



**DEDHAM-WESTWOOD WATER DISTRICT**  
**General Business Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, September 20, 2022 | 6:30 PM**

**Hybrid Meeting**  
**In-Person Attendance at 50 Elm Street in Dedham, MA 02026**

**Announcement of the Audio and/or Video Recording**

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

**Attendance**

James Fox, Chair

Robert Lexander, Vice-Chair (remote)

Andrew Kara, Clerk

Eric Merithew, Member

Gary Yessaillian, Member (remote)

John Healy, Member (remote)

Blake Lukis, Executive Director

Bob Marsh, Business Manager

Pauline Donoghue, Treasurer

Steve Locke, Operations Manager

**Roll-Call Attendance**

Messrs. Fox, Lexander, Kara, Merithew, Yessaillian, and Healy Present.

Mr. Fox confirmed a quorum present.

**Approval of Minutes of September 6, 2022**

Mr. Fox called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes for September 6, 2022. Mr. Lukis pointed out one corrected spelling error. A motion was made by Mr. Kara to approve the minutes, as corrected and reviewed, for September 6, 2022; the motion was seconded by Mr. Yessaillian. With no additional discussion necessary, a roll-call vote was taken.

Roll-Call: Messrs. Fox, Lexander, Kara, Merithew, and Yessaillian all voted Aye; Mr. Healy abstained since he was absent from the September 6, 2022 meeting.

Motion passes.

**Financials and Warrant**

Warrant

Ms. Donoghue presented Warrants 66-68 for September 6 to 15 activity. Mr. Fox asked if all approvals had been received; when Ms. Donoghue informed that most approvals had been received, Mr. Merithew gave his verbal approval.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Fox inquired on the cash balance as compared to this year's projections. Ms. Donoghue reported that cash is up from projections, this pertaining to increased rate, some usage, and the

tier-structure change. Mr. Fox attributed this positive result to Mr. Lukis' implemented tier-structure reform.

## **Business Manager Report**

### Business Operating Reports

Showing the presentation of Projections of Long-Range Plan, Mr. Lukis stated the District objective is to provide safe and clean drinking water for residence and businesses, and to provide backflow protection. Stating this objective will be achieved through financial strategies, Mr. Lukis explained each bullet, comparing rate-structure snapshots previously used to past-versus-future data currently used.

Mr. Lukis confirmed the stabilization fund for pension liability expense will drop off, recommending saving to offset this future expense. Some discussion was held regarding the market and how displayed strong fiscal management helps the District's rating.

Regarding alternative funding, Mr. Lukis explained each bullet and gave an example of an expense being added to billing rather than being built into the annual rate where the increase remains. He relayed this is the format other towns use.

Displayed by Mr. Lukis, Mr. Marsh presented the 2022 budget versus forecast, stating he feels a breakeven can be anticipated this year because of all in place, resulting in a year-end positive cash balance.

Mr. Marsh detailed the five-year 2023-2027 forecast, including the rate fund set aside for pension resulting in profit & loss balances being negative. For the ten-year forecast, Mr. Marsh gave explanation including the pension being paid off in 2029 and profits beginning to decline with capital expenditures. Mr. Lukis confirmed the 2% minimum in answer to Mr. Fox's confirmation request; Mr. Marsh stated the importance of a steady rate. In response to Mr. Merithew's inquiry, Mr. Marsh informed that the District's cash would be reassigned without rate increase. Mr. Marsh reiterated that this forecast plan has not been finalized.

Mr. Lukis stated 2027 has a negative budget forecast which will be funded with the stabilization fund. Mr. Marsh listed aspects of the forecast, recommending borrowing every other year so the borrowing expense is not great. Mr. Fox requested confirmation this would be new borrowing; Mr. Marsh answered this is based on known projects and variables. He related the profit & loss review and cost was based on reasonable assumptions of drivers. Ms. Donoghue and Mr. Marsh confirmed bonds were included, in response to Mr. Fox's question of rate increases and with no Norfolk County pension expense still resulting in debt. Mr. Fox voiced concern with keeping debt down, citing the District's saving/bond/debt history and resulting cash balance. Mr. Marsh reiterated that this long-range plan based on assumptions had not previously been done and was completed so improvements may be sought.

