



Thursday, May 9, 2024
Remote Connection via Zoom
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 (remote)
David Manugian	Bedford	Here (remote)
John Sullivan	Boston (BWSC)	Here (remote)
Jay Hersey	Brookline	Arrived after vote
John Sanchez	Burlington	Here (remote)
Cate Fox-Lent	Chelsea	Here (remote)
David Pavlik	Lexington	Here (remote)
Yem Lip	Malden	Arrived after vote
Elena Proakis Ellis	Melrose	Arrived after vote
Brendan O'Regan	Saugus	Arrived after vote
Richard Raiche	Somerville	Here (remote)
Sam Stivers	Southborough	Here (remote)
John P. DeAmicis	Stoneham	Here (remote)
Maurice Handel	MAPC	Here (remote)

B. Executive Director's report

Matthew Romero went to a National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) roundtable the previous week where regulators, utilities, and other stakeholders got together to discuss regulatory challenges facing Region 1 and starting a conversation about ways to work together better. MWRA alumna and former Secretary of Environmental Affairs Beth Card was the moderator.

Matthew Romero mentioned that Stephen Estes-Smargiassi (Director of Planning and Sustainability, MWRA) had asked if anyone from the Executive Committee would be interested in joining and serving on the Water Supply Citizens Advisory Committee (WSCAC) to help provide a community and ratepayer perspective to the issues being discussed.





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C. Presentation – Comments & Recommendations on MWRA’s proposed FY25 CIP and CEB

Expenses have gone up 2.9% in PFY25 from FY24, with a rate change of 3.0%, up from 2.4% in FY24. As in recent years there has been a divergent split in assessments between water and sewer rates, this is portrayed in the Comments & Recommendations. This reflects debt coming due from projects such as the Carroll Water Treatment Plant and the Metro-West Tunnel on the water side, while on the sewer side debt is coming down for projects such as Deer Island.

In the last several years, effort has been made to get the most up-to-date information from the MWRA regarding the CEB with the so-called “Spring Revisits.” An example would be instead of using a budget assumption for chemical prices, actual awarded contracts reflect accurate pricing. For the PFY25 CEB, approximately \$2.5 million has been added back into the budget through the Spring Revisit process on the sewer side. On the water side approximately \$1.4 million has been added back. The Advisory Board has recommended adjusting the staffing vacancy rate by an additional 35 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, bringing the total to 70 FTEs. The rationale for this adjustment is that the MWRA has typically been about 100 FTEs under budget, reflecting hiring difficulties. This is assuming a \$113,000 salary per employee. Separately, the Advisory Board has recommended a reduction of about \$1.6 million for corresponding reductions for 30 FTEs in fringe benefits expenses, which the Authority does not include in its vacancy rate. The Rate Revenue Requirement on the sewer side is 2.16%. The use of rate stabilization funds at \$1.5 million is being recommended to help with rate relief on the water side, bringing the Rate Revenue Requirement to 3.18%. The combined Rate Revenue Requirement is 2.53%.

The Advisory Board recommends ratifying additional phases to the Inflow/Infiltration Assistance Program with a Phase 15 \$100 million interest-free loan available in FY25 and a Phase 16 \$125 million grant-loan (75% grant, 25% loan) available in FY26 with 10-year loan repayments. The authorization of Phase 4 of the Local Water Supply Assistance Program totaling \$300 million was also recommended, as well as modifying the existing community assistance Lead Loan Program to make it a 25% grant/75% interest-free loan program subject to conditions to be finalized between Advisory Board and MWRA staff.

The Advisory Board recommended addressing the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Ranger’s lack of enforcement options on watershed lands. This includes suggestions such as developing non-punitive educational notices for serious offenders, reviving ban/suspension systems, and possible legislative fixes to restore ranger enforcement authority. The opposition to proposed legislation “An Act Relative to the Quabbin Watershed and Regional Equity” was also recommended, which includes recommending that no funding be allocated for the Quabbin expansion study beyond the existing 12 communities already included in the proposal.

The Advisory Board also recommends redirecting all future Other Post-Employment Benefit (OPEB) contributions to the pension until full funding is achieved in FY30.

A motion was made to approve the Comments and Recommendations on the MWRA’s proposed FY25 CIP and CEB to bring to the full Advisory Board for approval. It was moved by Maurice Handel, seconded by David Manugian, and added to the omnibus vote at the end of the meeting.



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Matthew A. Romero
Executive Director



D. Action Item: AB FY25 operating budget

The Advisory Board FY25 operating budget has decreased in recent years, largely due to the elimination of the rent line item after moving from Charlestown to Chelsea, as well as budgeting for three full-time employees and two co-ops, rather than four full-time employees in FY25. Mr. Romero cautioned that while there would be a decrease in FY25 there would likely be a significant increase in FY26 as the Advisory Board hires its fourth and final member of staff. Knowing the Advisory Board was only planning on hiring one position in FY25 the budget reflects only three FTEs rather than four.

