

## **Minutes**

**Sept. 17, 2015**

The Wastewater Advisory Committee to the MWRA met briefly before the start of the joint WAC/WSCAC and Advisory Board meeting (for full minutes of that meeting, see the MWRA Advisory Board website)

**Attendees/Contributors:** WAC: Stephen Greene (chair), Mary Adelstein, Travis Ahern, Beth Miller, Craig Allen, Karen Lachmayer

**Guests:** Wendy Leo (MWRA)

**Staff:** Andreae Downs (WAC)

1. Voted to nominate James Pappas for WAC membership
2. Voted Taber Keally WAC Chairman, Beth Miller Vice-Chair
3. Voted to approve the June 2015 minutes

For more information, please see WSCAC meeting summary, attached.



## **Joint MWRA Advisory Board, WSCAC, and WAC Meeting**

Location: Samuel Hadley Public Services Building  
201 Bedford Street, Lexington, MA  
September 17, 2015 – 11:30 A.M.

### Members in Bold in Attendance:

Whitney Beals, WSCAC Chair, NE Forestry  
Elie Saroufim, Boston Water & Sewer Commission  
**Martha Morgan, Nashua River Watershed**  
**Dona Motts, MA League of Women Voters**  
**Kurt Tramosch, Wayland Wells**  
Terry Connolly, Town of Ware & Trout Unlimited  
Lexi Dewey, WSCAC staff

Andrea Donlon, CRWC  
**Gerald Eves, Trout Unlimited**  
Michael Baram, BU & CLF  
**Paul Lauenstein, NepRWA**  
Martin Pillsbury, MAPC  
**Bill Fadden, OARS**  
Heidi Waugh, WSCAC staff

Following introductory comments, the Advisory Board recognized Katherine Dunphy's contributions as Chairman of the MWRA Advisory Board from 2001 to 2015. It was announced that Katherine decided not to run for another term as Chair but will remain on the Executive Committee.

Louis Taverna was unanimously elected Chairman of the MWRA Advisory Board. Katherine will continue to represent the MWRA Advisory Board on the Water Supply Protection Trust. The Advisory Board presented Katherine with a glass 'water drop' to recognize her many contributions.

### MWRA FY16 Priorities and Challenges: Fred Laskey, Executive Director

Fred Laskey began his presentation by stating that completing the CSO Program is of utmost importance to the MWRA. The program consists of thirty-two different projects and about nine hundred million dollars worth of spending. The long-standing deadline for the program is the end of the 2015 calendar year.

- Three contracts are still open in Cambridge – cautious optimism that the deadline will be met

The Deer Island Valve Replacement Project is also a priority moving forward:

- Over the next year, the North system will be shut down fifty times overnight for valve replacement
- Great risk comes from day to day variability (i.e. changes in the weather)

The Spot Pond Storage Tank Project is close to completion:

- One of the two tanks is online; the other tank is undergoing a leak repair
- Ten million gallons of storage is online

Fred then addressed financial challenges. He stated that he and Joe Favaloro, Exec. Director of the MWRA Advisory Board, are working hard to sell water. He noted that potential customer communities look to rates and

rate increases – numbers that are largely determined by when debt is due. The MWRA will make an effort this year to show a steady and thereby predictable rate increase by restructuring the debt service.

Fred stated that over the course of the next nine months, the Authority must make several decisions that will set the course for the next decade. The overarching questions are as follows:

- Food Waste – is it financially feasible to process food waste on Deer Island to produce more methane?
- Wachusett Reservoir Rail Safety – how will the MWRA proceed?
- Redundancy for the city tunnel – how will the MWRA approach and fund this top-priority project?

Following Fred’s presentation, Paul Lauenstein asked how many years it would take to have redundancy for the city tunnel physically in place. Fred replied that a realistic estimate would be ten to fifteen years. He then thanked the audience for their attention.

