as pathogen control zones. He also reported on the annual deer hunt. While the program has been “regular” for the last two decades, there may be some changes (“tweaks”) proposed in the next year. Also identified have been impacts on the forest at the Wachusett from deer. Through the ten-year plan there has been consideration of some kind of control program as a necessary step. More public meetings will be held in the spring at the Wachusett to discuss the development of a control program.

Turning to the subject of public access management, Mr. Scannell noted that the public is allowed access to a fair amount of the watershed land although there are places closest to the intake where access is restricted so there is not an impact to the water quality. There are public access plans for each of the watersheds that lay out how the public access is controlled. It is considered not a “given” right but is secondary to water protection efforts and access is only allowed where it will not have an impact to the water program to protect the reservoirs. Some of the accomplishments include, at Quabbin, the provision of seven full-time and three seasonal rangers in recent years; more recently, this has been converted to 9 full-time rangers to match the 9 at the Wachusett. It is felt this provides a better year-round program (especially within the Ware River watershed and provides a better “presence” on the properties. The Quabbin Visitor Center is open nearly every day of the year and offers a great opportunity to provide watershed protection education to over 100,000 people on an annual basis. He also commented on the boat seal program at Quabbin (requiring proper cleaning of private boats to control the spread of aquatic invasive species), in support of the boat fishing program at Quabbin.

In response to a question from Mr. Favaloro regarding the Ware River watershed, Mr. Scannell noted, in regard to trail cutting programs, that the changes in the ranger program were designed to ensure that there was a greater active presence in the Ware River watershed. He noted that the violations and the issues there are better controlled. He emphasized that the situation “is improving.” He pointed out that the rangers for the Wachusett watershed are responsible for the Sudbury, and the those for the Quabbin are responsible for the Ware River watershed. He described improved ability to address problems with those who violate the rules of access at the watersheds. He also noted that

there is coordination and relationships with the Environmental and State Police. The Department now has the ability to write tickets, where warranted.

Currently being updated is the Quabbin public access plan. This update started with a survey in 2016 followed by a draft plan which was reviewed last fall and public comments were received. Finalization of the plan is expected this spring. Regarding watershed security, the Department works with the MWRA to make sure that the reservoirs and the infrastructure is secure. Staff continues to get regular training with MWRA on incident command systems. Also being pursued is an application for a Homeland Security to enhance the training that is being done.

Regarding infrastructure, he described the maintenance of the roadways. Regarding the Wachusett, a plan has recently been put together to prioritize the road system and improvements. Also, improvements to the road system in the Quabbin have been made. He also highlighted education and outreach programs, including school-based programs, and the Quabbin Visitors Center. Work has also begun on a new data management process which is expected to allow analysis on long-term data sets.

An annual work plan is to include recommendations and more specific tasks, including staffing needs and job descriptions. The watershed protection plan is the overarching document. On another topic, aquatic invasive species has become a more significant issue for water supplies and water resources, in general. The MWRA takes the lead on the program to remove the invasives in the upper basins of the Wachusett reservoir. That program is creating some success. The Eurasian water milfoil and fanwort in the area have shown a marked decrease in the last couple of years which demonstrates that the program of eradication has been effective.

Other topics addressed included wastewater management including the Rutland/Holden line. The state owns the line which runs from the Town of Rutland through the Town of Holden to the City of Worcester's sewer system. The system was installed in the 1930's to protect the watersheds. The state manages the trunk line within the MOU with MWRA; MWRA performs the operation and maintenance of that line. In addition, the state tracks connections of properties to the sewer system, in Holden, Rutland, and West Boylston to the system, as well as permitting any connections that happen directly to the state system. The state also works with local boards of health, because there are still portions of the watershed that are served by septic systems. Also, improvements to Title V, now about ten years ago, have made a significant benefit for the state to the required inspections of systems when properties are transferred, allowing the determination of whether the septic systems are functioning properly.

The department has spent a lot of time over the past several years on stormwater management at the Wachusett. There are some significant roads that ring the Wachusett watershed, and considerable effort has been made in the last couple of years on what is termed the "direct discharge project," identifying the places where stormwater is discharged from roadways directly into the reservoir or fairly close to the reservoir. A report of several years ago identified the areas and have worked with the DOT to make changes to protect water quality. Also developed have been BMPs to other places on the state property to inspect and maintain those areas. There are 13 stormwater basins and 8 new treatment units resulting from the discharge project. Also mapped are all the privately owned BMPs in the watersheds. Staff have met with homeowners and educated property owners regarding stormwater discharges. Some improvements have been accelerated allowing the elimination of all of the direct discharges into the reservoir (either removed or treated prior to discharge).

Also noted was the development of an emergency response capability in the event of a spill including the ability to assist local responders and DEP partners. Also part of the program is the provision of trailers with necessary supplies and boats (including training) to deal with a spill (with particular attention to the potential of a train accident or derailment). Also enumerated were activities that are prohibited or restricted on the properties in the watershed. An annual compliance report is also prepared and distributed.

D. COMMUNITY “TALK BACK”

This month’s topic was “Updates on Stormwater – Is Your Community Ready for the Permit?” The discussion opened with remarks from the Chairman on issues being addressed by Newton: Mr. Taverna noted that Newton is not yet ready for the permit. The City does have a stormwater fee. The biggest issue is phosphorus: how does the city, located along the Charles River, reduce or mitigate phosphorus?

Needham has just closed its town meeting warrant, which includes a bylaw for the MS4 permit. It will have to pass town meeting, expected to be in early May. Mr. Favaloro observed that the implementation date for the permit may be “bumped back” to a later date. Some communities are working on implementing a fee, including Reading and Newton as well as Gloucester – he invited comments regarding other communities beyond those three that may be working on establishing a stormwater fee system. Mr. Hornbrook stated that he had received his first billing for stormwater, in Milton. It was a separate bill, and was based on a minimum charge based on a percentage of impervious surface.

