



DEDHAM-WESTWOOD WATER DISTRICT
General Business Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 7, 2022 | 6:30 PM
Via Teams Virtual Platform

Announcement of the Audio and/or Video Recording

The Chair, James Fox, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and announced the meeting would be audio- and/or video-recorded.

Attendance

James Fox, Chair

Robert Lexander, Vice-Chair

Andrew Kara, Clerk

Eric Merithew, Member

Gary Yessaillian, Member

Blake Lukis, Executive Director

Bob Marsh, Business Manager

Pauline Donoghue, Treasurer

Steve Locke, Operations Manager

Joe Emerson, Negotiation Legal Counsel

Absent

John Healy, Member

Executive Session

Mr. Fox requested a motion to break out to Executive Session, with respect for Counsel Joe Emerson's schedule.

Mr. Lexander made motion to exit the open meeting and enter into closed Executive Session under G.L. c. 30A, Sec. 21(a) Exemption 3 – to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kara, and a roll-call vote was taken.

Messrs. Fox, Lexander, Kara, Merithew, and Yessaillian all voted Aye.

Motion passes unanimously.

Open Session resumed at 6:50 p.m. at which time Steve Locke and Pauline Donoghue joined the meeting.

Approval of Minutes of May 17, 2022

With Attorney Emerson having exited the meeting, Mr. Fox called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes for May 17, 2022. A motion was made by Mr. Yessaillian to approve the minutes, as reviewed, for May 17, 2022. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lexander. With no discussion necessary, a roll-call vote was taken.

Messrs. Fox, Lexander, Kara, Merithew, and Yessaillian all voted Aye.

Motion passes unanimously.

Continued Discussion and Action on Rate Structure Changes

Mr. Lukis reminded the Board that the motion details were included in the background information. He reviewed that the motion is to implement a second tier of commercial rate for

any usage over 2,500 cubic feet and offered an updated rates schedule with a current/future comparison chart. Based on the previous meeting's discussion, Mr. Lukis thought the only remaining discussion point is the tier 2 commercial rate dropping to a usage of 1,500 cubic feet.

Mr. Fox requested explanation of the elimination of the minimum monthly charge. Mr. Yessaillian voiced concern of the monthly charge having residents pay for water not used, where charges based only on actual usage eliminates this. Mr. Fox questioned if the meter size affects water flow; Mr. Lukis explained how this is the case. In response to Mr. Fox inquiring if there is an increased cost to the District, Mr. Lukis confirmed the monthly charge based on meter size will still be in place. Mr. Fox questioned if charges will be based on water usage rather than on infrastructure; and Mr. Lukis responded that infrastructure is considered by the minimum monthly charge, then only water used is charged. With Mr. Yessaillian restating residents will be billed for only water usage, Mr. Lukis provided an example of the calculation.

With Mr. Fox questioning the trigger for the next tier, discussion ensued regarding the best cubic-foot line and how the burden would be distributed. Mr. Merithew stated future change is an option to further shift the burden from residential customers. Mr. Fox read the motion:

The Dedham-Westwood Water Commissioners vote to eliminate the quantities of water included within the minimum monthly charge and reducing the charge to reflect this change. In addition, a second tier will be added to the commercial rate structure to begin at all usage over 25 hundred cubic feet at a rate of \$7.89/hcf. Changes are presented herewith in the revised Schedule A of the Districts Rules and Regulations and shall be effective on July 1, 2022.

Mr. Fox then made motion to accept the proposed rate structure changes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Merithew. With no discussion necessary, a roll-call vote was taken. Messrs. Fox, Lexander, Kara, Merithew, and Yessaillian all voted Aye. Motion passes unanimously.

Mr. Fox thanked Mr. Lukis for taking the initiative to create and propose the new tiered structure.

Financials and Warrant

Treasurer's Warrants

For the Board's review and approval, Ms. Donoghue presented Warrants 36-40 for May 16 to June 2 activity.

Business Manager Report

Business Operating Reports

Mr. Marsh informed the Board that Ms. Donoghue, Mr. Lukis, and he met with Rockland Trust Company representatives on May 26 to review the District's policy portfolio performance. Mr. Lukis shared the screen detailing the OBEB funds structured-plan trust agreement started in 2014 and moved to RTC in 2017, utilizing pay-as-go payments. The portfolio allocation highlighted

the investment structure, with all returns within the investment policy range. The performance summary confirmed the policy's objective has been outperformed. Mr. Marsh also explained the investment policy statement structure, utilizing an evaluation to rebalance, with intent to reevaluate the policy in three years. The bank statement shows contributions and withdrawals, with no changes last year; Mr. Marsh reiterated that any requested transactions would be brought before the Board for approval vote. Summarizing, Mr. Marsh stated this policy's returns with this reputable firm have been good and informed that past Board Member John Miller assisted in setting up the current policy in response to not being pleased with the prior policy's returns.

