



WSCAC Meeting

Location: MWRA Facilities
Southborough, MA
October 9, 2018—10:00 A.M.

Members in Bold in Attendance:

Michael Baram, WSCAC Chair, BU & CLF

Whitney Beals, NE Forestry
Terry Connolly, Town of Ware & Trout
Unlimited

William Copithorne, Town of Arlington

Andrea Donlon, CT River Conservancy

Gerald Eves, Trout Unlimited

Bill Fadden, OARS

Bill Kiley, BWSC, WAC

Paul Lauenstein, NepRWA

Jean McCluskey, ACEC/MA

Martha Morgan, Nashua River Watershed

Martin Pillsbury, MAPC

Janet Rothrock, League of Women Voters

Kurt Tramposch, Wayland Wells

Roger Wrubel, Mass Audubon

Non-Members in Attendance:

Lexi Dewey, WSCAC staff

Bethany Card, MWRA

Adrianna Cillo, BWSC, WAC

Andreae Downs, WAC

James Guidod, MWRA Advisory Board

Betsy Homa, MWRA

Alexandra Peckham, WSCAC staff

WSCAC Business

Michael Baram reviewed the agenda and noted there were no minutes to approve. WSCAC staff posted the presentations given by Mr. Laskey and Mr. Favaloro at the joint September with the MWRA Advisory Board, WSCAC and WAC on the WSCAC website.

Lexi introduced Alexandra, the newest WSCAC staff member, and summarized the discussions held at the September Executive Committee meeting.

DCR's Division of Water Supply Protection (DWSP) is updating the Ware River Public Access Plan; since this involves recreational uses in the watershed, it is of great interest to WSCAC. The draft plan will be ready for commenting in about a year. There are many stakeholders interested in increasing public access – snowmobilers, bicyclists, horseriders and others – which requires DCR to continually balance public access with safety precautions to protect water quality. Lisa Gustavsen (DCR's Assistant Director of Quabbin and Ware Watersheds) and John Scannell (Director of DCR's Division of Water Supply Protection) are leading the process, as well as Sara Cohen (from DCR's Office of Water Resources). WSCAC staff will be at the stakeholder and WRWAC meetings to gather information for committee discussion and to be prepared to comment when opportunity arises. Lexi will send out criteria, guidelines and updates prepared by DCR about this ongoing process.

Quabbin Forestry: At the Water Supply Protection Trust (WSPT) September meeting, Fred Heyes, designee for the Swift River Historical Society, stated that DCR can improve their forestry contracts by tightening up certain sections such as equipment used, road maintenance and improved supervision. New England Forestry's contract was recommended for comparison. Whitney Beals (NEFF and WSCAC member) provided a NEFF contract which Executive Committee members will compare with the DCR-DWSP permit. A summary of that comparison will be provided to WSCAC members.

Michael Baram asked about whether a lawyer would be appropriate in this process, and suggested MWRA's attorney.

Regarding the final item from the ExCom meeting, Lexi announced that WSCAC has the opportunity to submit feedback to the WSPT regarding issues of concern to the committee at the quarterly meetings. WSCAC staff will be working with the ExCom to determine potential topics for the December Trust meeting.

Roger Wrubel requested a clear definition of WSPT, which Bill Fadden echoed. WSCAC staff will email information on the Trust to all members.

Lexi gave a brief synopsis of the WSPT (a partnership between DCR's Division of Water Supply Protection and MWRA), which meets quarterly to review the DWSP budget, work plan, programs and projects.

Lexi then introduced Bethany Card, formerly with MassDEP. She is now the Director of Environmental and Regulatory Affairs with the MWRA.

Beth provided information on her background, including a position working with the MassDEP's Water Bureau, and more recently as Deputy Commissioner at MassDEP.

She listed the topics she would cover in her presentation: Expansion (both water supply and wastewater), the Tunnel Redundancy Program, water quality monitoring, and issues affecting water in a broader context including lead in drinking water, contaminants of concern and climate change. She introduced Betsy Homa, Program Manager of Data Analytics in ENQUAL (Environmental Quality) at the MWRA.

MWRA Service Area Expansion

MWRA is interested in expanding water service to new communities. There are three major areas to discuss:

MWRA Operating and Admission Policies

Policies apply to new water and sewer connections or emergency withdrawals (from areas that are not already part of MWRA). There are also state regulations including the MA Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), and the Interbasin Transfer Act.

The Policies (viewable on MWRA's website, [here](#)) include OP.04, a "sewer straddle" policy (the structure must straddle municipal boundaries), and OP.05, communities that request MWRA for emergency water such as the 2016 drought. Emergency customers are those who are not MWRA communities but request MWRA water during times of drought or needed repairs. MWRA does not

approve these water requests until they have been approved by MassDEP. The community requesting the water must have already implemented restrictions on outdoor water usage. Admission of new communities to MWRA water system is addressed in OP.10.

Michael Baram asked who pays for the new connections including emergency ones.

Beth responded that the community who is requesting the connection is responsible for constructing and maintaining the connections.

Beth noted that any expansion of MWRA's current wastewater system needs to be approached carefully given that parts of MWRA's wastewater infrastructure is limited by capacity constraints and efforts to prevent system overflows.

There are many prerequisites before a new community can join the MWRA system, including looking at the community's current system, whether they have a conservation plan in place, if they have local sources of water, if they have regulatory approvals, and if the proper legislation has been enacted. There are also costs associated with joining MWRA including an entrance fee (in addition to the regular cost of water). The Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) sets thresholds that trigger MEPA review for environmental impacts.

