

**MASSACHUSETTS WATER RESOURCES AUTHORITY**

Meeting of the Board of Directors

April 16, 2025

---

A meeting of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (“MWRA”) Board of Directors was held on March 19, 2025 at MWRA Headquarters at Deer Island, Boston, and via remote participation.

Chair Tepper presided at the MWRA Headquarters. Board Members Flanagan, Foti, Pappastergion, Taverna, Patrick Walsh, and Jack Walsh also participated at the Administration Facility. Board Members Peña, Swett and Wolowicz participated remotely. Board Member Vitale was absent.

MWRA Executive Director Frederick Laskey; General Counsel Carolyn Francisco Murphy; Chief Operating Officer David Coppes; Deputy Chief Operating Officer Rebecca Weidman; Director of Finance Thomas Durkin; Director of Administration Michele Gillen; Chief Diversity and Equity Officer (AACU) Rita Mercado; Director of Environmental and Regulatory Affairs Colleen Rizzi; Senior Program Manager Kristen Hall; Deputy Finance Director/Treasurer Matthew Horan; Program Manager David Granados; Assistant Director of Engineering Lisa Hamilton; Senior Program Manager Paul Rullo; AACU Associate Special Assistant Tomeka Cribb; Director of Human Resources Wendy Chu; Director of Planning and Sustainability Stephen Estes-Smargiassi; Senior Planner Malcom Ragan; Energy Manager Kristen Patneaude; Budget Director Michael Cole; MIS Director Paula Weadick; Chief of Staff Katherine Ronan; Associate General Counsels Angela Atchue, Kimberley McMahon, and Kristen Schuler Scammon, and, Assistant Secretary Kristin MacDougall attended at the MWRA Administration Facility.

Vandana Rao, EEA, and Richard Raiche and Matt Romero, MWRA Advisory Board, also attended at the Administration Facility.

Chair Tepper called the meeting to order at 1:00pm.

**ROLL CALL**

MWRA General Counsel Francisco Murphy took roll call of Board members in attendance and announced that Board Members Peña, Swett and Wolowicz were participating remotely. The Chair announced that the meeting was being held at MWRA Headquarters and virtually, via a link posted on MWRA’s website. She added that the meeting would be recorded, and that the agenda and meeting materials were available on MWRA’s website.

**APPROVAL OF MARCH 19, 2025 MINUTES**

**A motion was duly made and seconded to approve the minutes of the Board of Directors’ meeting of March 19, 2025.**

---

*Documents used for this meeting and cited in these minutes, including meeting materials/staff summaries, presentations, and approved minutes, are posted on MWRA’s website: <https://www.mwra.com/about-mwra/governance-management/board-directors/archive-agendas-and-minutes>*

Chair Tepper asked if there was any discussion or questions from the Board. Hearing none, she requested a roll call vote in which the members were recorded as follows:

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Tepper		
Flanagan		
Foti		
		Pappastergion
Peña		
Taverna		
J. Walsh		
P. Walsh		
Wolowicz*		

\*Inaudible, technical difficulty  
(ref. I)

#### REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive Fred Laskey reported that MWRA submitted its Risk and Resilience Assessment by the EPA's April deadline as required by the American Water Infrastructure Act. He thanked staff for their work on the assessment, and described its importance to system security. There was brief discussion about the assessment submittal and recordkeeping processes.

Mr. Laskey then discussed MWRA activities to support the Boston Marathon, including with manhole inspection; staffed trucks to block intersections; and, the portable water fountain. There was brief discussion about MWRA's participation in the upcoming America 250 celebration in Lexington.

Next, Mr. Laskey noted that Board Member Swett would give a talk for MWRA staff in recognition of Earth Day, and that staff were volunteering at the Green Roots clean up in Chelsea.

Finally, Mr. Laskey announced some upcoming retirements, including Chief Operating Officer David Coppes, Deer Island Deputy Director for Maintenance Ted Regan and Employment Manager Susan Carter. He noted their accomplishments, and thanked them for their contributions to the Authority.

Board Member Taverna congratulated MWRA staff for their excellent presentations at New England Waterworks Spring Conference. (ref. III)

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair Tepper requested that the Board move into Executive Session to discuss litigation and

collective bargaining, since discussing such in Open Session could have a detrimental effect on the litigating and bargaining positions of the Authority. She announced that the planned topics for Executive Session were a discussion of strategy with respect to litigation; the approval and ratification of a Collective Bargaining Agreement for Unit 2; and Memoranda of Agreement with Unit 2 (regarding position upgrades) and Unit 3 (regarding Operator career ladders.) She advised that the Board would return to Open Session after the conclusion of Executive Session.

**A motion was duly made and seconded to enter Executive Session for these purposes, and to resume Open Session after Executive Session adjournment.**

General Counsel Francisco Murphy reminded Board members that under the Open Meeting Law members who were participating remotely in Executive Session must state that no other person is present or able to hear the discussion at their remote location. A response of “yes” to the Roll Call to enter Executive Session when their name was called would also be deemed their statement that no other person was present or able to hear the Executive Session discussion.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, a roll call vote was taken in which the members were recorded as follows:

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Tepper		
Flanagan		
Foti		
Pappastergion		
Peña		
Swett		
Taverna		
J. Walsh		
P. Walsh		
*Wolowicz		

Voted: to enter Executive Session, and to resume Open Session after Executive Session adjournment.

