



**WATER SUPPLY CITIZENS
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**
to the Mass. Water Resources Authority

485 Ware Road
Belchertown MA 01007
(413) 213-0454
fax: (413) 213-0537
email: info@wscac.org

AB, WAC, & WSCAC Sept 18th Virtual Meeting/WSCAC Business Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 18th, 2025

WSCAC Members in Attendance in Bold:

- **Christine Bennett**, MWRA
Advisory Board
- William Copithorne, Town of
Arlington
- Steven Daunais, Tata & Howard
- **Bill Fadden**, OARS
- **Bill Kiley**, BWSC
- **Paul Lauenstein**, Neponset (Chair)
- Paul Rybicki, Partially Supplied
Community
- **Martin Pillsbury**, MAPC
- Janet Rothrock, League of Women
Voters
- Bill Merriam, Framingham resident,
Foss reservoir abutter
- **Erin Bonney Casey**, Ipswich River
Watershed Association
- **Ralph Abele**, Charles River
Watershed Association
- Matt Brown, OARS
- **Warren Kimball**, Nashua River
Watershed Association

Non-Members in Attendance:

- Stephen Estes-Smargiassi, MWRA
- Matt Romero, MWRA AB
- Nathan Cote, MWRA AB
- Jennifer Pederson, Mass Water
- Andreae Downs, WAC
- Kannan Vembu, WAC
- Andriana Ciolo, WAC
- Alfredo Vargas, WAC
- Moussa Siri, WSCAC Executive Director
- Plus 16 other attendees

I. Introduction (Moussa Siri, WSCAC)

Moussa Siri introduced the agenda for WSCAC businesses to be covered during the meeting:

- Approve the June 10 meeting minutes, led by Paul Laurenstein, the chair.
- Brief comment on the November Executive Committee renewal
- The role of MWRA in the WSCAC members recruitment process by Steve Estes-Smargiassi
- The candidacy for the November 18th Executive Committee election

Moussa dropped the water conservation subcommittee report due to the time constraint. Moussa added that in addition to the few members WSCAC lost, three active members excused themselves from the meeting. He indicated that the quorum should be met, then passed the lead to Paul Lauenstein, the WSCAC Chair, to check the quorum in case some attendees had already left, and lead the vote on the June 10 meeting minutes.

II. WSCAC Businesses

a. Vote to approve June 10 Meeting Minutes

Paul Lauenstein confirmed through a roll call that the quorum was reached with the presence of eight (08) members. After the roll call, the WSCAC Chair called for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 10 meeting.

A motion was made and was seconded!

Paul asked for any discussion. Paul indicated that the meeting minutes were lengthy, with some minor typographical issues resulting from the use of AI to assist with transcription. He also added that it was difficult to recruit an assistant, and Moussa had to help himself with the AI to transcribe the meeting.

Paul added that the link added at the end of the minutes, referring to the DCR's forestry presentation from the June 10 meeting, was missing (the presentation had not been posted). Moussa was working on getting the presentation posted at the indicated link shortly. He concluded that these issues would not affect the accuracy of the meeting minutes and moved to approve them.

After Paul's comments, there were no further comments, and the meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Moussa indicated that AI transcription cannot be used without a thorough cleaning process, but reading or reviewing alone the work he has done himself exposes him to mistakes he may not catch.

b. WSCAC Member Recruitment and Executive Committee renewal

i. WSCAC members recruitment

Moussa indicated that WSCAC needs members, especially for the Executive Committee. He exhorted attendees to consider both the Executive Committee renewal before the November election and the recruitment of new members. He added that there are several candidates, and their applications have already been submitted to the MWRA for approval.

