



DEDHAM-WESTWOOD WATER DISTRICT

General Business Meeting

Hybrid Meeting

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

Thursday, January 15, 2026 | 6:30 PM

Announcement of the Audio and/or Video Recording

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

Attendance

Eric Merithew, Chair

Louis Kustwan, Vice-Chair

John Healy, Clerk (remote)

Jennifer Perkins, Member

Robert Lexander, Member

Mark Phillips, Member

Blake Lukis, Executive Director & Assistant Treasurer

Bob Marsh, Business Manager

Pauline Donoghue, Treasurer (remote)

Steve Locke, Operations Manager

Roll-Call Attendance

Mr. Phillips, Mr. Kustwan, Mr. Lexander, Mr. Healy, and Mr. Merithew Present.

A quorum was confirmed.

Public Participation

One person was online but did not respond when asked to unmute themselves to address the Board.

Ms. Perkins joined the meeting in-person.

Approval of Minutes for December 9, 2025

Mr. Merithew requested a motion to approve the meeting minutes of December 9, 2025. A motion was made by Mr. Lexander to approve the meeting minutes as reviewed for December 9, 2025;

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

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

Motion passed unanimously.

Installation of 2026 Board Officers

Mr. Lukis shared the 2026 Slate of Officers, explaining how the Board has an historical practice of rotating the position of Chair from Community to Community. Last year, Mr. Merithew from Dedham served in the role, so Vice-Chair Lou Kustwan from Westwood becomes Chair; and all follow:

John Healy - Vice-Chair
Jen Perkins - Clerk
Bob Lexander, Mark Phillips, Eric Merithew – Members
Blake Lukis – Executive Director & Assistant Treasurer
Pauline Donoghue – Treasurer
Kathy Reynolds – Recording Secretary

Mr. Merithew requested a motion to approve the Slate of Officers for 2026. Mr. Lexander motioned to accept the DWWD Commissioners Slate of Officers for 2026; Mr. Phillips seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Lukis relayed that all Commissioners' contact information was included in the forwarded packet.

Discussion and Action on Water Rate Increase

Mr. Lukis shared his *Dedham Westwood Water District Water Rate* presentation.

The proposed water rate increase of 5.5% will affect the base meter charge water consumption tiers, private fire services, and low-income rate.

Giving an increase overview, the effects of the inflation were listed.

A graph displayed the proposed increase monthly meter charge.

Tables detailed the proposed increase to consumption tiers and private fire services.

By-tiers residential rate history chart showed 2018 to proposed 2026.

Answering how the proposed increase will affect most residents, yearly/monthly basis current versus 2026 proposed rates were reported.

Mr. Phillips asked how the District compares to neighboring cities and towns; Mr. Lukis shared:

Displayed, 2023 versus 2024 annual water charges for communities receiving services from the MWRA, showing that the District falls in the middle range of rates based on usage of 120 cubic feet, less than most DWWD users use per year; with an average increase rate of 5%.

Mr. Kustwan suggested the presentation be posted on the District website for residents' information. Ms. Perkins suggested the presented chart be included with the rate-increase notice, to show residents are receiving a good value for their money. Mr. Lexander informed that 100 cubic feet is 750 gallons. Mr. Merithew commented on most users being at 2024 pricing, due to

the tier-structure changes. Mr. Locke relayed that the District had been the most expensive of area communities years ago and worked hard to reduce its rates.

Discussion was held regarding other town's rate increases, increasing incrementally rather than at-once, what the increase revenue is used for, monetary assistance, etc.

Mr. Lexander read the motion: The Dedham-Westwood Water Commissioners vote to amend the Schedule of Water Rates as presented herewith as Schedule A, Metered Rates; Schedule B, Fire Protection Rates; Schedule C, Other Charges including Access and Change of Use Fees; and Schedule D, Meter Charges. Amended rates shall be effective on all bills issued on or after February 1, 2026.

SCHEDULE OF WATER RATES

Applicable to All Classes of Metered Service

Metered Rates

Schedule A

Approved 01/15/2026

Effective 02/01/2026

In accordance with the water rate setting policy as adopted December 20, 2013.

