

# Dedham-Westwood Water District *Annual Report*

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## **Mission**

The Dedham-Westwood Water District (DWWD) Board of Water Commissioners sets policy, prepares operating and capital budgets, and establishes rates along with rules and regulations for the Water District. The mission of the DWWD is to provide the residents and businesses of Westwood and Dedham with high quality drinking water for domestic purposes and for fire protection.

## **Water Supply**

The District continues to conduct its operations towards providing high quality, safe drinking water, in compliance with all federal and State Drinking Water Regulations as well as actively pursue land use and regulatory measures that will serve to protect the water resources used to supply our drinking water. The District's partial membership in the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority allows for the annual purchase of up to 73 million gallons of water that is available as a supplement, as well as for an emergency, to the District's existing water supply. A summary of all water quality test results is mailed annually to all DWWD customers.

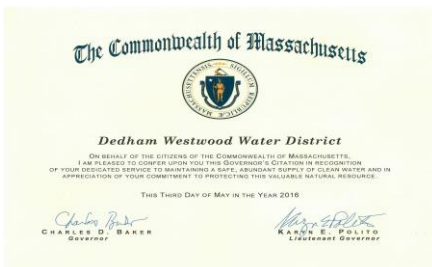
## **Water System Infrastructure Improvements**

This past year \$3.1MM was expended on water system capital improvements, which is a typical yearly investment. In total 5565 feet of water main were replaced. The DWWD generally replaces one to three miles of pipe each year. 132 new and replaced water services were installed this year. Twenty-four fire hydrants were replaced. At our White Lodge Water Treatment Plant on University Ave, a \$1.3 MM project of treatment process equipment upgrades including a dehumidification system and pressure filter painting was undertaken.

We have replaced virtually all water meters with the new radio style greatly reducing the time to read water meters and allowing for the monthly billing implement in September for Westwood customers.

## **Awards**

In 2016, for the second consecutive year, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection named DWWD as a Public Water System of the year.



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## *Bridge Street Treatment Plant and Pump Station*

The Bridge Street Water Treatment Plant, built in 1881 as a steam driven pump station, provides public water supply and fire protection to the Towns of Dedham and Westwood. The Plant was significantly expanded in the 1991 to include pressure filtration for iron and manganese removal. The DWWD determined the facility in need of extensive renovation to the structure, building systems and some process and pumping equipment in order to continue its purpose of supplying potable drinking water to the communities. The DWWD Board engaged an engineering firm to develop plans and specifications and the project will be put out to bid in Spring 2017. The project, estimated to cost 8.8 MM, will be financed with 2% loan from the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust.



## **Water Conservation**

Water conservation continues to be an integral part of the DWWD mission and day to day operations. Last Summer extreme drought conditions existed in the region causing a total out door watering ban to be implemented in late August. We conducted another system wide accoustical survey of the water distribution system intended to find water leaks on mains, services and hydrants which are not surfacing. Finding what's called "unaccounted for water" has been a long standing challenge for the DWWD as it is for systems such as ours that started well over a century ago. Currently, our UAW is 19%-well above the DEP recommended maximum of 15%.Water meters are also methodically replaced to assure accuracy and take advantage of new technologies. Rebates continue to be offered to promote the upgrade of toilets and washing machines to low flow versions. Lastly, we continue to offer water resource protection and water conservation education in both Dedham and Westwood Elementary Schools, community Green Fairs, Earth Day programs and Farmer's Markets. Aside from being the right thing to do, water conservation is

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necessary to continue to comply with MADEP issued water permits, without which we could not withdraw the water quantities needed from the Charles and Neponset river basins.

### **Financial**

DWWD continues to be a financially sound organization as evidenced by the recently completed financial audit conducted by the CPA firm of Melanson and Heath. The Moody's Bond Rating is Aa2. Water rates are comparable to many Massachusetts communities. Each year, the DWWD replaces water mains and services, meters, pumps and motors and other equipment, needed to keep the water works reliably running. The DWWD Board voted to issue bonds for 8.8MM for the Bridge Street Water Treatment Plant Modernization project.

### **Monthly Billing**

In December, the conversion to monthly billing was completed for all customers. Monthly billing will give customers more frequent messages of their water consumption and give early warning when a leak is occurring. Plans are underway to provide electronic billing and provide an autopay feature for those interested.

### **Cross Connection Control Program**

The DWWD Cross Connection Control Program is a key element of the Water System operation. DWWD is committed to protecting your public water system from contamination due to backflow or backsiphonage of connections containing non-potable water. Backpressure and cross contamination can occur when the pressure in equipment or a system is greater than the pressure in the drinking water system. Contamination can also occur when the pressure in the drinking water line drops due to occurrences such as main breaks and heavy water demand causing contaminants to be siphoned out from equipment and into the drinking water. Dedham-Westwood Water district's water system is protected by the control of actual or potential cross connections through two programs:

1. The elimination of existing or future cross connections through inspection and regulation of plumbing and water piping within a customer's premises.
2. The proper installation and maintenance and testing of backflow preventers on cross connections that have been approved.

Cross Connection surveys were conducted at 150 commercial and municipal locations this year. 1300 tests have been performed this year on backflow preventer devices installed in many commercial and municipal facilities to make sure they work properly.

### **DropCountr Customer Portal**

With a grant from MADEP, a program for a customer application for getting quicker access to water use patterns, rebate information, and more will be provided to all residential customers.