\*Inaudible, technical difficulty

\*\*\* EXECUTIVE SESSION \*\*\*

The meeting entered Executive Session at 1:07pm and adjourned at 1:57pm.

\*\*\* CONTINUATION OF OPEN SESSION \*\*\*

Chair Tepper announced that during Executive Session the Board voted to approve and ratify a collective bargaining agreement for the period April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2027 for AFSCME Local 1242 Unit 2, which includes: (i) ATB increases of 3% effective in September, 2024, 2% effective in March 2025, 2% effective in September 2025, 2% effective in March 2026 and 2% effective in September 2026; and (ii) increases to shift differential, standby pay and meal stipends. She also announced that the Board voted to approve a Memorandum of Agreement with AFSCME Local 1242 Unit 2 regarding position upgrades and authorized the Executive Director, or his designee, to implement the terms of the Agreement. Finally, she announced that the Board voted to approve a Memorandum of Agreement with NAGE Local R1-168 Unit 3 regarding an Operator career ladder and authorized the Executive Director, or his designee, to implement the terms of the Agreement.

WATER POLICY AND OVERSIGHT

Mr. Laskey introduced MWRA Advisory Board Chair Richard Raiche to Board members.

Information

Quabbin Reservoir Communities System Expansion Evaluation Update

Colleen Rizzi, MWRA Director of Environmental and Regulatory Affairs, presented an update on the ongoing Quabbin Reservoir Communities System Expansion Evaluation ("Quabbin study"). She described the purpose of the study, which the Board authorized in 2023.

Ms. Rizzi discussed the study communities; the statuses of their existing water systems; and, the evaluation's objectives. She explained that the Quabbin study requires additional analysis to identify potential water sources because area communities have limited access to existing MWRA infrastructure. She also discussed the study's methods; components; and, service area determinations for towns with and without existing public water systems.

Ms. Rizzi reviewed a range of Quabbin-area expansion options that were considered before narrowing the study's scope to five conceptual project alternatives. She noted that groundwater supply, surface water, and existing MWRA water system capacity were considered. She advised that the Brutsch Water Treatment Facility and Chicopee Valley Aqueduct do not have excess capacity available, and that use of the Quabbin Aqueduct is not feasible.

Chair Tepper asked why the Quabbin Aqueduct was not feasible. Ms. Rizzi explained that the aqueduct is not a practical or safe alternative due to its age and depth (300-700 feet below ground).

Ms. Rizzi then summarized five conceptual projects that were ultimately evaluated: the

Southwest Intake (Belchertown, Ludlow and Pelham); the West Intake (Shutesbury, New Salem, Wendell and Orange); two Northwest regional groundwater supply projects (New Salem, Wendell and Shutesbury, and Petersham and Phillipston); and, Southeast Intake (Hardwick and Barre). The summaries included reviews of location; required infrastructure; potential supply capacity; population served and opinion of probable cost in 2029 dollars.

Chair Pepper asked how staff determined the opinion of probable cost estimates. Ms. Rizzi explained that estimates included factors such as transmission main length; appurtenances; required water treatment methods and construction components; and, a 25% contingency.

Ms. Rizzi then discussed groundwater supply alternatives, and highlighted potential medium/high yield regional aquifer areas that could be suitable for siting wells and water storage tanks, noting that additional analysis would be required.

Ms. Rizzi described Quabbin study's next steps, including a published report and the public presentation of findings. She discussed a November 2024 meeting with study area town representatives, and comments subsequently received as correspondence to the Board. She noted the comment letters' common themes related to the Quabbin study's scope, and explained that the scope is consistent with those of MWRA's recent water system expansion studies for other communities.

Discussion followed including on MWRA's outreach to the Quabbin study communities; community concerns; requests for meetings with study area town offices with low response rates; engineering analysis; cost of alternatives versus watershed stewardship; timing and distribution of the evaluation report to Quabbin study area communities; plans for a hybrid meeting with community members to share feedback/concerns; septic systems servicing most study communities; potential wells and infrastructure constraints; capacity limits of the Brutsch Water Treatment Facility and Chicopee Valley Aqueduct; technological and cost challenges regarding distance from existing MWRA water infrastructure; probable cost for the five conceptual project alternatives (\$680 million); whether study communities could choose to opt out of MWRA system expansion; and potentially polling communities to gauge interest in joining the system.

Chair Pepper asked if the evaluation report would be distributed to the Quabbin study area communities before the next public meeting, and requested more information about upcoming meetings. Ms. Rizzi explained that staff intend to publish the report prior to the meeting, which is planned to be held in person at a location central to the study communities. Chair Pepper suggested that the meeting be conducted in a hybrid format. Ms. Rizzi agreed to hold a hybrid meeting if technologically feasible. Chair Pepper offered EEA's and DCR's technical assistance for a hybrid meeting. There was brief discussion about community feedback on the report's

engineering analysis. Chair Tepper recommended that community members have the opportunity to share feedback and discuss their concerns with the MWRA Board after the public meeting. Ms. Rizzi agreed.

Mr. Flanagan asked if the Quabbin Study communities are mostly served by individual septic systems. Ms. Rizzi responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Pappastergion requested more information about the study's inclusion of potential wells. Ms. Rizzi explained that groundwater sources are being considered because of infrastructure constraints, such as the capacity limits of the Brutsch Water Treatment Facility and Chicopee Valley Aqueduct.