A motion was made to approve the Advisory Board's FY25 operating budget to bring for a full vote of the Advisory Board. It was moved by Maurice Handel, seconded by David Manugian, and added to the omnibus vote at the end of the meeting.

E. Action Item: Nomination of an Advisory Board representative to the MWRA Board of Directors for a three-year term from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2027

Every year, the Executive Committee serves as the nominating committee for the Advisory Board where they take in letters of interest and resumes of people looking to run for a Board of Directors seat. This year, Mr. Pappastergion indicated that he would like to run again. There have been no other letters of interest or intent received. Mr. Pappastergion stated that this would be the tenth time serving a three-year term, having just completed 27 years on the Board of Directors. He spoke on the legislation "An Act Relative to the Quabbin Watershed and Regional Equity" noting that he does not wish to see a change in the structure of the Board of Directors as proposed in the bills. He also stated that if elected this may be his last term serving.

A motion was made to nominate Mr. Pappastergion as the Advisory Board representative to the MWRA Board of Directors for a three-year term from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2027. It was moved by Maurice Handel, seconded by John Sullivan, and added to the omnibus vote at the end of the meeting.

F. Quabbin Equity Bill Testimony

The Advisory Board will be submitting testimony on the legislation "An Act Relative to the Quabbin Watershed and Regional Equity" and has drafted a template letter for communities to submit on their own.

G. Consent agenda items

- Approval of the May 16, 2024 Advisory Board meeting agenda
- Approval of the Executive Committee meeting minutes from April 11, 2024

A motion was made to approve the consent agenda items. It was moved by Maurice Handel, seconded by David Manugian, and added to the omnibus vote at the end of the meeting.

H. New Business





Nathan Coté presented on the Comparative Residential Water and Sewer Rates for U.S. Cities portion of the 2023 Annual Water & Sewer Retail Rate Survey. This section compares 26 different cities across the United States. The average annual water and sewer rates for these cities are \$710.01 and \$933.28, with a combined total of \$1,643.28. This is 4.01% higher than the year 2022. The final portion of the Rate Survey will incorporate all non-MWRA Massachusetts communities and their water and sewer rates.

I. Executive Session

A motion to enter Executive Session was put forward to discuss the following items:

- *Approval of the Executive Committee Executive Session meeting minutes from April 11, 2024*
- *Litigation – Deer Island NPDES Permit*

It was moved by Maurice Handel and seconded by David Manugian. The vote was as follows:

Name	Community	Vote
Michael Rademacher	Arlington	Yes (remote)
David Manugian	Bedford	Yes (remote)
John Sullivan	Boston (BWSC)	Yes (remote)
Jay Hersey	Brookline	Yes (remote)
John Sanchez	Burlington	Yes (remote)
Cate Fox-Lent	Chelsea	Yes (remote)
David Pavlik	Lexington	Yes (remote)
Yem Lip	Malden	Yes (remote)
Elena Proakis Ellis	Melrose	Yes (remote)
Brendan O’Regan	Saugus	Yes (remote)
Richard Raiche	Somerville	Yes (remote)
Sam Stivers	Southborough	Yes (remote)
John P. DeAmicis	Stoneham	(not present)
Maurice Handel	MAPC	Yes (remote)

During Executive Session the Executive Session meeting minutes from April 11, 2024 were approved. Other matters related to the Deer Island NPDES permit were discussed including terms of engagement with Beveridge & Diamond. The Executive Committee approved a proposed adjustment to the rate structure for Beveridge & Diamond.

J. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was put forward. It was moved by Maurice Handel, seconded by David Manugian, and added to the omnibus vote at the end of the meeting.

A motion was put forward to approve the omnibus roll call vote. It was moved by Maurice Handel and seconded by David Manugian. The vote included the following:





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- Approval of the Comments & Recommendations on the MWRA’s proposed FY25 CIP and CEB to bring to the full Advisory Board for approval.
- Approval of the Advisory Board’s FY25 operating budget to bring for a full vote of the Advisory Board.
- Approval of the consent agenda items.
- To nominate Mr. Pappastergion as the Advisory Board representative to the MWRA Board of Directors for a three-year term from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2027.
- Adjournment of the meeting.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Name	Community	Vote
Michael Rademacher	Arlington	Yes (remote)
David Manugian	Bedford	Yes (remote)
John Sullivan	Boston (BWSC)	Yes (remote)
Jay Hersey	Brookline	Yes (remote)
John Sanchez	Burlington	Yes (remote)
Cate Fox-Lent	Chelsea	Yes (remote)
David Pavlik	Lexington	Yes (remote)
Yem Lip	Malden	Yes (remote)
Elena Proakis Ellis	Melrose	Yes (remote)
Brendan O’Regan	Saugus	Yes (remote)
Richard Raiche	Somerville	Yes (remote)
Sam Stivers	Southborough	Yes (remote)
John P. DeAmicis	Stoneham	(not present)
Maurice Handel	MAPC	Yes (remote)

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Raiche, 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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Matthew A. Romero
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