DEDHAM-WESTWOOD WATER DISTRICT

General Business Meeting

Hybrid Meeting
In-person attendance: 50 Elm Street; Dedham, MA

Tuesday, October 6, 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

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

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

Absent:
Louis Kustwan, Chair
John Healy, Vice-Chair

Also Present:
Dedham Resident William Gorman
DWWD Distribution Supervisor Demetrios Vidalis

II. Public Participation

Mr. Lukis welcomed Dedham Resident William Gorman, who resides at 161 Ledgewood Road, to the meeting.

Mr. Gorman wanted to introduce himself to the Board; he knows Mr. Lexander and served on the Dedham Conservation Commission for 17 Years, 12 as Chair. At that time, the Conservation Commission was adamant on the protection of Well fields, the Neponset River Water Shed, and other Town water sites. The University Avenue MBTA site shut down had no order of conditions without erosion controls; Aquifer was involved.

Mr. Gorman asked if the Board might consider increasing allowances for new appliances and water closets, to give more incentive to upgrade; Mr. Merithew stated incentive amounts will be compared to other communities', and Mr. Locke informed that current incentive amounts have increased from original amounts.

Referring to residential irrigation systems not being allowed to be placed on timers, Mr. Gorman asked if sensors or clocks are required on the sensors; Mr. Lukis informed that the District does not provide additional meters for irrigation systems. Mr. Lexander added that the owner must provide the usage reading to the Town, and Mr. Lukis described installation and billing for a resident to add a second meter. Mr. Locke described the billing tiers as a restricting conservation method, which Mr. Merithew informed were recently adjusted to deter excessive use. Mr. Gorman finds it unfortunate that the public mailing does not include mention of irrigation restrictions; Mr. Lukis stated that the items listed on the mailing are those allowed by the District. Mr. Gorman would like to see this gray area addressed; Mr. Lukis added that Districts are informed of restrictions by the Massachusetts Drought Advisory, and Mr. Gorman stated a language change would make restriction clear. Mr. Lexander informed that rain sensors are available free-of-charge. Mr. Gorman has found that many newly constructed houses have irrigation systems, but that he has never seen in-writing fines to be imposed; Mr. Lukis informed that the fines are outlined in the District Rules & Regulations. Mr. Gorman asked if the District Rules & Regulations fines could be included in the mailings, adding that that the stormwater management program was written while he served on the Conservation Commission and became the model for the State. Mr. Lukis listed how drought information is timely posted to the public. Mr. Lexander confirmed that conservation is a District focus, including using the leak-detection tool.

Mr. Gorman referred to apartment buildings being billed at commercial rates; Mr. Lukis informed that a multi-residential rate is used, adding that commercial rates have been tiered since 2022, with a four-tier rate structure with usage categories implemented in 2025.

As Mr. Gorman exited the meeting, Mr. Phillips thanked him for caring enough to express his thoughts; and Mr. Gorman responded that he would like to follow up in a month or so to see if his suggestions were used.

Mr. Lukis introduced and welcomed Demetrios Vidalis, the new District Distribution Supervisor. Each Commissioner introduced themselves and shared some of their experience. Mr. Vidalis informed of his background, licensing, and training, adding that he will especially be focused on staff safety.

Mr. Vidalis intends to stay for the remainder of the meeting.

III. Approval of Minutes for September 15, 2026

Mr. Kustwan requested a motion to approve the meeting minutes of September 15, 2026. A motion was made by Mr. Lexander to approve the meeting minutes as reviewed for September 15, 2026; Mr. Phillips seconded the motion. With no discussion necessary, a roll-call vote was taken.

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

IV. Financials and Warrants

Treasurer's Report
Approval of Warrants 75 through 82

Ms. Donoghue sent Warrants 75 to 82 for activity from September 10th to October 1st for Commissioners' review and approval, noting that the Warrant 82 payment was for bond principal and interest.

Also presented:
- Cash Graph for January to September 2026
- January to July 2026 Reconciled Cash
- August and September 2026 Unreconciled Cash
  Accounting Manager in-transit deposit adjustments are not included

Mr. Merithew motioned to approve Warrants 75 to 82 for activity from September 10th to October 1st; Mr. Phillips seconded the motion.
Roll-Call Vote: Mr. Lexander, Mr. Phillips, Ms. Perkins, and Mr. Merithew voted Aye. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Lukis suggested taking the Business Manager report out of order, as August month-end is a good segway to the long-range plan.

