Thursday, May 8, 2025
Hybrid Meeting
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)
John Sullivan	Boston	Here (remote)
Jay Hersey	Brookline	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
Maurice Handel	MAPC	Here (remote)

Also in attendance:
Christine Bennett, Nathan Coté, Matthew Romero, Keira Kishnani, Lou Taverna, Andy Pappastergion, Joe Foti, Colleen Rizzi, Hillary Monahan, James Finegan, Anne Malenfant, Jennifer Johnson, John Scnenna, Trevor McProud

Note: *Due to scheduling conflicts, certain agenda items were taken out of order to accommodate presenter availability.*

B. G. Action Item: Nomination of an Advisory Board Representative to the MWRA Board of Directors

Chair Richard Raiche introduced the action item to nominate an Advisory Board representative to the MWRA Board of Directors for a three-year term beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2028. He requested a motion for the Executive Committee, serving as the nominating committee, to nominate Joe Foti for reappointment.

Mr. Sam Stivers moved the nomination, which was seconded by Mr. John Sullivan of Boston. Mr. Raiche noted that Mr. Foti was the only applicant and invited discussion.

Mr. Foti addressed the committee, expressing his continued commitment to the role and to representing member communities effectively. He emphasized the productive collaboration among the three Advisory Board representatives on the MWRA Board and stated that he remains dedicated to advocating for the interests of the communities served.

Mr. Andy Pappastergion spoke in support of the nomination, highlighting the value of continuity and institutional knowledge on the MWRA Board. He noted Mr. Foti's longstanding service and effectiveness in advancing Advisory Board positions.

Mr. Lou Taverna also voiced support, underscoring the strong working relationship among the three representatives and the importance of maintaining a unified voice on the Board of Directors. He affirmed the group's alignment on most issues and its effectiveness during recent personnel transitions at MWRA.

With no further discussion or objections, Mr. Raiche confirmed that the nomination would be included in the omnibus roll call vote. Mr. Foti thanked the committee for adjusting the agenda to accommodate his scheduling conflict.

C. E. Action Item: Approval of Lynnfield Center Water District's Application for MWRA Membership

Chair Richard Raiche introduced the item concerning the Lynnfield Center Water District's (LCWD) application for full membership in the MWRA water system. Mr. Matthew Romero provided background based on the prior Operations Committee meeting, noting that the application was submitted under MWRA Policy OP.10 and is supported by all required regulatory reviews—except for a pending legislative requirement. The Operations Committee voted to recommend approval contingent upon passage of H.972 as presented at the Operations Committee meeting, the enabling legislation required for LCWD's admission.

Mr. Romero also clarified that if the legislation does not pass as presented, the application would need to return to the Advisory Board for a new vote. He noted that LCWD requested a vote in advance to avoid delays, given that the Advisory Board does not meet in the summer. He further explained that emergency access to MWRA water would be possible through OP.5 protocols once infrastructure is completed, anticipated by June.

Ms. Colleen Rizzi, MWRA Director of Environmental and Regulatory Affairs, provided a detailed presentation on the LCWD application. She described the district's supply and quality challenges—including limited redundancy, elevated manganese and PFAS levels, and summer supply limitations. She noted that the connection to MWRA via Wakefield would improve system resiliency and function as a fifth source, and that LCWD is requesting a waiver of the MWRA entrance fee due to these pressing needs.

Ms. Rizzi also reviewed projected water demand figures, which include a daily average of 0.28 MGD and a maximum day demand of 0.36 MGD, with a provision to request up to 0.83 MGD in emergency situations. She confirmed that regulatory approvals are complete from MEPA, MassDEP, and the Water Resources Commission, and that an intermunicipal agreement is in place between LCWD and Wakefield.

Ms. Anne Malenfant of CDM Smith, the district's consultant, presented technical findings from the blending analysis. The analysis showed no expected compliance concerns, including corrosion control or disinfection by-product (DBP) formation. She emphasized that the district has a strong flushing program and will update routine monitoring practices once the new supply is active.

Mr. James Finegan, representing the Town of Lynnfield, expressed support for the application and affirmed that the other water district serving Lynnfield fully backs LCWD's membership request. Mr. Romero confirmed that a support letter was included in the meeting materials.

A motion was made to recommend that the Advisory Board approve LCWD's admission to the MWRA waterworks pursuant to MWRA's Policy #OP.10 and contingent on the passage of H.972 as presented with the meeting materials and final MWRA Board of Directors' approval. It was moved by Maurice Handel, seconded by Sam Stivers, and moved to the omnibus roll call vote at the end of the meeting.