#### MWRA Advisory Board Priorities and Challenges: Joe Favaloro, Executive Director

- Rates – continually working to keep them at a manageable, predictable, and sustainable level
  - Moving forward, the goal is to keep rates under 4%
- Regulatory Issues
  - Molybdenum – move the argument forward to lower the MassDEP level in order to sell MWRA’s pellets in Massachusetts year round
- Co-digestion at Deer Island
  - Applauds the Authority for their cautious approach
  - Determining if this route is the best option for rate payers and for the environment
- Wastewater Primacy to move from EPA to MassDEP
- System Expansion
  - There is water to be sold and the Advisory Board is seeking ways to sell it
  - Working with communities on the matter of entrance fees
  - Southfield-A new developer has approached the MWRA to buy water & sewer services for the development
- Economic Development
  - Water and wastewater infrastructure is key to attracting new development

Joe announced that Travis Ahern is leaving his position at the Advisory Board. He thanked him for a job well done and wished him well in the future. Travis said a few words of thanks and the audience applauded.

The Advisory Board addressed several action items:

- Southfield motion approved

#### WSCAC FY16 Priorities and Challenges: Lexi Dewey, Executive Director

- The Transportation of Hazardous Materials
  - WSCAC continues to monitor the movement of hazardous materials by rail and road
  - The committee commended MWRA and DCR DWSP for their continued efforts to prevent, and prepare for an emergency.
- Water System Expansion
  - The committee will be following the process as the towns of North Reading (full user) and Ashland (partial user) move through the process of joining the system
  - WSCAC will also be monitoring system expansion with respect to the Southfield development.
- Public Relations
  - More than ever, water supply is a critical resource and dependence continues to increase

- The MWRA has done an exemplary job with system redundancy, storage, water treatment and green energy
- WSCAC supports the MWRA's efforts to address the potential effects of sea level rise on critical infrastructure increasing sustainable energy use in order to help meet the state's Global Warming Solutions Act
- Appropriate Public Use of Watershed Lands
  - Single-track mountain biking has become a contentious issue; some bikers have damaged Ware River watershed lands, destroyed signage, and harassed rangers
  - WSCAC believes that additional monitoring and higher fines are necessary to stop the damage being created
  - The committee will continue to monitor this issue
- Watershed Forestry and Green Certification
  - WSCAC has been supportive of DCR's watershed forestry program with the condition that the agency work toward watersheds that are once again recertified
  - WSCAC believes the best watershed forestry is done with professional oversight, public knowledge, and the transparency that certification provides

Lexi concluded by stating that WSCAC's monthly meetings are open to the public and posted on WSCAC's website. She asked that members of the audience either call or email the office with any questions or comments.

#### WAC FY16 Priorities and Challenges: Andreae Downs, Executive Director

Andreae began her presentation with the premiere of WAC's new video, *What is WAC?*. The committee's video explains the role of the committee at MWRA and in the community.

Andrea then addressed the following WAC challenges:

- Following the comments on regulatory reforms at MassDEP and the EPA
- Stephen Greene is stepping down as chairman; Beth Miller will now serve as Vice Chair and Taber Keally will serve as Chairman of the committee
- WAC continues to work on public relations and outreach; the committee is developing new ways to reach the community as part of their mandate

Andreae addressed WAC's priorities for the fiscal year:

- Reducing energy costs at MWRA's wastewater treatment facilities
- Co-digestion at Deer Island
- Molybdenum regulations in respect to MWRA's fertilizer pellets
- Public education and outreach continues to be a priority

WAC meetings are open to the public and a full meeting schedule is available on their website.

#### MWRA Advisory Board's Just the FAQs: Infrastructure Funding

An installment of the Advisory Board's Green Sheet was shown at the meeting. The video focused on the many federal, state, and quasi-state grant and loan funding options available to Massachusetts cities and towns for projects concerning water and sewer. Click [here](#) to view this installment.

Joe announced that the MWRA Advisory Board will not have a regularly scheduled meeting for October. The meeting was adjourned.