

BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF
MARCH 4, 2025

A quorum being present, Chairperson Sheldon called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM. He announced that the virtual version of the meeting was being recorded and requested those in attendance to state their name and title for the record by roll call:

Board Members Present in Person: Robert H. Sheldon, Commissioner and Chairperson - Present; Joshua M. Fox, Commissioner – Present; and Robert E. Boyd, Commissioner - Present.

Board Members Present Virtually: None.

Others Present in Person: Vincent J. Roy, Executive Director - Present; Thomas S. Travers, Treasurer - Present; Karen Moretti, Assistant Treasurer - Present; Michael Abbondanzio, Foreman – Present; and Renee M. Adams, Executive Administrator – Present.

Others Present Virtually: none

1. Review and Vote to Approve the Minutes from the Board of Water Commissioners Meeting held on February 18, 2025.

The Commissioners reviewed and approved the minutes for the February 18, 2025, meeting, as amended. Commissioner Fox made the motion for approval, which was duly seconded by Commissioner Sheldon, and approved by unanimous roll call:

Robert E. Boyd, Commissioner - Aye

Joshua M. Fox, Commissioner - Aye

Robert H. Sheldon, Commissioner and Chairperson – Aye

2. Review of the Director's February 28, 2025, Bi-Weekly Report.

Director Roy presented his bi-weekly report, covering the following topics:

- *RRWTP/PFAS Filtration System/ Pipe Leak:*

Commissioner Sheldon provided a summary of the February 21st virtual meeting with Director Roy, Andy Reid of Weston & Sampson, and Randy Nixon, President of Corrosion Probe, Inc. They discussed the likely cause of stainless pipe leaks. Mr. Nixon suspects that microbiologically influenced corrosion (MIC) is the likely cause of pipe failures, due to the ideal conditions of stagnant water within horizontal pipes and leaks occurring in welded areas. Welding affects stainless pipe in such a way that it reduces the chromium content within the heated-affected area, creating an ideal condition for microbial bacteria to corrode the pipe over time. Mr. Nixon had observed similar cases at water treatment plants in Cambridge, Billerica, and other communities across the country.

Treasurer Travers asked how to mitigate the issue. Commissioner Sheldon suggested that PVC pipes might be an alternative but noted they could pose problems with an electrical charge being created as water flows through the pipe. Commissioner Fox asked about the extent of the affected pipes. Director Roy explained that about 3 feet of horizontal pipe exist on each vessel. These are used infrequently, only serving as relief pipes with relief valves. Mr. Roy further stated that installing a ¾” connection with a ball valve upstream of the relief valve could allow routine flushing of the fill pipe to mitigate the bacterial problem. Commissioner Sheldon emphasized the importance of this analysis, as it might necessitate changes to pipe specifications for the East Street WTP and Wells 4 & 6 PFAS Treatment projects.

- *9 Warren Circle / House-side Service Leak:*

Commissioner Fox requested that Director Roy provide an update on the reported house-side service leak at 9 Warren Circle. Mr. Roy responded that the service line was replaced from the curb-stop to the meter by a private contractor on February 19th at the homeowner's expense.