Beth reviewed the Interbasin Transfer Act, which governs transfers of water and wastewater outside of the original river basin . If a community wants to join MWRA, an initial question that must be resolved is whether the donor basin has the capability to transfer additional water without harm to existing uses. The application process can be lengthy and complex.

If a community is joining the MWRA, the final review of the application process is with the MWRA Advisory Board, and then to the MWRA Board of Directors.

Bill Fadden suggested that WSCAC have access to applications.

Adriana asked if there is a cap as to how many places MWRA can supply water to.

Beth responded that the MWRA has a registered amount of 300 million gallons/day. Current withdrawal averages 200 mgd though higher withdrawals are common in summer months.

Lexi added that a WSCAC concern is how does MWRA calculate future demand, taking into account potential emergency withdrawal requests due to drought, possible contamination of public wells, infrastructure repairs, the effects of climate change (storm damage) and growth outside the current MWRA service area.

Beth confirmed that MWRA is aware of these increases, and that water usage is monitored closely during these times.

Michael referenced the 2016 drought, when the Quabbin was below 80% capacity, pointing out that we're unable to use the bottom 25-30% of the reservoir. How are the numbers of what we can use calculated?

Beth was unsure of the answer, and would look into it.

Kurt asked how groundwater withdrawals affect reservoirs, referencing Hopkinton, where the reservoir level is affected due to Ashland's well withdrawals.

Beth explained that in that case, the burden is on Hopkinton, and that the towns would have to work that out.

Kurt then asked whether the MWRA attempts to educate the public on water use.

Beth confirmed, saying that there is regular communication with a town that is interested in joining the MWRA system. All MWRA communities are invited to participate in MWRA's school curriculum program for ages K-12.

Beth then mentioned Union Point, a proposed development in Weymouth. In this case, the availability of water supply isn't an issue (although the infrastructure route is a challenge), but wastewater removal is. She noted that any expansion of MWRA's current sewer system needs to be approached carefully given that MWRA wastewater infrastructure is already near capacity. MWRA would, however, work with its communities on these issues.

For example, Crescent Ridge Dairy is looking for wastewater removal. Given that it is a significantly smaller amount, it is likely they will be able to join MWRA's wastewater removal system via Stoughton.

Roger asked whether Deer Island has the capacity for an increase in wastewater.

Beth confirmed that Deer Island does have the capacity, but the issues come from limitations in the infrastructure – the system can only handle so much.

Water Quality

At the recent MWRA Advisory Board meeting, Executive Director Fred Laskey discussed coliform. Federal regulations require 300-500 samples/week to monitor water quality. Betsy Homa explained that if a positive result is found, the MWRA may increase chlorine residuals. Staff is currently looking into areas where multiple coliform hits have been documented.

Kurt asked if there could be a link between stormwater and coliform.

Betsy answered that MWRA is looking at longer-term trends of storm impacts on water sources. In 2018, there was a higher rate of coliform positives, but these seemed to be related to individual communities.

Tunnel Redundancy

The MWRA is currently planning a second set of tunnels (North and South) to ensure a redundant safe and effective water supply to the metro Boston system. These new tunnels, when complete, will allow the original tunnels to be taken off-line and upgraded. Beth discussed the proposed locations of the tunnels and the work that goes into permitting them.

Michael asked about the controls on the tunnels, and whether they'll have redundancy built in as well.

Roger asked about the cost-efficiency of the building process.

Beth pointed out that sections of the tunnel system currently in place now are in need of repair. The new tunnels will make these types of repair possible.

Lexi mentioned that Dave Coppes (MWRA's Chief Operating Officer) has a presentation that describes why this redundancy plan is occurring, and said that WSCAC will invite him to return with that presentation.

Issues to Watch

Beth concluded by listing issues to be closely watched, including climate, stormwater, blending, lead in drinking water, emerging contaminants, and Waters of the US (a federal Clean Water Act reference).

Kurt inquired about the status of the Pam Am railroad that passes over the Wachusett Reservoir.

Beth said that the discussion with the Governor's office is ongoing but nothing has been determined at this point.

Michael asked about isolating that part of the Wachusett, so to ensure that it's impermeable.

Beth said she'll look into that, and respond.

Michael then asked if there had been a recent change in the marketing of sludge.

Beth explained that land application of sludge is regulated both at the federal and state level. Until recently the MassDEP has had more conservative standards, but they've recently revised them. In the meantime, new legislation has increased regulations on phosphorus as a fertilizer. However, regulations are on the user, not the seller. UMass may do a study that will provide clearer guidelines.

Roger asked if there was any interest from MWRA in promoting greywater use.

Beth explained that the MassDEP rules don't allow much flexibility, but if this changes, MWRA would be interested in reviewing greywater use.

Bill Fadden returned to the Union Point development, asking where the MWRA connection would be.

Beth said that the options for providing MWRA water to Union Point would involve long and expensive pipe routes given that the Town of Weymouth cannot provide the amount of water required for a development of this size. A second concern is the amount of wastewater generated and where it will go for treatment.

Michael thanked Beth and Betsy for the presentation.

The meeting was adjourned.

**WSCAC will meet on November 13, 2018 at 10:00 AM at the MWRA Facilities in Southborough.
Please [visit our website](#) for more information on this meeting.**