



**DEDHAM-WESTWOOD WATER DISTRICT**  
**General Business Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, January 10, 2023 | 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**

Robert Lexander, Chair	Blake Lukis, Executive Director
Gary Yessaillian, Vice-Chair (remote)	Bob Marsh, Business Manager
Eric Merithew, Clerk	Pauline Donoghue, Treasurer
James Fox, Member (remote)	Steve Locke, Operations Manager
John Healy, Member	
Mark Phillips, Member	

**Roll-Call Attendance**

Messrs. Fox, Lexander, Merithew, Healy, and Phillips Present.  
Mr. Fox confirmed a quorum present.

Mr. Lukis introduced and welcomed Mr. Mark Phillips to the Board. Mr. Fox, along with the other Members, welcomed Mr. Phillips; and Mr. Fox stated his appreciation on Mr. Phillips' attendance constituting a meeting quorum.

**Installment of 2023 Board Officers**

Mr. Fox requested a motion to approve the proposed slate of Board Officers, yearly rotating Westwood/Dedham for Chairman placement. A motion was made by Mr. Healy to approve the slate of Officers; the motion was seconded by Mr. Merithew.  
Mr. Yessaillian joined the meeting remotely.  
With no additional discussion necessary, a roll-call vote was taken.  
Roll-Call: Messrs. Fox, Lexander, Merithew, Yessaillian, Healy, and Phillips voted Aye.  
Motion passes unanimously.

Newly appointed Chair Robert Lexander thanked outgoing Chair James Fox for serving in the capacity this last year.

**Approval of Minutes of December 20, 2022**

Mr. Lexander called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes for December 20, 2022. A motion was made by Mr. Merithew to approve the minutes as reviewed for December 20, 2022; the motion was seconded by Mr. Healy. With no additional discussion necessary, a roll-call vote was taken.

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

### **Discussion and Action on Water Rate Increase**

Mr. Lukis displayed a presentation for the public, covering the 2023 rate increase, past increases, and why a rate increase is needed.

The 5% rate increase will affect all charges as of February 2023. How inflation has affected District costs was explained. The 2022 rate adjustments were described as the tiered structure having changed commercial rates and the allowable-usage base rate was eliminated. Explanation was made that if these rate changes were not in place, a 13% rate increase would be required to balance the budget.

Confirmation of rate increases falling within a 2% average, as policy dictates:

- Four-year 2019-2022 2.35% average
- Five-year 2019-2023 2.9% average
- Ten-year 2% average

The three tiers of the residential rate history were displayed - 94% of the districts users falling into the residential category.

The minimum monthly meter coverage would also be increased by 5%.

Today's rates versus the 5% increase to rates was explained relative to cost in dollars per average user. The adjustment would affect the average residential user by \$2.02 a month.

Mr. Healy commented on his appreciation of the presentation for the public, and its transparency. Mr. Merithew appreciates the efforts of the District to build in tier structure with reduced impact to residents.

Mr. Lukis informed of the requested motion changes including a final-reading increased rate and a final reading within 24 hours increased rate.

Mr. Fox voiced his appreciation of the collaborative effort of two towns.

Mr. Merithew motioned that The Dedham-Westwood Water Commissioners vote to amend the Schedule of Water Rates as presented herewith as Schedule A, Metered Rates; Schedule B, Fire Protection Rates; Schedule C, Other Charges including Access and Change of Use Fees; and Schedule D, Meter Charges. Amended rates shall be effective on all bills issued on or after February 1, 2023. The motion was seconded by Mr. Healy. With no additional discussion necessary, a roll-call vote was taken.

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

## **Financials and Warrant**

### Warrant

Ms. Donoghue presented the approved last warrants of Fiscal Year 2022, Warrants 92-95, for December 19 to 29 activity; and the first warrants of Fiscal Year 2023, Warrants 1 & 2, for January 3-5 activity.

Mr. Merithew questioned if the two separate charges meant two orders. Mr. Marsh answered in the affirmative, with Mr. Lukis further clarifying and stating he will research the invoice.

### Treasurer's Report

Ms. Donoghue highlighted:

- Unreconciled cash balance at December 31, decreased from November, including a water bonds principal & interest payment and a vendor payment.  
The Dedham Savings business preferred account increased.
- Reconciled cash balance as of November 30.
- Monthly summary of reconciled cash and disbursements through November.
- Monthly summary of reconciled cash and disbursements for prior year 2021.

