



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

### **Hybrid Meeting**

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

**Thursday, April 25, 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 (remote)

Robert Lexander, Member

Blake Lukis, Executive Director & Assistant Treasurer

Bob Marsh, Business Manager

Pauline Donoghue, Treasurer

Steve Locke, Operations Manager

#### **Absence**

John Healy, Member

Hearing an apparent hack into the meeting, the ‘attendee’ was removed.

#### **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 March 27, 2024**

Mr. Phillips requested for a motion to approve the meeting minutes of March 27, 2024. A motion was made by Mr. Lexander to approve the minutes as reviewed for March 27, 2024; Mr. Merithew 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.

#### **Action on Bond Articles**

Article 1 – Water Main Replacement Projects

Article 2 – Vehicle Storage Facility

Article 3 – Greensand Media Replacement at WLTP

## Article 4 – Aeration Tower Media Replacement at WLTP

Mr. Lukis introduced the actions for the bond articles discussed at the last Board meeting. Ms. Donoghue reviewed the schedule for the projects' short-term bonding:

- UniBank will be engaged after the audit;
- Moody's will be contacted to place a rating;
- The rating agency will contact the Bond Council;
- Final changes will be made by June 7<sup>th</sup>, for printing;
- Official statement will be made by June 18<sup>th</sup>;
- UniBank sale for best rates will take place by June 26<sup>th</sup>;

Mr. Lukis explained that this is a bond-anticipation note, with interest being paid but without a rate lock until 2025.

- Funds should be received by the end of July.

The District's last rating was an Aa2 in 2014. Annual filings are without rating. The reasoning for one bond was explained.

Mr. Marsh relayed that the Financial Policy draft has been posted to Basecamp. The policy creation shows good business practices; he outlined why the policy is needed for the rating agency. It is a good risk to maintain a bond rating. The policy was summarized, and additional policies in-place were mentioned. Mr. Marsh stated that, if the policy is input, a vote will take place at the next meeting. He outlined the reasons to have a District Financial Policy.

Discussion took place regarding policy details and history, cash balances, current loans, and bonds.

Regarding the long-range plan for the cash reserve balance, Mr. Lukis asked the Commissioners if a percentage or the present fixed amount is suggested. He requested receiving comments to address at the next Board meeting.

Mr. Lukis introduced the articles and motions, summarizing and answering questions. Mr. Merithew read each of the articles, and Mr. Phillips called for individual motions:

Article 1: To see if the District will appropriate \$4,631,400, or any other amount, to pay costs of the following water main replacement projects, including the payment of all costs incidental and related thereto:

\$3,526,188 – Replacement of approximately 3,850 linear feet of 8-inch cast iron water main (Circa 1927) with 12-inch cement lined ductile iron (CLDI) water main on East Street in Dedham from Endicott Circle to the Westwood Town line.

\$558,112 – Replacement of approximately 450 linear feet of 2.5-inch iron water main with 8-inch CLDI and the addition of 700 feet of new 8-inch

water main on Martin Bates Street in Dedham from Chestnut Street to highland Street.

\$547,100 – Replacement of approximately 830 linear feet of 12-inch cast iron water main with new 12-inch CLDI water main.

to determine whether this amount shall be raised by borrowing or otherwise, or to take any other action relative thereto; and that to meet this appropriation, the District Treasurer, with the approval of the Water Commissioners, is authorized to borrow said amount under and pursuant to G.L. c. 44, §8(5) or any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the District therefor. The amounts associated with each of the projects described above are necessarily estimates, and more may be expended on one project and less on another, so long as, in the judgment of the Water Commissioners, each of the projects described above can be completed within the total amount appropriated for such projects by this vote.

Motion 1, moved by Mr. Lexander:

That the District appropriates \$4,631,400, to pay costs of the following water main replacement projects, including the payment of all costs incidental and related thereto:

\$3,526,188 – Replacement of approximately 3,850 linear feet of 8-inch cast iron water main (Circa 1927) with 12-inch cement lined ductile iron (CLDI) water main on East Street in Dedham from Endicott Circle to the Westwood Town line.

