



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
WATER RESOURCES COMMISSION
100 CAMBRIDGE STREET, BOSTON MA 02114

Meeting Minutes for December 8, 2011

100 Cambridge Street, Boston, MA, 1:00 p.m.

Minutes approved January 12, 2012

Members in Attendance:

Kathleen Baskin	Designee, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)
Marilyn Contreas	Designee, Department of Housing and Community Development
Anne Carroll	Designee, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
Ann Lowery	Designee, Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)
Gerard Kennedy	Designee, Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR)
Thomas Cambareri	Public Member
Bob Zimmerman	Public Member

Members Absent

Mark Tisa	Designee, Department of Fish and Game
Joseph E. Pelczarski	Designee, Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management
John Lebeaux	Public Member

Others in Attendance:

Bruce Hansen	DCR
Michele Drury	DCR
Jen Pederson	Mass. Water Works Assn.
Linda Hutchins	DCR
Michelle Craddock	DFG, Division of Ecological Restoration
Michael D. Coveney	West Boylston Water
Stanley Szczurko	West Boylston Water Commissioner
Jay Billings	Northeast Geoscience, Inc.
Sara Cohen	DCR
Pam Heidell	Mass. Water Resources Authority
Vandana Rao	EEA
Marilyn McCrory	DCR

Baskin called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Agenda Item #1: Executive Director's Report

Hansen provided an update on the hydrologic conditions for November 2011. Rainfall in November was slightly below normal (95 percent of normal), with some variation across the state. The month was the 54th driest November on record. The meteorological autumn (consisting of September, October, and November) was the warmest on record in Boston. Groundwater levels were generally normal on Cape Cod and the Islands and above normal to much above normal in the rest of the state. Streamflows were generally above normal. Because of excessive rainfall in August, September, and October, both groundwater and streamflows are above

normal. Reservoirs are generally above normal. Drought indicators all indicate no drought and the persistence of wet conditions in the near term.

Agenda Item #2: Vote on the Minutes of November 2011

Baskin invited a motion to approve the meeting minutes for November 10, 2011.

V O T E	A motion was made by Contreas with a second by Lowery to approve the meeting minutes for November 10, 2011. The vote to approve was unanimous of those present (Kennedy not present for vote).
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Agenda Item #3: Presentation and Vote on Offset Credit Resulting in No Net Increase in Interbasin Transfer: West Boylston Water District Proposed Sterling Street Well

Drury introduced representatives of the West Boylston Water District. She provided background on the project, explaining that West Boylston wished to site a new water source, the Sterling Street well. She acknowledged Bruce Hansen for his work on assisting with the siting analysis to ensure that there were minimal impacts to the Wachusett Reservoir, which the Department of Conservation and Recreation manages.

Drury reviewed the location and capacities of the existing and proposed wells in the Nashua River Basin and noted that a portion of wastewater is discharged to the Blackstone River Basin. She explained that though the new Sterling Street well would constitute an interbasin transfer, its capacity of 0.43 mgd was offset by two wells that the West Boylston Water District had abandoned in 1988. Since these sources, with a capacity of 0.5 mgd each, were constructed and usable as of the effective date of the act, the new Sterling Street well would not increase the present rate of interbasin transfer, as defined by the act's regulations.

Drury concluded by stating that staff recommends that the Water Resources Commission find that there is no increase in interbasin transfer based on the act's regulations and the commission's offsets policy approved in October 2007.

Cambareri commended WRC staff for the memorandum summarizing the issues. Drury requested that the commission vote on the project at this meeting instead of waiting until the January 2012 meeting. Baskin requested a motion for approval.