Availability

This rate is available to all customers located on the mains of the District in the corporate limits of the Towns of Dedham and Westwood, Massachusetts, for all purposes except fire protection, subject to Rules and Regulations of the District.

Minimum Charges

The minimum charge is a fixed charge and applies in addition to and regardless of the amount of usage. This charge recovers some of the fixed costs of the district including, but not limited to, installing, maintaining, and replacing water meters; automatic meter reading equipment; administrative and billing costs associated with billing each meter monthly. Minimum charges will be made to each customer for each meter, based on the meter size, as follows:

Meter Size	Minimum Monthly Charge
5/8"	\$10.92
3/4"	\$10.92
1"	\$18.09
1 1/2"	\$36.18
2"	\$57.88
3"	\$108.59
4"	\$180.71
6"	\$361.95
8"	\$578.44

Water Rates (all users)

Tier	Cost per Hundred Cubic Feet	Consumption
Tier 1	\$5.70	Up to and including 6 Hundred Cubic Feet
Tier 2	\$8.03	7 up to and including 20 Hundred Cubic Feet
Tier 3	\$11.33	21 up to and including 99 Hundred Cubic Feet
Tier 4	\$15.97	Over 99 Hundred Cubic Feet

Low Income Rate: Only **residential** customers with **5/8” meters** only may qualify for this rate if they meet the income eligibility requirements in effect with their natural gas or electric service provider for rate assistance. Copies of those utility bills may be required periodically. The low-income rate is a \$5.49 monthly service fee along with the regular water usage charge through the water rate tier structure. [adopted 6/21/11]

Alternative Water Source Supply Rate: A customer desiring water service from a water supply source other than that provided through the DWWD supplied mains may be accommodated with the following conditions.

The DWWD will agree to the arrangement at its sole discretion upon written application with explanation as to why the Alternative Supply is requested.

The Alternative Water Supplier must already have water main facilities adjacent to the property to be supplied and must agree to supply water with DWWD as the customer of record.

The DWWD will purchase the water directly from the Alternative Water Supplier and will in turn bill the customer for all water purchased at the Alternate Water Supplier billed rate. Additionally, the DWWD will bill the customer for all water metered by the Alternative Water Supplier an additional amount of 50% of the current lowest DWWD rate for the same customer class.

All other direct charges to the DWWD, including but not limited to meter testing, meter replacement and backflow device testing, imposed by the Alternative Water Supplier to the DWWD shall be passed on to the customer 1.25 times the bill amount.

Portions of the DWWD Rules and Regulations may be applicable to customers supplied under the Alternate Water Supplier Rate. Any similar Rules and Regulations applicable to water service imposed by the Alternative Water Supplier on the DWWD will be required in turn of the customer. There may be instances where the customer must comply with requirements of both DWWD and the Alternative Water Supplier. For example, if the DWWD established limits on outside water use, the customer may be required by DWWD to comply with the restriction, even though the Alternative Water Supplier may have no water use restrictions in effect. If the Alternative Water Supplier imposes outdoor watering restrictions, the customer would also need to comply. [Adopted 6/30/15]

Schedule B

Approved 01/15/2026

Effective 02/01/2026

In accordance with the water rate setting policy as adopted December 20, 2013.

Private Fire Service Size (01/01/1995)	Monthly Charge
For each 1” connection	\$31.59
For each 1 1/2” connection	\$32.46
For each 2” connection	\$35.68
For each 4” connection	\$69.62
For each 6” connection,	\$139.29
For each 8” connection	\$276.37
For each 10” connection,	\$441.10
For each fire hydrant	\$124.90

Schedule C

Approved 01/15/2026

Effective 02/01/2026

Other Charges:

1. After Hours Service Call (or actual cost, whichever is greater)
Effective [3/1/05] adjusted [2/12/2025]. \$120.00
2. Non-payment Turn-On Fee:
During working hours between: 8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. \$40.00
After Hours Turn-On Fee: 2:00 p.m. - 8:30 a.m. \$180.00
(Or actual cost, whichever is greater) Effective [2/28/98] adjusted [6/21/11].
3. New 1” Service - Other sizes at actual cost (see also page 7) \$1500.00
Effective [3/1/09] Adjusted Annually

For all sizes above 1” the cost will be based on individual field estimates and adjusted after installation is completed to actual cost. A check, payable to the District, in the amount of estimated cost of service connection, as determined by the District, shall be submitted with each application for service. When the actual cost of the service connection is computed, the District shall reimburse the applicant the amount of the deposit in excess of the actual cost within ninety (90) days of the completion of the work. The applicant shall pay the District the amount the actual cost exceeded the estimate, at the completion of the work.