\$558,112 – Replacement of approximately 450 linear feet of 2.5-inch iron water main with 8-inch CLDI and the addition of 700 feet of new 8-inch water main on Martin Bates Street in Dedham from Chestnut Street to highland Street.

\$547,100 – Replacement of approximately 830 linear feet of 12-inch cast iron water main with new 12-inch CLDI water main.

and that to meet this appropriation, the District Treasurer, with the approval of the Water Commissioners, is authorized to borrow said amount under and pursuant to G.L. c. 44, §8(5) or any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the District therefor. The amounts associated with each of the projects described above are necessarily estimates, and more may be expended on one project and less on another, so long as, in the judgment of the Water Commissioners, each of the projects described above can be completed within the total amount appropriated for such projects by this vote.

Mr. Kustwan 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.

Article 2: To see if the District will appropriate \$3,095,500, or any other amount, to pay costs of constructing a vehicle storage facility of approximately 4,200 square feet and making associated site improvements including retaining walls, drainage improvements, parking and driveway improvements on the District's property at 50 Elm Street in Dedham; to determine whether this amount shall be raised by borrowing or otherwise, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Motion 2, moved by Mr. Lexander:

That the District appropriates \$3,095,500 to pay costs of constructing a vehicle storage facility of approximately 4,200 square feet, and making associated site improvements including retaining walls, drainage improvements, parking and driveway improvements on the District's property at 50 Elm Street in Dedham, and that to meet this appropriation, the District Treasurer, with the approval of the Water Commissioners, is authorized to borrow said amount under and pursuant to G.L. c. 44, §7(1) or any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the District therefor.

Mr. Merithew 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.

Article 3: To see if the District will appropriate \$794,700, or any other amount, to pay costs of replacing greensand filter media, anthracite, gravel, and associated appurtenances within the 8 filters at the Whitelodge Water Treatment Facility, and for the payment of all other costs incidental and related thereto; to determine whether this amount shall be raised by borrowing or otherwise, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Motion 3, moved by Mr. Lexander:

That the District appropriates \$794,700 to pay costs of replacing greensand filter media, anthracite, gravel, and associated appurtenances within the 8 filters at the Whitelodge Water Treatment Facility, and for the payment of all other costs incidental and related thereto, and that to meet this appropriation, the District Treasurer, with the approval of the Water Commissioners, is authorized to borrow said amount under and pursuant to G.L. c. 44, §8(4) or any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the District therefor.

Mr. Kustwan 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.

Article 4: To see if the District will appropriate \$840,000 or any other amount, to pay costs of replacing of the aeration tower media within the two air towers at the Whitelodge Water Treatment Facility, and for the payment of all other costs incidental and related thereto; to determine whether this amount shall be raised by borrowing or otherwise, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Motion 4, moved by Mr. Lexander:

That the District appropriates \$840,000 or any other amount, to pay costs of replacing of the aeration tower media within the two air towers at the Whitelodge Water Treatment Facility, and for the payment of all other costs incidental and related thereto, and that to meet this appropriation, the District Treasurer, with the approval of the Water Commissioners, is authorized to borrow said amount under and pursuant to G.L. c. 44, §8(4) or any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the District therefor.

Mr. Kustwan 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.

Commission Members thanked the Administration Members for the work completed, and Mr. Lukis thanked the Board for their support of the projects.

## **Financials and Warrant**

### Treasurer's Report

Ms. Donoghue presented Warrants 23-30, for March 25<sup>th</sup> to April 22<sup>nd</sup> activity, informing that large amounts in each warrant were noted.

The prior cash report as of January, down from December, was forwarded to Members.

Ms. Donoghue highlighted cash receipts for February 2024:

- Unreconciled cash balance at February 29, 2024, decreased from January 2024;
- Reconciled cash balance at January 2024;
- Monthly summary of reconciled cash and disbursements through year-end December 31, 2023.

As anticipated, the on-hand cash balance is reducing.

## **Business Manager Report**

### Business Operating Reports

Mr. Marsh informed that the completed January and February financial statements have been uploaded to Basecamp. January-to-March billed revenue was greater than the prior year and budget. The audit is going well, with no significant findings or adjustments, on-schedule to

review with the Board in June. The long-range plan is being updated for the sub-committee and for website posting.