WSCAC and MWRA must obtain joint approval from members who are joining WSCAC. Moussa added that there are four applications, and another one he discussed with Steve Estes-Smargiassi the day before the meeting. Moussa added that Steve should be able to inform attendees about what the MWRA does or how they process members' applications, as there are specific aspects to consider when sending applications to the MWRA. He thanked Steve Estes-Smargiassi for his availability and passed it on to him.

ii. MWRA in Members Recruitment (Steve Estes-Smargiassi)

Steve Estes-Smargiassi indicated that his briefing was intended to address the request from Moussa Siri the day before, informing WSCAC members of what MWRA looks for when reviewing applications from potential new WSCAC members. Steve articulated his answer through three and a half things that he considers when selecting committee members.

- First, I would say obviously interest and engagement. Not necessarily a skill set or a deep familiarity with water resource issues, but an interest in understanding those issues, an interest in providing tempered, useful advice to the MWRA staff and the board, and being engaged in those issues. The applicant doesn't necessarily have to be an expert already.
- Second, and pretty important to us, is having the committee be broadly representative across a variety of different viewpoints. Historically, they considered parity between donor basins and user communities, as well as parity between broad-structure organizations and narrowly focused organizations. But at this point, decades after WSCAC was created, decades after its real deep engagement in the Long Range Water Supply Study in the late 70s and 80s, he is primarily thinking, as Sean and he and others look at this, at making sure that the committee is representative across donor basins, user communities, and a variety of financial user interests and so on, that all of that gets included, that we are not leaning too hard one side or another.
- Third thing, probably less important than those two, is not having a lot of overlap. WSCAC and MWRA don't need four or five members who represent one particular viewpoint. We're looking for that diversity of viewpoints.
- The last thing, as it relates to some members, particularly those who are consultants or already employed in the water industry, they do look about conflict of interest and MWRA law division will probably provide some guidance about if that member were to be selected to be on the committee, under what circumstances they would need to refuse themselves and not be involved in setting policy or voting on it.

Steve concluded that it's broadly like that, and the difficulty they often face is that if WSCAC has folks in one particular sector, it's easy to recruit additional folks in that sector. He knows that's been Moussa's frustration at trying to achieve parity. He added that we have a lot of people who've come at this from one particular range of viewpoints, and we're trying to ensure that the committee is broadly representative.

Before ending his briefing, he echoed what Matt and others have said, which is, let's look for folks who might be interested. There are individuals on the advisory board who may be interested in participating in a smaller, more narrowly focused group, specifically on water-related issues. If advisory board members know community members, business leaders, neighborhood associations, or planning board members who might be interested in another meeting on their calendar that focuses on water, he would be happy to have them.

Moussa indicated that it is essential to clarify the MWRA's role in member recruitment to help members understand that he is not obstructing the procedure, but rather waiting for MWRA's feedback after completing the steps described above.

Moussa added that he spoke to Jennifer Pederson to ask if she could also help with member recruitment. He thinks that it is not easy to recruit, especially among water suppliers, when you come to them with no connection. Moussa requested that attendees bring to WSCAC any interested water suppliers on either the donor side or the recipient side that they may know.

He informed those waiting for feedback that he is working hard to expedite the process and invites joint efforts from members to help them. He added that many of the prospective members are very active; they are working hard to make the committee better through their contributions, but if they don't have a voice, they feel like their efforts are in vain.

iii. **Executive Committee members' candidacy**

Moussa explained that the Executive Committee has only four (04) active members. He hopes that more WSCAC members will express interest in serving on the Executive Committee. He encouraged those who were still hesitant to join, as the Executive Committee is essential in making major decisions, which are then submitted to the entire committee for approval. He asked attendees to begin searching and making suggestions among the committee members. He encouraged searching for new members who can also be potential Executive Committee members and sent them his way.

Paul added that he has been the Chair for a while now since Whit Beals passed away. He indicated that he is 75 years old and can't do it forever. He asked any interested person with a burning desire to move up to chair the committee, not to hesitate to indicate their interest to him or Moussa.

Steve indicated that Paul still has a long way to go (10 years), and Moussa Siri acknowledged Paul's great work and support to him as the executive director, as well as to WSCAC members, and his excellent work in running both the committee and the Executive Committee.

With no further business, Paul asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

A motion was made and seconded!

All in favor!

Meeting adjourned around 12 PM.