There was discussion about technological and cost challenges posed by the Quabbin-area communities' distance from existing MWRA water infrastructure, and the total opinion of probable cost for the five conceptual project alternatives (\$680 million). Finally, there was general discussion about whether some Quabbin study communities could hypothetically choose to opt out of MWRA system expansion, and the potential to poll communities to gauge their interest in joining the system.

Hearing no further discussion or questions from the Board, Committee Chair Taverna moved to the next Information item.

(The Board continued to discuss these matters after Personnel and Compensation Committee) (ref. V A.1)

#### Local Water System Assistance Program Annual Update

Kristen Hall, MWRA Senior Program Manager, presented an annual update on the Local Water System Assistance Program ("LWSAP"). She reviewed the four phases of the LWSAP to date, which total \$1.025 billion in approved funding since FY01. She also discussed the timing of the phases, including their completed and ongoing distributions. Ms. Hall then presented examples of projects funded by the LWSAP including water main replacements and tank rehabilitations. She updated the Board on the status of unlined water main replacements within the regional water system, and reported that the LWSAP program has funded the replacement and relining of 632 miles of water main to date, with approximately 1,900 miles remaining.

Chair Tepper asked how the LWSAP is funded. MWRA Deputy Finance Director/Treasurer Matthew Horan explained that the program is funded through MWRA bonds issuances.

Hearing no further discussion or questions from the Board, Mr. Taverna moved to the next Information item. (ref. V A.2)

Lead Service Line Replacement Program Update

David Granados, MWRA Program Manager, updated Board members on MWRA's Lead Service Line Replacement Program, ("LRP"), which is comprised of a Loan Program and a Grant Program.

Mr. Granados described terms of the LRP Loan Program (10-year, no interest loans for community lead service line removal); reported that LRP loans provided over \$43 million in funding for 46 lead removal projects in 17 communities as of December 2024, supported replacement of 7,900 lead service lines and 1,400 lead goosenecks, discussed the LRP Grant Program (25% grants for communities that commit to funding the replacement of the portions of lead service lines on private property at no cost to the homeowner, and reported that Malden and Medford are implementing local programs for private-side replacements under the Program.

He updated the Board on the status of the lead service line inventory for MWRA water communities; discussed the inventory's approved initial findings: 84.47% of all service lines were made of non-lead materials; 2.68% were lead; 0.54% were galvanized steel needing replacement; and 14.30% were made of unknown material ("unknown lines"); and advised staff that don't expect the unknown lines to be lead; however, they remain an area of focus; described staff's significant outreach to communities; reviewed LRP grant and loan distributions for the third quarter of FY25; reported several communities expected to request LRP funding in the fourth quarter of FY25.

Chair Tepper asked when staff expect LRP funds to be fully allocated. Mr. Granados explained that the goal is 2032, pending the outcome of identifying the composition the unknown lines. He noted that staff expect more clarity the composition of unknown lines in 2027, when communities will be required to submit an updated inventory.

There was brief discussion about how potential changes to the federal Lead and Copper Rule could impact the LRP.

Mr. Jack Walsh asked if the LRP covers the replacement of galvanized steel piping located within home structures ("premise plumbing"). Mr. Granados explained that the LRP only provides funding for external service lines, and that indoor premise plumbing is the responsibility of property owners.

Hearing no further discussion or questions from the Board, Mr. Taverna moved to Contract Awards. (ref. V A.3)

Contract AwardsSaugus River Crossing Section 56 Pipeline Replacement: BOND Civil & Utility Construction, Inc., Contract 7486

**A motion was duly made and seconded to approve the award of Contract 7486, Saugus River Crossing Section 56 Pipeline Replacement, to the lowest responsible and eligible bidder, BOND Civil & Utility Construction, Inc., and to authorize the Executive Director, on behalf of the Authority, to execute said contract in the bid amount of \$9,484,846.99 with a contract term of 365 calendar days from the Notice to Proceed.**

Lisa Hamilton, MWRA Assistant Director of Engineering, noted that the pipe design for the proposed Saugus River Crossing Section 56 Pipeline Replacement Contract 7486 was challenging and not typical, and required environmental, navigational and roadway permits. She reported that staff worked with project abutters to minimize impacts and established temporary and permanent easements to build the pipeline and for infrastructure support.

Ms. Hamilton presented the project's location and described its scope; presented photos of planned work sites in Revere and Lynn; noted pipe alignment crosses a yacht club and a seawall; advised the project would take place concurrently with some city and development contracts.

Next, she presented the bid results, and noted that they indicate a competitive bidding environment. Finally, Ms. Hamilton recommended award to the lowest bidder, BOND Civil & Utility Construction, Inc. ("BOND"), whose bid came in below the Engineer's Estimate.

In response to a question from Mr. Taverna, Ms. Hamilton explained that this project was designed by AECOM Technical Services, Inc. Mr. Jack Walsh asked if BOND owns directional drilling equipment. Ms. Hamilton responded in the affirmative. There was brief, general discussion about the benefits of owning drilling equipment.

Hearing no further discussion or questions from the Board, Chair Tepper requested a roll call vote in which the members were recorded as follows:

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Tepper		
Flanagan		
Foti		
Pappastergion		
Peña		
Swett		
Taverna		



Yes                      No                      Abstain

J. Walsh

P. Walsh

Wolowicz

(ref. V B.1)

Contract Amendments/Change Orders

Northern Extra High Pressure Zone Improvements: Black & Veatch Corporation, Contract 7404, Amendment 1

**A motion was duly made and seconded to authorize the Executive Director, on behalf of the Authority, to approve Amendment 1 to Contract 7404, Northern Extra High Pressure Zone Improvements, with Black & Veatch Corporation, increasing the contract amount by \$879,418.13, from \$6,710,053.83 to \$7,589,471.96, with no increase in contract term.**

Paul Rullo, MWRA Senior Program Manager, described the scope of proposed Amendment 1 to Contract 7404 with Black & Veatch Corporation, which includes resident engineering; inspection; and, construction contract support services.