## **Operations Manager Report**

Mr. Locke reported:

### Pumping and Operational Report

Pumpage – Pumpage has been consistent, not increased.

Well 5 is completed, and Wells 5 & 7 are being backwashed on the filter bank.

Main & Service Lines –

Leak Detection - No leaks have been found.

Mr. Lexander commented on the hydrant leak detection being positive, and Mr. Locke informed that the Northeastern University fall co-op student is interested in taking the project lead role.

### Update on New & Existing Projects

- Customer Service
  - A position is open;
  - Employees have had additional training.

Discussion was held regarding Customer Service, leak detection & pumpage history, and leaks' nature.

Regarding the line break reported at the last meeting, Mr. Merithew asked if a policy is in place for when a location has had multiple leaks. Mr. Lukis responded that additional could be recorded in the District Rules and Regulations concerning the number of times a service is repaired. In response to Mr. Yessaillian's question, Mr. Locke described the line's material.

Discussion took place regarding this case and another.

Mr. Lexander offered kudos to Mr. Locke for drafting the waiver regarding Meadow Street repair if damage is reported to the remainder of the service.

Mr. Phillips asked about THMs and water purchase; Mr. Locke responded that THMs are in-compliance though high at Far Reach Road. Previously a 99 reading, Getty Gas has been high, probably attributable to rain; monthly samplings are scheduled.

Mr. Lukis listed location readings:

East Dedham Fire Station - 17  
Dedham Medical – 89  
Far Reach Road – 99  
Getty Gas – 67

Mr. Lexander asked for details regarding the auto-flusher. Messrs. Lukis & Locke responded, and discussion ensued. Mr. Lukis reiterated that readings are in-compliance.

Mr. Lukis reported that bi-weekly meetings are held with Weston & Sampson. The Bridge Street plant task order for the second round of piloting is being prepared. Mr. Lukis described the two options presented and suggested the holistic approach to address not only PFAS.

Discussion covered details regarding THMs, PFAS, benefits, and timing.

Mr. Locke offered that the short-term solution would be to shut down the Bridge Street plant to clean and clear the well. Mr. Lexander made suggestions; and discussion then included project sequencing, timing, air towers, clear water tank, etc.

Mr. Merithew asked if an October deadline is still in place for lead services. Mr. Lukis confirmed the deadline since more than 100 appointments per week have taken place the past few weeks. The Board will be updated at a future meeting, including of Weston & Sampson's statistics.

Mr. Locke reported that purchased MWRA water in the presented financials to-February was approximately \$100K per month. Mr. Lukis added that the \$550K annual budget was created when the mixers and vents were installed; not seeing positive effect, and without aeration, a different approach will be used in 2025.

Mr. Merithew asked about White Lodge downtime; Mr. Lukis answered that a site visit will be made next week to determine shutdown timing for once or for a few smaller periods.

Details of the White Lodge downtime were discussed.

## **Executive Director Report**

### Contracts Signed by ED

Two contracts were signed by the Executive Director since the last meeting:

- 1) Raybern Consulting's contract is for assistance with the procurement of a new utility billing system. The firm will demonstrate potential systems and deep-dive into the current system with a third-party independent to confirm all is operating appropriately, while transitioning to a new system; potentially, issues not previously caught may be found.
- 2) The Weston & Sampson task order is for the replacement of the Burgess Avenue pump station at 1446 High Street's permanent easement for a new above-ground pump station. Next steps were listed towards the new owner's approval. The survey encompasses all.

Mr. Phillips asked if Aquarion will be making reimbursement for this contract cost; Mr. Lukis answered that they would not, because the work would be done regardless. Mr. Lukis added that if an agreement is entered into with Aquarion, it would include their paying a specific portion of the District's costs.

Mr. Lukis informed that the PFAS finalized regulations state five years are given to be found in-compliance, time needed for White Lodge. WBUR is interested in learning of the District's proactive steps toward compliance.

Discussion was held regarding regulations' implementation.

