



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

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**Meeting Minutes for September 14, 2017**

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

*Minutes approved December 14, 2017*

**Members in Attendance:**

Vandana Rao	Assistant Director of Water Policy, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)
Linda Balzotti	Designee, Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
Anne Carroll	Designee, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
Douglas Fine	Designee, Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)
Hotze Wijnja	Designee, Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR)
Michelle Craddock	Designee, Department of Fish and Game (DFG)
Todd Callaghan	Designee, Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM)
Thomas Cambareri	Public Member
Raymond Jack	Public Member
Kenneth Weismantel	Public Member

**Members Absent**

Paul Matthews	Public Member
Bob Zimmerman	Public Member

**Others in Attendance:**

Michele Drury	DCR
Marilyn McCrory	DCR
Peter Weiskel	U.S. Geological Survey
Kate Bentsen	DFG/Div. of Ecological Restoration
Viki Zoltay	DCR
Gabby Queenan	Massachusetts Rivers Alliance
Becky Weidman	MassDEP
Jen Pederson	Massachusetts Water Works Association
Andreae Downs	Wastewater Advisory Committee to MWRA
Sara Cohen	DCR
Erin Graham	DCR
Stephen Boksanski	Green Industry Alliance
Duane LeVangie	MassDEP

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Rao called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m.

**Agenda Item #1: Executive Director's Report**

Rao announced that an informational workshop on Water Management Act permits and water needs forecasts for communities in the Merrimack River Basin was held in Lawrence on September 7. She noted a good turnout, with water suppliers, consultants, and representatives of environmental organizations in attendance. She added that a public notice was published in the *Environmental Monitor* and sent to the Commission in the August meeting package. LeVangie explained the purpose of these meetings and outlined the permit application deadlines for the

Merrimack Basin and the renewal process. He noted that DEP's review of the Merrimack Basin permits is likely to take place in 2019.

Fine provided an update on a public hearing that MassDEP held on September 12 on a petition from the Massachusetts Rivers Alliance requesting that MassDEP propose regulations that would impose water conservation conditions through Water Management Act registrations. He noted that more than one hundred stakeholders attended this public forum, with many providing oral or written comments to date. MassDEP will consider the input from this process and make a determination within ten days on actions the department intends to take.

Cambareri asked about the percentage of public water supplies who have registrations but not permits, LeVangie explained that the two largest public supply systems are registered only, with the result that about forty-six percent of water withdrawal volumes are associated with permits.

Fine added that presentations from the public hearing will be posted on MassDEP's website at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/watersheds/petition-amend-wma-regulations.html>.

Cohen provided an update on a survey that DCR and DFG staff are conducting on water rates. She explained that work on updating the pricing chapter of the Water Conservation Standards highlighted the challenge of balancing competing goals. The goal of the anonymous survey of public water suppliers was to identify potential ways in which state agencies can be most useful in addressing these challenges. The survey generated 113 responses out of 300 surveys. DCR and DFG staff will analyze responses to identify next steps. Cohen acknowledged help from the Massachusetts Water Works Association in publicizing the survey and its purpose.

Zoltay provided an update on the hydrologic conditions for August 2017, noting that August was the first month since the drought ended with below-normal precipitation in some regions. Streamflow was mostly normal, while groundwater levels were slightly below normal. Reservoir levels were generally normal. The national Drought Monitor showed abnormally dry conditions returning to some areas.

**Agenda Item #2: Vote on the Minutes of June 2017**

Rao invited motions to approve the meeting minutes for June 8, 2017.

V	A motion was made by Weismantel with a second by Balzotti to approve the meeting minutes of June 8, 2017.
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**Agenda Item #3: Presentation: WMA Grant Overview and Results**

Rao introduced Duane LeVangie of MassDEP to provide an overview of projects funded by two Water Management Act (WMA) grant programs over the past five years.

LeVangie provided an overview of the two programs: the WMA grant program, which assists those with WMA permits in meeting minimization and mitigation requirements; and the water audit program, which assists permit holders in reducing nonrevenue water by completing an audit using the AWWA M36 method. State capital funds have provided about one million dollars

per year for these programs. He summarized the grant program requirements, evaluation criteria, and the numbers and locations of projects funded by year for each program.

