



DEDHAM-WESTWOOD WATER DISTRICT
General Business Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 7, 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, Robert Lexander, called the meeting to order at 6:30p.m. and announced the meeting would be audio- and video-recorded.

Attendance

Robert Lexander, Chair

Gary Yessaillian, Vice-Chair (remote)

Eric Merithew, Clerk

James Fox, Member (remote)

John Healy, Member (remote)

Mark Phillips, Member (remote)

Blake Lukis, Executive Director

Bob Marsh, Business Manager

Steve Locke, Operations Manager

Absence

Pauline Donoghue, Treasurer

Roll-Call Attendance

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

Mr. Lexander confirmed a quorum present.

Approval of Minutes of February 7, 2023

Mr. Lexander called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes of February 7, 2023. A motion was made by Mr. Fox to approve the minutes as reviewed for February 7, 2023; the motion was seconded by Mr. Yessaillian. With no additional discussion necessary, a roll-call vote was taken.

Roll-Call: Messrs. Lexander, Yessaillian, Merithew, Fox, and Phillips voted Aye;

Mr. Healy abstained.

Motion passes.

Financials and Warrant

Treasurer's Report

In Ms. Donoghue's absence, Mr. Marsh presented Warrants 9-17, for February 2 to March 2 activity. Mr. Marsh noted Warrant 13 was a large project first contract payment to LeVangie Electric Company, informed that Mr. Yessaillian's question had previously been answered, and confirmed all Members approved the presented warrants. Mr. Healy thanked Mr. Yessaillian for posing the question regarding investment in equipment and manpower to solve future valve

issues. Mr. Lukis commented that the question gave opportunity to clarify for an accurate portrayal of the investment.

No financial report was given at this meeting.

Business Manager Report

Business Operating Reports

Mr. Marsh stated the year's results are good, consistent. Displaying the Profit & Loss Statement, Mr. Marsh referred to the Excess Revenue/Expenses surplus, even with taking the MWRA purchase into consideration. Representing billed water, Revenue was assisted by the commercial tier adjustment; and usage was drought-compliant. Referring to the Expense side, the result was better than budgeted; Mr. Marsh listed some favorable and unfavorable year's programs, explaining overtime usage and programs affected by Customer Service and Distribution. Mr. Marsh reported the Capital Plan is 43% spent, with projects carried over to the current year. With good results despite obstacles, Mr. Marsh attributes the year-end outcome to good teamwork.

Mr. Phillips asked if an additional operations purchase has been budgeted for this year. Mr. Marsh confirmed it has, and Mr. Lukis further detailed tracking purchase allotment.

Mr. Marsh voiced his hope for the surplus to hold and reported he will be fully disclosing all when meeting with the auditors.

Displaying the insurance renewal schedule for July, Mr. Marsh confirmed the Board approved the budget expense. Informing that the carrier has been changed, Mr. Marsh reported a significant savings to the 19% premiums has been found through Agent Corcoran & Havlin Insurance Group. Stating workmen's compensation claims affect ratings, he anticipates those rates improved this year.

Mr. Merithew asked if the same coverages were applied; Mr. Marsh confirmed coverage remains the same. Mr. Lukis explained some coverage amounts increased, but nothing was dropped; all was reviewed by the agent. A discussion was held regarding bid timing and yearly escalator.

Operations Manager Report

Pumping and Operational Report

Mr. Locke informed that pumpage for the last month has been approximately 3.6 million gallons a day, a slight increase from the average.

Mr. Locke reported the comprehensive leak detection study put out for quotes resulted in the acceptance of the lowest price in a decade, from New England Water Distribution Services; their work will begin next week. An additional bid had been received from Steve Miles.

Mr. Merithew asked if MWRA purchase has begun; Mr. Lukis confirmed it has. In response to Mr. Merithew's inquiry regarding what plants were using MWRA water, a discussion followed about supplementing, levels, which plants, and water pushing.

Mr. Locke reported a break report has been added to the pumpage report to explain increased usage. Since the last meeting, five main breaks, three 1-inch service breaks, and a gate valve leak have been found. Mr. Locke confirmed this is not atypical for February since it is the month for most breaks. He listed where the breaks were found.