Mr. Favaloro also noted that there is a stormwater page on the website as a resource for communities. Staff will also be putting out a report that NACWA has been working on putting together different communities across the country and stormwater fees. MAPC is also a resource on this topic, as is MMA. The report is expected to include developments in the state of Georgia, and other places. He plans to add this information to the Advisory Board’s website so that Advisory Board members could see how other communities in other parts of the country are putting some kind of fees together. He also invited communities to identify other things that the MWRA or the Advisory Board could be doing, to be of assistance. Mr. Handel also noted that in his community there are discussions of using roof area as an approach.

Another question addressed ways to develop cost estimates for the program. Newton does the stormwater sampling in house. The Chairman also mentioned engineering services and using a stormwater capital improvement plan. Given the timeframe and the availability of in-house resources, hiring a consultant may also be the solution. Another question addressed whether other communities had issued a notice of intent yet. Mr. Favaloro suggested that for the May meeting the Advisory Board could invite a speaker from DEP, or EPA, to address this question. Advisory Board staff also brought up the planned stormwater conference in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, May 7 and 8. Attendees are expected from both public sector and private sector organizations.

Mr. Taverna reviewed the anticipated timeline for the permit, with issuance in July and comments during the next three months, followed by another year to consider the implementation plans. While it seems that there is a long time to consider these plans, it seems that the deadlines come pretty quickly. While Newton is not ready yet for the permit, the City is preparing for it.

E. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee

Legislative Update: Mr. Favaloro reported that the Governor’s budget did include \$500,000 for State Debt Service Assistance. The process has begun for the FY 2019 state budget. Regarding the FY 2018 budget, which is expected to include between \$500,000 and \$900,000 (depending on applications being submitted between now and June 30), the Advisory Board’s policy has been to “pay it forward”, which would provide funds from the 2018 budget to reduce assessments for FY 2019.

Advisory Board staff met recently with Representative Dykema, to see if a “third road” could be forged for the primacy discussion and moving the responsibility from EPA over to the state. Mr. Favaloro emphasized that “that road has many,

many roadblocks.” Staff continues to work to find ways to make these discussions work. The Natural Resources Committee has approved an extra month (to the first week in March) for deliberation to DEP to file a report on primacy. On another legislative matter, there has been discussion and a report regarding certain categories of MWRA employees and their applicable pension plan. Mr. Favaloro emphasized that efforts to oppose this legislation are being pursued.

System Expansion: Mr. Favaloro provided an update on the application by the Town of North Reading to join the MWRA water system. Two months ago, this matter was thought to be at a standstill. However, more recently, discussions with Andover (and recent town meetings) and discussions with members of the Board of Selectmen of the Town of North Reading have moved the topic back onto the MWRA’s “front burner.” An update will be provided next month.

Mr. Laskey, CFO Durkin and Mr. Favaloro have continued discussions with Peabody regarding the town’s future water needs. The strategy with Peabody is: “you build a pipe and make a commitment for a specified amount of water now” which could keep open the potential for working with other communities in the stressed Ipswich River area (and which would also benefit the MWRA ratepayers).

Staff have also continued discussions with Burlington, which, in the last year, has had problems with its water treatment plant. Before having more discussions about building a new water treatment plant, town representatives have begun discussions regarding making a connection to the MWRA’s system which would avoid the capital expense of building a new water treatment plant (as well as avoiding taking on the costs of operating a new plant). In the meantime, Burlington, when there is a need for an emergency water supply, receives water through Lexington.

Finance Committee

CIP and CEB Updates:

Mr. Favaloro reported that the schedule for reporting and reviewing the MWRA’s proposed budgets for FY 2019 is somewhat different this year. Normally, the Authority’s Board of Directors would have met before the Advisory Board’s monthly meeting and the proposed assessments for the coming fiscal year would have been provided by this time. This year, the assessments will not be approved by the Board of Directors until the meeting scheduled for next week, February 21. (On the other hand, approved final assessments for FY 2019 will be distributed earlier in June than has traditionally been the case.) In the meantime, the Advisory Board will be starting its review process next month, with briefings being scheduled now and a presentation on the proposed Current Expense Budget planned for the March Advisory Board meeting (as well as the Advisory Board’s required public hearing).

Operations Committee

Upcoming Operations Committee Meeting:

The Chairman announced the next meeting of the Operations Committee will be held Thursday, February 22, 2018, in Burlington at 10 am, 55 Centre Street. The agenda will include discussion of the MWRA Wastewater Metering Program update. The Authority is going through the process of planning all of the community wastewater meters as well as updating all of the non-metered areas throughout the system. The other issue is the continuation of the Infiltration/Inflow Removal Program and the proposed next phase of the funding program.

Mr. Favaloro also reported that Mr. Estes-Smargiassi has previously remarked on the upcoming EPA lead and copper rules revisions and the invitation to comment on the draft language. The draft revisions have been posted to the Advisory Board website. In addition, Advisory Board staff has prepared and distributed to the Advisory Board representatives a copy of a draft letter commenting on the proposed revisions. The draft letter will be added to the Operations Committee agenda for next week, for additional comment before it is submitted (due March 8).

Mr. Carroll added a comment that he hoped the potential changes to the I/I program that may be considered at the upcoming meeting of the Operations Committee will not entertain any changes to the community allotments and that the allotments will remain the same. Mr. Favaloro noted that the upcoming committee meeting will afford the representatives the opportunity to discuss if there are any different, better ways to distribute the available funds.

F. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MADE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 11:12 pm. It was seconded and passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael W. Rademacher, Secretary