



DEDHAM-WESTWOOD WATER DISTRICT

General Business Meeting

Virtual Meeting

Wednesday, November 13, 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 (remote)

Gary Yessaillian, Member (remote)

Robert Lexander, Member

Blake Lukis, Executive Director & Assistant Treasurer

Bob Marsh, Business Manager

Pauline Donoghue, Treasurer (remote)

Steve Locke, Operations Manager

Absence

Louis Kustwan, Clerk; John Healy, Member

Roll-Call Attendance

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

Public Participation

No public participants were present to address the Board.

Approval of Minutes for October 16, 2024

Mr. Phillips requested a motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 16, 2024. A motion was made by Mr. Lexander to approve the meeting minutes as reviewed for October 16, 2024;

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

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

Motion passed unanimously.

Review and Action on 2025 Operating Budget

- Review 2025 Operating budget as reviewed by the Operating Budget Subcommittee in their public meeting held on November 5, 2024 and recommended to be brought forward to full Board of Water Commissioners for action.

Mr. Lukis informed that the revised motions related to the 2025 Operating Budget have been posted to Basecamp. The Operating Budget Finance Sub-Committee met November 15th and voted to recommend the budget to the Board for review and consideration. Mr. Lukis shared his screen to display the line items for the \$13,052,879 budget, outlining the 2025 budget assumptions. Revenue requires a 7.4% increase from 2024; the rate structure beginning

February 1st will change based on review. Additional Revenue bullet points as well as those for Labor, Benefits, and Other Expenses were explained and discussed.

Mr. Lukis displayed the Profit & Loss Statement for the budget and forecast. He explained that the largest percent increase is for depreciation. Mr. Merithew asked for explanation of the impact of the anticipated rate increase. Mr. Lukis shared how Personnel, Operating, and Depreciation expenses were broken down for the Sub-Committee:

- Personnel Budget - Increased 4.58% from FY24 to FY25 (includes personnel, health benefits, etc.) which represents 1.8% of projected FY25 rate increase.
- Operating Budget - Increased 8.57% from FY24 to FY25, which represents 2.8% of projected FY25 rate increase.
- Depreciation - Increased 16.25% from FY24 to FY25, which represents 3.6% of projected rate increase

The Operating Budget includes additional MWRA water purchase of \$250K; if this expense was removed, the projected rate increase could be reduced by ~2.1%. Other expenses were static or increased by a nominal amount.

In response to Mr. Lexander's statement that MWRA water usage is anticipated, Mr. Lukis confirmed the expense will be posted as described. The principal was reduced by 2.5%. The reduction in interest income must be reflected in the 7.4% rate increase.

Mr. Yessaillian asked how the average rate increase will impact an average user bill. Mr. Lukis stated this information will be made available when the proposed rate increases will be voted on, at the January meeting.

Mr. Locke informed that, based on analysis performed, he requests hiring two additional field staff for DEP-recommended work; he described the multiple processes requiring additional staff. A project necessitating additional staff is for small mains, as Weston & Sampson's Capital Improvement report identified; savings from using in-house additional staff is anticipated. Mr. Yessaillian asked if the proposal is reflected in the Operating Expenses; Mr. Lukis stated that this additional personnel expense is not reflected, but that the cost of new-hires and benefits for three-quarters of 2025 would add approximately \$150,000 to the proposed budget. Mr. Yessaillian stated the addition of positions will benefit the District's relationship with the Union, and that the resource pool is useful. Mr. Locke added that the iron services replacement project is another requiring additional staff. Mr. Lukis confirmed that the positions could be eliminated through attrition if work decreases. The Operating Expense number will be updated. Mr. Locke confirmed for Mr. Phillips that the contractor cost is greater than the employees' cost. Mr. Lukis added that the largest potential for cost project reduction is not being included in the budget when not out to bid.

Discussion took place regarding temporary mains, past mains projects, future steps, and design costs.

Mr. Lukis added that hired staff must be able to gain the D2 license within 6 to 12 months. For Mr. Phillips, Mr. Locke stated four foremen would act as supervisors to new-hires. Answering Mr. Phillips, Mr. Lexander described the Union-required treatment.