Mr. Rullo noted that Contract 7404 was awarded with the intention of conducting separate competitive procurements for the resident engineering and resident inspection services ("RE/RI") for each of the project's construction packages (6522/CP1, awarded to Albanese D&S Inc.; 7725/CP2, awarded to RJV Construction Corp.; and 7910/CP3, in design).

He explained MWRA issued an RFQ/P to solicit proposals for RE/RI services to support construction Contract 7725/CP2; no proposals received; staff conducted outreach and interviews with potential consultants; and Black & Veatch was the only firm that expressed interest; staff determined Black & Veatch's proposed RE/RI team meets MWRA's qualification requirements; cost is consistent with MWRA's other RE/RI professional services contracts; and requested Board approval for the proposed Amendment.

There was brief discussion about the procurement process and the scope of the proposed Amendment. There was also general discussion about the benefits of RE/RI services performed by a project's design firm, which Mr. Taverna noted is a common practice for municipal contracts.

Chair Tepper asked if there was any further discussion or questions from the Board. Hearing none, she requested a roll call vote in which the members were recorded as follows:

Yes                      No                      Abstain

Tepper

Flanagan

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Foti		
Pappastergion		
Peña		
Swett		
Taverna		
J. Walsh		
P. Walsh		
*Wolowicz		

\*Inaudible, technical difficulty  
(ref. V B.2)

(Mr. Taverna temporarily left the meeting after the Roll Call vote.)

#### PERSONNEL AND COMPENSATION

##### Approvals

##### Approval of the 2025 Affirmative Action Plan

**A motion was duly made and seconded that the Board of Directors approve the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority's Affirmative Action Program effective for a one-year period from January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025.**

Rita Mercado, MWRA Chief Diversity and Equity Officer, requested Board approval of MWRA's 2025 Affirmative Action plan ("AA Plan"). She outlined the contents of the report and advised that MWRA had exceeded its placement goals for females and minorities in its workforce during the 2024 Affirmative Action plan year.

Ms. Mercado advised that for 2025 MWRA would continue its Workforce Development Program (providing equal opportunities to qualified individuals, including targeted benchmarks for underutilization in specific job groups to assure equal access to opportunities); and explained that benchmarks are based on statistical analysis into the availability of qualified individuals in each job group; and take into account factors such as prior workforce demographics, internal/external availability of qualified individuals.

Next, Tomeka Cribb, MWRA Associate Special Assistant, Affirmative Action and Compliance Unit ("AACU"), presented highlights of MWRA's action-oriented program related to workforce development, including support of MWRA's Human Resources Department ("HR") with career path development and job description review.

Ms. Cribb reported that staff attended 43 career fairs in the past year; engaged with 348 students, including 128 engineering students and 48 environmental science students since fall,

2024; interacted with students in various fields of study, including the trades; continued to enhance targeted recruitment referrals and outreach to local communities and vocational schools; and, worked with HR on online recruitment for hard-to-fill position and targeted job groups. She highlighted staff's recruitment efforts through MWRA's Deer Island Tour Program and Annual STEM Fair, and the broadening of co-op programs for trade schools.

Next, Ms. Mercado discussed MWRA's Minority and Women Owned Business ("M/WBE") Program; data related to spending for M/WBE construction and professional services contracts; outreach efforts to enhance the program and ensure equal access to contract opportunities by attending industry and networking events hosted by the Commonwealth and other public entities; and, the review of contract provisions related to construction workforce goals, and potentially explore adding new provisions for professional service contracts.

Ms. Mercado reported that staff plan to launch an availability study to provide statistical data of firms qualified and available to perform MWRA contract work, which is designed to help AACU to establish project-specific goals for contracts in support of the M/WBE Program. She added that MWRA will continue to support local businesses by making contract opportunities accessible to qualified vendors. Finally, Ms. Mercado advised that MWRA remains committed to being an equal opportunity employer, and will continue efforts to attract, develop and retain a skilled and engaged workforce.

(Mr. Taverna returned to the meeting during the report.)

Chair Tepper remarked on staff's engagement efforts, especially for young people, and requested more information about current statistics with respect to M/WBE procurements. Ms. Mercado explained that MWRA is meeting its M/WBE goals, and that the purpose of the upcoming Availability Study is to determine appropriate goals in light of a changed procurement market due to Covid and other socioeconomic factors. Chair Tepper expressed support for this approach, and Mr. Pappastergion commended staff on the report.

Mr. Swett echoed Chair Tepper's remarks on outreach, and complemented the AA Plan's internal staffing targets. He expressed concern about the M/WBE goals, which are lower than those of other state agencies he has worked with. He encouraged staff to set more aggressive goals that reflect industry standards and the diverse available workforce, and to update the goals more often.

Mr. Swett also recommended that staff consider M/WBE performance measures that examine fully-completed contracts every fiscal year, rather than on a year over year basis, which is more affected by timing. Ms. Mercado acknowledged Mr. Swett's concerns and explained that in her view, every state agency poses a learning curve for new contractors, and that reducing barriers

in order to attract a more diverse pool of contractors, in addition to setting and meeting statistical goals, are currently top priorities for MWRA.

