



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

Meeting Minutes for Thursday, February 13, 2025

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

Minutes approved May 8, 2025

Members in Attendance:

Vandana Rao	Designee, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)
Chris Kluchman	Designee, Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC)
Duane LeVangie	Designee, Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)
Tyler Soleau	Designee, Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM)
Anne Carroll	Designee, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
Todd Richards	Designee, Department of Fish and Game (DFG)
Hotze Wijnja	Designee, Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR)
Christine Hatch	Public Member
Vincent Ragucci	Public Member
Kenneth Weismantel	Public Member

Members Absent:

Thomas Cambareri	Public Member
Samantha Woods	Public Member

Others in Attendance:

Andreae Downs	Wastewater Advisory Committee	Hillary Monahan	MWRA
Anne Malenfant	CDM Smith	Jason Duff	DCR OWR
Barbara Buls	DCR	Jen Keegan	DPU
Belkis Roman	EEA	Jennifer Johnson	CDM Smith
Caitlin Spence	EEA	Jim McGrath	City of Pittsfield
Dahlia Tympanick	UMass Amherst	Joe Holbeche	DMF
Daizha Baptiste	MassDEP	Joel Zimmerman	DCR
Dan Crocker	DCR	John Scenna	Lynnfield Center Water District (LCWD)
Daniel Burstein	MassDEP	John Sheppard	DMF
Danielle Mucciarone	MassDEP	Joseph Nerden	MassDEP
David Libardoni	Nutter	Joy Trahan-Liptak	DCR
Diane Manganaro	MassDEP	Judy rondeau	MassDEP
Donald Sutherland	Town of Hopkinton	Kara Sliwoski	DCR OWR
Elsie Uffelmann	Cooks Pond	Katie Paight	DCR OWR
Emily Wilcox	MassDEP	Kerry Reed	Town of Hopkinton
Emily Stockman	Stockman Associates LLC	Lance DelPriore	Town of Hopkinton
Erin Graham	DCR OWR	Laura Russell	Town of Sharon
Francesco Attaccalite	DCR OWR	Lydia Olson	Mass Rivers Alliance
Graham Parnaby	DCR	Malcolm Harper	MassDEP
Hank Webster	MassDEP	Mark Mancevice	Cooks Pond Club

Mark Ryan	Town of Norwood	Sara Cohen	DCR OWR
Mark Stinson	MassDEP	Stacy Johnson	MassDEP
Michael McLean	MassDEP	Stephen Boksanski	Green Industry Alliance
Nadia Madden	DCR OWR	Taylor Gosselin	DCR
Nick Couris	LCWD	Thomas Jachym	MassDEP
Patricia Russell	DCR	Timothy Fox	MassDEP
Patti McKone	Cooks Pond	Timothy Jones	MassDEP
Paul Gallagher	Town of Hopkinton	Toni Stewart	DCR
Purvi Patel	EEA	Tyler Ferrick	MassDEP
Rebecca Davis	MassDEP	Vanessa Curran	MA DCR
Rebecca Weidman	MWRA	Viktoria Zoltay	DCR
Rebekah Lacey	MassDEP	Vivian Wells	DCR
Richard Carey	MassDEP		
Sangwon Min	MassDEP		

Rao called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

Agenda Item #1: Welcome and Introductions

Rao announced that the meeting was being recorded for the purpose of meeting minutes and all votes would be taken by roll call. She invited those who wish to speak during the meeting to indicate this in the chat window. Members and attendees introduced themselves.

Agenda Item #2: Executive Director's Report

Rao updated attendees on the current drought status. January saw well below normal precipitation, setting back the improvement we saw in December. The Drought Management Task Force (DMTF) met last week and Secretary Tepper declared most regions worse than the previous month, with the Northeast and Central regions at Level 3 – Critical Drought, the CT River Valley, Southeast, Cape, and Islands regions at Level 2 – Significant Drought, and the Western region at Level 1 – Mild Drought. The DMTF is concerned about drought effects lingering as we move into the growing season and higher demands in a few months. The Interagency Drought Mission Group will meet next week with a particular focus on helping the agricultural sector coming into the spring.

EEA developed two drought-related infographics with their marketing consultant to make the information on what to do during a drought more accessible, shareable, and engaging. Rao encouraged everyone to share these within their own networks and agencies. A third drought-related product is a video that will be a shorter version of the 2.5-minute version that was shown to the WRC in December. The shorter video will be conducive to being posted as a reel for social media. The focus of the video is also on what people can do, especially during the winter, to conserve water. Rao thanked Jason Duff, Purvi Patel, and Anne Carroll for their work on this.

