

DRAFT
Minutes
June 5, 2015

The Wastewater Advisory Committee to the MWRA met at the MAPC conference room, 60 Temple Place

Attendees/Contributors:

WAC: Stephen Greene (chair), Taber Keally (vice-chair), Mary Adelstein, Travis Ahern, Karen Lachmayr, Beth Miller, Martin Pillsbury, Dan Winograd

Guests: Wendy Leo (MWRA), James Pappas

Staff: Andreae Downs (WAC),

FUTURE MEETING DATES/TOPICS

NEXT: Sept. 17, MWRA year ahead, jointly with Advisory Board, location TBD

VOTES: May 1 minutes approved.

- Karen Golmer nomination for membership approved.
- Authorization for Stephen Greene to sign the WAC contract approved.

UPDATES: Beth Miller summarized the residuals presentation given at the May Advisory Board meeting. She noted the new contract extension (5 years) will lower the cost of the pellet contract. Pellets are used in turf farms, on golf courses. NEFCo sells 32,000 tons/year. 1% of their production is sold or given away by MWRA as Bay State Fertilizer 100 tons/year (Andreae brought a sample of the bags used for this). While pellets can be sold in state for 2/3 of the year (because of the Molybdenum level set by state regulation), only 5% is now. NEFCo's VP of Operations, Manuel Irujo, said he would like it be 30%, which would reduce 80,000 miles traveled/year or 13,000 gallons of diesel fuel.

TA: NEFCo would save the money here, but when the contract is re-bid, it would make the contract more attractive.

Land application gives NEFCo the least amount of profit. Selling to blenders, like Scotts Turf Blender, which takes pellets and blends them with other materials & puts on a name brand, is more profitable.

Why are more pellets not sold in-state now, when it's legal to sell 60% of the time?

TA: because the high demand is in the spring, when Mb levels are out of compliance with state limits for land application. Storing it is difficult and potentially dangerous.

SG: There's probably also a psychological factor—if it's restricted part of the time, why even worry or think about it? Other advantage is that the great cost of shipping it long distances goes away.

AD: Part of the reason for the 5-year extension was also to give a competitor to NEFCo time to find its footing before the next contract.

Also, Karen G has been in touch with MWRA's Denise Breitneicher about which industries to contact about lowering Mb levels. Karen thinks she can help talk to users about alternatives to Mb.

The Advisory Board recommends TRAC start looking at restricting Mb in waste water flows.

TA: thinks the DEP may raise the limit. Rachel Madden (formerly of MWRA) is spearheading that effort.

SG: Suggestion that work with Associated Industries of Massachusetts to work cooperatively for mutual benefit (lower costs for AIM, lower costs for NEFCo)

MP: Agribusiness is another stakeholder. MAPC is creating first-ever Food System Plan state-wide that looks at inputs, such as energy, nutrients. Lot of folks aren't keyed in to. But if this were available cheaply and locally, might be of great interest. The Dept. of Agriculture might weigh in.

SG: Another thing to know: Regular commercial fertilizers have all sorts of things in them.

AD: One thing WAC may want to look into is the background levels of metals in normal NE soils, composted manure in the store, Scotts Turfbuilder and other soil amendments, as a comparison to Bay State Fertilizer. Seems unfair.

WL: know these meet Class A standards, but don't know if these other fertilizers do.

Why is AB suggesting MA up its limit to 40? Is that from NY?

TA: yes. The person who did the NY study said 40 is a conservative limit. Ruminants will not be harmed if you apply at this level or below. We're having him address the DEP.

WL: But with the governor's stance, MA could jump to 75, as that's the EPA limit.

TA: don't think it will. MA is at 25—10 for pastureland. Then there's HI at 25, NH at 35 and NY at 40. We believe the science supports 40.

MA: So why is it set at 25?

TA: that was an interim limit in 1993. They thought the EPA would re-set its interim limit, but nobody revisited it.

MP: Did they have any science to support the lower limit?

TA: No. We asked, but the person who had set it had retired, and did not leave any notes.

AD: Sample bag has the words "organic nitrogen" on it; using the word "organic" has caused trouble for the MWRA in the past (1990s law suit threat)

TA: Get around that by using "organic nitrogen" Plastic bags of BSF are now at Lowe's

KL: you can get it for free—pick up in Quincy

MP—there's phosphorus, and a limitation on that it fertilizer

TA: yes, but it doesn't leach as much as commercial fertilizers

AD: have they explored selling to DCR?

BM: can we have the folks who use fertilizers come talk to us?

MWRA: WL: the first trial shut-down of part of the north Main pump station for 4 hours occurred recently. The system responded as the model predicted, which is good. The next dry week will see another 4-hour trial shut down of another part of the system, as we continue to make sure everything acts as expected.

Because of maintenance to the harbor electrical line feeding Deer Island, the plant ran on generators all week.

