



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

### **Hybrid Meeting**

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

**Tuesday, March 27, 2024 | 6:30 PM**

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

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

#### **Attendance**

Mark Phillips, Chair

Eric Merithew, Vice-Chair

Louis Kustwan, Clerk

Gary Yessaillian, Member

Robert Lexander, Member

Blake Lukis, Executive Director & Assistant Treasurer

Bob Marsh, Business Manager

Pauline Donoghue, Treasurer

Steve Locke, Operations Manager

#### **Absence**

John Healy, Member

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

Messrs. Phillips, Merithew, Kustwan, Yessaillian, Lexander Present

Mr. Phillips confirmed a quorum present.

#### **Public Participation**

No public participants were present to address the Board.

#### **Approval of Minutes of February 21, 2024 and March 14, 2024**

Mr. Phillips called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes of February 21, 2024. Mr. Lukis confirmed the Members are in receipt of updated minutes. A motion was made by Mr. Lexander to approve the minutes as reviewed for February 21, 2024; Mr. Merithew seconded the motion. With no additional discussion necessary, a roll-call vote was taken.

Roll-Call: Messrs. Phillips, Merithew, Kustwan, and Lexander voted Aye; Mr. Yessaillian abstained. Motion passed.

Mr. Phillips requested for a motion to approve the meeting minutes of March 14, 2024. A motion was made by Mr. Lexander to approve the minutes as reviewed for March 14, 2024; Mr. Merithew seconded the motion. With no additional discussion necessary, a roll-call vote was taken.

Roll-Call: Messrs. Phillips, Merithew, Yessaillian, and Lexander voted Aye; Mr. Kustwan abstained. Motion passed.

## **Financials and Warrant**

### Treasurer's Report

Ms. Donoghue presented Warrants 14-22, for February 20<sup>th</sup> to March 21<sup>st</sup> activity, informing that Warrants 20 and 22 have been outlined, since include more expensive items. No follow-up questions were posed by the Commissioners.

## **Business Manager Report**

### Business Operating Reports

Mr. Marsh referred to Mr. Lukis' shared screen to review the year-end results. He highlighted that a loss is reported for YTD Actual, since the Dedham Donated Capital fixed asset was received late, causing P&L to report as over-achieved. If not for the MWRA expenditure because of lack of billing and increased summer usage, the outcome would be favorable. Overall, the result was a good holding to budget.

Mr. Marsh informed that general and liability insurance bids were received for March through February. The budget line represents returned unspent budget. Carriers were changed in 2022, and the same carrier was chosen again because of their below-market bid and their level of service. Appraisals were performed to determine value for the umbrella policy including major property, equipment, automobiles, liability, workmen's compensation, etc.

Mr. Phillips posed a question regarding value, and Mr. Marsh answered that inflationary factors affect improved property.

Mr. Marsh reviewed the health insurance cost history, which is below-average. Small-market bids have been received, with the focus on maintaining a low rate. The unspent budgeted funds revert to the District at year-end. Online system Corporate-360 is used by employees. Mr. Marsh stated the Board's medical insurance budget was achieved.

Mr. Phillips asked about the number of employees who receive healthcare coverage; Mr. Marsh answered that 34 employees are eligible and 20 have joined. Mr. Phillips asked how the cost increases are allocated; Mr. Marsh informed that the District covers 75% of the cost, to the employee's 25%. Mr. Kustwan suggested the District might consider the Massachusetts Health Connector. Mr. Lukis responded that municipalities go through the Group Insurance Commission that requires a three-year lock-in; but he is unsure how the cost-share would be formulated, suggesting the union may be consulted in the future.

## **Operations Manager Report**

Mr. Locke reported:

### Pumping and Operational Report

- Pumpage – The past five weeks' readings have consistently lowered, from 3.623 to 3.446 million gallons per day. This lowest reading is the bottom-quarter of the last 24 years, one of six lowest years in 24 years.

MWRA average daily usage increased this past week because of the White Lodge filter bank offline and reducing flow.

Reduction from 3.623 to 3.446 is directly attributable to the month-long main break at Brook Street and Clearwater Drive.

