



DEDHAM-WESTWOOD WATER DISTRICT

General Business Meeting

Hybrid Meeting

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

Wednesday, April 16, 2025 | 6:30 PM

Announcement of the Audio and/or Video Recording

The Chair, Eric Merithew, called the meeting to order at 6:44p.m. and announced the meeting would be audio- and video-recorded.

Attendance

Eric Merithew, Chair

Louis Kustwan, Vice-Chair (remote)

Jennifer Perkins, Member (remote)

Robert Lexander, Member

Blake Lukis, Executive Director & Assistant Treasurer

Bob Marsh, Business Manager

Pauline Donoghue, Treasurer (remote)

Steve Locke, Operations Manager

Absence

John Healy, Clerk

Mark Phillips, Member

Roll-Call Attendance

Mr. Merithew, Ms. Perkins, and Mr. Lexander Present.

Mr. Merithew recognized that a quorum was not present at this time.

Public Participation

No public participants were present to address the Board.

Approval of Minutes for March 17, 2025

Mr. Merithew stated the March 17th meeting minutes' acceptance vote will be delayed until quorum attendance.

Financials and Warrant

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Donoghue confirmed the approval request for Warrants 23-29 March 20th to April 10th activity was forwarded. Each warrant's large items are highlighted, including the MWRA debt payment due May 15th.

Ms. Donoghue informed that the Treasurer's Monthly Cash Flow Report is abbreviated since it is unreconciled, though all transacted has been recorded.

- Unreconciled cash report at March 31st, decreased from prior report, because of projects' BAN fund spending.
- The February report has been left for comparison.

Monday, Dedham Savings Bank interest rate has increased to 4%; South Shore Bank will match this rate. This week, Bank of Canton agreed to 4.25% interest for the next 90 days, without locking in as a CD. A South Shore Bank 4.25% CD will be considered. Money Market and CD rates have been passing those of treasury notes.

Mr. Merithew asked about the BAN funds, and Ms. Donoghue answered that a reduction in cash is the result of project funding. Ms. Donoghue added that BAN funds include interest earned of \$15-\$18K monthly. Ms. Perkins asked for explanation of a BAN fund, and Ms. Donoghue explained that a BAN is an anticipation note from October for projects, with the intention of it becoming a bond-payable by next October.

Mr. Merithew asked if there are any concerns with FDIC bank insurance changes; Ms. Donoghue answered that the banks used by the District must carry the added protection of Depositors Insurance Fund insurance in addition to FDIC insurance. Bank ratings are reviewed quarterly, how it was found that Dedham Savings Bank's rating dropped from Green to Yellow, which Ms. Donoghue explained.

Business Manager Report

Business Operating Reports

Mr. Marsh relayed that the audits are still being performed, for presentation to the Board in June. Open enrollment has been completed without issues. A meeting with The Rockland Trust Company fund manager is scheduled, to review post-employment benefits, for reporting at the next Board meeting. All funds are profitable, without issue.

Mr. Merithew asked about the new audit firm. Mr. Marsh answered that the firm is performing a regular municipal audit, requesting information in unfamiliar forms but proceeding well.

Operations Manager Report

Mr. Locke relayed:

Pumping and Operational Report

Pumpage – This past week, pumpage read slightly short of 4M gallons, basically staying close to what has been.

Update on New & Existing Projects

Completed Projects

- MWRA Booster Station & High Rock Booster Station epoxy floor completed
- East Street Railroad Bridge completed

Ongoing Projects

- ASRs - 17.3% unaccounted for, was 19.4% last year, a 2% reduction, still well on residential gallons per capita per day, under 65 RGPCD.
- White Lodge Media Project progressing well - All media removed from the second tower
- Water Main Project - A meeting will be held tomorrow night regarding Phase 2 - Norwood Street rotary water main installation completed - Passed pressure test - Services will be transferred next week, after disinfection and chlorination done - The East Street temporary bypass is being used.
- Stoughton Road Water Storage Tank - Progressing well - Issues resolved
- Garage Construction - Working on filtration system - Trees removed
- Hybrid Leak Monitoring - Grant received - 550 to reduce UAW
- Lead Service Line Inventory - Cold calling customers who have not responded will begin April 26th.
- Leak Detection - Beginning next week