D. B. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Matthew Romero provided an update on several ongoing initiatives:

He began by addressing long-standing Advisory Board member vacancies. With a fuller staff now in place, the Advisory Board will resume efforts to fill open seats. Mr. Romero noted that since the adoption of remote meetings and bylaw changes allowing designees to appoint proxy voters, attendance has improved significantly. He expressed optimism that the Advisory Board can build on this momentum to achieve broader participation.

Mr. Romero also reported outreach to the Governor's office regarding vacant gubernatorial appointee positions. While the Advisory Board does not count vacant gubernatorial seats toward quorum, filled seats that remain inactive can complicate quorum attainment—particularly during Board of Directors elections. He emphasized the importance of appointing members who are committed to participating actively and consistently.

Lastly, Mr. Romero addressed the pending request from the Town of Reading regarding potential reimbursement for entrance fee payments. Although MWRA has provided the relevant information, the item will be deferred to the June meeting due to a full agenda this month. He indicated the Reading representative would be invited to participate when the item is taken up.

E. C. Legislative Update

Matthew Romero began the legislative update by reviewing the Senate Ways and Means Committee's version of the state budget. He noted that the current draft does not include MWRA debt service assistance and appears to have removed key language typically used to secure $500,000 in support for Clinton. MWRA staff are reviewing whether this omission was intentional or a drafting oversight.

He also reported that the Advisory Board submitted testimony in support of the proposed wipes legislation, which is continuing to advance.

Turning to the proposed Quabbin legislation, Mr. Romero invited Mr. Andy Pappastergion to provide an update from the April MWRA Board of Directors meeting, where the matter was discussed informally. Mr. Pappastergion explained that while no action was taken, the Advisory Board delivered a presentation and submitted a detailed opposition letter outlining financial and policy concerns. He encouraged ensuring that the legislature has a copy of the Advisory Board's position, regardless of the Board of Directors' future actions.

Mr. Pappastergion noted that the legislation, if enacted, could significantly affect Boston and other MWRA communities. He highlighted the uncertainty surrounding how key Board members—including the Governor's appointees and City of Boston representatives—may vote on the matter. He added that any action by the Board of Directors could be politically sensitive and encouraged continued awareness and preparedness.

Mr. Romero added that one of the gubernatorial appointees had suggested forming a working group to further review the proposal. He also confirmed that the sponsor of the legislation had submitted a response letter to MWRA, and there is a possibility the topic could return to the Board's agenda in May or June.

To assist communities, Mr. Romero stated that the Advisory Board is preparing template letters and individualized cost estimates, which communities can adapt and submit to the legislature. The goal is to amplify opposition to the proposal by helping communities clearly communicate its local fiscal impacts. The Advisory Board will also adapt its letter into formal testimony for legislative hearings and incorporate the position into the FY26 Comments & Recommendations.

Chair Richard Raiche emphasized the importance of sharing cost impacts with Advisory Board members so they can effectively communicate with their local legislative delegations.

F. D. Presentation – Comments & Recommendations on MWRA's Proposed FY26 CIP and CEB

Executive Director Matthew Romero presented a preliminary overview of the Advisory Board's draft Comments & Recommendations (C&R) on MWRA's Proposed FY26 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and Current Expense Budget (CEB). He noted that final numbers were received from

MWRA the previous afternoon and that the full, formatted report will be finalized in time for the Advisory Board's vote next week.

CEB Recommendations:
Mr. Romero reviewed updated spring revisit items, which reflect contract pricing updates and other late-cycle adjustments. The Advisory Board recommends applying a vacancy rate adjustment of 42 FTEs, translating to ≈$5.8 million in savings, based on continued staffing shortfalls. These savings would reduce the combined rate revenue requirement increase from 2.98% to 2.70%. The Advisory Board recommends that surplus personnel savings be redirected to pension and OPEB contributions, rather than defeasance, unless explicitly budgeted as such. The presentation also emphasized the need for transparent budgeting practices aligned with stated funding purposes.

CIP Recommendations:
On the capital side, Mr. Romero highlighted cost escalation risks, particularly at Deer Island, and recommended that MWRA revisit project cost estimates—especially for out-year projects—using inflation or risk factors if necessary. He cited the need for accurate long-term rate projections and called for reconvening the Long-Term Rates Management Committee to evaluate future implications, including for the potentially $4.7 billion CSO program and Metro Tunnel Redundancy Project the costs of which are also projected to be in the billions of dollars.

