



## **DEDHAM-WESTWOOD WATER DISTRICT General Business Meeting**

### **Hybrid Meeting**

**In person attendance: 50 Elm Street, Dedham, MA 02026**

**Tuesday, November 7, 2023 | 6:30 PM**

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

Clerk Eric Merithew called the meeting to order at 6:30p.m. and announced the meeting would be audio- and video-recorded.

Robert Lexander, Chair (remote)  
Eric Merithew, Clerk  
John Healy, Member  
Mark Phillips, Member (remote)

Blake Lukis, Executive Director  
Pauline Donoghue, Treasurer  
Steve Locke, Operations Manager

#### **Absence**

Gary Yessaillian, Vice-Chair; Louis Kustwan, Member

#### **Also Present**

Dedham Resident, Attorney William Shaw McDermott

#### **Roll-Call Attendance**

Messrs. Lexander, Merithew, Healy, and Phillips Present.  
A quorum was not present.

#### **Public Participation**

The public attendees were welcomed and asked to present questions or comments by raising their hands, for topics other than tonight's scheduled agenda topic.

#### **Approval of Minutes of October 23, 2023**

Approval of the October 23, 2023 meeting minutes will be delayed until a quorum is confirmed.

#### **Upon Constituent request, Discussion of Town of Dedham Proposed Fall Town Meeting Article 19**

Mr. Lukis reiterated that at the last Board meeting, Dedham Resident Richard Irving requested a meeting with Messrs. Lexander and Lukis; Dedham Resident, Attorney William Shaw McDermott, present tonight, also attended the meeting.

Attorney McDermott introduced himself as a resident of 580 Bridge Street in Dedham, the closest neighbor to the Bridge Street Well, and told of his since-1955 residential history. In response to being informed of other communities' water issues, Attorney McDermott researched

the situation. He referenced a *New York Times* article and mentioned knowing a President Emeritus of the American Water Works Association.

Attorney McDermott requested action of the Dedham Planning Board, which will study water conditions for implications of their planning regulations. Referring to the Dedham Town Meeting Report, Attorney McDermott informed that seven topic bullet points would be studied. He remarked on it being a positive that the DWWD is a member of the MWRA special program, acknowledging PFAS EPA regulations present challenges for addressing. He recognized that the inevitable increased program costs will result in increases for rate payers, requiring public preparation and education for potential policies.

McDermott encourages the Board to Support Dedham Town Meeting Article 19, noting Weston & Sampson could counsel on water issues. At the Dedham Mini Town Meeting, residents supported the Article; and he will ask the Dedham Select Board for their support. Attorney McDermott states the Commissioners owe a fiduciary duty to the District to serve its customers well and to educate the citizenry on any concerns.

Mr. Merithew responded that the Water Commissioners', appointed by Dedham and Westwood Select Boards, primary role is to provide quality water to the Communities. He further stated this quality comes at a cost and with projected costs, with the focus of providing the best value. Regulatory compliance and execution of processes for water quality takes priority and at a certain cost. If an option is not preferable to the District but is most effective, that option will be tried. Mr. Healy mentioned his past municipal commission membership, where the center of decisions was taxpayers.

Mr. Merithew confirmed the goals of steady communication with Community members has a direct influence on the issues the District addresses. Mr. Merithew asked in what ways Attorney McDermott sees other Dedham Boards impact the Article line items, how information will be transmitted to the DWWD to be executed. Attorney McDermott responded that the Planning Board issued a broad mandate to create a multi-family housing district; future projects are decided by water usage, having impermeable surfaces. The Board of Health educates the public on the important subject of contaminants. The Conservation Commission addresses wetlands and storm water management. Attorney McDermott feels dialogue with all Boards will assist with water usage management and with citizens being educated regarding decisions. Some discussion was held regarding wells' capacities and DWWD's customer-service focus.

Mr. Merithew confirmed Dedham Community engagement adds resources for the Dedham Commissioners. Attorney McDermott suggests a consultation to form a study group from different areas of expertise to report to the Town Meeting for the Select Board to act on and involve Commissioners to weigh in. Mr. Merithew spoke about how projects are brought to the District, and Mr. Alexander informed of the Aquifer Protection Overlay District process; Attorney McDermott informed that he is meeting with the Dedham Select Board on Thursday, November 9<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Healy asked about MWRA savings, and Mr. Lukis answered that the savings are greater than \$5 million. Mr. Lukis relayed the details of the MWRA savings and timing to secure the

District's water need. Mr. Locke spoke about the regions seeking MWRA water. Discussion was held regarding details of water production and purchase balance, proactive PFAS action, available funding, Commission coordination, and tiered rates. Mr. Lukis reiterated that rate payers are kept informed of the changes made, including the potential fee for PFAS and funding, by the Communications Coordinator, a reallocated administrative position.

Some discussion took place regarding forming a rate study committee to inform the public on funding. Attorney McDermott finds the rate study committee valuable for informing the public. Mr. Merithew stated more details on goals must be provided: 1) difficult to include Westwood Commissioners in decisions when the Board is making recommendations and 2) useful for Select Board Meetings for evaluating projects and Boards. Mr. Merithew sees merit in interactions if additional input is given to the DWWD. Mr. Alexander remarked on Mr. Merithew's eloquent stating of the District's position, acknowledging Attorney McDermott's input will be taken under advisement but that no decision will be made tonight. Mr. Alexander confirmed DWWD representation will be at the Select Board meeting to listen to advisor input.

Mr. Alexander thanked Attorney McDermott for his meeting attendance. Attorney McDermott stated he learned a lot during this meeting, and Mr. Alexander confirmed strides are being made in communication. Giving thanks, Attorney McDermott exited the meeting.