EEA issued an RFR for the first round of a drought-related grant program, with a deadline of January 30. The grant has a total budget of \$500,000 and offers funding for drought planning, drought response, and conservation and uses an application process designed to be manageable and non-burdensome for applicants. They received about 55 proposals covering a wide range of ideas, which are currently under review. The Q&A sessions were well attended.

Kluchman shared that EOHLC is hiring for a Seasonal Communities Coordinator to help lead an advisory council to address the needs of the newly designated “seasonal communities” of the Berkshires, Cape, and Islands. Additionally, the State Housing Plan was just released, which lays out regional housing needs and responsive strategies over the next 5 years. The Plan projects a housing shortage of 222,000 units by 2035. Much more content related to this plan will be coming, digitally. She also shared that the Community One-Stop for Growth initiative launched on January 24. This is a consolidated coordinated grant application for 12 grant programs within Mass Development, Economic Development and Housing and Livable Communities. Under the initiative, interested parties can submit an expression of interest and get feedback on their proposals, which will be due in May.

Wijnja shared a press release from December highlighting \$3.6M allocated through several MDAR grants for a variety of agricultural projects, many of which have water aspects.
<https://www.mass.gov/news/healey-driscoll-administration-announces-36-million-in-grants-to-support-farmers>

LeVangie shared that there are positions at DEP open, which can be found online. Rao invited anyone to send water-related positions to her to include in the WRC mailings.

Agenda Item #3: Hydrologic Conditions and Drought Status

Rao introduced Graham to present the Hydrologic Conditions Report for January 2025.

- *Temperature*: Monthly average temperatures were near normal.
- *Precipitation*: January precipitation was below normal. There were a few sites in the normal range, but overall, it was a dry January. According to the Northeast Regional Climate Center, Massachusetts had its eighth driest January on record. All Regions are at an elevated Index Severity Level (ISL) for the 1-mos look-back, and all Regions are showing deficits at the 6-mos look-back.
- *Snow Cover*: At the end of January, minimal snow cover remained mostly less than one inch snow water equivalent, with a little more in the northwest corner of the state. There was still a seasonal snow deficit ranging from seven to 25-inches.
- *Streamflow*: January streamflow ranged from much below normal to normal with only four gages in the normal range in the Western and Connecticut River Valley (CTRV) Regions. All Regions are at elevated ISLs. Approximately 22 gages did not report for January due to ice with about half of the affected gages from the CTRV Region. The time series showed streamflow in the normal range at the beginning of the month from December precipitation, but for most of January most of the gages were below normal.
- *Flooding*: There was no reported flooding in January.
- *Groundwater*: January groundwater levels ranged from below normal to normal and have deteriorated since last month. All Regions are at elevated ISLs.
- *Lakes & Impoundments*: At the end of January all but two of the reported sites were below their 30th percentiles. Two sites in the Central Region were the lowest in the OWR database, and the others reporting were very low, which is why the ISL was so high. All Regions except the Western are at elevated ISLs.
- *MA Drought Status*: Rao gave an update of the MA Drought status during the Executive Director’s report. The drought declaration issued February 7th changed the Central and Northeast Regions from Level 2 to Level 3 and changed the Southeast and Cape Regions from Level 1 to Level 2.

- *US Drought Monitor (USDM)*: At the beginning of January there were some improvements made to the map reflecting the December precipitation. These improvements remained on the last January map, which showed areas of D2 (Severe Drought), D1 (Moderate Drought), and D0 (Abnormally Dry). The first map in February, which included data from January, showed areas of deterioration in southeast Massachusetts, and today's map showed Nantucket at D1.
- *NOAA Climate Prediction Center outlooks*: Both the February and seasonal outlooks show chances leaning for above-normal temperatures and chances leaning for above-normal precipitation in the western part of the state and no strong signal in the eastern part of the state. The February drought outlook shows drought persisting in the central part of the state and removal likely in the northeast. The seasonal drought outlook shows drought remaining but improving in the central parts of the state with some areas of likely removal.

Agenda Item #4:

Rao invited motions to approve the meeting minutes for November, 2024.