Mr. Swett suggested that MWRA explore programs offered by larger global players to assist agencies with the identification and procurement of appropriate M/WBE subcontractors, and requested more information about the Availability Study's timeline. Ms. Mercado advised that she and her staff will begin the study process as soon as possible. She described next steps, and invited Mr. Swett to join the Selection Committee. Mr. Swett affirmed his support of the study and for updating MWRA's M/WBE goals. Chair Tepper asked if there was any further discussion or questions from the Board. Hearing none, she requested a roll call vote in which the members were recorded as follows:

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Tepper		
Flanagan		
Foti		
Pappastergion		
Peña		
Swett		
Taverna		
J. Walsh		
P. Walsh		
Wolowicz		

(ref. VI A.1)

Ms. Wolowicz advised that she had resolved her audio technical difficulties and requested the opportunity to offer comments on a previous agenda matter. Chair Tepper invited Ms. Wolowicz to comment after the Personnel and Compensation Committee.

#### April 2025 PCR Amendments

**A motion was duly made and seconded to approve amendments to the Position Control Register (PCR) as presented in the April 16, 2025 Staff Summary and filed with the records of this meeting.**

Wendy Chu, MWRA Director of Human Resources, invited Board members' questions on the proposed amendments to the PCR.

Chair Tepper asked if was any discussion or questions from the Board. Hearing none, she requested a roll call vote in which the members were recorded as follows:

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
------------	-----------	----------------

Tepper

Flanagan

Foti

Pappastergion

Peña

Swett

Taverna

J. Walsh

P. Walsh

Wolowicz

(ref. VI A.2)

Appointment of Director, Risk Management, Finance Division

**A motion was duly made and seconded to approve the appointment of Mr. Jeffrey McAvoy to the position of Director, Risk Management (Non-Union, Grade 15) in the Finance Division at the recommended annual salary of \$162,000 commencing on a date to be determined by the Executive Director.**

Ms. Chu invited Board member's questions on the appointment of Risk Management Director.

Hearing no discussion or questions, Chair Tepper requested a roll call vote in which the members were recorded as follows:

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
------------	-----------	----------------

Tepper

Flanagan

Foti

Pappastergion

Peña

Swett

Taverna

J. Walsh

P. Walsh

Wolowicz

(ref. VI A.3)

Non-union Manager Benefits; Contract Employees Salary Adjustments

**A motion was duly made and seconded to approve the benefits detailed in the April 16, 2025 Staff Summary and presented and filed with the records of this meeting related to vacation,**

**sick and bereavement leave; prior state and municipal service for vacation accrual purposes; and tuition reimbursement for non-union managers and authorize the Executive Director to implement said benefits.**

**Further, a motion was duly made and seconded to authorize the Executive Director, on behalf of the Authority, to implement salary adjustments of 3% effective January 4, 2025 and 2% effective June 28, 2025 for three contract employees as further detailed in the April 16, 2025 Staff Summary.**

Ms. Chu referred Board Members to the Staff Summary for this agenda item, and explained that the recommended benefits and salary adjustments for non-union managers are consistent with those recently approved for Collective Bargaining employees.

There was brief, general discussion about the length of the three contract employees' contracts.

Chair Tepper asked if there was any discussion or questions from the Board. Hearing none, she requested a roll call vote in which the members were recorded as follows:

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Tepper		
Flanagan		
Foti		
Pappastergion		
Peña		
Swett		
Taverna		
J. Walsh		
P. Walsh		
Wolowicz		

(ref. VI A.4)

#### Continued Discussion on the Quabbin Reservoir Communities System Expansion Evaluation Update

Chair Tepper invited Ms. Wolowicz to share remarks on the Quabbin Study, which was first discussed in agenda item V A.1.

Ms. Wolowicz commented on draft legislation sponsored by Senator Jo Comerford with the support of Representative Aaron Saunders with regards to payment in lieu of taxes ("PILOT") for Western Massachusetts communities.

Ms. Wolowicz advised that as resident of the Quabbin Reservoir area, she recognizes the great

value of the reservoir as a resource that supports the water system that serves Eastern Massachusetts. She noted that the communities that MWRA serves, or does not serve, are not well known to Quabbin area residents and advised that more education and outreach is needed.

She acknowledged Sen. Comerford's position with respect to equity for the residents of communities surrounding the Quabbin Reservoir, and welcomed further discussion with the Senator and her colleagues, along with the MWRA and Advisory Board staff. She also expressed support for Sen. Comerford's proposal to increase representation for Western Massachusetts communities on the MWRA Board of Directors, and noted the large size of the Connecticut River Basin.

Ms. Wolowicz advised that in her view, expanding the MWRA water system to serve the Quabbin area poses significant challenges due to the region's geographical characteristics and the new infrastructure required; however, she believes that it is possible.

She noted that she will continue to advocate for awareness and equity for Quabbin area communities and its residents in her role as the region's MWRA Board representative. She invited Sen. Comerford to participate in a Quabbin expansion Board subcommittee and to speak with MWRA staff and the Board.

Finally, Ms. Wolowicz acknowledged Sen. Comerford's concerns with respect to PILOT payments for Western Massachusetts and expressed support for further discussion.

