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OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday, April 1, 2024 at 10:30 AM

REMOTE

[Zoom \(www.mwraadvisoryboard.com/event\)](https://www.mwraadvisoryboard.com/event)

(pursuant to An Act Relative to Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency suspending certain provisions of the open meeting law)

AGENDA

- A. Roll call attendance [5 min]
- B. Lead and Copper Rule Revisions and possible Lead Loan Program update [45 min]
- C. Approval of the minutes from January 5, 2024
- D. New business
- E. Adjournment [5 min]

I certify on this date, Notice was Posted as "MWRA Advisory Board Operations Committee Meeting" at [mwraadvisoryboard.com](https://www.mwraadvisoryboard.com) and emailed to regs@sec.state.ma.us, Melissa.Andrade@state.ma.us

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew A. Romero'.

Matthew A. Romero, Executive Director
Date Posted on Website: 03-22-2023



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Matthew A. Romero
Executive Director



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Friday January 5, 2024
Remote Connection via Zoom
10:30 AM

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

A. Roll Call Attendance

A commencing roll call voted as follows:

Michael Rademacher	Here (remote)
Elena Proakis-Ellis	Here (remote)
Rich Raiche	Here (remote)
Sam Stivers	Here (remote)
Chase Berkeley	Here (remote)

B. Local Water System Assistance Program Phase 4

Jon Szarek, MWRA’s Senior Program Manager, presented on the Local Water System Assistance Program (LWSAP), which achieves the goal of maintaining high quality water from the MWRA distribution system through funding community water system rehabilitation projects, the majority of which are water main lining projects. The program has funded the lining of nearly 600 miles of community water mains to date. Three funding phases totaling \$725 million have been approved. Funding allocations are based on a community’s percent share of water charge and percent share of unlined pipe. All funding distributions are interest-free loans with a 10-year loan repayment schedule. \$563 million has been distributed covering 529 local water system improvement projects. Phase 1 distributed \$220 million from FY01 through FY13, Phase 2 has distributed \$210 million and runs from FY11 through FY25, and Phase 3 has \$293 million allocated and runs from FY18 through FY30. Only 8 of the 47 water communities have Phase 2 funds remaining, prompting discussions of adding a potential Phase 4 funding stage as FY25 completes.

Total funding to communities is distributed on a yearly basis divided by ten so as not to have larger communities taking all their money at once, distressing MWRA’s borrowing capacity. If a community does not use a particular fund total in a year it will get rolled over into the next fiscal year, which may enable bigger projects to be undertaken.

Stephen Estes-Smargiassi, MWRA’s Director of Planning and Sustainability, spoke on the reasoning behind why the water loan program has traditionally been a 0% loan while the sewer program has been a grant-loan structure. At its inception, the water program was targeted towards the amount share of total unlined pipe for a community, and therefore was not equally distributed and instead



35 was targeted. The wastewater program is proportionate to community share of billing, essentially
36 money coming back to the community proportionate to what they put in.

37
38 *{a motion to recommend Phase 4 of \$300 million start in FY25 as proposed by MWRA staff was put*
39 *forth, motioned by Rich Raiche and seconded by Sam Stivers. It was added to the omnibus vote at*
40 *the end of the meeting}*

41 42 **C. I/I Local Financial Assistance Program loan-only Phase 15**

43 Jon Szarek presented on the I/I Local Financial Assistance Program, which is intended to
44 rehabilitate local source systems and the long-term reduction of I/I quantities going into the
45 regional source system. The program achieves this through the funding of community
46 rehabilitation projects along with I/I reduction, planning, and engineering design services. To date,
47 the board has approved 14 funding phases totaling \$861 million, beginning in FY93. This total is
48 made up of grants and interest-free loans. Funding allocations are based on a community's percent
49 share surcharge. Grant/loan phases are distributed as 75% grants and 25% interest-free loans with
50 a 10-year repayment schedule. Loan-only phases are intended as stopgaps between grant-loan
51 phases, as demonstrated with Phase 13. \$551 million has been distributed to date, covering nearly
52 700 local I/I identification and rehabilitation projects, with over 80% of the funds going to the
53 rehab projects.

54
55 As of December 2023, two communities (Milton and Newton) have depleted their funds, which has
56 prompted discussion of adding a \$100 million Phase 15 loan-only program as a stopgap. This would
57 allow communities that are amid projects, or have priority projects, to proceed while the rest of
58 the communities spend their grant-loan funds. The proposed loan-only Phase 15 would be
59 optional. Elena Proakis-Ellis raised concern that adding a loan-only phase may push back the next
60 potential grant/loan phase and noted that there was a lag getting to the grant/loan Phase 14 when
61 the loan-only Phase 13 was introduced. These concerns would be alleviated if a grant/loan Phase
62 16 were preemptively introduced.