V O T E	<p>A motion was made by Weismantel with a second by Ragucci to approve the meeting minutes for November, 2024, with one edit as provided by Weismantel to correct the spelling of his name on page 3.</p> <p>The vote to approve was unanimous of those present.</p>
------------------	--

Agenda Item #5: Presentation and Discussion: Draft Staff Recommendation for Lynnfield Center Water District's Interbasin Transfer Act (ITA) Application/Proposal to Obtain Supplemental Water Supply from MWRA

Rao introduced Curran for the presentation. Curran presented facts pertaining to Lynnfield's application. Lynnfield relies on 4 groundwater wellfields from the Ipswich and North Coastal watershed basins, which have contamination issues with PFAS, manganese, iron, and nitrate. Pumping Stations 2 and 4 are located in the Ipswich basin, while Stations 1 and 3 are in the North Coastal basin. Lynnfield Center Water District is applying for admission for MWRA, which is sourced by the Chicopee and Nashua River watersheds, with a maximum proposed transfer of 0.83 MGD. MEPA review was completed on November 29, 2024, written public comments received were in favor of the project with a request for a formal water conservation plan.

Next, Curran discussed the application review against the ITA criteria, all criteria were met with the exception of conditions needed to meet the criteria for Water Conservation. These included documentation of a water bank program and outdoor water use restriction bylaw, additional rebate and water conservation resources, ICI outreach to encourage conservation, annual M36 audits with the results to inform a water loss control program to achieve $\leq 10\%$ unaccounted-for-water, annual master meter calibration services, and a revision of Lynnfield's Drought Management Plan to define triggers and match state guidelines.

Curran then reminded the WRC about the timeline for the project, with the presentation and vote on final staff recommendations at the March 13 WRC meeting, and the regulatory deadline for the vote on the application on April 27.

Curran opened the discussion to Commissioners and introduced Scenna and Malenfant who were present on behalf of the Lynnfield Center Water District. Scenna thanked the WRC for reviewing the project application. Weismantel asked why so much water was unaccounted for and noted that Scenna answered that LWD had investigated this and thought it was due to discrepancies in the metering and billing system. A few issues had been revealed with master meter calibration from the M36 audit. Weismantel noted that he liked the requirement for the annual audit and that the meter repair condition should be upgraded to require 10-year replacements instead of 14 years for residential meters. Curran confirmed that the standards could be incorporated, and Rao noted that the Commission regularly voices concerns on reducing unaccounted-for-water and leaks during review of ITA requests. LeVangie asked about the water bank and noted that Lynnfield had exceeded its allocated volume in the year it was set up. He asked about the impacts of bringing in the MWRA as a water source to the existing water bank. Malenfant answered that the water bank has a rebate program account that funds rebates for customers tied to Special Condition 1 in the Ipswich water use permit. The intention is to take pressure off the Ipswich basin. Curran offered to send additional information to DEP and coordinate a meeting to sort out the issues raised. Hatch commented that interbasin transfers should not be done to resolve water quality and noted that the direction of the transfer will take some pressure off the Ipswich which is one of the most stressed water basins in the state. Rao noted that the applicant has looked at alternate in-basin sources. Curran added that this transfer will be a backup supply to existing in-basin water sources. The discussion was then opened up to the general public, who had no questions.

Curran stated that the public hearing for the draft recommendation will be on 1:00pm on Zoom on April 26. The notice for the public hearing was sent out in a prior WRC meeting packet, and requests for the meeting link can be made directly to Curran.

Agenda Item #6: Presentation and Discussion: Draft Staff Recommendation for Sunrise Senior Living's Request for Determination of Insignificance Under the ITA

Rao described that during the last change in regulations on the Interbasin Transfer Act, a separate pathway was introduced for any transfer that is 10,000 gallon per day or less that provides no significant impact. It was noted that the Sunrise Senior Living project meets the criteria for this pathway and this application is being brought to the Commission for their vote of insignificance at a future meeting.

Curran provided a summary of the project proposal, which includes the development of a 99 unit assisted living and memory care facility in the Town of Sharon. As an on-site septic system was not deemed to be feasible due to site constraints and lack of municipal sewer system, the proponent is seeking to connect to the Town of Norwood sewer system, which discharges to the MWRA sewer system.

Curran continued, noting this is the second request under the revised regulations of 10,000 gallons per day or less. As Sharon's municipal sources are currently split between the Taunton Basin (35% capacity) and the Boston Harbor Basin (65% capacity), this will require a transfer of

3,500 gallons per day from the Taunton and 6,500 gallons per day from the Boston Harbor. Curran noted the basin of discharge will be the Massachusetts Coastal Basin, through Norwood to the MWRA system.