MWRA bought 380,000 gallons of diesel (at a seasonal discount) to keep such generators running, which means about 40 trucks with police escorts will go through Winthrop. The plant can run 30 days if power were cut off—if all its tanks are full.

May hit a record low for flow at Deer Island.

Advisory Board:

Co-permittees in the NPDES permit The Charles River Pollution Control District communities (a small upriver group of municipalities that share a wastewater treatment plant) lost their appeal with the Environmental Appeals Board and decided not to appeal beyond that. This may set precedent. The Clinton permit, which has co-permittees in the draft, may be next, or EPA may be looking to set further precedent. The AB thinks MWRA should appeal as far as necessary. Because the MWRA Board has changed so much this year, AB recommended that staff present a background briefing on the issue to the MWRA Board soon.

(The issue with including contributing municipalities into the NPDES permit is that it would make MWRA EPA's enforcer, rather than a collaborator with the municipalities)

MP: requested the staff summary on this be sent to WAC as soon as it is public.

Primacy: With the pending MS4 stormwater permits, AB brought up the issue of primacy again - removing direct EPA oversight and allowing the state DEP to do so. It had been studied before, but found to be too expensive. AB would like to study again.

Co-Digestion: AB recommendation this year is to make sure the economics of the pilot or the program work before spending ratepayer funds. Want data on organics—who is taking them and at what price? Will a tipping fee be feasible?

MA—WAC may want MWRA to just cover expenses—not lose money.

TA: AB position is before we spend ratepayer funds to construct a new system, want to be sure there's non-rate revenue to help out ratepayers coming in on the back end.

WL: Because MWRA is taking the risk.

KL—agrees with MA.

SG—Careful that we don't want to create an enterprise center, but certainly don't want costs borne by rate payers if the capital investment never pans out.

TA: AB doesn't oppose Co-digestion, but while it's a great initiative, it's a state initiative, AB thinks therefore the state should pay for it. Wants to know how collection and disposal of food waste is going. And waste management also doesn't want to take on the risk; they want the state to cut them a check.

MP: conceivably, as the ban remains in place, increasingly, folks will find other places to put this material, and it could eat into the market.

AD: I asked Dave Duest Wednesday about the competition on the south shore and RI. He said the trucking distances were still large. Lawrence, also starting co-di, still hasn't built a digester yet.

MA: I'd like an update on collection and disposal costs for food waste.

Chairman's report: Stephen noted that he would be happy to step down as chair of WAC.

Wanted to open the position up to anyone interested. Beth Miller said she would be. SG said he would look to formalize this at the next regular meeting. Andreae suggested that Tabor take the chairmanship for a year, with Stephen mentoring, and Beth take vice-chair for a year, again with mentoring from Taber. She also requested that signature authority extend to 2 people, so WAC's monthly financial business could proceed smoothly despite vacations and such.

Committee members added thanks to AD and SG on good year's (and years) of work.

Director's report: Highlights of WAC's past year include a mercury regulation comment letter, a presence in several smaller publications, an updated and expanded WAC handbook, reports and several well-attended meetings.

Planning for FY2016:

MA: asked if WAC could meet in early Dec. instead of early Jan., which would allow her to attend yet one more meeting.

After discussion, WAC agreed to move the January meeting to the first Friday in December.

Stormwater: AB is recommending a working group to work on public education materials that could be shared by many municipalities.

AD: Interested in costs & benefits of different kinds of stormwater infrastructure.

MP: MAPC and NePRWA are in the second year of a 2-year grant to create a toolkit for education and financing of stormwater infrastructure. The looming MS4 permit has municipalities looking at fees to finance. Want to replicate the materials for the 7 watersheds within MAPC. WAC could publicize, help pull together resources. Could do a presentation on the Neponsit effort. Utility fees based on impervious service—norm at the national level.

North System Hydraulics & capacity?

Will preliminary monitoring design for **CSO progress** be ready this year? Or a wrap-up of the program & where it goes from here—maybe in the spring? Andreae will ask Dave Kubiak of MWRA.

Suggestion that WAC look at what **primacy** would mean for the state and DEP, including financially. Invite watersheds in as well as DEP.

Decision not to get another maintenance presentation this year.

High interest in **TRAC**—how they develop local limits, metal & contaminant levels in residuals and other soil amendments such as Milorganite and topsoil, Mb regulations & reduction Fertilizer customers—review what they use and why? Trade associations in NE for field turf, NepRWA—biosolids. Beneficial re-use of sludge?

Co-digestion still of interest

Harbor Monitoring/health of MA Bay with perhaps Save the Harbor in for a presentation?

Food waste—how is collection and disposal going? Fall?

Tour—headworks of most interest.

A **joint meeting** with WSCAC to explore the move to outdoor water meters, retail rates, water use trends, I/I and drought

Community FOG programs and best practices

NPDES permits, should they come up

Emerging contaminants