Hearing no further discussion or questions from the Board, Chair Tepper moved to Administration, Finance and Audit. (ref. V A.1)

#### ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE AND AUDIT

##### Information

##### Progress on Emissions Reduction and 2023 Greenhouse Gas Inventory

##### Progress on Emissions Reduction and 2023 Greenhouse Gas Inventory

Stephen Estes-Smargiassi, MWRA Director of Planning and Sustainability, presented a 2023 greenhouse gas inventory and progress update on emissions reduction. He provided background on MWRA's long-standing commitment to energy savings and reducing emissions; noted that this work was acknowledged by the MA Department of Energy Resources with the 2023 Leading by Example Award; and, explained MWRA's sustainability and resiliency efforts have been guided by the Commonwealth's Clean Energy and Climate Plan (net zero greenhouse gas ("GHG") emissions by 2050).

He presented MWRA's progress highlights for reducing greenhouse GHG emissions since 2006 (-41%, in line with state targets); advised that there was slight rise in GHG emissions in 2023

(i.e., increased Deer Island Treatment Plant Flows due to high precipitation); and discussed the relationship between MWRA's energy demands and precipitation levels.

Next, Malcolm Ragan, Senior Planner, outlined the main categories of MWRA's GHG emissions sources, including electricity (45.4%); process and fugitive, from biochemical reactions of wastewater treatment (20.4%); natural gas (20.2%); diesel/fuel oil/propane (12.1%); and, the vehicle fleet (1.9%). He summarized the reductions in emissions from these sources since 2006. Mr. Ragan noted that most of MWRA's emissions reductions (80%) are associated with electricity, and reflective of MWRA's commitment to energy efficiency, on-site renewable energy, and the greener regional electrical grid. He reported that MWRA has reduced electricity purchases by 9% since 2006, with a 56% reduction in emissions, and stressed the importance of electrifying facilities.

Mr. Ragan then summarized the rates of emissions reductions from other sources, including natural gas (-18% since 2006); diesel/fuel oil/propane (-32%); vehicle fleet (-23%), and, process and fugitive. He noted that reducing process and fugitive emissions for the wastewater sector is a known challenge within the industry, citing the *Massachusetts 2050 Decarbonization Roadmap*.

Next, Mr. Estes-Smargiassi discussed MWRA's energy efficiency progress and plans; advised that reducing overall energy use by increasing efficiency continues to be MWRA's most effective strategy for reducing GHG emissions; noted that frequent energy audits led to significant process, lighting and equipment efficiencies; highlighted ongoing energy efficiency projects (i.e. new Deer Island Combined Heat and Power Facility ("CHP")); and, relayed that staff expect the CHP to double existing electricity generation and require 75% less fuel.

Mr. Estes-Smargiassi then reviewed MWRA's renewable energy portfolio, noting that onsite generation of renewable energy enables MWRA to decrease its GHG emissions and reliance on fuel oil by reducing reliance on grid electricity at some facilities. He discussed MWRA's plans to expand its renewable energy assets, and reported that MWRA had been awarded a \$20 million State Climate Mitigation grant for decarbonization projects, such as a new solar array at the Norumbega water storage facility, and a wind turbine and canopy array at Deer Island.

Next, Mr. Estes-Smargiassi discussed recent electrification projects, including a geothermal heat pump at the Wachusett Aqueduct Pump Station; water heat pumps at Spot Pond; air heat pumps at the Norumbega site; and, the purchase of 30 electric vehicles and 16 chargers. He summarized planned projects, such as heat pump installations; an investigation into wastewater energy recovery systems; a feasibility study for a large-scale battery system at Deer Island; and, the installation of additional EV chargers.

Finally, Mr. Estes-Smargiassi discussed MWRA's next steps toward further energy efficiency and



reduced GHG, including continued efforts for energy efficiency; electrification and renewable energy; exploring innovative strategies; and the development of a broader GHG Reduction Plan, expected in 2026.

Chair Tepper suggested that the challenge of reducing process and fugitive emissions could present a leadership opportunity for MWRA, and encouraged staff to consider conducting research in partnership with institutions such as MIT. Mr. Estes-Smargiassi agreed, and noted that MWRA is participating in several Water Research Foundation projects to increase understanding of process and fugitive emissions, and to identify reasonable opportunities for improvement.

Mr. Swett requested staff's estimate for achieving the Commonwealth's GHG reduction goal by the 2030 deadline. Mr. Estes-Smargiassi explained that MWRA expects to meet the target, but potentially not until after the planned 2032 completion of the Deer Island CHP. Mr. Swett asked if staff were exploring green power purchases to bridge the gap. Mr. Estes-Smargiassi advised that staff would present a more detailed presentation about MWRA's electrical portfolio in the near future. Kristen Patneade, MWRA Energy Manager, added that MWRA has discontinued buying Voluntary Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) per the Healey-Driscoll administration's guidance, and is now focused on investing in renewable energy and GHG reduction projects at MWRA facilities. She expressed interest in exploring additional renewable energy opportunities. Mr. Jack Walsh asked how MWRA's battery systems are charged. Ms. Patneade explained that the Deer Island CHP design will include an assessment of a potential of a micro ring, which could potentially be included in the CHP project. Mr. Jack Walsh asked if staff expected 75% power generation at the CHP facility. Ms. Patneade responded in the affirmative. There was brief, general discussion about how power generation percentages are calculated. Hearing no further discussion or questions, Committee Vice Chair Flanagan moved to the next Information item. (ref. VII A.1)

#### 2024 Annual Update on New Connections to the MWRA System

Ms. Rizzi presented a summary of communities that have expressed interest in joining MWRA's water system, including Lynnfield Center Water District (supplemental supply through Wakefield); Natick (supplemental, via a new connection); Wayland (partial supply from the MWRA tunnel system); and, Weymouth/Former South Weymouth Naval Air Station (new connection). She noted community approvals are complete; legislation is pending; and Confirmed staff expect to seek Board approval for the system admissions in spring or summer 2025.