#### PFAS Regulation and Settlement Update

Able to report on the DuPont PFAS settlement for having contaminated sources since it is now public information, Mr. Lukis informed that Action Fund claims are due by June 16<sup>th</sup> and that the Special Needs Fund for funds already allocated for PFAS remediation only, has a July 31<sup>st</sup> deadline for 10% of the total settlement. Questions were answered regarding submission details and coverage.

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

Messrs. Lukis and Marsh met with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation regarding their winter operations. Technology has been implemented so sodium usage has been reduced but cannot be eliminated because of public safety concerns. Meetings with the Mass DOT will continue and involve other parties, such as towns and developers.

The Dedham resident who had previously met with the Board sent emails to Westwood entities regarding advocating for water quality. Mr. Lukis had provided requested information to the resident. Some discussion took place regarding formation of a Dedham committee.

Mr. Locke asked about a party's interest in the Dedham Endicott land; Mr. Merithew answered that nothing has come before the Dedham Planning Board.

Mr. Lukis posed a question to the Members regarding rate structure, since the District is one of few communities to have different rate structures for residential and non-residential customers - Is the Board interested in looking into only the model of all customers having the same rate structure? Mr. Kustwan asked of the percentage driven from businesses; Mr. Lukis answered that 95% are residential customers. Mr. Merithew asked about the volume; Mr. Lukis responded that residents do not use 95% of the provided water, figures he can provide to the Board. For wastewater, Westwood has a three-tier structure without differentiation and Dedham has two rate structures with the same number of tiers, where residential rates are less than commercial rates. The only two communities in the area that treat Non-residential properties differently are the Towns of Wellesley and Sharon, with their separate commercial tier systems. Mr. Lukis asked if he should perform an analysis for one or three models.

Mr. Kustwan does not see the advantage of raising residents' costs to benefit businesses. Mr. Yessaillian asked of the benefits to splitting tax rates, and Mr. Merithew questioned if this is the conventional wisdom within certain communities; Mr. Lukis answered that he believes this process is easier because analysis models are different. Mr. Yessaillian asked what the benefit is to the District for a one-rate structure; Mr. Lukis stated it is easier to run one annual rate analysis, and described the process.

The rate structure was further discussed.

Mr. Lukis informed that single-stream could eliminate funding infrastructure needs without a special feed to reduce first-tier volume for reduced-income and fixed-income population, with a different tier structure. No motion is requested, just discussion for a consensus that looking at one model is sufficient, possibly to bring forward to vote after the Board has had time to review and then to hold a public meeting to inform of impacts for the next fiscal year.

Discussion was held regarding other communities' processes, industry-standard, and details for residents and businesses.

Mr. Lukis relayed that mandatory water restrictions will be implemented next year, regardless of weather conditions. Summer usage would have to be reduced so no spikes are seen. Mr. Lukis sees this as another reason to change the water-rate structure.

Answering questions, Mr. Lukis informed that DEP regulations are driving the mandatory water restrictions instituted in the Water Management Act, also affecting the MWRA by-town implementation. Environmentalists' opinion regarding inventory is that high rates of rain does not make an effect, as witnessed in other states. Mr. Lexander described Boston's water treatment, which then flows into the ocean so does not allow for recovery. Mr. Lukis stated the District will define restrictions, and Mr. Locke described the MWRA interaction regarding their reservoirs.

History of water restrictions was discussed.

Mr. Lukis listed the work completed to the office building exterior and the next steps, including a safe drop-box.

Mr. Lukis displayed how Weston & Sampson will breakout the GIS task order into three tasks to breakup funding; updating will be tracked. This will be discussed at the next Board meeting. Mr. Phillips asked about additional manpower, and Mr. Lukis listed who would be assigned.

Mr. Phillips asked if any discussions have been held regarding the planned District garage. Mr. Lukis answered that neighbors have not been reengaged, since awaiting the civil plan based on the located District sewer services. The completed plan will then be shown to the neighbors.

**Next Meeting**

The next District Board hybrid meetings are scheduled for Wednesday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, and Wednesday, June 12<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Phillips requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Yessaillian to adjourn the meeting; the motion was seconded by Mr. Lexander, 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 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kathy Travers Reynolds  
Recording Secretary