



DEDHAM-WESTWOOD WATER DISTRICT

General Business Meeting

Remote Meeting

Tuesday, July 14, 2026 | 6:30 PM

Louis Kustwan, Chair
John Healy, Vice-Chair
Jennifer Perkins, Clerk
Robert Lexander, Member
Mark Phillips, Member
Eric Merithew, Member

Blake Lukis, Executive Director & Assistant Treasurer
Bob Marsh, Business Manager
Pauline Donoghue, Treasurer
Steve Locke, Operations Manager

I. Announcement of the Audio and/or Video Recording

Roll-Call Attendance

Chair Louis Kustwan called the meeting to order at 6:30p.m., and announced the meeting would be audio- and video-recorded.

Mr. Kustwan requested a Roll-Call Attendance: Mr. Phillips, Mr. Merithew, Mr. Lexander, and Mr. Kustwan Present.

Quorum was confirmed.

Absent:

John Healy, Vice-Chair; Jennifer Perkins, Clerk

II. Public Participation

No public participants were present.

III. Approval of Minutes for June 16, 2026

Mr. Kustwan requested a motion to approve the meeting minutes of June 16, 2026. A motion was made by Mr. Merithew to approve the meeting minutes as reviewed for June 16, 2026; Mr. Phillips seconded the motion. With no discussion necessary, a roll-call vote was taken. Roll-Call Vote: Mr. Lexander, Mr. Merithew, Mr. Phillips, and Mr. Kustwan, voted Aye. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Financials and Warrants

Treasurer's Report

Submission of Warrants 50 through 57

Ms. Donoghue presented Warrants 50 to 57 for activity from June 18th to July 8th for the Commissioners' review and approval. Large items are noted on the summary page.

Also presented:

- Graph of Unreconciled Cash Reports for January to June 2026
- Reconciled Cash Reports for January to March 2026

Unreconciled and reconciled reports do not quite agree because of in-transit deposits.

- January 2026 Reconciled Cash, reduced from December 2025
- February 2026 Reconciled Cash, reduced from January 2026
- March 2026 Reconciled Cash, reduced from February 2026

Most decrease is because of the White Lodge PFAS Program loan; reimbursement is received after expenses are incurred.

- Summary of Reconciled Cash Receipts, Cash Disbursements, Interest Income, and Returns for Year-Ended December 31, 2025.

Mr. Merithew motioned to approve Warrants 50 to 57 for period June 18th to July 8th; Mr. Kustwan seconded the motion.

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

V. Business Manager Report

Business Operating Reports

Mr. Marsh introduced that he is presenting the financial results for months April and May, reviewing the May package. As clarification for the Board, because of new financial systems and audits being behind in reporting to the Board, the January operating results package posted in April, February in March, and March in June. April and May operating results being reviewed tonight will be posted in July. June should be completed by Friday, to review with the Board for posting in August.

Mr. Lukis shared his screen for Mr. Marsh to highlight and review the Year-to-Date Budget and Variances:

Revenue

Expenses

Revenue over Expenses, better than Budget

Cash

Breakdown

MWRA Water Usage

Using more water for PFAS treatment and continuing facilities upgrades

Holding to Budget now, trending to same line.

Mr. Kustwan commented that the favorable and unfavorable labeling creates an easy review for the Commissioners.

Mr. Kustwan asked if, during a drought, there is a way to fluctuate rates on the second meters. Mr. Lukis answered that the second meters in the District are for sewer usage; the District does not own or read these meters as they are owned by the residents who take pictures to send to the Town on a quarterly basis. The only thing preventing irrigation is that the more irrigation, the higher the tier.

Mr. Merithew asked if routine and Plant pump expenses overrun are related to White Lodge filters; Mr. Lukis relayed that that is a Capital expense rather than in the Operating Budget.

VI. Action on General Water Construction Services

Review bids and vote to approve the on-call General Construction Services Contract

Mr. Lukis relayed that the on-call General Water Construction Services was put to bid. The bid package was put together by the Staff Engineer rather than by Weston & Sampson, which saved on consulting fees.

Two bids were received from RM Pacella and Blue Diamond Equipment Company. The bids were significantly different from one another. The quantities to be used are estimated for bid purposes, not a guarantee of funding, depending on calls for on-call services.