Curran described the staff recommendation, which was to find this project insignificant under the ITA based on the provided information. Curran noted that Sharon's water use has been declining over the past two decades, causing no needed increase in WMA allocations. Additionally, no environmental impacts are anticipated from water withdrawals or sewer line construction.

Next steps were described, with a request for a vote on the proposal at the WRC's March meeting as the regulatory deadline for a vote being April 7th.

Hatch noted the importance of monitoring groundwater in the Boston Harbor region due to clay in the area and asked if that has been considered with this project. Curran noted that Sharon's water use has been declining compared to historic trends, so it is felt that the 6,500 gallons per day proposed to be transferred would not cause significant impact compared to historic amounts. Rao noted that no additional environmental impacts are expected with this proposal.

Libardoni noted that the project expects to use a lower amount of water than the max daily capacity. Rao noted that all the fixtures and appliances for this project will be water efficient as this is a new development, lowering the amount of wastewater. Rao asked Libardoni if any outdoor irrigation was planned for the project, which Libardoni noted would all be returned to the groundwater at the project's location.

Ryan noted that the project is supported by Norwood, as is necessary for the region. Ryan noted that there will be Infiltration and Inflow (I&I) work completed with funds provided by the proponent for the connection to the sewer system. Libardoni noted that those I&I projects still need to be identified in Norwood.

Agenda Item #7: Presentation and VOTE: Draft Local Drought Management Plan Guidance

Rao introduced the draft local drought management plan guidance (DMP) for a vote and reminded Commissioners that this Guidance was brought before them last month in detail. It is meant to be a working document that is refined over time based on feedback from public water suppliers (PWSs) and other users as the guidance is followed and implemented. Graham reviewed a brief history of the effort to produce this draft starting back in 2016 when a working group was formed to develop guidance on drought trigger setting. With a grant in 2022, a consultant was hired to help develop the guidance document including the work previously done on trigger setting. A steering committee was established. Graham presented a preview of the guidance to the Commission in December. Commissioners received a copy of the draft guidance later that month. At the January Commission meeting, Graham presented the guidance in detail. Graham proceeded to show the 7 steps in the guidance based on the American Water Works Association's guidance but made more Massachusetts specific. Feedback has already been received, both minor and more substantial comments. A future task is creating a checklist.

Weismantel asked whether water suppliers provided feedback on their ability to do this process without a consultant or any other feedback that resulted in significant changes since the draft

presented last month. Graham showed the slide again with the revisions made since last month and feedback that may take longer to address. Graham noted that suppliers who have looked at the draft thought it is a little challenging to follow the guidance with the spreadsheets. Weismantel commented that it is still better to have this guidance than not having anything so that folks can know what is reasonable to be expected. Rao confirmed that back in 2016 not many communities had drought plans or knew how effective they were, and this effort was initiated with feedback from suppliers. Multiple PWSs were part of the steering committee. It is challenging and complex to accommodate the variety of water supply systems. Getting feedback from users will be the best way to refine it. Graham confirmed that minor changes will be included in the first working version. Rao commented that the larger changes can be made in the coming year and based on feedback we receive. Kluchman congratulated the staff and supports this approach of providing a working version and getting guidance out to communities sooner than later.

A motion was made by Weismantel with a second by Ragucci to approve the local drought management plan guidance as a working document.

The vote to approve was unanimous of those present with a roll call.

Rao acknowledged and thanked Graham for heading up this effort along with Sara Cohen, Viki Zoltay and Anne Carroll. She also thanked the water suppliers who were part of the working group and brought their experience to the project. Carroll echoed Rao's comments and thanked Rao and the Commission for their support.

Agenda Item #8: Presentation: Introducing The MA Guide to Algae and Aquatic Plant Management (2025 Update)

Rao invited Anne Carroll to give the final presentation for the meeting. Highlights of the presentation are below, and the full presentation can be viewed at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/review-the-meetings-of-the-water-resources-commission>.

Carroll introduced herself and explained that the DCR Lakes and Ponds program has the responsibility to help manage DCR waterbodies. She continued to explain that she would be presenting on what has been called the "GEIR and Practical Guide," but noted that they are seeking alternatives to this acronym/name and would like feedback.

Carroll began by reviewing the history of the GEIR. She explained that the original guide was started in the 1980's and involved collaboration among multiple state agencies. The original purpose of the document was to provide guidance on lake management in the Commonwealth, including control of aquatic vegetation and explaining the permitting processes. It received a certificate from MEPA in 2004 and a summary guide was also created because the original document was over 700 pages long.