- *Metro West Regional Water Collaborative /Proposed Water Supply Study:*
Commissioner Fox requested an update from the Director on the February 21st virtual meeting and inquired about the participants' reactions to the Commissioners' position on being a non-contributing supporter of the MetroWest Regional Water Supply study. Mr. Roy responded that the reactions were mixed: some members understood the Commissioner's reasoning, while others were dismayed. The concerned members worried that other communities might follow the District's non-contributing stance, thereby increasing the financial burden on contributing participants. Mr. Roy mentioned that he only stayed in the virtual meeting long enough to relay the District's position before logging off to attend another scheduled meeting. He also noted that the collaborative group had another meeting scheduled for Friday, March 7, 2025.
- *Meter Replacement:*
Commissioner Fox asked about the 40 meters that were reported as non-read during the last billing cycle. Foreman Abbondanzio reported that 10 meters have already been replaced since being reported and that the letters have been mailed out to the remaining addresses to schedule meter change-out appointments.
- *PFAS Analytical Results from the Raymond Road WTP:*
Treasurer Travers inquired about the recent PFAS analytical results for the Raymond Road WTP/PFAS treatment system and questioned whether the system is in compliance with the State's PFAS regulation. Mr. Roy responded that the District is indeed in compliance with the regulation, with PFAS being non-detectable in the water leaving the WTP. He explained that the differing results shown in the report are from sample taps at different heights on the primary vessels prior to discharge to the distribution system. Mr. Roy stated that sampling at different layers within the vessels allows the District to track the performance of the GAC media and to anticipate when the media will need to be replaced.
- *Boston Globe and NWEA News Articles:*
Commissioner Sheldon informed all in attendance about recent articles he read. One article from the Boston Globe discussed water meters over-registering in Somerville. Another article was from the Water Environment Federation (WEF) reporting on drinking water quality by an environmental group, highlighting the problems with PFAS in public water supplies.
- *Bid Results for Granular Activate Carbon (GAC) Replacement:*
Commissioner Fox requested that Director Roy provide a breakdown of the Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) bid results from February 20th. Mr. Roy stated that the District advertised quantities and specifications for replacing GAC with either virgin carbon or reactivated carbon at both treatment plants for the next three years. The bid results illustrate pricing for both specifications over the three-year period, but the District will only be purchasing virgin carbon after the first year of operation for each treatment facility. The first year will not exceed \$116,000, the second year will not exceed \$205,000, and the third year will not exceed \$225,000. The total three-year contract amount is \$546,000.

There were no further questions regarding the Director's Bi-Weekly Report.

3. Review and Vote to Approve the 89th Annual Meeting Warrants

Director Roy presented the warrants for the 89th Annual Meeting for review and discussion. He noted that the warrant for the Annual Meeting had not changed since the February 25, 2025, meeting. However, updates were made to the Special Annual Meeting warrant. Specifically, two new articles were added:

1. Creation of a New System Development Stabilization Fund addresses the following:

- This fund will align with MassDOR requirements that money generated from payment of connection fees must be either included as part of the free-cash calculation, allocated for a related project or projects, or moved into an interest-bearing stabilization account.
- It will allow the continued practice of depositing fees for new service connections.
- The funds can be withdrawn for future water main replacement projects.
- Withdrawal of funds from the stabilization account will require a 2/3 majority vote at an annual meeting for appropriations related to capital improvement projects.

2. Depositing Service Connection Fees:

- This practice will ensure compliance with MassDOR requirements.

Director Roy emphasized that establishing a system-improvement stabilization fund would enable the District to continue its practice of depositing fees from new service connections while utilizing these funds for future infrastructure projects.

Commissioner Fox made the motion to approve the Warrant for the 89th Annual Meeting, which was duly seconded by Commissioner Boyd, and approved by unanimous roll call:

Robert E. Boyd, Commissioner - Aye
 Joshua M. Fox, Commissioner - Aye
 Robert H. Sheldon, Commissioner and Chairperson – Aye

Commissioner Fox made the motion to approve the Warrant for the 89th Annual Special Meeting, which was duly seconded by Commissioner Boyd, and approved by unanimous roll call:

Robert E. Boyd, Commissioner - Aye
 Joshua M. Fox, Commissioner - Aye
 Robert H. Sheldon, Commissioner and Chairperson – Aye

4. Review Draft Employee Policy (Handbook).

Commissioner Fox recommended that the discussion on the employee policy be postponed for a special Commissioners Meeting for the following Tuesday, March 11, 2025. The Commissioners agreed to the recommendation.

There were no further questions regarding the draft employee policy.

Conclusion of Open Meeting

Commissioner Fox moved to conclude the open public meeting session and move into executive meeting session, not to return to the open public meeting session, under executive session “Exemption 3. To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and to review and vote to approve Executive Session Minutes for February 18, 2025. and the chair so declares.” Chairperson Sheldon subsequently so declared. The motion was duly seconded by Chairperson Sheldon and was approved by a unanimous roll call:

Joshua M. Fox, Commissioner - Aye
 Robert E. Boyd, Jr., Commissioners - Aye
 Robert H. Sheldon, Commissioner and Chairperson - Aye

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.