Past to current licensing and types were discussed.

Mr. Merithew asked about the impact to the rate increase; Mr. Lukis answered that the anticipated impact will be approximately 1%.

Mr. Lukis read the recommended Motion 1: The Dedham-Westwood Water Commissioners vote to approve the proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Operating, Maintenance, and Debt Services Budget as reviewed and recommended by the Operating Budget Subcommittee in their publicly held meeting of November 05, 2024, and amended in the amount of \$13,202,879.

Mr. Merithew motioned to move the motion forward as amended and read by Mr. Lukis, and Mr. Yessaillian seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

Review and Action on 2025 Capital Budget

- Review 2025 Capital budget as reviewed and modified by Capital Budget Subcommittee in their public meeting held on November 12, 2024 and recommended to be brought forward to full Board of Water Commissioners for action.

Mr. Lukis reported that the Capital Budget Sub-Committee met October 12th and recommended the full \$4,552,237 budget. Sharing his screen, he reviewed and explained budget highlights of Routine Capital Items and Special Projects including Water Source & Supply, Water Treatment & Quality, and Miscellaneous Special Projects. Routine Capital Items includes a change to cell based meter radios as the pilot test with the AMI system did not yield satisfactory results to continue on that path. Discussion included cellular meter transmitter and AMI reading, and radio systems beneficial integration.

Continuing with Routine Capital Items, Mr. Lukis listed the District's current vehicles and proposes a backhoe upgrade and a new Customer Service transit van.

Mr. Healy had informed Mr. Lukis that he agrees with the proposed motion, to move forward.

Mr. Phillips motioned to accept Motion 2, which he read aloud: The Dedham-Westwood Water Commissioners vote to approve the proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Capital Budget as reviewed and recommended by the Capital Budget Subcommittee in their publicly held meeting of November 12, 2024, in the amount of \$4,553,237.

Mr. Lexander seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Lukis added that rates will be brought forward in subsequent meetings.

Financials and Warrant

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Donoghue presented Warrants 75-81 for activity from October 17th to November 7th, 2024, acknowledging all Commissioners reviewed. The bond anticipation note update was received October 22nd. Large amounts in Warrants 79 and 81 were noted.

Business Manager Report

Business Operating Reports

Mr. Marsh stated he has no updates to provide tonight since his Team has been reconciling budgets the last 60 days.

Operations Manager Report

Mr. Locke reported:

Pumping and Operational Report

Pumpage – Pumpage is decreased. Reviewing pumpage for the last 20 years, output is still higher than historically, which will hopefully be reflected with revenue. MWRA water usage has been reduced as usage has dropped.

Update on New & Existing Projects

- Cellular Meters
One cellular meter was installed at the Norfolk County Correctional Center. Scheduling coordination was necessary for prison shutdown, to accomplish the installation. Presented issues were worked through. Monitoring will continue to catch levels of flow and create more revenue.
- MWRA & High Rock Booster Station
Insulation and epoxy will be completed this week or early next.
- Green Sand Filter
Media removal is scheduled to begin November 20th, from the drain, for filters not yet done.
- Air Towers
This project is estimated to start in January.
- East Street
The East Street neighborhood Zoom meeting is being held tomorrow night, regarding the work at the rotary to begin November 19th. Mr. Phillips asked if Commissioners have volunteered to attend; Messrs. Merithew and Lexander will attend. Mr. Lukis described the Zoom meeting process.

- Highland Street

Waiting on bacteria testing results to move forward with service connections.

Mr. Phillips asked about the jail meter; Mr. Locke answered that the meter had not failed, rather that a new ultrasonic meter should present a return on investment as seen at another District location.

Meter types and operation, eliminating compound meters, accuracy, and fire service were discussed.