63
64 *{a motion was put forth to suggest a Phase 15 loan-only program for FY25 coupled with a Phase 16*
65 *grant/loan program of \$125 million for FY26. Rich Raiche motioned and Sam Stivers seconded the*
66 *motion, adding it to the omnibus vote at the end of the meeting}*

67 68 **D. Lead Loan Program update**

69 Jon Szarek gave an introduction on the Lead Service Line Replacement Loan Program, which was
70 initiated in FY17 at \$100 million and provides interest-free loans for local lead service line inventory
71 identification and replacement projects. There are no preset community allocations, and each
72 community can develop its own program tailored to their circumstances. It's estimated that MWRA
73 communities contain nearly 16,000 lead service lines, nearly 2,000 goose necks, and 7,000
74 unknown service line sources. \$41 million in lead loans have been distributed to 17 communities,
75 replacing nearly 4,300 lead service lines in addition to doing inventories and identification projects.

76
77 Stephen Estes-Smargiassi presented further on the program. Corrosion control, pH adjustment, and





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78 alkalinity adjustment were introduced in 1996 resulting in an 80% to 90% reduction in lead levels,
79 depending on the year. These results are from first-draw samples in homes considered high-risk for
80 having lead. The EPA introduced proposed regulations which will be promulgated in final by the
81 end of 2024 which would reduce the lead action level from 15 to 10 parts per billion (ppb), which is
82 likely to impact some MWRA communities. Sampling procedures for lead service lines may also
83 change, which will cause lead levels as they're monitored and reported to increase. EPA will also be
84 mandating replacement of all lead service lines within 10 years of when the regulation goes into
85 effect, which will shift service line replacement from being triggered by lead level to eliminating
86 lead lines entirely.

87
88 If a lead reading is above the action level, MWRA may need to make changes in corrosion control
89 by adding orthophosphate to the system, which once introduced will need to be perpetuated into
90 the future. There is aversion to this method as lead lines may need to ultimately be replaced, thus
91 spending money on adding a new chemical with the capital infrastructure needed to add it into the
92 treatment process is costly. The MWRA has conducted a pilot program taking samples of
93 communities with lead service lines using the EPA's proposed new standards. They are looking at
94 differences in lead levels between homes with lead service lines versus homes with copper and
95 lead solder. Most of the elevated samples are coming from homes with lead service lines.
96 Communities that have funded the private portion of service line replacement have had greater
97 success at convincing homeowners to participate in full replacement. Expect future discussion of a
98 possible introduction of a new replacement program which encourages full replacement.

99
100 Orthophosphate builds up a film of lead phosphate on the interior of lead service lines which acts
101 as an effective corrosion control. However, it is also a pollutant and not something wanted in
102 wastewater.

103 E. New business

104
105 Matthew Romero reported that the Advisory Board and MWRA staff are in early discussions about
106 establishing TRAC fees and their potential increase over the next five years. Several years ago, it
107 was recommended to tie TRAC fees to an index, such as the consumer price index, but this was
108 determined that it was not feasible. Instead, a five-year plan of incremental increases was
109 introduced. As we are in the 5th year of this plan, we are beginning conversations for the next five-
110 year plan.

111 F. Omnibus Vote/Adjournment

112
113 *{a motion to adjourn was put forward, motioned by Elena Proakis-Ellis and seconded by Sam Stivers.*
114 *It was added to the omnibus vote at the end of the meeting}*

115
116 An omnibus roll call vote took place including the following:

- 117 - to recommend Phase 4 of \$300 million start in FY25 as proposed by MWRA staff
- 118 - to suggest a Phase 15 loan-only program for FY25 coupled with a Phase 16 grant-loan
- 119 program of \$125 million for FY26.





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120 - meeting adjournment

121
122 The roll call vote was as follows:
123

Michael Rademacher	Yes (remote)
Elena Proakis-Ellis	Yes (remote)
Rich Raiche	Yes (remote)
Sam Stivers	Yes (remote)
Chase Berkeley	Yes (remote)

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128
129 Respectfully submitted,
130 Michael Rademacher, Secretary
131

132 These minutes reflect the discussion of the meeting. The Advisory Board maintains audio recordings of Executive
133 Committee meetings that are available upon request.
134

DRAFT