Policy Recommendations:
Mr. Romero outlined several policy items, including continued opposition to the Quabbin legislation, support for restoring citation authority for DCR Rangers, and a recommendation that MWRA collaborate with DCR via the Water Supply Protection Trust to pursue improvements.

Christine Bennett, Policy & Program Manager, then presented the Advisory Board's recommendations on watershed forestry. She emphasized the need for improved public communication, greater transparency in operations, and the value of active forest management to promote ecological resilience. She also recommended that DCR support a third-party review of long-term forest health using existing data, ideally in partnership with an academic institution.

Mr. Lou Taverna acknowledged the longstanding debate surrounding forestry management and noted that while MWRA leadership has applied pressure for transparency in the past, the issue remains politically sensitive.

The presentation concluded with a discussion of system expansion. Mr. Romero recommended exploring financing mechanisms to assist new entrants with high connection costs—such as betterment assessments—while ensuring MWRA ratepayers are made whole.

A motion was made to recommend that the Advisory Board approve the Comments & Recommendations on the MWRA's proposed FY26 CIP and CEB as presented. It was moved by

Maurice Handel, seconded by Elena Proakis Ellis, and added to the omnibus roll call vote at the end of the meeting.

G. F. Action Item: Advisory Board FY26 Operating Budget

Executive Director Matthew Romero presented the Advisory Board's proposed FY26 operating budget, noting that it is largely unchanged from the draft reviewed the previous month. Key updates include the return to a full complement of four full-time employees and the proposed addition of a part-time administrative assistant.

Mr. Romero explained that the new administrative role would help manage internal financial and administrative tasks such as payroll, accounts payable, and paid time off tracking—functions currently being handled by one of the full-time staff analysts. The goal is to reallocate those duties to free up analytical capacity for higher-level projects. He added that he has identified a qualified candidate with prior experience working with him at the Massport Community Advisory Committee (MCAC), who is certified as a Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official (MCPPO) and may contribute in additional areas as needed.

He also confirmed that the Advisory Board will continue participating in Northeastern University's co-op program, with a new student joining in July.

A motion was made to recommend that the Advisory Board approve and adopt the Advisory Board's FY26 Operating Budget as presented and filed with the records of the meeting. It was moved by Maurice Handel, seconded by Elena Proakis Ellis, and added to the omnibus roll call vote at the end of the meeting.

H. Approval of the May 15, 2025 Advisory Board meeting agenda

A motion was made to approve the Advisory Board meeting agenda for May 15, 2025. It was moved by Maurice Handel, seconded by Elena Proakis Ellis, and added to the omnibus roll call vote at the end of the meeting.

I. **Approval of the Executive Committee meeting minutes from April 10, 2025**

A motion was made to approve the Executive Committee meeting minutes, both open and Executive Session, from April 10, 2025. It was moved by Maurice Handel, seconded by Sam Stivers, and added to the omnibus roll call vote at the end of the meeting.

J. New Business

None.

K. Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. It was moved by Maurice Handel, seconded by Michael Rademacher, and added to the omnibus roll call vote at the end of the meeting.

L. Omnibus Roll Call Vote

A motion to take an omnibus roll call vote was put forth. It was moved by Maurice Handel and seconded by David Manugian.

An omnibus vote took place on the following items:

- Nomination of Joe Foti as an Advisory Board representative to the MWRA Board of Directors to serve for the term from July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2028
- To recommend that the Advisory Board approve LCWD's admission to the MWRA waterworks system pursuant to MWRA's Policy #OP.10 and contingent on the passage of H.972 as presented with the meeting materials and final MWRA Board of Directors approval
- To recommend that the Advisory Board approve the Comments & Recommendations on the MWRA's proposed FY26 CIP and CEB as presented
- To recommend that the Advisory Board approve and adopt the Advisory Board's FY26 Operating Budget as presented and filed with the records of the meeting.
- To approve the Advisory Board meeting agenda for May 15, 2025
- To approve the Executive Committee meeting minutes from April 10, 2025
- Adjournment of the meeting.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Name	Community	Vote
Michael Rademacher	Arlington	Yes (remote)
John Sullivan	Boston	Yes (remote)
Jay Hersey	Brookline	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

Respectfully submitted,

David Manugian

David Manugian, 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.