

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
MASSACHUSETTS CLEAN WATER TRUST**

NOTICE AND AGENDA

Meeting Date:	Wednesday, July 2, 2025
Time:	1:30 PM
Location:	Remote*
Listing of Topics:	Call to Order
	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Review and approval of minutes from the 6/18/2025 meeting of the Executive Committee2. AMP Grant Extension Requests: The Trust will present AMP Grant extension requests.3. LSL Grant Extension Requests: The Trust will present LSL Planning Grant extension requests.4. Borrower Survey Presentation: The Trust will provide an overview of responses from borrower surveys.
	Other Business <i>(Items not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting)</i>

***Location: Remote:** Notice is hereby given that the Wednesday, July 2, 2025 meeting of the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust's Executive Committee will be held through remote participation in accordance with M.G.L. c.30A, §20, as modified by c.20 of the Acts of 2021, c.22 of the Acts of 2022, c.2 of the Acts of 2023, and c.2 of the Acts of 2025.

Those who would like to attend the meeting, please e-mail masswatertrust@tre.state.ma.us to request meeting information. Information to access the meeting will be available through the duration of the meeting. However, we encourage participants to request the information by 5:00 PM the day before the meeting.

To ensure that the audio is clear to all attendees, unless you are actively participating in the meeting, please mute your audio. If you have technical difficulties joining the meeting, please email masswatertrust@tre.state.ma.us.

Please Note: There will be no physical meeting at the offices of the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust.



MASSACHUSETTS
CLEAN WATER TRUST

Item #1: *Draft Minutes of the Meeting*
Held on June 18, 2025

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
MASSACHUSETTS CLEAN WATER TRUST**

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Wednesday, June 18, 2025

Time: 1:30 PM

Location: Remote

Notice: Due public notice given

Attendees Sue Perez, Executive Director, Trust
Robin McNamara, Director of Program Development, Trust
Timur Yontar, Director of Finance & Administration, Trust
Bridget Munster, Deputy Director of Program Development, Trust
My Tran, Treasurer, Trust

Also Present Nicole Munchbach, Assistant Controller, Trust
Pam Booker, Accountant, Trust
Iden Abdulrahman, Accountant, Trust
Jonathan Maple, Senior Policy Analyst, Trust
Rachel Stanton, Investor Relations and Communications Graphic Designer, Trust
Josh Derouen, Program Manager, Trust
Kailyn Fellmeth, Senior Program Associate, Trust
Aidan O’Keefe, Program Associate, Trust
Esther Omole, Program Associate, Trust
Ray LeConte, Program Associate, Trust
Kathleen Baskin, Assistant Commissioner, MassDEP
Michele Higgins, Program Manager, MassDEP
Gregory Devine, Section Chief, MassDEP

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

	<u>Open the Meeting:</u> Ms. Perez opened the meeting after confirming the attendees present.
1.	<u>Review and approval of minutes from the 5/15/2025 and 5/21/2025 meetings of the Executive Committee:</u> The Committee approved meeting minutes from the 5/15/2025 and 5/21/2025 meetings of the Executive Committee. Ms. Munster was not present for the vote.
2.	<u>Lead Service Line (LSL) Planning Grant Extension Requests:</u> Ms. Omole stated that LSL Planning Grant extension requests were received from four communities, as outlined in the Executive Materials. It was recommended that the communities be granted an extension of 60 days beyond the respective extension deadlines requested. The Executive Committee voted unanimously to grant the recommended deadline extensions to allow the communities ample time to complete the scope of work and project closeout documentation. Ms. Perez inquired whether all the grant extension requests were a result of the Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR) or other factors.