A memo has been prepared to the Board recommending award to RM Pacella. The District has used this firm for 13 years. A meeting was held with Pacella to discuss bid items.

The requested motion has no contract value since cost will be based on utilization. The Board is asked to approve items and unit price of each item listed.

Mr. Lexander asked if Pacella was spoken to about their temporary patching quality; Mr. Locke confirmed Town input was addressed with the contractor, and safeguards will be put into the new contract to ensure proper procedures are followed. For Mr. Merithew, Mr. Lukis confirmed the unit prices reflect these expectations.

Mr. Kustwan asked if the cost is regardless of the call timing; Mr. Lukis explained the 1A Rate is the equipment with operator on-call work (after-hours) overtime rate – nights, weekends, two-hour response time. Mr. Lukis further clarified in response to Mr. Kustwan's inquiry.

Mr. Phillips asked if the RFP requesting rate sheet or the scope as well was used to arrive at pricing; Mr. Lukis answered that the estimated quantities were included in the bid items for the purpose of the bid package, offering an example. The actual bid results can be forwarded to the Commissioners.

Mr. Lexander reiterated that the District has a history with Pacella, suggesting this Project will be similar to when Weston & Sampson was involved.

Mr. Lukis shared and detailed the actual bids, listing the greatest-discrepancy areas. The meeting with Pacella confirmed the District specifications and requirements are understood, and that the contractor's bid price was actual.

Mr. Phillips asked if the bid is for one year; Mr. Lukis answered that the one-year contract offers the ability to extend for two additional one-year contracts. Mr. Phillips asked if the extensions are with escalators or a fixed fee; Mr. Lukis confirmed the extensions will include escalators. The new contracts with new rates will be brought to the Board each year.

Mr. Phillips asked how the contract compares to as budgeted and as happened previously; Mr. Lukis responded that budgeting was not done for a full contract, rather in the Operating Budget as a line item. Mr. Locke added that Pacella knows how to bid this because they are familiar with the District's calls for service.

Mr. Kustwan asked if Blue Diamond was approached about their bid amount; Mr. Phillips informed that the bids are non-negotiable. Mr. Kustwan asked if only the two received bids were requested; Mr. Lukis answered that this was a publicly advertised bid, without solicitation – The bid was sent to ten contractors, and two responses were received. RM Pacella was asked to confirm their bid pricing, not to change it. Mr. Kustwan asked about last-year versus this-year pricing; Mr. Lukis answered that the estimations were not based on the same amount of work, rather on quantities based on potential. Mr. Locke added that some line items will not happen but need to be covered in case. Mr. Lexander mentioned that the letter from the District's Engineer states prior value, which Mr. Lukis confirmed. Mr. Lukis informed that the Routine Maintenance line item in the Operating Budget is typically from where on-call services are paid, in addition to other services.

Mr. Merithew read the motion: The Dedham-Westwood Water Commissioners vote to award the General Water Construction Services Bid ID: 2026-101 to R.M. Pacella, Inc. of Plainville, MA. The Contract is for a price agreement as stipulated on the following two pages. The overall contract value will vary based upon the actual work required during the contract period. Further that the Executive Director be authorized to execute the contract.

Mr. Lexander seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

VII. Operations Manager Report

Pumping and Operational Report

Mr. Locke reported:

Pumpage - Obvious as pumpage follows the temperature, pumpage has been up and down. Due to reduced capacity with filters being replaced, the District has been drawing more MWRA water. Filters should be back online the end of next week. Vendor issues have been experienced. Pressure differential gauges will be installed next week.

Main Service Break - Leak Detection Survey found seven of nine service leaks and one main break. Direction is triggered by Town events – Example: Westwood paving is planned, so the District must coordinate with that schedule. The Town's construction happening was described - Kudos to the Distribution Department working overtime.

Large Projects

Burgess Avenue Booster Station

Preconstruction meeting July 7 - No firm start date, but in near future - Sorely needed

Two Water Main Projects - Riverside Drive & Schoolmaster Lane

Starting next Monday - Zoom meeting Thursday regarding Riverside Drive

Smaller Projects

Will be shutting down two roads in Westwood tomorrow and Thursday to put in new service at 65 Mill Street and to address another Burgess Avenue leak.