4. Access and Change of Use Fees- [3/1/89] See Rule 30 (pages 34 - 38)

Use	Fee
General Use (per gallon)	\$15.61
Single Family dwelling (per dwelling)	\$6,010
Multi-family dwelling unit (per bedroom)	\$1,718
Restaurant (per seat)	\$547
School (per student)	\$311
Office building (per 1,000 sq. ft.)	\$1,171
Hotel (per room)	\$1,718

5. Meter Test [3/1/09] adjusted [6/21/11].

Meter Size	Fee
5/8 inch	\$25.00
3/4 inch	\$50.00
1 inch	\$60.00
1-1/2 & 2 inch	\$100.00
Other Sizes	Actual Cost

6. Backflow Prevention Device Tests(each) Effective 3/1/15 adjusted 1/10/23 \$75.00

7. Cut and cap water service inspection fee for demolition {6/21/11} \$100.00

8. Bank Returned Checks [06/12/89] \$25.00

(Cash or money order required on 2nd consecutive NSF check on checks under \$2,500 with a 1% of check as a maximum penalty).

9. Final Reading (must be paid at time final bill is rendered) 06/01/99: \$60.00

Adjusted [1/10/2023].

Final Reading (when appointment is made within 48 hours of closing) \$100.00

(Effective 1/10/2023)

10. 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.

11. At the discretion of the Water District, in lieu of discontinuation of residential water service, a \$25.00 per month additional charge will be added to the bill for residential customers requiring a meter change due to age or other reason, where, in the opinion of the Water District the potential exists for the meter change to cause damage to the customer's plumbing or customer's water service pipe, and, where that customer is unwilling to either sign a waiver of liability for such possible damage or to engage a licensed plumber to be on premises during the meter change. Similarly, the \$25.00 per month additional charge will be imposed for customers that cannot reasonably provide access to the meter due to material storage or any other conditions around the meter which prevent safe access to the meter including the use of tools used in the removal of the meter. The \$25.00 per month additional charge will also be posted to the bill

of any customer who does not respond to a request for an appointment to change the water meter within 30 days of the letter being sent by the Water District. The \$25.00 per month additional charge will be posted to the account on the same date as the bill is issued and will stop appearing as a charge in the first bill issued after the meter has been changed. The Water District may review the \$25.00 per month additional charge and the standing of the customer account may be changed at any time following written notification to the customer, requiring the customer to make all necessary changes to the water service piping to allow a meter change to continue receiving water service from the Water District. (Effective 4/1/09, amended 7/26/16)

Schedule D

Approved 2/12/2025

Effective 3/1/2025

METERS

Meter Size	Fee
5/8 inch (with radio)	\$602.00
3/4 inch (with radio)	\$626.00
1 inch (with radio)	\$679.00
1-1/2 inch (with radio)	\$1,142.00
2 inch (with radio)	\$1,385.00

- (1) For all sizes above 2” the cost will be based on individual field estimates and adjusted after installation is completed to actual cost.
- (2) If an outside meter pit or vault is requested or required, it shall be furnished at the expense of the customer and installed as approved by the District.

Mr. Merithew seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

Financials and Warrants

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Donoghue presented the Monthly Cash Report:

Page 1 - Received Cash Report as of 10/31/2025, decreased from 9/30/2025

Page 2 - Received Cash Report as of 9/30/2025

Page 3 - Received Cash Report through year-end 12/31/2025

Reports cash receipts and disbursements, investment income, and debt service and returns. BAN principle and interest was paid 10/22/2025.

Page 4 - Monthly Cash for year-end 12/31/2025 graph

Cash is reconciled through 10/2025. November and December amounts are cash without any adjustments for deposits in-transit.