Update on New & Existing Projects

Mr. Locke reported on new and existing projects:

- The Distribution Department installed an auto-flusher on Far Reach Road to flush stagnant water and improve TTHMs.
- Putting the 2004 Ford Econovan with a bad transmission out for auction resulted in \$3,800+ rather than a \$500 rebate.
- Muni-Tech Inc., a North Attleboro insurance agency dealing in accident recovery, will be utilized for DWWD property damage. The agency will request police reports and identify responsible parties and insurance carriers, the District then receiving payment from the insured. This service will save the District employees' valuable time and effort, at no risk.

Discussion took place regarding the reasons for using this service rather than completing the work in-house.

- Planning replacement of 100-year-old cast-iron pipes, Towns' paving schedules are being reviewed for replacement before paving.
 - A preconstruction meeting for Veterans Road was held, for work to begin April 17;
 - Brookfield Road and Beacon Street will begin late-April;
 - Washington Street will be included if bid pricing is favorable;
 - The Town of Dedham will be paving East Street which they have been willing to push out a year so that the District can replace the water main in advance to save costs with paving and avoid costly repairs if a break were to occur after the paving.

Mr. Fox asked about one contractor, and a discussion was held regarding contractors and repair and paving plans.

- Mr. Locke spoke with Todd Korchin regarding the paving schedule for Milk Street and spoke with Joe Flanagan on Riverside Drive;

- The MassDOT Tip Project engineering group may be utilized for the Canton Street project planned for 2026-2028. One proposal has been provided, and more discussion will be held, with a second proposal expected.

Mr. Lukis explained that a TIP Project entails having the water main placed as DWWD designed. Discussion was held regarding details, timing, distance, this project versus others, pipes age, and pressure.

- White Lodge Treatment Plant –
The filter media replacement increased from the Capital Budget amount, reporting one train out of eight out to bid, for one contract to be funded by relocating from the TTHM reduction system project since only installing mixers. All bid projects will be in-house to save on related expense.

Mr. Lukis informed that the legal team will review to save where possible. Mr. Lexander spoke about the details of replacing all media on schedule. Discussion was held regarding repair history, greensand issues, price increase, header replacement, deferment time, and schedule.

- DEP – TTHM Reduction Plan & Modification –
A meeting was held with Utility Services Group regarding mixers in in the Spring; final pricing will be provided.
- A ten-year amortized maintenance program for storage tanks plan will be provided.
- An alternate bid for the painting of Sandy Valley Road is being sought.

Executive Director Report

Contracts Signed by Executive Director

Three contracts were signed by the Executive Director:

- Weston & Sampson – High Rock pump station approved with capital projects –
Construction oversight by DWWD to reduce fee
- Bonds – PRV replacement design change for vault access gate
- Air Compressor

Mr. Lukis reported that the Ford F150 Lightning Truck production was stopped because of a battery issue. Instead, a 2023 Ford Explorer Hybrid, \$300 less expensive, will be purchased to meet the Distribution Supervisor's needs. The Ford F350 is still in the production line, Mr. Lukis informed.

Action on Authorizing Executive Director to Approve Change Orders for the Security Project

For the installation/upgrade to the camera system, one change order with three changes detailed is needed. As Executive Director, Mr. Lukis requests authorization to approve change orders for 5% of the total contract value, especially valid if additional change orders are required between scheduled Board meetings. Discussion was held regarding pricing, detailed changes, number of change orders, timing, etc.

Mr. Merithew made a motion to give the Executive Director authority to approve change orders of up to 5% of existing contracts; Mr. Healy seconded the motion. Mr. Lexander values saving time by not waiting until the next meeting for change orders, and Mr. Fox appreciates Mr. Lukis taking the initiative on the contracts.

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

Mr. Lukis confirmed he will add any change orders approved to project accounting.

Discussion of Architecture Selection Process

Regarding the Elm Street garage architect selection, Mr. Lukis received one bid response for design and construction oversight. With mention of installing a prefabricated building, concern was voiced of neighbors' opinions.