LeVangie highlighted several of the WMA grant projects, including projects to restore fish passage in Scituate; a digital water conservation tracking system in Dedham and Westwood; groundwater recharge projects in Dedham, Westwood, and Stoughton; studies of water supply interconnections in Auburn and Worcester; and bioretention systems in Wrentham.

LeVangie described the purpose of M36 audit program, noting that WMA permittees not meeting the 10% performance standard for two out of three years will be required to conduct an M36 audit and implement the results. The program highlighted several areas on which water supply systems should focus, including accuracy of both master and customer meters, billing inaccuracies, and systemic data handling errors.

LeVangie noted that proposals for FY2018 grants are due on September 18, 2017, and provided websites where the request for responses can be found (<https://www.commbuys.com/bsol/> and <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/water-management-act-grant-programs-for-public-water-suppliers>).

Discussion focused on the M36 audit program. Pederson noted that the M36 audit process can have high up-front costs, because intensive data collection is required, but over time, a community should be able to complete the audit process using its own resources. Pederson added that it is in a system's best interests to control losses identified as paper losses by the audit. Weidman called attention to training sessions funded by the program.

Other questions and discussion addressed calculation of mitigation credits for groundwater recharge projects and the capacity-building benefit of funding audits.

Weidman added that DEP has also funded technical assistance to water and wastewater utilities to digitize maps of their service areas and infrastructure, including identifying existing and new interconnections.

**Agenda Item #4: Presentation: FY17 WRC Annual Report, with a look back 50 years to the 1967 WRC Annual Report**

Rao introduced Erin Graham of DCR to provide an overview of the Water Resources Commission as reflected in its annual report from fifty years ago, and Anne Carroll to introduce the current annual report (Fiscal Year 2017).

Graham outlined the make-up and activities of the Water Resources Commission in 1967, highlighting organizational differences and responsibilities, including flood control and the management of water use. She also noted that the 1967 report was published in the midst of the worst drought on record, adding that the state had a larger rainfall monitoring network at that time. Weiskel added that many groundwater observation wells were established in the 1960s in response to the drought.

Carroll outlined the contents and organization of the draft annual report for FY2017, noting its focus on monitoring and responding to drought conditions throughout the year. She highlighted

efforts to revise the Massachusetts Drought Management Plan, replace 39 groundwater observation wells, revise the Interbasin Transfer Act regulations, prepare water needs forecasts for 25 water suppliers in five river basins, and revise the Water Conservation Standards.

She invited feedback on the report. She noted a request by Callaghan to provide an annual roll-up of rainfall totals, in addition to the monthly hydrologic conditions report, noting that such an annual summary was discovered during the review of the commission's 1967 report. There was some discussion of whether the data should be reported annually or by water year.

Discussion addressed the groundwater observation wells and plans to automate data collection for as many wells as funding allows, the status of updates to the Massachusetts Drought Management Plan, and the need for consistent terminology in communications with media outlets and, in general, more robust communication before and during a drought.

Meeting adjourned, 2:25 p.m.

**Documents or Exhibits Used at Meeting:**

1. Minutes June 8, 2017
2. WRC Annual Report
  - a. FY17 WRC Annual Report
  - b. 1967 WRC Annual Report
3. Interbasin Transfer Act project status report, August 30, 2017
4. Hydrologic Conditions in Massachusetts, August 2017 (available at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/water-res-protection/water-data-tracking/monthly-water-conditions.html>)
5. Presentation by Duane LeVangie, MassDEP: WMA: Grant Programs
6. Presentation by Erin Graham, DCR: A Glimpse Back at the 1967 Annual Report of the Water Resources Commission

*Compiled by: MJM*

*Agendas, minutes, and other documents are available on the web site of the Water Resources Commission at <https://www.mass.gov/water-resources-commission-meetings>. All other meeting documents are available by request to WRC staff at 251 Causeway Street, 8<sup>th</sup> floor, Boston, MA 02114.*