	Ms. McNamara clarified that most of the requests were not solely due to the LCRR, noting that communities are utilizing leftover grant funds to identify unknown service lines. Many grantees have inquired about additional grant funds to explore unknowns.
3.	<p><u>Pine Valley Plantation Cooperative Corporation:</u> Ms. Perez provided an update on Pine Valley Plantation Cooperative Corporation (Pine Valley), a private borrower included on the 2024 Drinking Water Intended Use Plan, which was offered a \$6 million loan for a complete rebuild of their water distribution system. The Trust is offering a zero percent interest rate loan due to the public health benefits of completing the project. Additionally, Pine Valley is a Tier 2 Disadvantaged Community eligible for loan forgiveness.</p> <p>Ms. Perez gave an overview of the conditions presented to Pine Valley, as outlined in the Term Sheet. The loan must be secured by a perfected first lien on all gross revenues and receivables and a debt reserve fund equal to two times the Maximum Annual Debt Service. The reserve is to be held at a bank with a Deposit Account Control Agreement in favor of the Trust. Pine Valley will not be permitted to incur additional debt without prior written consent from the Trust, except for the acquisition of equipment that is secured solely by the equipment itself. Pine Valley will be required to submit its bylaws and collateral documentation to the Trust. Pine Valley requested additional terms that would allow them to use funds and interest from the reserve account to pay for the final two years of debt service.</p> <p>Mr. Maple is currently working with Pine Valley on finalizing the documentation needed for the Trust. Drafts will be circulated to the Executive Committee.</p> <p>Ms. McNamara noted that a restricted Project Approval Certificate (PAC) will be issued for consideration at a Board of Trustees meeting. All conditions of the PAC must be met before the full PAC is issued and Pine Valley is given permission to bid.</p> <p>The Executive Committee voted unanimously to accept the Term Sheet and recommend it to the Board of Trustees.</p>
Other Business: None.	
<u>Adjourn the Meeting:</u> Ms. Perez requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. McNamara moved the motion. A roll call was held, and all members approved the motion.	

Minutes Approved:



Item #2 through 3: *(No Reference Documents)*



Item #4: *Borrower Surveys Overview*

The Massachusetts Clean Water Trust

Borrower Surveys Overview

Background

- Borrower surveys were launched in the fall of 2024 to gain a better understanding of how the Trust and MassDEP can improve processes and communications
- Electronic forms are sent to community contacts to request feedback on their experience at various stages of the SRF process
- Questions are optional to encourage open and honest feedback
- Surveys have no impact on future loan/grant eligibility



Surveys by Phase

Surveys are split into **three** phases:

PHASE 1: Application

Sent to loan/grant applicants at the conclusion of the Annual Open Solicitation, once per year



PHASE 2: Loan/Grant Process

Sent to borrowers/grantees after all necessary documents have been received, once per quarter



PHASE 3: Loan Repayment

Sent to borrowers following the closing of each Trust bond deal, approximately once per year



Survey Sections

Each survey has **three** sections:

- **Introduction:** Questions about the respondents' role, the community's population size, and types of projects funded through the SRF
- **Content:** Phase-specific questions about the community's experience with the SRFs
- **Conclusion:** Questions about whether this is the community's first time working with the SRF program, whether they intend to work with the SRFs again in the future, recommendations for changes that would increase the likelihood of utilizing the SRFs, additional comments, and optional contact information should we choose to get in touch about their responses

Responses

The surveys have been sent to **769 contacts** consisting of:

- Treasurers
- Town Administrators
- Mayors
- DPW contacts

Phase	Number of Contacts	Number of Responses	Response Rate
Phase 1	348	51	14.7%
Phase 2	248	37	14.9%
Phase 3	174	21	12.1%

Introduction Overview

Responses by Position

48% Municipal or Utility Finance Officials

46% Municipal or Utility Public Works Officials

5% Other

Responses by Population Served

1% 25-500 people

5% 501-3,300 people

19% 3,301-10,000 people

61% 10,001-100,000 people

14% 100,000+ people

Responses by Projects Funded through SRFs

11% Planning

47% Construction

18% Asset Management Planning

23% Lead Service Line Planning

Note: Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.

Content Overview

90% of respondents **agree** or **strongly agree** that loan/grant application process was user-friendly.

Respondents noted that some challenges with the application process include:

- Application process was cumbersome
- Deadlines were too rigid
- Difficulty in determining next step of SRF process
- Lack of clarity on what information was required

Content Overview

95% of respondents **agree** or **strongly agree** that loan/grant process was user-friendly.

Respondents noted that some challenges with the loan/grant process include:

- Completing the loan/grant questionnaire was cumbersome
- Obtaining a Green Light Letter or Interim Loan Note was cumbersome

Content Overview

95% of respondents **agree** or **strongly agree** that requesting and receiving loan disbursements was user-friendly.

Respondents noted that some challenges encountered through the process of requesting and receiving loan disbursements include:

- Completing the Payment Requisition Form was cumbersome
- Long turnaround between requesting and receiving loan/grant disbursements
- Uncertainty around when disbursements would be received

95% of respondents **agree** or **strongly agree** that the permanent financing process was user-friendly.

