



Minutes
March 19, 2025
Remote

Attendees:

WAC Members: **Kannan Vembu** (Chair), **Dan Winograd** (Vice Chair), **Adriana Cillo** (BWSC), **Craig Allen**, **Wayne Chouinard** (Belmont), George Atallah, **Dr. Karen Lachmayr**, **Martin Pillsbury** (MAPC), Taber Keally (NepRWA), **Alfredo Vargas** (Newton), **Christine Bennett** (Advisory Board), **Jonathan Smith** (Somerville), **Felina Silver** (LWV), **Zhenyu Tian** (Northeastern). (Members in attendance in **bold**).

MWRA Liaison: David Wu

Guests: Moussa Siri (WSCAC), *see Advisory Board minutes for full attendance*

Staff: Andreae Downs

Joint meeting presentations: *See Advisory Board minutes.*

Highlights for WAC: Rebecca Weidman's presentation on PFAS—many of the sources are residential/commercial (i.e., not covered by TRAC).

Update on the CSO LCTP drafting—watershed organizations still want more control. Flooding on the Alewife won't be totally eliminated under the plan because much of the flooding now is stormwater and the properties along the brook are in a flood plain. The Partners didn't increase the level of control of CSO on the Alewife because of the difficulty of any such plan—the Partners don't own the land that would be required. The new proposal treats all of the remaining CSO on the Mystic and most of it on the Charles, while increasing the level of control to zero CSO in the Typical Year (with 2050 climate adjusted rainfall).

Fecal bacteria concentrations are higher in untreated CSO than in most stormwater, but in typical conditions are destroyed within 6-24 hours. (the lower number for the Charles). But even when CSO is removed, the rivers fail the swimming standard.

59% of the cost of the CSO LCTP will come after 2050. MWRA rate increases to date have remained stable because of the flexibility of spending on maintenance. MWRA's CSO LCTP and river variances, however, are mandatory spending.

VOTE: February Minutes

UPDATES: Andreae welcomed everyone to the meeting & announced the next set of meetings: April 21—joint with AB on the MWRA's 5-year Master Plans; and May 15 Deer Island Tour focusing on energy and maintenance vehicles—the Advisory Board and WSCAC are invited to join us. Asked members whether they preferred a 10 am or 10:30 am start.

Andreae went to the Neponset River Watershed Association meeting on the state of the river. No CSO on this river, but some high fecal indicator concentrations on some of the smaller tributaries. One for sure is cracked sewer pipes leaking into underdrains into Meadow Brook. The main stream of the Neponset has fewer days where bacterial concentrations are too high for swimming, but other pollution (a superfund site, for instance) make swimming unwise there. Stormwater pollution via separate sewer leaks is a topic Andreae is going to continue to follow for WAC.

As the April meeting is also joint, and the CSO LCTP draft will be public in early May, WAC will need time to discuss and formulate comments before the public comment period ends. Andreae asked members to think about how much time might be needed and when—possibly a second summer meeting?

On March 10, the CRWA wrote an op-ed for [Commonwealth](#) Beacon, which, among other things, claimed that the annual Charles River swim, City Splash, was canceled in 2025 because of CSO; this was not accurate. The canceled date was July 12, and there were no CSO discharges for the two weeks before (you can check CSO announcements at the EOEA CSO [Data Portal](#) for yourself). WAC leadership considered writing a correction letter but decided not to engage in a public back & forth.

MWRA—David Wu: Retirements; David Duest—new Deer Island Director is Chad Whiting, Lisa Wong—new Deputy Director of DI. Clarifier rehab project (\$250 million) is proceeding. Clinton Treatment plant has started up phosphorus removal ahead of warmer weather.

Question: what process is being used for phosphorus removal? Ferric Chloride.

Next meeting is **THURSDAY, April 21, 10 am- noon.**