



DEDHAM-WESTWOOD WATER DISTRICT General Business Meeting

Hybrid Meeting

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

Wednesday, May 15, 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 (remote)

John Healy, Member (remote)

Gary Yessaillian, Member (remote)

Robert Lexander, Member

Blake Lukis, Executive Director & Assistant Treasurer

Bob Marsh, Business Manager

Steve Locke, Operations Manager

Also in Attendance

Antoine and Mary Chehwan, Owners of 32 Orchard Street in Dedham

Absence

Pauline Donoghue, Treasurer

Roll-Call Attendance

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

Mr. Phillips confirmed a quorum present.

Public Participation

No public participants were present to address the Board.

Approval of Minutes of April 25, 2024

Mr. Phillips requested for a motion to approve the meeting minutes of April 25, 2024. A motion was made by Mr. Lexander to approve the minutes as reviewed for April 25, 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. Healy Abstained.

Motion passed.

Financials and Warrant

Treasurer's Report

For Ms. Donoghue, Mr. Marsh presented Warrants 31-36 for activity from April 25 to May 9, 2024; he listed the large checks under Warrant 31. The two Commissioners who have not yet approved the warrants will do so.

Mr. Marsh highlighted cash receipts:

- Reconciled cash balance to February 29, 2024;
- Unreconciled cash balance at March 31, 2024;
- Monthly summary of reconciled cash and disbursements through December 31, 2023;
- Monthly summary of reconciled cash and disbursements for prior year 2022.

Mr. Marsh commented that the level of cash is where it is expected to be, still in-line, with projects doing well for planned spending.

Business Manager Report

Business Operating Reports

Mr. Marsh referred to the displayed Profit & Loss statement to-March 31, 2024 and highlighted Total Year, noting risks and opportunities. Monthly meetings are held to review. The YTD Budget Variance through March includes Billed Water Revenues above plan attributable to the rate increase, though volume is down. Continuing, Mr. Marsh reported that User Charges and Investment Income are increased. With Treasurer Pauline Donoghue managing funds well, Mr. Marsh confirmed all revenue categories are increased. The bottom line shows an excess of Revenue over Expenses, with a District profit in the big-billing months. A loss is anticipated, unfavorable to Plan, as MWRA for water treatment is a potential risk. Last year's plan was met, so favorable reporting is anticipated for this year.

Mr. Merithew asked if the Operating Costs were attributable to anything in particular; Mr. Marsh referred to a few larger categories, and Mr. Lukis explained the Routine Maintenance line item. Seeing no reduction in THMs, MWRA water is still used for blending.

Mr. Phillips asked if any concern with water production regarding the programmed Capital work; Mr. Lukis answered that the White Lodge closings for PFAS updates is a concern, and Mr. Locke added the concern of the Bridge Street Clearwell cleaning shutdown a week in June.

Mr. Marsh displayed the overall Capital projects underway.

Mr. Healy voiced appreciation of the process.

Mr. Marsh added that the long-range plan is being formulated.

Mr. Kustwan joined the meeting.

Action on Financial Policy

Mr. Lukis reported that one change has been made to the Financial Policy, which will be uploaded to Basecamp; this relates to the year-end cash level a percentage rather than a flat number. The justification for this change is so the Board is not required to vote yearly on the cash amount. Mr. Phillips asked if this change was made at the recommendation of the Bond Counsel or for flexibility; Mr. Lukis confirmed the change was so the Board would not have to vote yearly. Mr. Marsh added that the cash amount will be a percentage of the billed revenue; he and Mr. Lukis further explained the reasoning.

Some discussion was held before Mr. Phillips called for a motion to approve the Financial Policy. Mr. Merithew read the motion: The Dedham-Westwood Water Commissioners vote to approve the Financial Policy, dated May 15, 2024.

Mr. Lexander seconded the motion, and a roll-call vote was taken.

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

Operations Manager Report

Mr. Locke stated he gave the report in advance and reported:

Pumping and Operational Report

Pumpage – Pumpage has increased but fairly consistently this past week, with flushing of 2.5 million gallons per week.

Main & Service Lines – Because of a leak, a break was scheduled in Dedham Square at 7pm last night so businesses were not disrupted. The lateral 8-inch crack was at 554 Washington Street.

Leak Detection – Taking place in Westwood around the Foxhill tank

Update on New & Existing Projects

- Engineer Ashley Dunn has created a schedule to document when all the capital work will take place in order to ensure we stay organized especially as many of the projects impact the production department and ensuring adequate staff availability is vital to the success of the projects.
- Customer Service – A background check and drug screening will be conducted for the selected Backflow Technician new-hire – The Candidate's experience and designations were highlighted.

Mr. Phillips asked Mr. Locke if he is comfortable with the project managers' management of the planned projects. Mr. Locke relayed that the schedule is not being overly pushed; this year and the beginning of next is a good schedule.

Regarding the Dedham Square pipe repair, Mr. Healy thanked Mr. Locke for the report, voicing appreciation of the pro-active superlative service delivered to employees, businesses, and residents, to keep service going with safety considered first.

Public Participation

Since members of the public walked into the meeting, Mr. Lukis recommended to the Chair that we open up the Public Participation portion of the meeting to provide an opportunity for the members to speak. Seeing no objections, Mr. Phillips agreed and opened public participation.

Mr. Phillips requested any members of the public who would like to comment to please state their name and address. Antoine and Mary Chehwan, of 32 Orchard Street in Dedham, joined the meeting in-person. Mr. Phillips asked the Participants to keep comments to five minutes' length.