Respondents noted that some challenges communities encountered through the permanent finance process include:

- January and July are not preferred months for repayment

Conclusion Overview

95% of respondents who have interacted with **Trust staff** reported that it was **helpful** for understanding the financing process. Respondents noted that Trust staff are **very responsive**, friendly, knowledgeable, and cooperative.



QUOTES

*“They are very **helpful** when any questions arise and always send friendly reminders for loan closeouts. They work very well with our consultants as well and this saves valuable time.”*

*“I have worked on many SRF projects over many years. The process has been **streamlined**, and the staff is **accessible**, helpful and knowledgeable.”*

*“I believe the Water Abatement Trust and the SRF program is one of the **best run programs** in the State.”*

*“Interactions with the Trust is great. All staff is extremely helpful, and knowledgeable. Always tends to my questions and concerns promptly. **Love the relationship.**”*

*“The Town finds working with the Trust to be extremely **easy and efficient**. The loan rates the Town receives saves a lot of money and enables the Town to take on needed projects for the Town.”*

Conclusion Overview

96% of respondents who have interacted with **MassDEP staff** reported that it was **helpful** for understanding the construction or planning project processes. Respondents noted that MassDEP staff are quick to respond, friendly, and **go above and beyond**.



QUOTES

*“The staff of MassDEP were friendly and helpful providing **information** and guidance on the SRF applications.”*

*“MassDEP staff have always been helpful in working with the Town to address questions about the application process or **develop solutions** when project scope needs to be adjusted.”*

*“All staff is very helpful and responds very quickly to any questions. I can not speak **highly enough** about the folks we have worked with in recent years!!”*

*“**Patricia Arp** has been helpful in many ways and explains things thoroughly.”*

*“**Greg Devine** was incredibly responsive, informative, and professional. As a Town Administrator who only began my role here 6 months ago, I came in on the tail end of this loan process. The Town is a uniquely small community with limited staff and resources. Greg **took the time to assist me** with understanding the process and making sure things were handled correctly.”*

Conclusion Overview

Is this the community's **first time** working with the SRF?

15%
Yes

74%
No

11%
Unsure

99% of respondents noted that they are **likely or extremely likely** to work with the SRFs again in the future.



QUOTES

*“Thank you for helping (the community) with all of our projects though the years. We have made **tremendous improvements** in both our water, sewer and drain systems.”*

*“This program is **essential** to our ability to provide essential water and wastewater services and the fact that staff understand it's importance and work hard to pull in the same direction is refreshing and **instrumental** in everyone's success.”*

Community Feedback

Communications

- “This is likely on us (town staff), but it **doesn't feel like the SRF program and timelines are regularly promoted.**”
- “Having a **financing calendar** or updates on **timelines** would be great”
- “I'm not sure if it exists already, but a **graphical overview of the process** and timeframes would be helpful.”

Simplification/Explanation of Forms

- “Overall, the **process was quite involved** with a lot of steps/moving parts. I understand the need for documentation especially when it comes to programs of this nature. Although I can't specifically say what should be streamlined within the process, I do think that perhaps some steps could be a bit more 'user friendly'. I know the Water Department Administrative Assistant struggled quite a bit with the questionnaire.”

Portal Updates

- “The new eDEP process for loan applications was different. There were good features like the pre-population of information from the PEF. There were some items that **still need some work** and some **navigation improvements** that could be made. It would also be nice to be able to **download a complete package** of all documents attached and all forms for a complete record of what was submitted. Currently you can only download the completed form. “

Community Feedback

Disbursement Turnaround

- “Most contractors **do not understand** the process it takes once a pay rec is submitted for reimbursement, they expect to get paid the next day- and it causes a lot of **tension** between contractor and the District if payment is delayed. I think it would be a good idea to put out a **fact sheet** that the **Towns can give the contractors** explaining how the reimbursement process works and expected timelines. We had one contractor this year threaten legal action because he was not paid within two weeks- which he thinks is MGL.”

Additional Staffing

- “**Additional staffing** to manage projects for both MassDEP and the CWT would help streamline the processes. Relying on the same staff to manage existing projects and vet proposed new projects **creates untenable delays** for all users of the program.”

Summary and Next Steps

- We've received a great amount of positive feedback on the services we provide (90-95% approval rating)
- Common theme of feedback is communication
 - A draft communications plan is underway
 - The Trust and MassDEP should work together to review procedures and how we can improve our communications with communities



Questions?

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