Responding to Mr. Fox's inquiry on treasury bills percentages now and our ability to invest, Ms. Donoghue answered that a lawyer is looking into setting up an investment policy for the Board's review, for up to \$2 million in investments. Ms. Donoghue confirmed the conservative investments would increase modestly; Mr. Kara commented on market percentages. Answering Mr. Merithew's question regarding the stabilization fund and capital projects, Mr. Lukis confirmed the depreciation would be put back into the system for capital improvements and a savings account would ideally be maintained. Mr. Lukis listed the assumptions, stating a self-funding strategy would lower costs. Some discussion regarding percentages was held. Mr. Marsh confirmed his intent in presenting a breakdown was for a clear understanding.

Mr. Healy asked how a debt-structure override to increase the bond rating would be handled. Mr. Lukis answered that Counsel could be consulted, and the Board would decide. In response to Mr. Healy's additional question regarding override, Mr. Lukis stated it would depend on the Board's motion and vote. Mr. Marsh gave further explanation.

### **Operations Manager Report**

#### **Pumping and Operational Report**

Mr. Locke informed that pumpage this week was similar to last, with all doing fine. With the DEP drought-level eased, Level 1C restrictions will be effective as of Monday, September 26.

#### **Update on New & Existing Projects**

Main and Service Breaks Report – Two one-inch service breaks on the customer side were reported. Both breaks have been repaired.

#### **Action on Task Order 126 Amendment #1**

Mr. Locke explained the amendment, and requested a Board motion and vote.

Motion: The Dedham-Westwood Water Commissioners vote to approve Amendment #1 to Weston & Sampson's Task Order #126 for the Design, Bidding, and Construction Services of Water Main Replacements in the amount of \$27,200. Further, that the Executive Director be authorized to sign the Amendment. This was done to ensure that we completed Beverly Lane and Hillcrest Place this year, as customers were experiencing severe water volume problems due to tuberculation on a 2-inch water main. We had received numerous calls which we were able to codify them to be patient and were doing everything possible to resolve in 2022 despite supply chain issues.

#### **Action on Hillcrest Place and Beverly Lane Water Main Replacements Project**

Mr. Locke explained the amendment, and requested a Board motion and vote.

Motion: The Dedham-Westwood Water Commissioners vote to approve the Hillcrest Place and Beverly Lane Water Main Replacements contract with CJP & Sons Construction Co. Inc. of Millis, MA in the amount of \$257,070.31. Further, that the Executive Director be authorized to execute the contract. Weston & Sampson has checked bonding references and history of performance / workmanship and recommends to issue aforementioned letter.

A motion was made by Mr. Kara to approve both motions as read; the motion was seconded by Mr. Yessaillian. Roll-Call for both motions requested by the Operations Manager: Messrs. Fox, Lexander, Kara, Merithew, Yessaillian, and Healy all voted Aye. Motions pass unanimously.

Mr. Locke informed that the preconstruction meeting for Beverly Lane and Hillcrest Place will be held Thursday, and that the Veolia new pricing will be available for the next Board meeting.

### **Executive Director Report**

#### Contracts Executed by Executive Director

Mr. Lukis relayed that he had signed a contract with Woodard & Curran for harmonics monitoring and review before a new the new MCC is installed.

#### September Monthly PFAS Results

Mr. Lukis displayed the September PFAS results which show a slight reduction from the August sample at White Lodge, resulting in the standing being about the same as last year. Mr. Lukis reiterated the intent is to remain below Massachusetts MCL. Discussion was held relative to levels remaining in-compliance and to report timing.

#### Update and Potential Action on PFAS Litigation

Reminding that Attorney Sandman contacted him, Mr. Lukis relayed that he communicated with area communities, all of whom have been solicited by one or more companies regarding litigation against manufacturers; and one signed on with a firm.

Mr. Fox asked if there is any direction from the Attorney General's office or MWRA. Mr. Lukis responded that the Attorney General's office is acting on the issue and that the MWRA is not impacted by this litigation because their levels are virtually non-detectable. Discussion was held regarding joining forces with other communities, costs, and possible funding grants. Mr. Lukis ensured he would look into the litigation details.

#### **Old/New Business\***

Mr. Healy asked if Dedham and Westwood restaurant grease trap rules' compliance fines might be a revenue mechanism. Mr. Lukis answered that the issue is related to the sewer and a fee is charged to test backflows.

A motion was made by Mr. Fox to adjourn the meeting, and Mr. Merithew seconded it. A roll-call vote was taken.

Roll-Call: Messrs. Fox, Lexander, Kara, Merithew, Yessaillian, and Healy all voted Aye. Motion passes unanimously.

Discussed after meeting adjournment roll-call vote, the next meetings will be held Tuesdays October 11, November 1, and November 22.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kathy Travers Reynolds  
Recording Secretary