Ms. Chehwan referred to an email she received on Friday regarding the District bypassing the Town of Dedham zoning, regulations, and codes to go through the State for construction of the garage at 50 Elm Street. Ms. Chehwan also referred to the March 14, 2024 Board Meeting that she attended via Zoom. She reiterated her concerns with the existing facility that exists next to her property and has concerns that with the addition of a new garage that this will increase. If answers to her concerns are not forthcoming from the District, the Chehwans will seek legal counsel.

Mr. Phillips confirmed the Board has been transparent regarding the building plans and has communicated them to the neighbors, following protocol. He offered that the Board will listen to and consider any suggested plan. Mr. Lukis informed that the decision to seek State rather than Town approval was made in 2022 and was done so working in conjunction with both District Counsel and Dedham Town Counsel.

Discussion took place regarding the details of a fence on a retaining wall on District property, with 8-foot arborvitaes behind the fence – The requested 16-foot plants cannot be sourced. Mr. Lukis also pointed out that the updated plan forwarded to the neighbors shows the snow storage area no longer exists as the resident had mentioned it in their comments.

Mr. Lukis confirmed the Town of Dedham is aware the District is exempt from local zoning bylaws. Mr. Chehwan requested a description of the fence positioning, and Mr. Lukis gave details of the grade-raise, retaining wall, fence, and plantings. Mr. Merithew relayed that other sites for the garage had been considered, and Mr. Lukis added that it was found not financially sensible to sell the property. Based on this, Mr. Merithew confirmed the relayed plan is the best option. Mr. Lukis offered an onsite visit to describe the plan. Mr. Merithew offered another meeting might be set, to include representation,

for the Chehwans to present other options. Mr. Lukis will schedule a meeting with the Chehwans.

Mr. and Mrs. Chehwan thanked the Board and exited the meeting.

Executive Director Report

Contracts Signed by ED

No contracts were signed by the Executive Director since the last meeting:

Mr. Lukis informed that a Town of Dedham Water Resources Advisory Committee meeting will be held June 11th; he will forward information to the Commissioners for their attendance. He added that a Dedham resident regularly requests a copy of District public records.

Action on GIS Update Task Order

Mr. Lukis informed that the GIS task order is broken into thirds, including building a business practice, updating GIS, and ongoing support to-100 updates in a year; he detailed the sections. Mr. Lukis would like to move forward with the first two pieces. Questions were answered and further detail was given. A grant application has been submitted, and the recently purchased transit van cost was \$10K less than budgeted - Mr. Lukis relayed this information as a means of balancing spending vs. savings. Further discussion was held.

Mr. Phillips requested a motion for the GIS task order. Mr. Merithew read the motion: The Dedham-Westwood Water Commissioners vote to approve Task Order No. 148 to provide general GIS services in support of the District's operations between Weston & Sampson Engineers, Inc. and the Dedham-Westwood Water District for the contract price of \$48,000. Further, that the Executive Director be authorized to sign the agreement.

Mr. Healy moved to accept this motion; Mr. Yessaillian seconded the motion, and a roll-call vote was taken.

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

Action on SRF Funding for WLTP PFAS Remediation Project

Mr. Lukis requested the Commission vote prior to the June 30th deadline, to move forward. The revised cost estimate was sent to the Commissioners and displayed on-screen. Large items causing increase were highlighted: Electrical FSB, PFAS process, greensand filter piping replacement, increased contingency, and MWRA purchase. Questions were answered and details provided. Mr. Lukis relayed that it appears the additional cost would be covered and that increased-cost justification will be submitted.

Mr. Phillips requested a motion for the SRF funding. Mr. Merithew read the motion:

That the District appropriates \$13,024,000 to pay costs of designing and constructing a new PFAS treatment facility at the White Lodge Treatment Plant, which shall include, without limitation, construction of a new treatment building, new filters, PFAS removal media and 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. All, or any portion, of the amount authorized to be borrowed by this vote may be obtained through the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust (the “Trust”) and in that regard, any appropriate official of the District is authorized to execute and deliver any and all documents and agreements that may be required by the Trust, or by the Department of Environmental Protection of The Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Mr. Lexander moved to accept this motion; Mr. Healy seconded the motion, and a roll-call vote was taken.

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

Mr. Lukis informed Mr. Kustwan that Clerk certifications must be signed; arrangements will be made.

Regarding the planned garage project, Mr. Lukis relayed that the second Planning Board meeting was held last night and the project was approved with conditions. Westwood's Town counsel does not agree the District does not have to comply with local zoning requirements. The District having to go through Westwood’s Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals will be discussed in tonight's Executive Session. Minor plan changes have been made. Details regarding frontage were discussed.

Mr. Lukis informed that the Bond Counsel requires a list of Board meetings for the calendar year. Members agreed the middle Wednesday of each month works best.

Old/New Business

Mr. Healy stated that Norfolk County Commissioners have a significant amount of ARPA money to be disbursed to towns. Mr. Healy suggests each Town's Select Board Chair and Vice-Chair be asked to approach the County for funds towards PFAS treatment or any remediation worth pursuing. Mr. Lukis commented on his communication with Norfolk County, being informed the District is not eligible for funding, that coverage is through the towns served. Mr. Lukis will ask the Towns' Administrator and Manager if plans are in-line for this money.

Mr. Phillips motioned to enter into Executive Session, adjourning the open meeting. Mr. Merithew seconded the motion, and a roll-call vote was taken.

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

Executive Session

Pursuant to MGL c.30A Sec. 21(a) Exemption 3 - To discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares.

Next Meeting

The next District Board hybrid meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 12th, at 7pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Travers Reynolds
Recording Secretary