Upcoming Projects

- Milk Street, Westwood - Under design - Receiving proposals
- Riverside Drive, Dedham - Two Water main quotes for next year - Well rehabilitation out for bid

Ms. Perkins asked if the leak detection monitoring is just on hydrants or if there are other ways to monitor leakage, and whether the cost is completely covered by the grant. Mr. Locke answered that a company will perform a walk survey which is fairly close to real-time monitoring. Mr. Locke added that manpower has been lacking; the Board authorized two

hirings, one of two technicians has returned from workmen's compensation leave, and the intern is working out well.

Mr. Merithew asked of the number of East Street customers that will be on bypass. Mr. Locke answered that the number is less than for the first half of the street, at approximately 40-50 homes; Mr. Lukis added that the accurate number could be determined.

Mr. Lukis acknowledged that Mr. Lukis joined the meeting approximately ten minutes ago, securing a quorum.

Approval of Minutes for March 17, 2025

Mr. Merithew requested a motion to approve the meeting minutes of March 17, 2025. A motion was made by Mr. Lexander to approve the meeting minutes as reviewed for March 17, 2025; Ms. Perkins seconded the motion. With no discussion necessary, a roll-call vote was taken.

Roll-Call: Mr. Merithew, Mr. Kustwan, Ms. Perkins, and Mr. Lexander voted Aye.

Motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director Report

Contracts Signed by ED

Mr. Lukis informed that one January contract was not included on the agenda - Last year's Muni-Link media billing software upgrade integration cost was included in this year's budget. The process is moving forward. Raybern Utility Solutions, a consultant for the RFP process, is providing continued support for input confirmation during the billing software switch. A savings has been seen from the first Muni-Link contract because of their history with Raybern.

Mr. Lukis confirmed the change order drafts are recorded on the building project change order tracking spreadsheet, with weekly progress meetings held.

- The retaining wall and site work change order has been finalized; this order was based on storm water change during the permitting process, as reported at the last Board meeting. The process of finding unsuitable material was described; the addition of suitable material and excavation were necessary.
- Eversource changed how they do metering, using a different socket with meter disconnect.
- Fencing changes and additional excavation for access agreement with 30 Elm Street neighbor
- Received credit for included pay station (drop box), since already have a newly purchased one.
- Getting contractor estimates for two sidewalk areas not previously proposed

To-date, change orders total approximately 1.6% of the Project, with most excavation completed.

Mr. Merithew asked if meters would have been done anyway. Mr. Lukis explained that the additional cost will be offset by a credit for the meter socket; backup will be provided for the original and new pricing.

The spreadsheet will be updated and bolded when a change order is solidified.

Mr. Locke asked if the contract has an allowed cushion; Mr. Lukis answered that the budget does, with additional funding available - For Mr. Locke, Mr. Lukis approximated this percentage at 5.

Action on Access License Agreement for 30 Orchard Street

Mr. Lukis reminded that the Board advised consulting legal counsel to determine the best path forward for an access agreement with the 30 Orchard Street homeowners. Counsel's recommendation was to move forward with a property access license agreement, which the homeowners are agreeable to. Final vote is required.

Mr. Lexander read and moved the motion: The Dedham-Westwood Water Commissioners vote to authorize the Executive Director to negotiate and enter into a long-term property access license agreement with the property owners of 30 Elm Street in Dedham, MA 02026 for access to 330 square feet on the Southeast corner of the Districts property located at 50 Elm Street Dedham, Ma 02026. This access is requested to provide better vehicle movements and access to their garage. There is no compensation associated with this access agreement.

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

Roll-Call: Mr. Merithew, Mr. Kustwan, Ms. Perkins, and Mr. Lexander voted Aye.

Motion passed unanimously.