Ms. Donoghue explained more tax than anticipated was because of construction, and confirmed this information is posted on Basecamp.

## **Business Manager Report**

### Business Operating Reports

Mr. Marsh informed that the November financials for the calendar year YTD are posted on Basecamp.

Referring to the three columns on the screen, Mr. Marsh explained that a forecast column was added, with the hope that a surplus will be maintained. He reported December was favorable to revenue budget though an additional MWRA water purchase was made, looking to break even with revenue increased and expenses decreased. With projects delayed, hopes are to achieve progress on the capital plan in 2023.

Mr. Marsh reported the December audit is being worked on.

Mr. Healy asked about a flushing issue, and Mr. Lukis answered that the MWRA contract purchase is unassociated. Mr. Merithew asked when pension updates would be available; Mr. Marsh answered that updates are not yet available.

## **Operations Manager Report**

### Pumping and Operational Report

Mr. Locke informed that the year-end total MWRA purchase was for 162.5 million gallons, and that the daily pumpage average for the last three weeks was 3.6 million gallons.

## Main and Service Break Report

Mr. Locke stated:

- A 1” service line break had been found, the result of a grounding/corrosion/electrical issue; it has been repaired.
- On December 30, a main break was found and repaired.
- On December 22, a customer service leak was found and contractor-repaired; and a 6” main break was found and repaired.
- A 1” plastic service leak is running into a catch basin since a hose would freeze; this will be repaired.

Mr. Lukis confirmed the issue Weatherbee Drive would be a February 7 meeting agenda item.

## Update on New & Existing Projects

The Filter Media Report confirmed buildup on the GreensandPlus media, as expected and overdue. Recommendations were made, and money has been appropriated; a strategy meeting is planned.

The Security Project preconstruction meetings will begin in two weeks.

The year-end Customer Service production was almost 1,300 meters installed and 1,200 backflow tests performed.

From the DEP meeting, a corrective action compliance plan was made for mixer installation in conjunction with the pilot study.

Mr. Fox inquired about a project’s contractor change. Conversation took place regarding materials and details.

## **Executive Director Report**

### 2023 Contracts Executed

No new contracts were executed.

### Action on Classification and Compensation Plan

With the Board having had time to review the plan, Mr. Lukis offered to answer any questions. Mr. Lukis answered Mr. Lexander’s question regarding yearly review and update, referring to the charts for clarification. Discussion was held regarding the positives of the initiative, including employees receiving salary increases based on proven ability, how Customer Service is the District representation to explain processes to residents, defined position pay scales, and the HR firm usage.

Mr. Merithew motioned that the Dedham-Westwood Water Commissioners vote to approve the 2023 classification & compensation schedule and the merit-based increase matrix as presented. Further that the Executive Director be authorized to execute the plan as voted and report the

results back to the Commissioners upon finalization. The motion was seconded by Mr. Healy. With no additional discussion necessary, a roll-call vote was taken.  
Roll-Call: Messrs. Lexander, Yessaillian, Merithew, Fox, Healy, and Phillips voted Aye.  
Motion passes unanimously.

Mr. Lukis thanked the Board for their acceptance of the Classification and Compensation Plan.

Mr. Lukis confirmed he had again provided to the Members the overview of the financial estimate for improvement cost and background material, including water production cost and cost with projected Capital cost. Mr. Phillips had not had chance to review the material. Mr. Lukis stated that Weston & Sampson's treatment analysis report will be added as a next meeting agenda item. Discussion was held regarding MWRA purchase versus own supply, including having work performed, details of permitting versus request, costs and requirements, and water quality affected.

Mr. Lukis informed that the Westwood Select Board will be informed of PFAS updates remotely on February 13 and the Dedham Select Board will be informed in-person on February 16.

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

Mr. Healy asked if a litigation update may be provided. Mr. Lukis responded that Mr. Phillips has not yet been informed of this subject, but that the suit has been filed and the District is working with the representative firm.

#### **Next Meeting Dates**

Unless there is a need to meet before, beginning in March, after the February Select Board meetings, DWWD District Board meetings will be held on the first and third Tuesdays of each month.

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

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:29p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kathy Travers Reynolds  
Recording Secretary