Executive Director Report

Contracts Signed by ED

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

Discussion on Lead Service Line Replacements

Mr. Lukis shared the list of confirmed lead services, informing that the District's inventory was submitted November 16th. For the six customer-side and six District-side services requiring replacement, some financial services are available. Mr. Lukis recommends funding the replacement of all 12 lead services. The MWRA offers a ten-year interest-free loan for District service replacements. If the MWRA is informed that both sides will be eliminated, a 25% grant with 75% interest-free loan will be available. For Mr. Lexander, Mr. Lukis confirmed that ownership after repair would not change. The on-call contractor will be utilized. The displayed spreadsheet showed that of the six District-responsible systems, four are galvanized so must also be replaced since connect to lead. If a lead service is disturbed, the owner must be notified and be provided a filter for six months. When a meter is changed on the lead systems, an additional six months of filters must be provided. If a main breaks, creating a lead disturbance, six months of filters must be provided. Additional lead services may be found; all notification letters have been mailed. Mr. Phillips asked of the replacement cost for the six customer-side lines. Mr. Lukis stated cost estimates are not yet available, and Mr. Locke informed that the contractor is working prices for the six with their situation variables.

Discussion of the lead service replacements took place.

Mr. Lukis explained that he is requesting a consensus to be able to relay when customers are telephoned. Mr. Locke commented on the EPA roll-out taking place in November rather than in the spring. Weston & Sampson is reviewing the service-scanning issue. Mr. Lukis informed of the customer options for scheduling appointments or for self-submission. Responding to Mr. Lexander's suggestion that a Customer Service employee visit customers to instruct on how to determine service type, Mr. Lukis informed that the District created a YouTube video with step-by-step instructions, an offered onsite visit, and District website links to the EPA website. The District's YouTube video is being used across the State to help other utilities and to provide public education.

Mr. Lukis asked if the Board is willing to move forward with the MWRA application to fund these replacements, to be able to inform District customers; before action is taken, the Board will be notified of pricing and a vote will be required. Mr. Phillips asked if there has been a

precedent on who replaces customer lead services; Mr. Lukis relayed that, per the regulators and MWRA, it is in the best interest to move forward, the reason the MWRA is offering the grant when replacing both sides.

Discussion was held regarding service line replacement funding.

Mr. Merithew offered that customer notification should be done on an individual communication basis rather than website posting. Mr. Lukis informed that the customer must sign a release regarding ownership. Mr. Merithew asked if landscape, etc. must be addressed when a service is replaced; Mr. Lukis confirmed that the all-inclusive cost would include landscape loam and seed. Mr. Merithew asked if driveways and patios will be a concern; Mr. Locke answered that he knows of one District-side service under a driveway. Mr. Lukis stated a thorough investigation of properties will be done in advance and approached on a case-by-case basis. Answering Mr. Yessaillian's inquiry, Mr. Lukis described the two ways to filter drinking water.

Action on Authorization for Executive Director to Sign Contracts and Change Orders

Mr. Lukis highlighted Motion 3, worded exactly as last year's motion, ensuring monthly updates will continue to be provided.

Mr. Merithew motioned to accept as read: The Dedham-Westwood Water Commissioners vote to provide the Executive Director with the authority to sign contracts, task orders and Change Orders that have already been approved through the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget process. The signature authority shall only be for contracts and/or Task Orders that are within the approved budget amount and that are of a total amount of \$100,000 or less, up to \$1,000,000 in aggregate. The signature authority shall only be for change orders that do not exceed 5% of the original contract amount. Any change order greater than 5%, or contract greater than \$100,000, above the approved budgeted amount, or a new unbudgeted item shall require approval of the Board for execution.

Mr. Alexander seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

Action on Professional Engineer Services for the Design of the Milk Street Water Main Replacement

Mr. Lukis described the Project, noting reduced final-paving costs and informing that a new consultant will be used. Moving forward with this one-time service agreement for this Project is requested.

Mr. Merithew motioned for: The Dedham-Westwood Water Commissioners vote to approve the Professional Engineering Services Agreement for the Design, Bidding, and Construction Administration Services for the Replacement of the Milk Street water main replacement in Westwood between Environmental Partners and the Dedham-Westwood Water District for the Not to Exceed price of \$112,800. Further, that the Executive Director be authorized to sign the agreement.

Mr. Alexander seconded the motion.

