



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

Meeting Minutes for December 9, 2021

Meeting conducted remotely via Zoom meeting platform, 1:00 p.m.

Minutes approved March 10, 2022

Members in Attendance:

Vandana Rao	Designee, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)
Anne Carroll	Designee, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
Duane LeVangie	Designee, Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)
Hotze Wijnja	Designee, Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR)
Kate Bentsen	Designee, Department of Fish and Game (DFG)
Linda Balzotti	Designee, Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
Vincent Ragucci	Public Member
Kenneth Weismantel	Public Member
Thomas Cambareri	Public Member
Samantha Woods	Public Member

Members Absent

Todd Callaghan	Designee, Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM)
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Others in Attendance:

Erin Graham	DCR/Office of Water Resources
Marilyn McCrory	DCR/ Office of Water Resources
Vanessa Curran	DCR/ Office of Water Resources
Sara Cohen	DCR/ Office of Water Resources
Viki Zoltay	DCR/Office of Water Resources
Kara Sliwoski	DCR/Office of Water Resources
Jennifer Pederson	Mass Water Works Association
Lexi Dewey	Water Supply Citizens Advisory Committee
Andreae Downs	Wastewater Advisory Committee
John Scannell	DCR DWSP
Katharine Lange	Mass Rivers Alliance
Daniel Silverman	CDM Smith
David Roman	CEI
Greg Woods	Auburn Water District
Jason Pollender	U.S. Geological Survey
John Macone	Merrimack River Watershed Council
Katie Ronan	Massachusetts Water Resources Authority

Rao called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Agenda Item #1: Welcome and Introductions

Rao introduced herself and welcomed the attendees and Commissioners.

Agenda Item #2: Executive Director's Report

Rao announced a MWWA workshop that will be held December 14th, "Making the most out of your water use data." The state is happy to collaborate with MWWA including having Sara Cohen as one of the instructors. Interested people can sign up at www.masswaterworks.org.

The MassDEP sewage notification regulations are not on the agenda today because they are still making their way through administration approvals. Therefore, we will need to call a special meeting of the WRC some time before the holidays and likely take only an hour. Rao requested that Commissioners notify her of travel plans or other conflicts between next week and the holidays. Commissioners noted their conflicts to Rao.

McCrary reminded Rao to take a roll call. Rao announced that the meeting was being recorded for the purpose of the minutes. McCrary took a roll call and affirmed the presence of a quorum.

Weismantel asked about the changes to Foxborough's monitoring requirements. Rao stated that WRC staff have been working with Foxborough on the conditions and make revisions to the draft Conditions. The matter will be brought back to the commission in the near future.

Agenda Item #3: Update: Hydrologic Conditions and Drought Status Update

Graham provided an update on the hydrologic conditions for November. Monthly average temperatures were near normal. Monthly precipitation was below normal across much of the state. The 1-month SPI Index Severity is at Level 0 for the Western region; at Level 1 for the Connecticut River Valley, Central, Northeast, Cape Cod, and Islands regions; and at Level 2 for the Southeast region. Snowfall is a few inches below normal for the season with minor snow cover at the end of the month in the central and western parts of the state. Streamflow was mostly above normal across the state. All regions are at Index Severity Level 0. Groundwater levels were mostly above normal across the State. All regions are at Index Severity Level 0 except for the Islands, which is at Level 1. Lakes & Impoundments were mostly much above normal. NOAA's December outlook shows equal chances of below-normal, normal, or above-normal temperatures and precipitation. NOAA's 3-month outlook shows chances likely for above-normal temperatures and equal chances of below normal, normal, or above-normal precipitation. The full hydrological conditions report can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/monthly-hydrologic-conditions>.

Agenda Item #4: Vote on the Minutes of September 2021

Rao invited a motion to approve the meeting minutes for September 2021.

V	A motion was made by Weismantel with a second by Ragucci to approve the meeting
O	minutes for September 2021.
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E	The roll-call vote to approve was unanimous of those present.

Agenda Item #5: Vote on the WRC Annual Report for FY2021

Carroll reminded commissioners of the overview on the Annual Report that was provided at the November meeting. She pointed out one change in the report that was requested by Pederson to include photographs showing the progression of the drought. Carroll thanked Bentsen for

providing the time-lapse photographs that are now included. Carroll asked Commissioners for their feedback.

Rao invited a motion to approve the WRC Annual Report for FY2021.

