



Minutes  
June 2, 2023  
*Remote via zoom*

**Attendees:**

**WAC Members:** Wayne Chouinard (Chair, Town of Arlington), Kannan Vembu (Vice Chair), Adriana Cillo (BWSC), Craig Allen, Dan Winograd, George Atallah, James Guiod (AB), Karen Lachmayr, Martin Pillsbury, Philip Ashcroft, Stephen Greene, Taber Keally (NepRWA), Alfredo Vargas, Jim Ferrara (Members in attendance in bold)

**Guests:** Wendy Leo, Denise Ellis-Hibbett, Gwen Speeth (Save the Alewife), David White (Arlington ConComm), Lexi Dewey (WSCAC), Elise Scholl (EPA), Kristin Anderson (Save the Alewife), Juliet Simpson (MIT Sea Grant, OMSAP)

**Staff:** Andreae Downs (WAC)

**VOTE:** May minutes approved.

**Leadership:** Kannan Vembu nominated and unanimously voted chair. Dan Winograd vice chair. Wayne Chouinard will continue to serve as chair until the WAC contract is signed in June/July. He has served nearly two years as chair, and members thanked him for his service during a particularly difficult period.

Kannan thanked the committee for the honor, and stated he is always open to ways to improve WAC and build upon its great reputation.

Phillip Ashcroft tendered his resignation, and was thanked for his service since Nov. 2017.

Approval of **letters** to Joe Favaloro and to Matt Romero on their new positions

(Joe retiring, Matt promoted).

Approval of a **letter** requesting more time to comment on the Deer Island draft NPDES permit.

Next, special **WAC meeting** Tuesday July 18, 10:30 am. Virtual. Just on the Deer Island Draft Permit.

## DISCUSSIONS

**WAC Draft Annual Report:** This is a look back on the year. Highlights include:

- 2 new members, James Ferrara and Alfredo Vargas. But Mary Adelstein (member since May 6, 1998) and Philip Ashcroft (2017) have stepped down, so membership is still 13.
- Deer Island Draft Permit preparations
- Wipes bill died in House Ways & Means Committee, but new state and federal legislation has been filed. Andreae encouraged members to contact their state senators and representatives who haven't yet co-sponsored the new bills: S-480 and H-805
- WAC office cubicle moved to Chelsea.
- Archives for WAC now either stored on the MWRA server or in the MWRA archives, with the exception of the first minutes, which will be at the WAC cubicle.

Members voiced approval of the draft.

Focus for next year

Suggestions:

- what emerging technologies might be on MWRA's radar, or what should be under consideration?
- Landfill capacity in New England and how that impacts MWRA budgets and perhaps pellet disposal. Also how are landfill operators handling methane from landfills.
- Many of the perennial WAC topics are continuing to be of interest—climate

change, CSO systems, maintenance, TRAC, major capital projects, energy

System expansion? Not a lot of room for sewer system expansion. Water expansion is on the table, but doesn't contribute additional water to the sewers. 43 sewer communities, about 46 water supply communities—some will never contribute sewer (way out west). Some have both w&s, some are one or the other.

MWRA is open to water system expansion, but the trick is to get the piping to them.

The number of sewer communities has stayed the same since 1985. The Rivers School and Crescent Ridge Dairy have hooked up, but that's about the limit of sewer expansion.

- EPA residual discharge permits (for large structures and parking lots) may come to the communities. Might come up this year.
- Artificial Intelligence & its impact on the system? SCADA perhaps?
- Future of outfall monitoring science? Maybe a body that looks at the whole bay and cape cod bay?

## **REPORTS:**

**Director's report:** attached.

Biggest focus is on the new wipes bill. Andreae attended a lobby day with the DPWs and Engineers to advocate for this bill and others on Beacon Hill.

Another new item was the importance of landfill capacity.

### **MWRA Advisory Board: James Guidod:**

- Nearing the end of the budget process. Comments are in to the MWRA Board. Recommended a 2.42% rate revenue requirement. MWRA staff seemed to feel that could be met, but perhaps a different way.
- Continue work with legal team on possible NPDES permit for Deer Island. The AB will have information on that soon.
- AB has officially moved to Chelsea, but not fully unpacked.
- Have a summer intern. She will be helping with their surveys of RRR and

stormwater.

- Joseph Favaloro is retiring after 37 years at the AB. Party at Deer Island. Matt Romero is assuming the ED post. Hope to fill 2 vacancies.
- Lou Taverna was formally sworn in to the MWRA Board. John Sanchez of Burlington will be running the AB meetings until a new president is elected.

#### **MWRA: Wendy Leo:**

- WAC contract is going to the board.
- Most of MWRA is moved, just not yet Wendy's offices, which are still waiting for other offices to make room for them.
- Draft CSO variances will be out this summer, maybe August, for public comment. 30-day comment period. It may be more than just an extension of time.
- Draft Deer Island Permit is out. July 12 at 7 pm is a public hearing and meeting. Virtual. <https://www.epa.gov/npdes-permits/epas-permit-massachusetts-water-resources-authority-mwra-deer-island-treatment-plant>

#### **Deer Island Draft NPDES Permit-Discussion**

The permit (shorter) governs, and DEP also has a permit that adds reporting and more PFAS monitoring. Attachments are often standard procedures and already-promulgated regulations. They are part of the permit.

The EPA fact sheet is longer. It mostly explains why they made some of the changes in the permit. OMSAP is not in the permit itself, but if it's included it will be in the fact sheet. A section on I/I and the new major storm requirements are in this document.

New comments on the major storm requirements—WAC needs to decide whether to only comment on how these requirements affect MWRA, or whether to also comment on the effects on co-permittee communities.

The draft has changes that WAC may want to thank EPA for making, as well as some

that WAC may want changed or removed.

The comment period is the only chance for the public to submit input (but you can appeal on those items on which you commented). But if WAC wants any changes to the permit, it should comment, even if EPA is unlikely to make the change.

WAC decided to meet in July to work on the content of the permit, and to apply for the comment period to be extended to October to give WAC and other volunteer groups a chance to meet and revise. WAC members suggested other groups to invite to send letters to EPA, including OMSAP, Save the Harbor, the watershed organizations, Mass Rivers. (spoiler–EPA gave an additional 30 days to August 30th).

MWRA had not decided yet on whether to ask for more time.

Andreae read a draft letter to EPA asking for more comment time. Members approved of the sentiment and the letter.

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