V. Business Manager Report

Business Operating Reports

Mr. Lukis shared his screen for Mr. Marsh to review the Year-to-Date Financial Results:

- Billed Water Revenue
  - Variance favorable to Budget
  - Year-to-Date favorable because of raised rates and volume
  - Total includes interest income, mostly from settlement funds
- Expenses
  - Net Personnel Costs
    - Even or slightly favorable
  - Operating Costs
    - Some favorable offsets to MWRA purchase
  - Depreciation
    - Unfavorable
      - More items with shorter depreciable lives
- Excess Revenue/Expenses
  - Yearly overage with surplus

Bank Balance
  BAN Funds
    Spending down
  PFAS Funds
    No change and nothing additional expected
Operating Funds
  Capital Spending
    Most Capital Programs catching up and ongoing
MWRA Water
  Over Budget

Mr. Lukis reiterated that the August MWRA usage was increased because of the White Lodge Treatment Plant shutoff. For Mr. Merithew, Mr. Lukis informed that the next scheduled shutdown will be November 1st.

Referring to the Total Profit & Loss, Revenue increased the forecast and MWRA additional water purchase is unfavorable for the year, including November and December, because of the White Lodge Plant shutdown. Auditors are being consulted regarding deferring the shutdown effect, to breakeven for the year.

For Ms. Perkins, Mr. Lukis explained the effect of MWRA water purchase and further clarified regarding the shutdown for required PFAS upgrades. Mr. Lukis confirmed for Mr. Merithew that this is unique to water districts.

VI. Review of Long-Range Financial Plan

Review of Five-Year Financial Plan spanning Fiscal Years 2027 through 2031

Mr. Lukis shared his screen for Mr. Marsh to review the Long-Range Plan Profit & Loss (Fixed-Rate Increase) for Five Years ended 12/31/2031.

Columns 2026B and 2026F
  August results from prior review.
Capital
  Dramatically changing
Debt Service at 2025
  Interest & Principal
    2026 amount shows amount one bond affects
    2027 amounts reviewed
  Plant building greatly affects debt level
Personnel Operating Expenses - Norfolk County
  Mandated to fully fund pension plan by 2029
  Reduced payment beginning 2023, to 2036

Mr. Lukis informed that the first White Lodge Treatment Plant payment is due in 2028 and the Bridge Street Project total is increased. Mr. Marsh reviewed debt type, noting a bond will be paid this year. Massachusetts Clean Water Trust funding payback begins when the Plant goes live. Mr. Lukis informed that bond versus SRF loan results in zero-percent interest savings. Mr. Lexander, Mr. Marsh will review the amount added yearly to billing. Ms. Perkins asked about clarification of the form structure; Mr. Lukis explained the history/plan chart. Mr. Lukis confirmed Mr. Merithew's inquiry about the Bridge Street Treatment Plant.

Discussion was held.

Mr. Lukis relayed the White Lodge and Bridge Street Plants' regulatory requirement amounts for PFAS treatment.

Further discussion took place.

Mr. Lukis informed of Lead & Copper Rule revisions and improvement amounts for EPA regulations; Ms. Perkins commented on this being an important point for residents to understand.

Mr. Lukis stated that Personnel Expenses have increased at a typical rate, where other Operating Costs have seen modest increases. Higher increases in the Long-Range Plan are all related to Capital Expenses and borrowing to cover them. Mr. Merithew questioned the yearly reduction, and Mr. Lukis explained the slight reductions. Mr. Merithew commented on the District continuing to strive to keep rates reasonable for residents. Mr. Lukis confirmed Budget discussion topics and options.

Mr. Merithew asked about Investments; Mr. Lukis ensured that savings interest is being earned.

Discussion included District investments, investment options, and cash reserve policy.

Mr. Lukis will email regarding scheduling subcommittee meetings.