Hearing no further discussion or questions, Mr. Flanagan moved to the next Information item. (ref. VII A.2)

Delegated Authority Report – March 2025

Mr. Flanagan invited Board Members' questions about the March 2025 Delegated Authority Report.

Hearing no questions or discussion, Mr. Flanagan moved to the next Information item. (ref. VII A.3)

FY25 Financial Update and Summary through March 2025

Michael Cole, MWRA Budget Director, reported a budget variance of \$18.3 million through 9 months at 5.8% underspent, which is slightly less than March 2024 (\$25.7 million). He noted that the current variance figure reflects a \$3 million variable rate savings transfer to the defeasance account, and that this fiscal year's budget trends are holding steady.

Next, Mr. Cole explained that overall expenses are 2.5% under budget (versus 3% in March 2024), primarily driven by underspending on wages due to lower full time equivalent ("FTE") counts; and that maintenance spending is greater than planned, particularly for plant machinery services. He noted slight underspending for indirect expenses, driven by lower watershed reimbursements.

Mr. Cole then reported that the Capital Improvement Program ("CIP") budget is 23.6% underspent and favorable compared to March 2024 (33.4%) and the 20-year average (27.2%). He explained that factors such as project schedule changes and supply chain issues contribute to variances. Finally, Mr. Cole noted that the FY25 budget is progressing as expected and briefly reviewed the timeline of the ongoing FY26 budget process.

There was general discussion with questions and answers about some economic trends that staff are monitoring, including variable rate interest, tariffs, and fixed rate debt.

Hearing no further discussion or questions from the Board, Mr. Flanagan moved to Approvals. (ref. VII A.4)

ApprovalsFlow Averaging for Computing Clinton Wastewater Sewer User Charges

**A motion was duly made and seconded to implement, for the Clinton Wastewater Treatment Plan service area, two-year wastewater flow averaging in FY2026, using CY2023 and CY2024 wastewater flow metering data (Average Daily Flow), and then implement for said service area three-year wastewater flow averaging in FY2027, using CY2023, CY2024 and CY2025 flow data.**

MWRA Director of Finance Thomas Durkin requested Board approval to make minor modifications to the methodology for calculating user charges for the MWRA's Clinton

Wastewater System by implementing flow averaging, similar to the approach for MWRA's Metropolitan Sewer System assessments. He provided background on the impacts of precipitation on wastewater flow volumes and MWRA's flow share based assessment methodology. Finally, Mr. Durkin explained that staff's proposal for flow averaging for Clinton wastewater sewer users is intended to mitigate wide swings in the Clinton Wastewater Treatment Plant User Charges for the Town of Clinton and the Lancaster Sewer District.

In response to a question from Mr. Jack Walsh, Mr. Durkin explained that flow averaging as proposed is expected to reduce Lancaster's FY26 user charge by \$19,000 (-8.4%) and noted that community charges generally smooth out over time.

In response to a question from Mr. Foti, MWRA Advisory Board Executive Director Matt Romero advised that the Advisory Board staff Executive Committee members support the proposal. There was brief, general discussion about the benefits of the proposed flow averaging approach.

Hearing no further discussion or questions from the Board, Chair Tepper requested a roll call vote in which the votes were recorded as follows:

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Tepper		
Flanagan		
Foti		
Pappastergion		
Swett		
Peña		
Taverna		
J. Walsh		
P. Walsh		
Wolowicz		

(ref VII B.1)

#### Contract Amendments/Change Orders

Purchase Order Contract for Senior Business Analyst Consultant: Acro Service Corporation, Bid WRA-5258Q, State Contract ITS77 Category 1A and 1B, Amendment 2

**A motion was duly made and seconded that the Board of Directors, on behalf of the Authority, approve the award of Amendment 2 to WRA-5258Q for a Senior Business Analyst Consultant to Acro Service Corporation, in the amount of \$163,800 and authorize the Director of Administration to execute an amended purchase order, increasing the purchase order amount from \$327,600 to \$491,400, and extending the contract term by one year from March**

**31, 2025 to March 31, 2026.**

Paula Weadick MWRA MIS Director, invited Board members' questions about proposed Amendment 2 to a Senior Business Analyst Consultant Purchase Order Contract.

In response to a question from Mr. Jack Walsh, Ms. Weadick described ongoing efforts to permanently fill a vacant System Analyst/Programmer III position, whose job functions, including a key Enterprise Resource Planning ("ERP") migration, are now being performed by a consultant. She explained that staff recommend extending the consultant's existing contract to ensure the success of the ERP migration and for project team continuity. She noted that staff are in the process of updating the vacant Analyst/Programmer job description in order to better reflect the staffing needs for the new ERP, and potentially broaden the applicant pool.

Hearing no further discussion or questions from the Board, Chair Tepper requested a roll call vote in which the votes were recorded as follows:

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Tepper		
Flanagan		
Foti		
Pappastergion		
Peña		
Swett		
Taverna		
J. Walsh		
P. Walsh		
Wolowicz		

(ref. VII C.1)

(Mr. Pappastergion left the meeting after the Roll Call vote.)