Page 5 - Received Cash Report for year-end 12/31/2024

Approval of Warrants 96 through 101 for 2025 and Warrants 1 through 3 for 2026

Warrants 96-101 for activity from December 11th to December 31st, and Warrants 1-3 for activity from January 8th to January 9th were presented. Ms. Donoghue reminded that Warrants 96-99 were sent to the Commissioners for before-meeting review. Mr. Lukis reiterated that approval of warrants now takes place at Board meetings.

Mr. Kustwan motioned to approve Warrants 96-101 for 2025 and Warrants 1-3 for 2026; Mr. Phillips seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

Business Manager Report

Business Operating Reports

Mr. Lukis shared the *Statement of Revenues & Expenditures - Month & YTD 11/25*. Mr. Marsh confirmed this report has been posted on the shared server; he reviewed line items:

Billed Water - Over budget for month and whole year

Excess Revenues/Expenses - Negative - Investment Income from BAN Settlement

Bank Balances - Includes settlement funds placed in a Dedham Savings separate account

Capital Spending

Forecast for year-end - Overage anticipated primarily based on yearly revenue

Expenses - Personnel Costs - Large Projects charged labor to Capital Projects balance sheet, and amortized

MWRA

October 2025 Financial Close Review

Mr. Marsh informed that year-end is being worked on, stating 2025 was a good year with much accomplished. Answering Mr. Kustwan's question, Mr. Marsh stated the District uses the

calendar year for accounting purposes. Mr. Lukis added that all District financial systems were upgraded or replaced during the last 18-24 months, describing the Accounting and Customer Service changes and processes. Ms. Perkins asked what accounting package is used; Mr. Lukis answered that the District uses MIP Aplos. Mr. Marsh further described the process for upgrades and changes.

Compliance – To be dealt with in the first quarter

Areas the human resources contact reviewed were listed.

Insurances - General Liability - Out for bid in February

Health - Out for bid March/April

RTC - OPAC - Meet with twice a year

457 Retirement Plan - Review twice a year

Operations Manager Report

Pumpage and Operational Report

Mr. Lukis shared the new reporting format on-screen, and Mr. Locke reported:

Pumpage – Consistent, at 3.8/3.9 million gallons per day through the last five weeks

Main & Service Line Breaks -

14 Deerfield Avenue in Westwood - 6" 1930's cast iron pipe

117 Lakeshore Drive in Westwood - Customer-side sensors detected, contractor repaired

124 High Rock Lane in Westwood - Operators caught

Miles Leak Detection found ten leaks.

Mr. Locke reported that the District is still dealing with the challenge of off Sprague Street in Dedham, describing finding and assessing the leak, and the best route of repair. Mr. Lukis reported that the Cedar Street resident requests compensation for using the most direct access for repair via their property. Mr. Locke further described the process. Mr. Lukis relayed that the MBTA was consulted regarding access possibilities and anticipated concerns.

Discussion was held regarding repair access, detection process, etc.

Mr. Lukis stated that access will be determined tomorrow. Mr. Merithew asked if any authorization is needed. Mr. Lukis answered that he had responded to the resident who has requested compensation, informing that the District does not compensate for temporary access through property and offered complete restoration to as-is, if not better, condition; the resident believes compensation is part of industry standards.

Further discussion took place.

Mr. Lukis informed that appraisal will be done for the use of land, the District having to compensate when a permanent easement. At Mr. Lexander's request, Mr. Lukis shared a map of the area and described the main location; Mr. Lexander pointed out an access point.

Discussion was again held.

Mr. Locke relayed that ribbons were placed on trees and the DPW will provide an arborist to plan for shelter from the railroad tracks. Mr. Merithew added that it would be best to gain approval for continued access to the area. Messrs. Locke and Lukis commented on the sewer and drain easement being parallel to the track. Mr. Lukis reiterated that a meeting will be held tomorrow to discuss options. Mr. Locke stated the tracks were walked Wednesday, and the easiest and safest option is through the Savin Street property. For Mr. Merithew, Mr. Lukis described the patching process. Mr. Phillips suggested the Board talk about compensation in Executive Session.

Mr. Lukis shared the year-end meter and backflow reporting. Mr. Locke highlighted that 924 meters were installed, lower than anticipated because of new-hires and employees out with injuries; concentration was on maintaining compliance. Tested backflow devices totaled 1,519.