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

Action on Task Order 156

- Engineering Services for Bidding and Construction Administration of the PFAS treatment upgrade at the White Lodge Treatment Plant

Mr. Lukis described and broke down what the task order includes. He notified that a second quote was received today for the resident engineer to act as the OPM; the number was a little less but recommends the OPM not be a full-time resident engineer, rather should be associated with the design firm. If discussion with the quoting firm results in additional motion language, that can be added later. The Project is anticipated to take 1.5 years, at less than 10% of the total construction value.

Mr. Merithew asked how Motion 6 is affected by voting on Motion 5. Mr. Lukis explained that Motion 6 is as-is, describing the reasoning and process as well as the OPM fit, adding that the scope of services are above and beyond that of with Weston & Sampson. He described the State's process requirements and gave a project example, listing what is included in the pricing. Providing clarification to Mr. Merithew, Mr. Lukis stated the difference and described the process.

A discussion was then held.

Mr. Lukis confirmed that the construction administration costs will be discussed when the project is bid and that the SRF still covers all. Mr. Merithew asked if Mr. Lukis is familiar with any PFAS projects to this scale bid and off from their engineered budgets; Mr. Lukis stated he does not know one way or the other.

Mr. Merithew posed the motion, reading: The Dedham-Westwood Water Commissioners vote to approve Task Order No. 156 for the Professional Engineering Services Agreement for the for the PFAS treatment upgrade at the White Lodge Treatment Plant between Weston & Sampson Engineers, Inc. and the Dedham-Westwood Water District for the Not to Exceed price of \$1,378,700. Further, that the Executive Director be authorized to sign the agreement.

Mr. Lexander seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

Action on Owner's Project Manager Services for the PFAS treatment upgrade at the White Lodge Treatment Plant

Mr. Merithew made a motion, reading: The Dedham-Westwood Water Commissioners vote to approve the Owner's Project Manager Services for the PFAS treatment upgrade at the White Lodge Treatment Plant between Tighe & Bond Engineers and the Dedham-Westwood Water District for the Not to Exceed price of \$251,000. Further, that the Executive Director be authorized to sign the agreement.

Mr. Lexander seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

Action on DWWD Storage Facility and Site improvements

Mr. Lukis shared his screen, displaying bids for the Storage Facility Project. Bidding opened October 24th, and 13 competitive bids were received within a price range. The original spring appropriation fell short. The 2025 Capital Budget includes an additional \$500K to fund the full Project and any potential change orders. RGB Architects vetted the low bidder, Seaver Construction, to confirm the company has completed projects of similar size and scope. RGB and the District part-time Engineer Ashley Dunn met with Seaver Construction to confirm the work scope is understood and to learn more about their qualifications. RGB recommends the award to Seaver Construction, the lowest responsible bidder. Mr. Phillips asked if the District specifies the Project sub-contractors; Mr. Lukis explained that the Massachusetts procurement laws are specific for the sub-contractor trades bidding process for this Chapter 149, vertical construction. The Project scope includes more than just the building, it also includes drainage, parking, safety and security upgrades to the entire office site.

Mr. Lukis reported that he spoke with the Town of Dedham administration, receiving confirmation that the District is not expected to go before their board but given recommendation to bring future projects through the Dedham Planning Board. Regarding the architect's reference checks for the low bidder, Mr. Merithew suggested Ms. Dunn might follow up on some aspects. Mr. Lukis stated Ms. Dunn will be the OPM for the Project. Mr. Merithew asked if the Executive Director will sign the contractor agreement after all insurance and bonding information is added; Mr. Lukis stated the package must be complete before signed. Mr. Phillips asked about Mr. Lukis' communication with Seaver Construction; Mr. Lukis has been in contact with the construction firm. Once the contract is signed and submittals started, a start date will be determined; a pre-construction meeting is still needed.

Mr. Merithew motioned for: The Dedham-Westwood Water Commissioners vote to approve the Storage Facility and Site improvements in Dedham, MA with Seaver Construction Inc. of Woburn, MA in the amount of \$3,380,499.00. Further that the Executive Director be authorized to execute the contract

Mr. Lexander seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

Old/New Business

No additional business was brought before the Board.

Next Meeting

The next District Board hybrid meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 18th, at 6:30pm.

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. Phillips, and a roll-call vote was taken.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Travers Reynolds
Recording Secretary