Mr. Marsh stated 17 Union employees are grandfathered into the account for post-employee benefits with 50% paid at retirement. The account has been reduced to 12 remaining beneficiaries after 2 opted out and 3 retired, the account slated to close when the 12 remaining employees retire.

Mr. Marsh informed that he is the only signatory on the account, where two should be in place. He requested the Board choose a second signatory, he recommending Mr. Lukis. Mr. Fox asked if the required signatures are dual or single, with Mr. Marsh responding that he understands one signature is required though two signatories should be listed on the account; he will confirm.

Mr. Marsh reminded that inquiry was made at the last Board meeting of the Norfolk County bill. He will present the invoice expected next week at the next meeting, for payment by July 1. With the average rate increase of 7.3%, Mr. Marsh stated this payment is made six months in advance and is within the 2023 planned budget increase. Mr. Yessaillian asked if the increase is with pension liability or is an overall change, with Mr. Marsh responding it is an overall change and liability is reduced.

For Mr. Marsh, Mr. Lukis displayed the operations results for YTD-April. With the coming year negative, results are more favorable than planned; performance to-date is better than budgeted. The rate increase resulted in surpassing every month's budget this year. Mr. Marsh explained the line items, noting all except the MWRA piece should at least achieve plan, the resulting message being the trend is good this year. May results, closing mid-month, will be available for the June 21 meeting.

Mr. Kara questioned the investment income, with Ms. Donoghue responding Dedham Savings' rate has increased as of June 7. Mr. Kara asked if the District's organization documents allow for investment in short-term treasuries, sighting the same credit risk but with a two-to-three-times better return. Mr. Marsh responded that the protection of the critical principal is always of highest concern, so he will look into and inform.

Mr. Marsh reminded of the audit taking place next week and stated that long-range plans are being developed.

Operations Manager Report

Pumping and Operational Report

Mr. Locke reported average pumpage, with main and service break repairs done where contractors have damaged lines. The Dedham Oakdale Square hydrant hit by a fleeing motorist was repaired. The largest leak detected was repaired May 20, and contractors repaired two additional leaks. Flushing has been taking place. Customer Service reports 144 meters have been installed and 370 backflows tested. Stating that the Production Department has been busy, Mr. Locke detailed the work and informed of one shutdown.

Additionally, as planned, the Viper communication radio system is being installed.

Update on Pacella Invoices

Mr. Merithew asked if Pacella costs, of mostly overtime, may be found on Basecamp; Mr. Locke confirmed they are on the site. Mr. Locke stated this is a good analysis of where money is going and who is doing the work. Mr. Merithew had questions related to some lines, with Mr. Locke answering. Mr. Lukis informed that the backhoe was not in working order, so that scheduled work was subbed out, as Mr. Locke stated.

Update on New & Existing Projects

- The THM Reduction Bid scheduled for July 7 is now expected July 14.
- Mr. Locke met with Neptune Technology Group representatives regarding their cost-significant leak-spy sensor. Mr. Locke offered that 64seconds', in business 25 years, sensor's positive points include a \$40-a-year cell phone charge, the same amount currently charged for leak detection, as well as the ability to cancel the program anytime. Additionally, 64seconds' system pinpoints leaks, virtually eliminating false positives, where Neptune's system finds but is unable to pinpoint. Discussion entailed regarding the positives of the pilot program, including adding rather than moving, details to curb vandalism, a logo to confirm validity, a new cold-climate track record, and a ten-year battery, while reiterating the noise-sensitive pinpointing of leaks proves especially important when large breaks continue for months.
- Regarding the Asset Management Program, Mr. Locke informed that the capital improvement plan is incorporated into the piping schedule, with the paving schedule planned by each Town. With all pipes weighted so able to list and prioritize to select water main replacements, Mr. Fox confirmed this makes selecting correct replacement easier.

Executive Director Report

Contracts Executed by Executive Director

Mr. Lukis reported no new contracts have been executed.

Mr. Lukis reminded that the PFAS sampling update charts were provided, showing 14 months of sampling with a YOY chart. In answer to Mr. Merithew mentioning correlation for a reason, Mr.

Lukis informed that only January saw White Lodge's Well 5 off, with some other wells at higher levels.

Mr. Lukis reported Attorney General Maura Healey filed suit against chemical companies for pollution of PFAS with 'forever chemicals,' stating it will be seen if there will be long-term financial gains to combat.

Mr. Lukis told the Board the website redesign is complete and live as of June 2. DWWD.org is still experiencing some bugs; but with the ability to update content and add pages, the site will prove customer user-friendly.

Mr. Fox requested a motion for adjournment. A motion was made by Mr. Lexander to adjourn the meeting, and Mr. Kern seconded it. A roll-call vote was taken.

Messrs. Fox, Lexander, Kara, Merithew, and Yessaillian all voted Aye.

Motion passes unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Travers Reynolds
Recording Secretary

DOCUMENTS

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