V O T E	A motion was made by Carroll with a second by Cambareri, as follows: The Water Resources Commission finds that the decommissioning of the West Boylston Water District's Lee Street Wells #2 and 3 serves as an offset to the development of the Sterling Street Well, resulting in no net increase in Interbasin Transfer from the development of this latter well. Therefore, the Interbasin Transfer Act does not apply to this project. A roll call was made, and the vote to approve was unanimous of those present (Kennedy was not present for the vote.)
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**Agenda Item #4: Discussion: Update of the Water Supply Policy Statement:
Discussion of Theme Statement**

Drury reviewed previous discussions of the Water Supply Policy Statement at the September and October commission meetings. She reviewed the feedback received during and after those discussions. Several questions had to do with the goals of the original policy statement. She explained that the chief goals were to balance supply and demand with environmental preservation and address concerns about water shortages. She added that an awakening environmental consciousness in the early 1970s led to more emphasis on environmental protection. She clarified the tasks set out in the policy statement, which included quantifying the basic need for all water uses, specifying the limitation of the resources, setting standards for streamflows and lake and pond levels, and preserving environmental, economic, and social values. She noted that many new scientific investigations have been conducted since the original policy statement was published and suggested that these should be incorporated into future policies and programs.

Drury reviewed the overarching policy statement of the 1978 document. She presented the draft of proposed revisions to the overarching policy statement and summarized its main points: that the commonwealth has a shared responsibility for the stewardship of its resources, that environmental and water resources provide economic services and benefits, and that it is necessary to balance needs and promote sustainability of those resources. She explained that future tasks would be guided by the ideas expressed in the overarching policy statement.

She described the anticipated process for updating the policy statement, noting that the update will take some time. Drury invited comments and questions.

Zimmerman asked how the policy statement would be used. Drury responded that the policy statement is envisioned as a guidebook, providing a vision and a pathway for the commission's work for the twenty-first century. The policy statement would identify areas on which the commission should focus its efforts.

Lowery requested clarification on the scope of the policy statement, and asked if the intent is to cover the many uses of water and the benefits and services of water supply. Drury explained that the commission's enabling act refers to the "Water Supply Policy Statement," but the 1978 statement encompasses more than water supply. Lowery asked if the statement would be a guide for all the agencies or for the commission. Drury responded that areas where the commission interfaces with the agencies should be highlighted and opportunities to coordinate and partner with other organizations should also be identified.

Pederson expressed concern about how the efforts of the commission and the agencies – such as the Sustainable Water Management Initiative, the update of the Water Conservation Standards, and the update of the policy statement – fit together. Drury responded that it would be helpful to bring all the threads together. She added that the first step is to gather ideas and identify the universe of issues that would be worthwhile to tackle.

Zimmerman commented that the 1978 policy statement is rooted in a traditional approach to the use of water and there is an opportunity to articulate a different approach. Drury commented that this is an exciting and interesting time to be looking at these issues. Zimmerman also described a sewerage study incorporating energy generation and smart growth for the town of Littleton. Baskin invited Zimmerman to provide more details on this study at a later commission meeting.

Drury invited comments on the overarching policy statement, noting that the statement will continue to evolve and be refined. Baskin suggested that initial comments be submitted by December 31. Baskin also invited ideas on how the Water Supply Policy Statement should be structured. Drury added that development of the policy statement will be a long-term process, with the initial effort focused on soliciting ideas and determining direction.

Agenda Item #5: Presentation and Discussion: WRC Work Plan, CY2011 Accomplishments, and Proposed WRC Work Plan, CY2012

Carroll reviewed progress on tasks in the commission's 2011 Work Plan and highlighted key tasks in the proposed work plan for 2012. The Sustainable Water Management Initiative (SWMI) was a major effort involving both agency and other stakeholder staff. Work on SWMI will continue through 2012, moving to the phase of piloting some of the approaches and implementation. It is anticipated that the advisory committee and technical subcommittee will reconvene early in 2012 to discuss the draft final framework.

Development of water needs forecasts will resume in mid-2012. It is anticipated that approaches from SWMI will be incorporated into the forecasting process, though the details remain to be worked out.

WRC staff began reviewing the Water Conservation Standards in 2011 and identified potential changes. Minor edits to the Water Conservation Standards will be completed early in 2012, and work will continue on focus areas for substantive edits, with the help of work groups. In addition, a DCR intern focused on identifying water conservation opportunities for DCR's Urban Parks, and the Urban Parks Division is proceeding with implementing the recommendations.

