



Advocacy & Accountability

Representing over 3 million people in Massachusetts since 1985

Thursday, June 13, 2024
Remote Connection via Zoom
10:00 AM

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

A. Roll Call Attendance

A commencing roll call voted as follows:

Name	Community	Vote
Michael Rademacher	Arlington	Here (remote)
Jay Hersey	Brookline	Here (remote)
David Pavlik	Lexington	Here (remote)
Yem Lip	Malden	Here (remote)
Elena Proakis Ellis	Melrose	Here (remote)
Nicholas Rystrom	Revere	Here (remote)
Richard Raiche	Somerville	Here (remote)
Sam Stivers	Southborough	Here (remote)
John P. DeAmicis	Stoneham	Here (remote)
Maurice Handel	MAPC	Here (remote)

Also in attendance:

Lou Taverna, Andy Pappastergion

B. Executive Director's report

Matthew Romero noted that the Massachusetts's House included \$1 billion for MWRA system expansion in its version of the housing bill. The language as proposed essentially limits funding to the South Shore. He also noted that the Quabbin Equity bill that the Advisory Board had submitted testimony on and included in the annual Comments & Recommendations report has been voted favorably out of committee and has moved on to Ways & Means. The Advisory Board will be reworking testimony to submit to Ways & Means, particularly on the per gallon charge to emphasize why this is a bad idea. The community template letter will be updated and sent out to MWRA water communities asking them to submit testimony to Ways & Means.

The moratorium on forestry has been officially lifted. It lasted over a year rather than the initial 6-months. The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has ten approved plots they can continue their forestry operations on. The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) took to heart the perspective that water supply forestry is different than other types of forestry. The majority of DCR's



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Matthew A. Romero
Executive Director



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forestry programs will be able to continue as structured on water supply lands. EEA and DCR are still working out the details of the Commonwealth's requirement to designate 10% of the State's forests as reserves.

Matthew also addressed the DCR rangers' loss of the ability to issue citations on watershed lands at a recent Water Supply Protection Trust (WSPT) meeting. Although legislation is preventing citation issuance, the Advisory Board intends to keep attention on this issue to navigate discussion toward reviving this ability in some fashion, or at least mitigating the repercussions of potential increased violations because of enforcement loss.

C. **Advisory Board annual independent audit**

The Advisory Board was in the process of finalizing the FY23 audit last fall, but after the passing of James Guioed this was put on hold. John Sullivan and Matthew Romero have since signed the receipt of the audit so that the CPA can now finalize it. At the end of September, the FY24 audit process will begin. The final report should be on schedule sometime this fall 2024. Maurice Handel noted that there seemed to be an unusually high expenditure rate. This is attributed to accrued vacation time payouts to previous Advisory Board Executive Director Joe Favoloro.

D. **Advisory Board FY25 meeting schedule**

The FY25 meeting schedule for Executive Committee and Advisory Board meetings has been finalized. Maria Belen Power, Undersecretary of Environmental Justice & Equity, will be speaking at the June 27th, 2024 Advisory Board meeting providing insight into the Administration's environmental justice goals and activities. The MWRA will present on the same issues immediately afterward, which dovetails with the MWRA's Lead Service Line Removal Program as it relates to environmental justice communities that are most affected.

E. **Advisory Board summer field trip**

This year the focus will be on wastewater, kicking off with a tour of the New England Fertilizer Company pellet plant in Quincy, followed by a tour of the Nut Island Headworks. Following the fire at Nut Island in 2016, many facility improvements have taken place. These field trips give perspective to communities as to the scope and scale of facilities and operations. An RSVP form will be sent out for those wishing to attend. The field trip will be on August 22, 2024. David Pavlik noted that these types of events give communities a chance for in person conversation and collaboration.

F. **Consent agenda items**

- Approval of the Advisory Board meeting minutes from May 9, 2024
- Approval of the June 27, 2024, Advisory Board meeting agenda

A motion was made to approve the consent agenda items. It was moved by Maurice Handel, seconded by Rich Raiche, and added to the omnibus vote at the end of the meeting.

G. **New business**



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Matthew A. Romero
Executive Director



None.

H. Executive Director annual evaluation

Matthew Romero provided a list of annual accomplishments, as his predecessor had done in the past. He noted the unusual year but felt the Advisory Board had bounced back and he plans on building on this foundation. He also noted that Nathan Côté will be joining the Advisory Board as a full-time staffer after his co-op ends.

Michael Rademacher noted that the year had been challenging staffing-wise with the passing of James Guidi, but that Matt did a great job keeping the place going. Maurice Handel also noted challenges such as moving out of Charlestown, Joe Favoloro's retirement, and the continuing effects of COVID. Despite these challenges, Mr. Handel thought the Advisory Board had a stellar year. Rich Raiche appreciated the summary of annual accomplishments, which helped put into perspective how much the Advisory Board had done that year. He also appreciated Matt's deference to how his predecessor would have done things and noted that now Matt can really own the position. Jay Hersey suggested finding ways to get back into in-person meetings, starting with the Executive Committee. David Pavlik concurred, offering Lexington as an in-person meeting venue.

Michael Rademacher noted that Matt's contract allows for a salary increase but does not provide an automatic percentage. The increase must be decided by the Executive Committee. Sometimes this increase is tied to Fred Laskey's percentage increase. He also noted that Matt has unused vacation time that will be lost if he does not use it. As Matt's ability to take a vacation was hampered by the challenges noted above, a one-time vacation balance carryover beyond the amount allowed in his contract was suggested. A 4% salary increase starting July 1, 2024, was agreed upon, with a one-time vacation balance carryover. The 4% increase will be reevaluated in September 2024 as it relates to MWRA salary increases.

A motion was made for a 4% salary increase with a one-time vacation balance carryover to take place July 1, 2024, with a potential reevaluation in September 2024. It was moved by Maurice Handel, seconded by Rich Raiche, and added to the omnibus vote at the end of the meeting.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made. It was moved by Maurice Handel, seconded by Rich Raiche, and added to the omnibus vote at the end of the meeting.

I. Omnibus and Adjournment

An omnibus vote took place on the following items:

- Approval of the consent agenda items.
- A 4% salary increase for Matthew Romero with one-time vacation balance carryover to take place July 1, 2024, with a potential reevaluation in September 2024.
- Adjournment of the meeting





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The roll call vote was as follows:

Name	Community	Vote
Michael Rademacher	Arlington	Yes (remote)
Jay Hersey	Brookline	Yes (remote)
David Pavlik	Lexington	Yes (remote)
Yem Lip	Malden	Yes (remote)
Elena Proakis Ellis	Melrose	Yes (remote)
Nicholas Rystrom	Revere	Yes (remote)
Richard Raiche	Somerville	Yes (remote)
Sam Stivers	Southborough	Yes (remote)
John P. DeAmicis	Stoneham	Yes (remote)
Maurice Handel	MAPC	Yes (remote)

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Raiche, Advisory Board Secretary

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