The office had no power one morning the week after Christmas and the emergency generator was not running; a temporary generator was used. A leak was found in the generator's turbo charger, causing low oil pressure; repair will be made January 21st. For Mr. Phillips, Mr. Locke confirmed a service contractor performs annual maintenance and the District completes a weekly exercise.

Mr. Lukis informed that Ms. Perkins must leave the meeting at 7:35 tonight.

Mr. Locke relayed that a conduit at the White Lodge Treatment Plant has caused issues; since ownership is unknown, the line may have to be cut. Mr. Lukis ensured authorization is given to make the cut to determine what is in the line.

Discussion was held regarding abandoned utilities and this conduit.

Ms. Perkins exited the meeting.

Action on CO No. 3 for the East Street and Martin Bates Water Main Replacement

Mr. Locke described the R.M. Pacella change order for time spent to relocate a lateral pipe to 989 East Street; the amount was disputed and compensation has now been agreed upon. Mr. Lukis reiterated that the first change order amount necessitated all subsequent change orders be brought before the Board. Mr. Lukis added that the conflict was in close proximity to the MWRA.

Mr. Lexander read the motion: The Dedham-Westwood Water District Water Commissioners vote to approve Change Order No.3 for East Street and Martin Bates Water Main Replacement Project with R.M. Pacella, Inc. in the amount of \$29,824.26. This is for unearthing of unforeseen conflicts and all subsequent efforts to realign the branch mechanical joint tee, mechanical joint gate valves and 8-inch ductile iron water main to successfully navigate the proposed 8-inch branch line into the property limits at 989 East Street. Further that the Executive Director is authorized to sign the Change Order.

Note: This work was conducted back in August and Pacella originally requested \$46,260.44 in compensation. There have been numerous negotiations conducted to make this amount a fairer settlement for the District.

Mr. Merithew seconded the motion.

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

Executive Director Report

Contracts Signed By ED

Mr. Lukis shared his screen to show signed contracts with Weston & Sampson. The last and final change order for the Garage Building Project had been voted on. The general contractor delay claim was dropped. The final Project update was 5.3% over budget; the Commissioners agreed this is a reasonable overage percentage. A White Lodge Treatment Plant change order for site work was also signed.

Update on White Lodge SRF Funding

Mr. Lukis reiterated that the White Lodge Treatment Plant SRF loan was anticipated to be zero-percent interest, with some loan forgiveness. The principal balance was also reduced by 5%. Mr. Lukis shared the letter from the *Massachusetts Clean Water Trust*, outlining the loan balance at zero-percent interest.

Mr. Phillips asked if the Bridge Street Treatment Plant evaluation will take place now or when commence; Mr. Lukis answered that the approved task order was signed, and he reviewed steps.

Discussion was held.

Old/New Business*

No additional business was presented to the Board.

Next Meeting

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 10th, beginning at 6:30pm.

Mr. Merithew motioned for the Board to close the general meeting to meet in Executive Session, Pursuant to MGL c.30A Sec. 21(a)(2) to discuss strategy for negotiations with non-union personnel, Executive Director; the general meeting will then continue. Mr. Phillips seconded the motion.

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

Action on Personnel Items

Take any action resulting from the Executive Session and approval of 2025 bonus allocations

Upon return to open meeting, Mr. Merithew relayed that the bonus recommendation for Mr. Lukis was accepted by the Commissioners, and no other recommendations were made. Mr. Lukis' bonus is 5.5% of his annual salary. Mr. Merithew motioned to accept the District employee bonus

recommendations submitted during the January 15, 2026 Commissioners meeting, including the Executive Director bonus of 5.5%. Mr. Phillips seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Lukis reminded of the other item discussed in Executive Session, the Executive Director performance increase; Mr. Merithew reiterated that the increase will be 5.5% of the ED's annual salary.

Mr. Merithew motioned to accept the 5.5% Executive Director performance increase; Mr. Healy seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Merithew requested a meeting adjournment motion. Mr. Lexander motioned to adjourn the meeting; the motion was seconded by Mr. Kustwan.

Roll-Call Vote: Mr. Merithew, Mr. Phillips, Mr. Healy, Mr. Lexander, and Mr. Merithew voted Aye. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Travers Reynolds
Recording Secretary