Hydrants

To-date, approximately 140 hydrants have been painted by two summer painters, completing approximately six each most days - No bad reports, and work is neat.

Referring to Thursday's Riverside Drive meeting, Mr. Merithew asked if Commissioner representation is needed; Mr. Locke confirmed Commissioner attendance would be welcome. Messrs. Merithew and Lexander should be able to attend the meeting; Mr. Lukis will request the Communications Coordinator forward the panelist link so the Commissioners are informed to be able to speak at the meeting. Mr. Lexander requested the PowerPoint presentation also be sent. Mr. Locke stated the District has been pleased with Apex Engineering project management for past projects, appreciating their thorough

preconstruction meetings. Mr. Locke added that the District has never used Gravity. For Mr. Lexander, Mr. Locke confirmed the main will again be removed to place a temporary main, per the Town.

Mr. Phillips asked of the takeaways from the Tighe & Bond/ Hungersford & Terry report for the White Lodge Filters; Mr. Locke informed that the main's pressure differential gauges are required in order to follow the maintenance requirements, where had previously had the effluent percentage valve open, not the required methodology. Pressure transmitters next to the filters are being installed so have totalizers to pick the parameters to run the filters on. The Hungersford & Terry report added that the scaling of the pressure transmitters may have been a contributing factor in the failure of some of the filters.

Mr. Phillips asked if multiple filters or only Filter 2 failed; Mr. Lukis answered that multiple filters failed. Mr. Phillips asked if the higher differential pressure was only seen on Filter 2; Mr. Locke answered that there were no pressure differential gauges as now used on new plants, including on Bridge Street, adding that when green sand is installed, there was no mention of running a different way from the methodology used for over 40 years.

Mr. Merithew asked if there were any notes indicating the past process was not continuing to work; Mr. Lukis answered that the original filter O&M manual is from 1985, when backwash was based on the pressure differential. Newer processes had pressure gauges on top and bottom of tanks to determine the actual pressure differential in each vessel. Now, the pressure differential will be monitored from the influent to the effluent.

Addressing Mr. Phillips, referring to the 20 PSI operating differential, Mr. Lukis informed that Filter 2 had one differential pressure gauge; he shared those results and added that all eight filters may be replaced, four at a time. He described the process to operate EnCata-based on the original O&M plan to backwash based on pressure differential of 8-10 PSI. Funding for the second four filters will be requested of the Board in August or September. Backwashing is being performed now; the high levels of manganese are concerning. Mr. Merithew asked if this occurred before or after the plant was shut down for PFAS; Mr. Lukis answered that that was to be determined, through discussions and meetings.

The necessary process was discussed, for placing the four filters back online timely to reduce MWRA usage and increase plan production. Mr. Kustwan asked if there would be a cost savings if replace all eight filters at the same time; Mr. Lexander stated the whole plant would need to be shut down to accomplish this. Mr. Kustwan asked if all eight filters were funded at the same time, would a cost savings be seen; Mr. Lukis responded that he is not aware of that process showing a savings. Mr. Phillips commented on it making sense to replace all filters, especially with the PFAS concern, so there will remain no risk of contamination, especially since ion-exchange resin will be highly susceptible.

Mr. Phillips asked about the untreated backwash water, the high manganese levels, and the recommendation to use secondary with the maximum contaminant level of 0.05. Mr. Lukis informed that for a plant built today where backwash done, finished water would be used; this plant was not built this way, so the same ability with the infrastructure is not available. The onsite contractor may be consulted regarding cost of adding a six-inch main from the plant affluent back into the plant to connect to the backwash; a significant number is anticipated. Mr. Phillips asked if this manner is continued, is the resin life jeopardized; Mr. Lukis answered that he does not believe the resin for the PFAS is affected, because they are not to be backwashed at all, so there is no PFAS resin contamination unless break through the green sand filters. This new green sand filters operating scheme should allow for a typical run life of ten-plus years, as seen in the past. Mr. Locke added that, even though raw water is used, manganese levels have never exceeded the secondary level; because of the channeling and permanganate distribution system causing issues, manganese levels were created - Two sampling ports were added to test the affluence of the backwash water. The operators previously had not had enough information to properly run the plant. He listed updates made at the plant.

