

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE MASSACHUSETTS CLEAN WATER TRUST

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Wednesday, May 21, 2025
Time: 3:30 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
 My Tran, Treasurer, Trust
Also Present Nate Keenan, Department Director, Trust
 Nicole Munchbach, Assistant Controller, Trust
 Sunkarie Konteh, Accountant, Trust
 Joshua 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
 Rachel Stanton, Investor Relations and Communications Graphic Designer, Trust
 Lealdon Langley, Division of Watershed Management Director, MassDEP
 Yvette DePeiza, Drinking Water Program Director, MassDEP
 Janine Bishop, Regional Planner, MassDEP
 Michael Celona, Drinking Water Specialist, MassDEP
 Greg Devine, Section Chief, MassDEP
 Abigail Jacobs, Environmental Analyst, MassDEP
 Gufran Bulbul, Environmental Analyst, MassDEP
 Jennifer Pederson, Executive Director, Massachusetts Water Works Association
Absent Bridget Munster, Deputy Director of Program Development, Trust

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

	<u>Open the Meeting:</u> Ms. Perez opened the meeting after confirming the attendees present.
1.	<u>Discussion on MassDEP Proposed Projects:</u> Mr. Langley provided a presentation with updates on PFAS data collection and management. In 2019, MassDEP began collecting data on PFAS concentrations in residuals, or sludge. Quarterly data is now required when National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits are issued. Data is uploaded to the eDEP portal, a platform used by external entities to submit environmental data to MassDEP. Once submitted, the data is entered into the PFAS NPDES Quality Assurance (PNQA) system, where it undergoes quality assurance and analysis by MassDEP staff. After review, the verified data is uploaded to a public portal, ensuring transparency and public access.

	<p>The Trust previously allocated \$164,000 to assist with planned information technology work. Enhancements have been made to eDEP, PNQA, and the public portal to improve usability. The funding has also helped fund a continuously updated groundwater facilities list, which now contains more than 400 entities.</p> <p>MassDEP is looking to expand data collection and management capabilities to include collecting data from groundwater discharge facilities such as wastewater treatment plants, strip malls, and schools. This would help preemptively address requirements stemming from the PFAS Omnibus Bill that is active in the state legislature. MassDEP requested an additional \$40,000 in funding to secure a project contractor who will help address potential future requirements and make minor enhancements to the data collection and management system.</p>
2.	<p><u>PFAS Grant Program Proposal:</u> Ms. Bishop provided an overview of the PFAS Grant Program, which aims to support small and disadvantaged public water suppliers (PWSs) in developing engineering and design plans for PFAS mitigation projects. An additional \$500,000 in funding to allow grants of up to \$75,000 per community was requested.</p> <p>There are approximately 1,500 small and disadvantaged PWSs in Massachusetts. Many small and disadvantaged PWSs throughout the state have detected PFAS at levels that exceed both federal and state standards, but do not have the financial means or technical abilities to complete design work to address PFAS contamination, a necessary precursor to apply for grants, loans, or financial assistance to remediate the issue. MassDEP is hopeful that the PFAS Grant Program will help small communities submit competitive applications to the Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities Grant.</p> <p>MassDEP is planning outreach efforts to inform eligible systems and consulting firms of the program. A request for quotes was issued and two engineering firms were selected to provide services to communities. A kickoff meeting is planned within the next few weeks, after which a grant application will be developed and rolled out.</p>
3.	<p><u>Cybersecurity Grant Program Update:</u> Mr. Bulbul provided an update on the Cybersecurity Grant Program, noting that a total of 32 applications have been received to date. Of these, 25 have been approved, while six were incomplete due to missing documentation, which applicants are in the process of submitting. There is \$2,000,000 allotted to the program and approximately 45% of grant funds have been committed. Applications will continue to be accepted and reviewed on a first-come-first-serve basis. The grant application portal will remain open until all funds are exhausted. MassDEP is providing webinars to communities to make them aware of cybersecurity risks and will continue to advertise the program during webinars.</p> <p>Mr. Keenan inquired about the feedback on the program from grantees, to which Mr. Bulbul replied that most of the applicants, particularly small systems, are happy with the program and that the feedback has been very positive so far.</p>

4.	<p>Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Small System Technical Assistance Program</p> <p>Discussion: Ms. McNamara provided an update on MassDEP’s CWSRF Small System Technical Assistance program, which aims to provide a gateway for small, rural, or tribal communities with publicly owned treatment works to participate in the CWSRF program, using Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) set-aside funding.</p> <p>In 2023, MassDEP began a series of outreach to 65 eligible communities. Responses were received from 10 communities. Of those, two engaged in services. To date, only about \$20,000 of the \$500,000 in program funds have been spent. MassDEP attributes the lack of interest in the program to an overlap in services provided by a similar EPA grant program, as well as a shortage of eligible communities in the state. The current procurement contract for the program expires in March of 2026.</p> <p>Ms. Perez asked if there was any flexibility for how the set-aside may be spent and whether other states have experienced similar issues, to which Ms. McNamara responded that the set-aside can only be used for small, rural, or tribal communities with publicly owned treatment and that she is not aware of similar issues in other states.</p> <p>Mr. Yontar asked if the set-aside was at risk of being clawed back, to which Ms. Perez stated that this risk is low as it makes up part of the larger BIL grant the Trust receives. The grant application will need to be amended if it is decided that the funds will be used for a different program.</p>
	<p>Other Business (Items not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting):</p> <p>Lead Service Line (LSL) Planning Grant Extension Request: Ms. Omole stated that an LSL Planning Grant extension request was received for Gardner DWL-23-72. The community noted that they have faced delays with their project, particularly as they amend the work to meet the Lead and Copper Rule Revision requirements. It was recommended that the community be granted an extension of 60 days beyond their requested extension deadline.</p> <p>The Executive Committee voted unanimously to give an extension through 7/11/2026 to allow the community ample time to complete the scope of work and project closeout documentation.</p>
	<p>Adjourn the Meeting: Ms. Perez requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Yontar moved the motion. A roll call was held, and all members approved the motion.</p>

Minutes Approved: June 18, 2025