VII. Review of By-Law Update & Modernization

First review of updated to the 1985 By-Laws to incorporate how the District currently operates, and modernize the language and format

Mr. Lukis would like to reinforce that a marked-up red-lined version of the By-Laws was not provided to the Commissioners because it would have been too greatly marked. He reiterated that the original By-Laws are from 1985/6, when the District was created; the Executive Director was the only District employee, and all others were contract workers. The Executive Director oversaw the contracts. The format has been retained, with

Counsel's review. The updated By-Laws model how the District runs today. The Rules and Regulations are fully understandable. The By-Laws are being distributed a month before a motion to accept is requested; if comments are received before the November meeting, the By-Laws will be redistributed. Amendments must be voted on at the meeting after the Board Member suggests their addition.

Mr. Lexander commented on the By-Laws being straightforward and easy to comprehend, leaving no questions remaining.

Answering Mr. Merithew, Mr. Lukis stated no Counsel suggestions were not adopted. Mr. Merithew asked if the DPU will be involved; Mr. Lukis stated their language might be incorporated, though water district by-laws differ. Mr. Lexander suggests reviewing timely since change occurs quickly; Mr. Lukis recommended not having a specific review timeframe. Mr. Lukis reiterated that all Counsel input was taken into consideration and incorporated.

Mr. Merithew instructed the Board to submit questions and comments before November's meeting.

VIII. Action on Nahatan Street Water Main Design

Review and take action on the design contract for the Nahatan Street Water Main Replacement Project in Westwood

Mr. Lukis informed that the next project for next year is to address an 8-inch 1930 main running from the Westwood Nahatan Street high school, and another of the same size and age from Clapboardtree Street to the Norwood line.

A new water main had been placed down Thatcher Street from Nahatan Street to the high school, 12-inches with a redundant 8-inch line next to it, connecting the 12-inch main and putting new mains on each side. Mr. Locke added that the plan is to then continue to Pond Street to the 12-inch main; a transition main will bring to the Burgess Avenue Booster Station. Currently, per Mr. Lukis, the main runs from the 12-inch main to the high school, starting on Gay Street, down Thatcher Street, with a small section on Clapboardtree Street, down Nahatan Street to the high school. The 12-inch main has no service connections, just feeds the high school. The plan is to abandon the redundant 8-inch main and move all services to the 12-inch main. Long-term, multiple 12-inch mains will feed the Burgess Avenue Booster Station.

Mr. Lexander suggested another location for a 12-inch main.

Clarification discussion took place.

Before the Commissioners is a request to fund the Project design so the plan is in place for a last-day-of-school start.

Mr. Lexander read the motion to move: The Dedham-Westwood Water Commissioners vote to approve the Professional Engineering Services Agreement for the Design, Permitting, Bidding, and Construction Administration Services for the replacement of the Nahatan Street water main in Westwood between Apex Companies, LLC and the Dedham-Westwood Water District for the not to exceed price of $265,000. Further that the Executive Director be authorized to sign the agreement.
Mr. Phillips seconded the motion.

Mr. Merithew asked about APEX, and Mr. Lukis listed District projects with the firm. Discussion was held.

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

IX. Operations Manager Report

Pumping and Operational Report

Mr. Locke stated that all has been covered in his submitted report.

At Riverside Drive, about-700 feet was dug in two days. Mr. Lukis anticipates the main being put in this week if the rate of work continues.

The Project was further discussed.

Mr. Merithew asked if there has been any update to the culvert on Schoolmaster Lane. Mr. Locke informed that the pressure has been tested and a sample has been taken; results are pending. Addressing the culvert is potentially five weeks away; however, the main will laid elsewhere before. Mr. Merithew asked if there is a need to make a decision regarding resurfacing; Mr. Locke relayed that the developer has been contacted and a preliminary price has been provided.

X. Executive Director Report

After all presented and discussed, Mr. Lukis had nothing additional to report.

XI. Old/New Business*

No additional business was presented to the Board.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 17th, beginning at 6:30pm. This timing will allow for the subcommittee meetings to take place prior.

Ms. Perkins asked about the District's cyber security attack protection. Mr. Lukis relayed that a cyber security assessment was performed this past year, and the DEP and the consultant gave kudos regarding the positive results. Mr. Lukis confirmed the District networks are separate and isolated.

Discussion took place.

Mr. Lexander motioned to adjourn the meeting; the motion was seconded by Ms. Perkins. Roll-Call Vote: Mr. Lexander, Mr. Phillips, Ms. Perkins, and Mr. Merithew voted Aye. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Travers Reynolds
Recording Secretary