Mr. Phillips asked if the O&M manuals will be updated; Mr. Locke confirmed the manuals will be updated and six-month inspections will ensure filters are operating properly. Mr. Lukis also confirmed for Mr. Phillips that the O&M manuals will be updated; the manuals advise to use different pressure for 8-10 PSI. Change may not be needed to the Manuals, but a SOP will be drafted so operators have documents to review to follow the outlined backwash parameters. Mr. Locke informed that the permanganate backwash will be slightly adjusted.

Mr. Kustwan asked if the reports note why the failure was so much quicker than previously and if their recommendations will remedy this; Mr. Locke answered that the recommendations should remedy the concern because the parameters must be followed with the new methodology. Mr. Lukis stated the failure most likely occurred because the O&M protocols were not being followed. Mr. Merithew acknowledged that it may not be known if the old protocol contributed to this event, but it is worth having a conversation regarding how much piping or rerouting is needed to treat water backwash; Mr. Lukis agreed and will have Tighe & Bond review. Mr. Lexander offered that the feed could be tapped off at the Westwood High services.

Mr. Merithew asked how Well 5 stands; Mr. Locke answered that there seems to be a vendor issue. For Mr. Merithew, Mr. Locke confirmed the well is shut down now; it was not running well, and it was determined a pump would have to be pulled. Timing and supplies were discussed. Messrs. Merithew and Locke discussed that the pump removed for replacement allows for inspection of screens.

VIII. Executive Director

Contracts Signed By ED

Mr. Lukis has signed no new contracts.

A change order and PCO for the White Lodge PFAS upgrade were updated, similar to last month's; three changes but not new items, just added pricing. One new manhole coring was added. The water trench was extended so the main is all exposed until penetration through the foundation wall. The contractor added a PCO to address some corbel extension modification based on the Planning Board permit. Weston & Sampson is reviewing. The Board will be updated when information is received.

Mr. Lukis confirmed Distribution Superintendent interviews are being held, finding two strong candidates last week and one additional interview scheduled. The individual chosen will be welcomed to a Board meeting, for introduction and to share their background.

Mr. Lukis notified that two funding applications were submitted through MWRA. In April during the Budget process, it was determined a ten-year zero-percent MWRA loan would be sought for Phase 2 Lead Service Line investigation and replacement for potholing, digging, finalizing service line material, and replacing lead lines. A 25%-debt forgiveness may apply for the District willing to replace customer-side lead service lines. The second application, submitted today, is for a ten-year interest-free loan for Phase 4 of the Local Water System Improvements Program, to be utilized as part of Riverside Drive funding; more than half of the Project funding is by interest-free loan, and the rest is with cash. The Board will be updated on the applications.

IX. Old/New Business*

Mr. Lexander referred to the recently sold Gobbi property in Dedham. A District pipe has been in the ground since the 1960s, with some provided at no cost in about 2010. The Conservation Commission and Planning Board will have input regarding building on the property. Mr. Locke informed that the previous owner built a subdivision in Westwood with the mentioned pipe; Mr. Lexander reacted to this pipe intended only for the other property but used elsewhere, stating pipe-cost reimbursement may be sought.

Mr. Lexander stated that if a data center is placed in Dedham or Westwood, the average daily water usage may be quite high.

Mr. Locke informed that a meeting was held this week regarding Sturgis Avenue apartments requiring a hydraulic model evaluation through Weston & Sampson; projects of that scope require a run through the model. Mr. Lexander reviewed the history of a prior project fire service request; a booster system is for a neighborhood, not a business.

Discussion took place regarding the Campus at 128 development in Dedham, including the main sizes of existing pipe on West Street and estimated volume of water the development may use.

Regarding a data center, Mr. Lukis stated the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs is developing a framework. He has been part of a working group

through the Massachusetts Water Works Association to include water systems' input regarding energy and water needs.

The next fully remote Board meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 10th, beginning at 6:30pm.

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

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

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:43pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Travers Reynolds
Recording Secretary