Carroll noted that the Massachusetts Climate Change Adaptation Report was completed in 2011. Baskin added that the agencies are moving forward with assessments of their activities related to climate change adaptation. The next steps will be to convene a steering committee to give guidance and identify opportunities, as well as a small committee to establish guidance and criteria for reviewing climate change impact assessments by projects that are reviewed by the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act unit. Rao added that coordination and collaboration between EEA agencies and other state agencies will continue on interpretation of data and vulnerability assessments.

Carroll reviewed other work plan tasks, including Interbasin Transfer Act project reviews. Drury elaborated on work related to Interbasin Transfer Act regulatory revisions, including the criteria for determination of insignificance, particularly for reservoir projects; inserting guidance that has been established for wastewater transfers into the regulations; and clarifying ambiguous terms. Baskin added that viable source definitions and reasonable instream flow requirements may be refined based on what has been learned from SWMI analyses.

It is anticipated that the update of the Drought Management Plan will be completed in 2012. Baskin explained proposed clarifications related to authority for declaring a drought. Through joint discussions between the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, it was agreed that the Water Resources Commission has the technical expertise to determine whether conditions warrant a drought declaration, while MEMA has the ability to convene personnel in an emergency. The Water Resources Commission would adopt the Drought Management Plan and convene experts on the Drought Management Task Force. The EEA Secretary would then have the authority to make a

drought declaration, based on the recommendation of the Drought Management Task Force. Declaration of a drought emergency will be made by the governor.

Gerard Kennedy arrived.

Work by the USGS Cooperative Program included completion of both the preliminary and final Fish and Habitat study. Funding was also sought from FEMA for a new gage needed for flood forecasting on the Merrimack River in Lawrence. If funded, the new gage would be adopted into the statewide network maintained by USGS. Hutchins acknowledged the Department of Transportation, which agreed to provide the required matching funds. Cambareri added that USGS is also considering installing additional technology into three existing groundwater observation wells on Cape Cod to allow calculation of daily averages in groundwater levels.

Carroll noted that the six-year EPA-funded Targeted Watershed Grant for demonstration projects in the Ipswich River Basin had been completed, with many final publications available. Carroll congratulated Cohen, who managed the grant. Cohen added that the project web site (<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/watersupply/ipswichriver/index.htm>) was redesigned to serve as a resource in perpetuity on low-impact development and water conservation.

Collaboration with the state geologist's office will continue in 2012, including mapping geologic hazards. Hansen commended Steve Mabee, the state geologist, for revitalizing the program. Hutchins added that the state geologist's office and the University of Massachusetts have proposed establishing a fluvial geomorphology group to develop a standard method for recording river conditions in the field and reporting data and to develop a statewide fluvial geomorphology database. A conference on this topic is being planned for Fall 2012.

Drury noted that discussions of the update of the Water Supply Policy Statement will continue.

Carroll invited comments on the Work Plan and noted that the commission will vote on the 2012 Work Plan at the January meeting.

Meeting adjourned, 2:00 p.m.

Documents or Exhibits Used at Meeting:

- Meeting Minutes for November 10, 2011
- Memorandum dated December 8, 2011, from Staff to Water Resources Commission: Offset Credit Resulting in No Net Increase in Interbasin Transfer: West Boylston Water District Proposed Sterling Street Well
- Locus Plan: Sterling Street Well Site, West Boylston Water District
- Memorandum from Staff dated November 10, 2011: Response to Feedback from the September 8, 2011 Presentation on the 1978 Water Supply Policy Statement
- Memorandum dated December 8, 2011, from Staff to Water Resources Commission: 2011 Work Plan Accomplishments
- Memorandum dated December 8, 2011, from Staff to Water Resources Commission: Proposed 2012 Work Plan – Draft for WRC discussion
- Interbasin Transfer Act project status report, 23 November 2011
- Current Water Conditions in Massachusetts, December 8, 2011