**WASTEWATER POLICY AND OVERSIGHT****Information****Infiltration/Inflow Local Financial Assistance Program Annual Update**

Ms. Hall invited Board member's questions on the annual Infiltration/Inflow Financial Assistance Program update.

There was brief, general discussion about the Deer Island's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System ("NPDES") permit requirements, and the benefits of removing Infiltration and Inflow from MWRA sewer system flows.

Hearing no further discussion or questions, Chair Tepper moved to Correspondence to the Board. (ref. VIII A.1)

#### CORRESPONDENCE TO THE BOARD

Chair Tepper announced that the Board of Directors received correspondence from Jessica Mooring on behalf of the Town of New Salem's Select Board, regarding the Quabbin Reservoir Watershed Communities Alternative Evaluation Summary, and from Richard E. Raiche, MWRA Advisory Board Chair, regarding SD828: An Act relative to the Quabbin watershed and regional equity ("SD828"). She noted that the correspondence is included the materials for the meeting. She advised that the correspondence raised good points in her view, and acknowledged the remarks made by Ms. Wolowicz earlier in the meeting.

The Chair advised that there was work to be done with respect to ensuring that the concerns of Western Massachusetts communities are heard, and expressed appreciation for Ms. Mooring's and Mr. Raiche's comments.

Ms. Wolowicz recommended that discussion on the topics of Quabbin system expansion and SD828 be included in future Board meeting agendas, and suggested the formation of a dedicated Subcommittee on these matters.

On behalf of the MWRA Advisory Board, Mr. Romero expressed concern about the significant impacts of SD828 on MWRA rates. He also discussed concerns about proposed changes to the MWRA Board's makeup.

Chair Tepper requested that staff include further discussion on Quabbin system expansion and SD828 on future agendas.

Ms. Wolowicz acknowledged Mr. Romero's remarks and noted that in her view MWRA is a well-run agency. She encouraged the Board and MWRA and Advisory Board members to discuss with and consider the perspectives of Western Massachusetts residents.

Hearing no further discussion or questions from the Board, Chair Tepper moved to adjournment. (ref. IX)

#### ADJOURNMENT

**A motion was duly made and seconded to adjourn the meeting.**

Hearing no discussion or questions from the Board, Chair Tepper requested a roll call vote in which the members were recorded as follows:


<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Tepper		

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Flanagan		
Foti		
Peña		
Swett		
Taverna		
J. Walsh		
P. Walsh		
Wolowicz		

The meeting adjourned at 3:38pm.

Approved: May 21, 2025

Attest:

 for  
Brian Peña, Secretary

#### LIST OF DOCUMENTS AND EXHIBITS USED

- Draft Minutes of the March 19, 2025 MWRA Board of Directors' Meeting (ref. I)
- April 16, 2025 Staff Summary and presentation – Quabbin Reservoir Communities System Expansion Evaluation Update (ref. V A.1)
- April 16, 2025 Staff Summary and presentation – Local Water System Assistance Program Annual Update (ref. V A.2)
- April 16, 2025 Staff Summary and presentation – Lead Service Line Replacement Program Update (ref. V A.3)
- April 16, 2025 Staff Summary and presentation – Saugus River Crossing Section 56 Pipeline Replacement: BOND Civil & Utility Construction, Inc., Contract 7486 (ref. V B.1)
- April 16, 2025 Staff Summary – Northern Extra High Pressure Zone Improvements: Black & Veatch Corporation, Contract 7404, Amendment 1 (ref. V C.1)
- April 16, 2025 Staff Summary – Approval of the 2025 Affirmative Action Plan (ref. VI A.1)
- April 16, 2025 Staff Summary – April 2025 PCR Amendments (ref. VI A.2)
- April 16, 2025 Staff Summary – Appointment of Director, Risk Management, Finance Division (ref. VI A.3)
- April 16, 2025 Staff Summary – Non-union Manager Benefits; Contract Employees Salary Adjustments (ref. VI A.4)

- April 16, 2025 Staff Summary and presentation – Progress on Emissions Reduction and 2023 Greenhouse Gas Inventory (ref. VII A.1)
- April 16, 2025 Staff Summary and presentation – 2024 Annual Update on New Connections to the MWRA System (ref. VII A.2)
- April 16, 2025 Staff Summary – Delegated Authority Report – March 2025 (ref. VII A.3)
- April 16, 2025 Staff Summary – FY25 Financial Update and Summary through March 2025 (ref. VII A.4)
- April 16, 2025 Staff Summary – Flow Averaging for Computing Clinton Wastewater Sewer User Charges (ref. VII B.1)
- April 16, 2025 Staff Summary – Purchase Order Contract for Senior Business Analyst Consultant: Acro Service Corporation, Bid WRA-5258Q, State Contract ITS77 Category 1A and 1B, Amendment 2 (ref. VII C.1)
- April 16, 2025 Staff Summary and presentation – Infiltration/Inflow Local Financial Assistance Program Annual Update (ref. VIII A.1)
- Presentation – Map of Quabbin Expanded Study communities (ref. IX)
- March 10, 2025 correspondence from Jessica Mooring on behalf of the Town of New Salem’s Selectboard, comments on the November 19, 2024, MWRA presentation of the Quabbin Reservoir Watershed Communities: Alternative Evaluation Summary (ref. IX)
- March 21, 2025 correspondence from Richard E. Raiche, Chair, MWRA Advisory Board, comments on SD828: An Act relative to the Quabbin watershed and regional equity