## **Financials and Warrant**

### Treasurer's Report

Ms. Donoghue presented Warrants 74-77, for October 23 to November 2 activity, adding that Warrant 75 Weston & Sampson payment was for various projects including the 50 Elm Street facility design. Mr. Merithew asked about police details and preparation of insurance documents for the main break on Gay St. caused by a vehicle striking a hydrant; Mr. Lukis answered that Muni-Tech works through the entire insurance process for the District and that all expenses have been charged and tracked to a work order in order to identify the entire claim amount. Since only two Commissioners approved the Warrants, Ms. Donoghue requested the remaining Commissioners go onto Basecamp to record their approval.

## **Business Manager Report**

### Business Operating Reports

Mr. Lukis displayed the financial information. Mr. Marsh referred to the favorable Billed Revenue, explaining it is volume-related with six of nine months unfavorable. Excess Revenue/Expenses included MWRA purchases and was still favorable. Attention was drawn to Net Personnel Costs and Operating Costs, resulting in decreased Revenue but holding on and managing expenses. Mr. Marsh stated the forecast is holding on breakeven for the year.

Mr. Marsh reported the Budget is being completed, to be presented at the next meeting. Capital meetings have been held for finetuning, to vote during the next Board meeting. The subcommittee meeting will be held before the next Board meeting. Mr. Merithew asked about the Budget recommendations tying to rates and timeline; Mr. Lukis answered that both Budgets will be completed this month, for rate increases in January.

## **Operations Manager Report**

Mr. Locke reported:

### Pumping and Operational Report

Pumpage – 3.755 million gallons per day, down from 3.851 the previous week;

MWRA usage was .401 million gallons a day, down from .413 the previous week.

### Main & Service Lines -

- Today, a contractor internally damaged the fire service at Dedham Country Polo Club -  
The hole in the pipe was found in record time, minimizing damage.
- 64 Goshen Road, Dedham - 1962 6-inch main break
- 10/29 - Gate valve leak - Repaired
- 10/26 - Contractor hit an offset Dedham main
- 10/23 - Customer service line break - Repaired
- Contractor caused a service break - Repaired
- Two Westwood service breaks
  - 1) now a hose connection
  - 2) 1-inch service break caused by contractor - Repaired

### Update on New & Existing Projects

- Sandy Valley

In preparation for the washout inspection and removal of cathartic protection wiring by USG on 11/13, the 2-million-gallon tank is being drained, currently 565 thousand gallons into the catch basin to the river system; the back is also being drained. All neighbors have been notified.

Mr. Merithew asked if any pressure issues have arisen. Mr. Locke answered that no pressure issues have been reported; the Fire Chief has been notified to inform if issues arise. USG will work complete the work on the tank and then it will be filled. The Sandy Valley booster station is still in operation. Mr. Lexander confirmed for Mr. Locke that the tank had never previously been drained, since online. Mr. Merithew mentioned the in-place program for needed tank painting. Mr. Healy asked if any power issues affected the area; Mr. Locke responded that power was lost at both plants, and the production operators stayed late to repair. Mr. Merithew asked if the generators kicked on; Mr. Locke answered that they did, but communication issues necessitated both plants manned.

- Bridge Street Security Fencing
  - All fencing and gates installed;
  - Driveway paving scheduled for after tomorrow's electrical conduit excavation;
  - Motor controllers & card reader operations and training remain.
- Customer Service Productivity

Though shorthanded because of retirement and termination, and with a transfer from the Distribution Department,

- 75 backflow tests were completed in October, and
- 135 meters were installed, including during a week when the transferred individual was in hoisting training.

Mr. Healy asked if the open position is being advertised; Mr. Locke informed that a verbal acceptance was received today from a candidate with good feedback; awaiting the background check and drug screening.

- Brookfield/Beacon/Washington Street Water Main Replacement
  - All water main placing has been completed;
  - Allyssa Jewell has communicated with residents, and positive feedback has been received;
  - All Beacon Street houses have been tied to the new main;
  - Anticipate all Brookfield Road houses will be tied into by the end of the week.

Mr. Locke listed next steps.

Mr. Locke announced that the Distribution Superintendent gave his resignation, effective November 22, in order to have a shorter commute. Six resumes have been received, including two from Union members; Messrs. Lukis, Marsh, and Locke will hold interviews next week.

### **Executive Director Report**

Mr. Lukis attempted to reach Mr. Kustwan to certify a quorum.

#### Contracts Signed by Executive Director

Mr. Lukis informed that no contract review or action is required.

#### Review and Action on White Lodge Treatment Plant Filter Media Replacement

Two quotes were received for Greensand Plus media replacement of four pressure filters at the White Lodge Treatment Plant. The pricing was over budget, which can be absorbed within this year's Capital budget since will still be under-budget. Discussion was held regarding company reviews and timeline. Mr. Lukis will post the motion garnered from the internal engineer's review on Basecamp for Board approval.

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

#### SRF Program

Mr. Lukis reminded that the SRF Program application was submitted in August; he hopes for notification in December of funding for PFAS elimination at the White Lodge Treatment Plant. All PFAS project loans are interest-free. The SRF program issues some principal forgiveness for PFAS projects applied for in 2022; if approved next year, the same may apply.

Mr. Locke informed that the final ConCom meeting regarding rerouting Blue Hill Drive to the White Lodge water main will be held in Westwood tomorrow night; Dedham has approved the project. Two options will be considered.

**Next Meeting**

The next Board meeting date will be determined.

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

Roll-Call: Messrs. Lexander, Merithew, Healy, and Phillips voted Aye.

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kathy Travers Reynolds  
Recording Secretary