- Main & Service Lines

- All Dedham breaks were caused by contractors, allowing for quick repair.

Mr. Lexander asked about one break, and Mr. Locke described the rainy night circumstances.

- 35 Meadow Street circa-1895 iron spaghetti-service break - ~400 feet to two houses – Still running while determining solution.

Discussion was held regarding a similar circumstance, possible extension with shutoff, community's service-leak history, indemnification agreement, leak ahead of meter, service to first and second houses, private-way easement, contractor quotes, timeframe, and hydrants.

The Board suggested a letter be sent to the homeowners to inform of service details.

### Update on New & Existing Projects

- Customer Service
  - Department is shorthanded – End-of-month results will be provided at the next meeting.
  - Lines inventory as of Monday, the 25<sup>th</sup>, was 6,522 lines verified, 51.3%.
- The plotter scanner was sold on Municibid.
- Brookfield/Beacon/Washington Project
  - Westwood will begin paving in April, allowing the District to bypass trench paving.
    - RFS will pave trenches on Washington.
- Hydrant Monitoring Leak Detection Sensors
  - Two quotes received
    - Great pricing for winning bid with maintenance contract.
      - Will begin with older pipes in April.

Discussion took place regarding details of the 650 real-time Bluetooth sensors. Expansion from 50-100 now will depend on results.

- 128 Crossing Pipe Installation Rerouting
  - The pipe was not included in the 1952 easement.
  - The pipe was rerouted ~300 feet.
    - Has been pressure-tested and chlorinated.
      - Samples have been good.
      - Will be tied-in Monday.
- University Avenue Well 5
  - Will be rehabilitated.
    - Testing shows 70% of original specific capacity has been lost.
      - Motor and casing must be replaced.
- Verizon Fios
  - Installed at White Lodge
    - Integrated into District network

Regarding Well 5, Mr. Merithew asked if the capacity loss was gradual and when the well was last tested; Mr. Locke answered that the last well rehab was in 2010.

- Dedham Country Polo
  - 300-foot 8” water main extension to Country Club Lane was installed.
    - Pressure-tested and chlorinated
    - Hydrant in service completed
    - Private-way residents may sign an easement.
- Common Street in Dedham
  - Culvert needed
    - No other way to feed area

Residents received letters regarding the service line and inventory project scheduled inspections which began March 11<sup>th</sup>, to average 90 per week. No negative reports have been received.

- Filter Media Replacement at White Lodge
  - Started
    - One bank is off.
    - Media has been removed, ~200 bags.
    - Parts will be received April 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup>.
      - Then, refilling will be done.

Mr. Locke confirmed for Mr. Phillips that the project has been contracted.

- Appraisal for fair-market value of land for above-ground booster station with generator at 1446 High Street
  - Conducted March 7<sup>th</sup>
  - Mr. Lukis spoke with attorney, and next steps are approved.
    - A surveyor will stake easement and building.
      - For agreement to begin design

Responding to Mr. Merithew’s question, Mr. Lukis described Aquarion Water Company’s process.

**Executive Director Report**

Contracts Signed by ED

Mr. Lukis informed that no contracts have been signed since the last Board meeting.

Action on Hydrant Flow Test Section of the Rules and Regulations

Mr. Lukis informed that the rules and regulations regarding the hydrant flow test section are not on Basecamp. The \$300 rate is reasonable, with an added \$100 refundable fee. When results are received, the contractor will receive a \$100 rebate as incentive.

Mr. Merithew read the Motion regarding the District rules and regulations:

The Dedham-Westwood Water Commissioners vote to amend the Rules and Regulations as presented herewith, including:

- Schedule C, 10, Fee for Hydrant Flow/Fire Pump Tests
- Section 13, H, Public Fire Hydrants

**Schedule C, 10, Fee for Hydrant Flow/Fire Pump Tests**

Current:

Flow Tests. There will be an up-front charge of \$300.00 for three days of required published notifications. The Water District must receive payment at least two weeks in advance of the date scheduled for the flow test. (Effective 8/29/06).