Mr. Lukis reiterated the Designer Selection Law applying for design cost and estimated construction cost of this project. Mr. Lukis outlined the process: Issue a request for qualifications for design firm, select firm based on qualifications only, interview the top three firms, rank those three firms; then pricing negotiations begin with the highest-ranking qualified firm, going down the preferred list until an agreement is made. Mr. Lukis suggested including a project-cost maximum in the posting.

A discussion was held regarding the project requirements, project perimeters, other property possibilities, RFQ-issuing timing, fees, etc. Mr. Lukis informed that a Clerk of Works must be hired if the construction costs estimate reaches \$1.5 million, which will further increase the costs of the project. He will research other potential properties to report to the Board at the next meeting, for possible proposals for procurement.

Security Upgrades

Mr. Lukis received one bid for completion of the Bridge Street fencing with added gates and the White Lodge gate; it came in almost twice as expensive as the estimate and he plans to reject the bid. The electrical contractor was willing to put together a price as there is a good amount of electrical work and he could sub out the fence work and potentially review it as a Change Order to the existing contract. Since the work is taking place at the same locations as the new fence and gates and includes the same type of work, this is a viable alternative. Mr. Lukis will have this price by the next meeting.

Update on TTHM at Far Reach Road

Mr. Lukis reported that the January TTHM results for Far Reach Road were elevated but in compliance, stating they would be out of compliance if repeated. He referenced his memo outlining the performed steps:

- February 16 - The sample showed no effect - Action items were then discussed, and an auto flusher was installed.
- February 24 – The changes were made to the operating level for the Fox Hill tanks - The MWRA Westwood booster station increased.
- February 27 - The chlorine dose was lowered to reduce TTHM production - At Bridge Street, two pumpage systems eliminated an area of usage; the change results were summarized.
- March 3 – Another sample was taken – The results will be reported to the Board.
- March 9 – Flushing is scheduled.
- March 10 – Another special sample will be taken.

Conclusion: For Far Reach Road, the goal is 70 parts per billion. The discussion will continue. Mixers will also affect TTHM reduction to stay in compliance. All steps will be documented.

With Mr. Lukis referring to the details of the sample testing as tanks level versus Far Reach Road/Bridge Street/Wells Avenue and confirming an auto flusher was installed last year to great results, discussion ensued.

Because of blending with MWRA and corrosion control concern, DEP correspondence was received regarding TTHM reduction systems additional conditions. Mr. Lukis responded regarding testing expense and timing for lead and copper sampling, forwarding documentation of prior having no impact; and requested removal.

PFAS sampling at White Lodge was 9.54 and at Bridge Street was 8.51. Mr. Merithew exclaimed at the amount of salt dumped on the highway during the last storm event.

Regarding a subpoena received for a private-entity water-quality court case the DWWD is not involved in, Mr. Lukis intends to respond through an attorney that the water quality has not changed in ten years.

Mr. Lukis informed that he would not be available for the second April meeting. Mr. Alexander suggested holding the first monthly meeting, on April 4, and assessing if the second will be needed.

Executive Session

Executive Session pursuant to Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(2) to discuss strategy for negotiations with non-union personnel, Executive Director

Mr. Alexander motioned to enter into Executive Session; Mr. Merithew seconded the motion. Roll-Call: Messrs. Alexander, Yessaillian, Merithew, Fox, Healy, and Phillips voted Aye. Motion passes unanimously.

Executive Session began at 8:00pm.

Exiting Executive Session, the **Executive Director Performance Evaluation** was addressed by Mr. Lexander requesting a motion regarding a salary market increase. Mr. Fox motioned to increase the Executive Director's salary by 4%; Mr. Healy seconded the motion, adding that the increase is based on an excellent review from the leadership of the Commission based on Mr. Lukis' performance.

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

Old/New Business*

Mr. Yessaillian asked if employee mileage compensation would be addressed. Mr. Lexander answered that an employee who uses their personal vehicle for DWWD business may request current-rate mileage reimbursement.

Mr. Lexander requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Healy to adjourn, and Mr. Yessaillian 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 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Travers Reynolds
Recording Secretary