More recently, it was acknowledged that the document needed an update to reflect changes in management techniques and permitting/regulatory processes. Several state agencies have been involved in an interagency review team including DAR, DFW, DMF, DEP, DCR, and NHESP. In addition to updating the information to reflect changes in recommended techniques and

permitting processes, the updates are intended to simplify the material to make it more accessible.

Major updates to the guide included:

- Designed as an editable online resource & includes Hotlinks
- Emphasis on comprehensive lake management plans and information on how to develop such a plan
- Updated science related to lake ecology
- Acknowledgment of the increasingly important role of climate change
- Consolidation of regulatory requirements into one chapter
- Clarification of acceptable lake management techniques in MA vs alternative techniques (i.e. not accepted, rarely applied, or without a sufficient track record for proper evaluation)
- Experience with phosphorus inactivation which has expanded greatly, more guidance for best results.
- Coverage of active ingredients in algaecides and herbicides registered for use in Massachusetts as of 2024
- Changes in the guidance for how drawdowns should be conducted without MEPA review (appendix for projects where a MEPA review may be necessary)

Next steps for the updates include:

1. Developing outreach materials related to the guide
2. Developing an outreach plan for roll out and public comment
3. Identifying and reaching all individuals and groups who are interested
4. Reviewing and addressing all comments
5. Completing outreach by June 30, 2025, then commencing the MEPA process

Carroll ended by showing an example of an abridged flow chart for lake projects which helps to simplify full permitting flow charts. She suggested that anyone who has ideas for further simplifying the material should reach out with suggestions during the review/comment period. Sliwoski added that if any attendees are not on the WRC email list and would like to know when the public review and comment period begins for this Guide, please email dcr.lakesandponds@mass.gov.

Carroll asked Richards and Wijnja, who were both involved in this effort, if they had anything to add. Richards explained that a big focus of these updates was to make the guide more practical while still provide enough information to help develop successful lake management projects. Wijnja thanked Carroll for the presentation and reiterated how significant of an effort these updates have been.

There were no other questions or comments. Rao invited a motion to adjourn the meeting.

V O T E	A motion was made by Weismantel with a second by Richards to adjourn the meeting.
	The roll-call vote to approve was unanimous of those present.

Meeting adjourned, 2:55 p.m.

Documents or Exhibits Used at Meeting:

1. WRC Meeting Minutes: November 14, 2024
2. Request from the Lynnfield Center Water District for Approval of an Action to Increase the Present Rate of Interbasin Transfer under the ITA, MGL Chapter 21 Section 8B-8D:
 - a. Draft for WRC Discussion, dated February 13, 2025: WRC Staff Recommendation on the ITA Application for Lynnfield Center Water District's Proposal to Obtain Supplemental Water Supply from MWRA
 - b. Written public comments received from stakeholders
3. Request from Sunrise Senior Living for a Determination of Insignificance under the ITA, MGL Chapter 21 Section 8B-8D:
 - a. Notice of Receipt of a Request for Determination of Insignificance Under the ITA
 - b. Draft for WRC Discussion, dated February 13, 2025: WRC Staff Recommendation for Sunrise Senior Living's Request for Determination of Insignificance
4. Draft Local Drought Management Plan Guidance
 - a. MA Local DMP Guidance Document
 - b. MA Local DMP Guidance Appendix A
5. Correspondence documents from the WRC to MEPA, including letters with the following dates and content:
 - a. December 31, 2024, regarding the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) for the Island View Road Project in the Town of Fairhaven.
 - b. December 31, 2024, Environmental Notification Form (ENF) for the Dudleyville Emergency Dam Removal Project in the Town of Shutesbury.
 - c. January 10, 2025, regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Hartford Avenue Warehouse in the Town of Bellingham.
 - d. January 21, 2025, regarding the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for The Reserve Project in the towns of Oxford and Auburn.
 - e. February 4, 2025, regarding the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) for the Worcester Street PFAS Water Treatment Plant Project in the Town of Grafton.
6. Interbasin Transfer Act project status report, February 3, 2025
7. Hydrologic Conditions in Massachusetts, January 2025 (available at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/monthly-hydrologic-conditions>).

Compiled by: (WRC Staff)

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 10 Park Plaza, Suite 6620, Boston, MA 02116.