Revised:

Hydrant Flow/Fire Pump Test (each) Effective 8/29/06, adjusted 3/27/24 \$400.00\*

\* Upon submission of hydrant flow test results, the requestor will receive a \$100 refund of the test fee. Failure to submit flow test results to the District within two weeks of the test date will result in forfeiture of the \$100 refund and prohibit future tests.

**Section 13, H, Public Fire Hydrants**

Current:

Inspections and tests of public hydrants will be made by the District at convenient times and reasonable intervals. The conductor of the test will be charged the amount to reimburse the Dedham-Westwood Water District set forth in Schedule B, Paragraph 10 for public notification costs incurred. A written notice to the Water District is required two weeks prior to the flow test,

including a payment in accordance with the fee schedule. The Water District, in its sole discretion, may defer all water flow tests depending on system conditions. (Approved 8/29/06)

Revised:

The District will inspect and test public hydrants at convenient times and reasonable intervals between April 1 and October 31. After this time frame, tests/inspections are conducted on a case-by-case basis, weather permitting.

In order for the District to properly conduct public outreach efforts, payment must be received at least two weeks before the test's scheduled date.

Upon completion of the test, the requestor must submit a hydrant flow test report to the District within two weeks of the test date. Failure to submit flow test results to the District within two weeks from the test date will result in forfeiture of the \$100 refund and prohibit future tests.

The District, in its sole discretion, may defer all water flow tests based on system and weather conditions.

Mr. Lexander seconded the motion. With no additional discussion necessary, a roll-call vote was taken.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

Update on Timing of Short-Term Borrowing

Mr. Lukis informed that the maximizing of bonds is being reviewed, for Board approval when borrowing in April or May for four to five projects under one bond. The bond anticipation note was explained. Long-term bonds are for 20-25 years. Funds should be in the bank account in July.

Mr. Merithew asked a question regarding interest payments; Mr. Lukis explained the budgeted interest. Mr. Marsh further described the cash flow need.

Mr. Lukis informed that the financial policy will be brought to the Board for approval. When money is borrowed, the Moody Rating Agency is used; the more policies being followed, the better the District rating.

Update on Garage Cost Estimate

Mr. Lukis reiterated that the proposed garage appropriation is included in this year's Capital Budget. The project cost is higher than anticipated since the preliminary estimate was based on plan but more drainage work is found to be required.

Referring to the cost-estimate received by each Member, discussion included the positives of the project and need to go forward now, the cost estimate's 85-90% design, offsets/grants, no

anticipated employee growth, large equipment, equipment deterioration, site safety & security, traffic flow, water pooling, and fencing.

Mr. Lukis stated that a letter will be sent to the Town of Dedham, informing that the District will be moving forward with the project; the notification will reiterate that the Town counsel is of the opinion that the District is not subject to local permitting and building requirements.

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

The intended-use plan for the White Lodge Treatment Plant upgrades has been finalized, utilizing some grant funding and 20-year interest-free loans. Mr. Lukis responded to Mr. Merithew's request that the plan be posted for review by informing that a press release will be publicized. Town of Westwood zoning requirements and bylaws do not apply to this project.

Monday, the exterior shell project begins, having waited until spring. No-issue, better long-term maintenance PVC materials will be used. The drive-thru will be torn out and standard double-hung windows added. A drive-up box with safe inside has been ordered.

A Weston & Sampson task order for the GIS system will address accuracy and updating of horizontal only. Posting will be made to Basecamp. Discussion was held regarding the GIS system details.

Mr. Merithew suggested subcommittee models reviewed for revenue generating for bonding before final garage funding. Mr. Lukis stated a meeting will be planned for the subcommittee.

**Next Meeting**

The next District Board hybrid meetings are scheduled for Thursday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, and Wednesday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, at 7pm.

Mr. Phillips requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Lexander to adjourn the meeting; the motion was seconded by Mr. Yessaillian, and a roll-call vote was taken. Roll-Call: Messrs. Phillips, Merithew, Kustwan, Yessaillian, and Lexander voted Aye. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kathy Travers Reynolds  
Recording Secretary