Action on Well Redevelopment and Repair Annual Services Contract

The three-year annual services contract was recently put to bid through consulting engineer Tighe & Bond. The attached letter recommends a firm for award, as well as the other bids received. The chosen contractor has a positive history with the District. Mr. Lukis suggests moving forward with the consultant's recommendation.

- White Lodge's well field has 5 wells, and 1 is rehabilitated each year.
- Bridge Street's well field has 11 wells, and all 11 are rehabilitated yearly because of conditions.

Mr. Lexander read and moved the motion: The Dedham-Westwood Water Commissioners vote to approve the Well Redevelopment and Repair Services contract with Maher Services of Reading, MA, for a three-year term and a total contract amount of \$299,610.00. Further that the Executive Director be authorized to execute the contract.

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

Roll-Call: Mr. Merithew, Mr. Kustwan, Ms. Perkins, and Mr. Lexander voted Aye.

Motion passed unanimously.

Old/New Business

Mr. Lukis shared that there have been some issues with the Districts Legal Council, Ned Richardson Messrs. Lukis and Locke met with Attorney Richardson, and agreed to part ways at the end of 2025. A RFP will be created for legal services proposals. Richardson has operated on

an hourly fee rather than against a retainer. An advance RFP copy will be provided to the Board.

Mr. Lexander requested that it be relayed to Attorney Richardson that his hard work for the District over the years has been appreciated. Mr. Kustwan asked if the reason for severing the Richardson relationship is because of performance; Mr. Lukis answered that performance has been a concern, but that the change is good timing for both sides. Ms. Perkins asked if Mr. Lukis is familiar with other attorneys with this specialized industry knowledge. Mr. Lukis informed that he is aware of a few attorneys who are familiar with municipal needs, though those representing Dedham and Westwood will not be considered; recommendations will be sought.

Ms. Perkins asked Mr. Lukis if the property right of way at 1446 High Street is moving forward. Mr. Lukis answered that a final agreement with the homeowners has been reached and will be signed later in the process, with homeowner compensation as approved by the Board. The signed copies will be forwarded to the Planning Board and Zoning Board for the permit process.

Ms. Perkins asked about last week's Select Board meeting, since she missed it. Mr. Lukis informed that last week's meetings covering water restrictions went well. Questions were answered to educate the Select Board and the public about all conditions. The Drought Task Force reduced restrictions to Level 2. Mr. Locke added that members of the public have voiced discontent with the restrictions. Mr. Lukis informed that the District has a seat on the Massachusetts Water Works Association task force, so he is able to garner and relay information, which is also posted on the Association website. Mr. Merithew relayed that exemptions were discussed at the Dedham meeting and asked if any resident feedback has been received; Mr. Locke stated many calls were received last week.

Ms. Perkins asked if any uncertainty of the EPA guidelines is felt; Mr. Lukis answered that no impacts have been seen, but that the question has been asked of him. Massachusetts instituted PFAS regulation before the EPA. Dedham representatives have asked about Federal grants and requested they be contacted if grants are not received. Some are of the idea that Federal grant funding will cease. The District has continued to receive service line inventory funding. In response to Mr. Merithew's inquiry, Mr. Lukis confirmed that Massachusetts would fill the gap if EPA funding changes.

No new Business was brought before the Board.

Next Meeting

Mr. Lukis informed that PFAS upgrade bidding results will be determined May 8th; Weston & Sampson's award letter will be ready May 16th, possibly available the 15th. Mr. Lukis reminded that contractors able to bid are those already prequalified from approximately 65 proposals reviewed between General contractor and all the filed sub-contractors. He will follow up regarding the next meeting date once other Members are contacted.

Mr. Locke informed that the Dana Farber Cancer Institute has been contacted regarding a possible staging area on University Avenue for the project; their board of trustees will be consulted.

Mr. Merithew requested a meeting adjournment motion. Mr. Lexander motioned to adjourn the meeting; the motion was seconded by Ms. Perkins, and a roll-call vote was taken.

Roll-Call: Mr. Merithew, Mr. Kustwan, Ms. Perkins, and Mr. Lexander voted Aye.

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Travers Reynolds
Recording Secretary