V	A motion was made by Weismantel with a second by Ragucci to approve the WRC Annual
O	Report for FY2021.
T	
E	The roll-call vote to approve was unanimous of those present.

Rao informed the WRC that, as required by law, this plan will be submitted to the secretary of state and the Legislature. She also asked that folks share the document widely and to inform others of the Commission's work.

Rao welcomed the new USGS staff attendee, Jason Pollender.

Agenda Item #6: Completeness Review and Vote To Accept the Auburn Water District's Interbasin Transfer Act (ITA) Application to Purchase Water from Worcester as Complete

Rao introduced the agenda item explaining that projects generally go through a Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) process before coming for ITA approval. The first step is reviewing the application and formally accepting the application as complete. The Commission will vote on this after the presentation by WRC Staff. Once that vote happens, the regulatory timeclock begins.

At 1:26 pm, Bentsen joined the meeting.

Curran started by introducing Greg Woods from the Auburn Water District and David Roman from CEI who is the consultant for Auburn. At this meeting, only the completeness of the application was discussed and not its merits. Auburn is proposing to purchase up to 0.54 MGD of water with 0.36 MGD subject to the ITA from the City of Worcester. Auburn has land area in the Blackstone River Basin while Worcester's sources are in the Nashua River and Blackstone River basins. Only the water from the Nashua River to the Blackstone River basins are under the jurisdiction of the ITA. Auburn's 12 water supply wells have been seeing an increase in contamination and remain vulnerable due to their proximity to multiple major roadways.

At 1:36 pm, Cambareri joined the meeting.

Curran reviewed the history since the 1990s. A 2015 alternatives analysis recommended a new interconnection with Worcester. Maps of water supply sources and basins were shown including the point of interconnection and of the flow analysis. This proposal was last before the Commission in June 2020; WRC staff discussed the review of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) and its request for additional information. The Final EIR was submitted to MEPA in September 2021. WRC staff submitted comments on the FEIR to MEPA in October 2021. MEPA issued a decision in the same month that the project adequately and properly complies with its regulations. Next steps are today's vote on completeness, followed by two public hearings within 60 days, a draft staff recommendation brought to the WRC in February or March 2022, and one

public meeting on the draft recommendation. The target month for a vote by WRC on the recommendation is April or May 2022. Woods and Roman thanked Curran.

Rao opened the floor for questions. With no questions, Rao invited a motion to Accept the Auburn Water District's Interbasin Transfer Application to Purchase Water from Worcester as Complete.

V	A motion was made by Weismantel with a second by Wijnja to Accept the Auburn Water
O	District's Interbasin Transfer Application to Purchase Water from Worcester as Complete.
T	
E	The roll-call vote to approve was unanimous of those present.

Dewey asked if Auburn is trying to protect its remaining wells from road salt contamination. Roman answered on behalf of Auburn and stated that they are doing a study with the University of Massachusetts (UMass) to monitor quality. Rao mentioned that DCR uses brine in a targeted way. Scannell said there are some new technologies such as the use of brine but the town does not control a lot of these roadways. He also noted that it took a long time for DCR to see impacts in the wells so it will likely take a long time to see improvement after efforts to control the sources are implemented. Rao mentioned that DCR has given assistance to towns within the Quabbin and Wachusett reservoirs' watersheds to switch to brine. Scannell added that they have been working with towns in the watersheds for enhanced stormwater management and snow removal. UMass offers great training on this topic and is a good resource.

Pederson asked for clarification on the upcoming vote on the sewage notification regulations and whether they will be the final, amended regulations. Rao confirmed that they will be the final, amended regulations.

Rao asked for a motion and vote to adjourn.

V	A motion was made by Ragucci with a second by Balzotti to adjourn the meeting.
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T	The roll-call vote to adjourn was unanimous of those present.
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Meeting adjourned at 1:44pm.

Documents or Exhibits Used at Meeting:

ATTACHMENTS:

1. WRC Meeting Minutes: September 9, 2021
2. FY2021 WRC Annual Report
3. Staff Recommendation on Completeness of the Auburn Water District's ITA Application
4. 2022 WRC Meeting Schedule
5. Interbasin Transfer Act project status report, December 1, 2021
6. Hydrologic Conditions in Massachusetts, November 2021 (available at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/monthly-hydrologic-conditions>)

Compiled by: (VZ)

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, 8th floor, Boston, MA 02114.