



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

Meeting Minutes for December 13, 2018

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

Minutes approved March 14, 2019

Members in Attendance:

Vandana Rao	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)
Doug Fine	Designee, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
Hotze Wijnja	Designee, Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR)
Michelle Craddock	Designee, Department of Fish and Game (DFG)
Marcela Molina	Public Member
Vincent Ragucci	Public Member
Kenneth Weismantel	Public Member

Members Absent

Todd Callaghan	Designee, Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM)
Thomas Cambareri	Public Member

Others in Attendance:

Michele Drury	DCR
Erin Graham	DCR
Stephen Brown	DCR
Peter Weiskel	U.S. Geological Survey
Gabby Queenan	Massachusetts Rivers Alliance
Kate Bentsen	DFG/Div. of Ecological Restoration
Sara Cohen	DCR
Lexi Dewey	Water Supply Citizens Advisory Committee
Andreae Downs	Wastewater Advisory Committee
Viki Zoltay	DCR
Vanessa Curran	DCR
Marilyn McCrory	DCR
Katy Ronan	MWRA
Newton Tedder	EPA
Fred Civian	DEP
Mike Celona	DPH
Liz Walk	Office of Representative Dykema

Rao called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m.

Agenda Item #1: Executive Director's Report

- Rao noted that Commission staff and the Division of Ecological Restoration hosted a water rates workshop on November 14, 2018. Speakers included staff from the Alliance for Water Efficiency (AWE). The workshop was very well attended by water suppliers, watershed groups and municipal officials. Carroll said that the evaluation forms were very favorable and a number of communities are interested in the rates model developed by AWE. The workshop included a panel of water suppliers and water commissioners, who shared rate setting experiences. This was well received. There was also a presentation of the rate survey that had been conducted by WRC and DER staff. Carroll thanked DER for partnering with the WRC staff and providing funding for the workshop.
- On November 15th, staff attended a conference at MIT: Thirsty Cities. Graham said that Mary Ann Dickenson's (AWE) presentation was excellent. We hope to have her to present it to the WRC in the near future (potentially via the internet). Rao asked if other cities were highlighted. Graham said Singapore was highlighted for its water efficiency program. McCrory said there were many excellent keynote speakers, including Dickenson, who focused on water re-use. Dickenson also discussed water rates and noted that in the short term, water conservation drives up water rates, but in the long term, water conservation is cost efficient. Another keynote speaker was Jim Lockheed, the manager of Denver Water. His focus was on water in the west, but he also provided a broad overview and stated that finding common ground with all stakeholders is important.
- Fine apprised the Commission about some grant programs DEP was sponsoring. The first was the Water Management Act grants, to help permittees with mitigation requirements. The RFR came out early this fall. DEP hopes to be awarding these grants in early January 2019. DEP has launched a grant program for monitoring by watershed groups. These are small grants to help with surface water quality monitoring (specifically bacteria monitoring). The RFR will be released in early 2019. DEP held an information session on this program. It was well attended, indicating great interest in the program. It is DEP's hope that this will continue to be offered in coming years, with an expanded focus. Under the Federal Water Infrastructure Needs Act there is a grant program for lead testing in schools. \$20 million are available nationally, with about \$200,000 - \$300,000 available to Massachusetts. DEP will need to apply to EPA to obtain this funding and will use this to expand its existing lead in schools program. Cohen asked if, under the water quality grants, the data would have to be in a uniform format. Fine replied yes, any group receiving funding would need to have an approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). Funding can be used to develop a QAPP. The data collected has to be usable for DEP and Federal programs. There is more information about the grants programs on DEP's website.

Agenda Item #2: Presentation: Stormwater, Drinking Water, Wastewater: Becoming Equal on the Mesa?

Rao said that the presentation was the first part of a two part series. This month, DEP and EPA will present on the stormwater program and the permit issued by EPA earlier this year. Next month, DCR will present on what the agency is doing to implement the permit on DCR properties. Fine gave an introduction. Massachusetts is a highly urbanized state and a lot of the

water pollution experienced is from stormwater. Stormwater management also has implications for water quality. EPA is the lead on this permit, but it has been cosigned by DEP.

Civian stated that for decades, stormwater systems were designed to move water off of hardscapes as quickly and efficiently as possible, without a thought for the environmental impacts of doing this. And since most of these systems didn't have treatment, any pollutants that were in the stormwater were transferred to the water body that catch basins discharged to. Towns have many reasons for managing stormwater, such as water quality at bathing beaches, wetlands protection, drinking water quality, water quantity in the natural environment. Since 2012, the number of coalitions of towns banding together to manage stormwater has increased, spurred by DEP assistance and state grants. Many towns are exceeding the requirements of the MS4 permits, not just to comply, but for their own reasons. Sixty (60) percent of water quality impairments are from stormwater.

Wijnja arrives.

One of the benefits of MS4 is that it allows towns to take local actions to address stormwater pollution as it impacts the town's local needs and conditions. Tedder stated that stormwater is the number one water quality problem in the state and this has triggered a regulatory response. MS4 permits were first issued in 2003. The last decade has been spent trying to renew them. The new MS4 permits look at different ways to think about stormwater: as a resource rather than a waste. The draft permit came out in 2016 and generated a lot of comments. The permit was issued in 2018 and has gotten a 97% compliance rate. Stormwater pollution has caused issues for communities in meeting Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). EPA is working with permittees to assist with compliance. Most towns have done a great job meeting TMDL levels. This is because of a change in how stormwater is dealt with at the local level. The traditional approach to dealing with stormwater is expensive, but doesn't always solve the problem. An innovative approach being adopted by towns is to incorporate the elements of the MS4 permit into daily infrastructure maintenance practices. This reduces costs by an order of magnitude.

EPA has funding for technical assistance for low cost innovative approaches to stormwater management. The UNH Stormwater Center has done a lot of great non-proprietary work on these issues and is a great resource. There is a need to change mind set regarding stormwater because there are huge benefits to getting people to change their individual approaches, even at the household level. DEP also is funding stormwater training for small towns. Massachusetts has several stormwater coalitions, which pool resources. Different regions focus on different priorities, for example, the southeast region focuses on buying services together. The central region focuses on sharing GPS units to assist in mapping and data services. In 2019, the DEP Stormwater Advisory Committee will reconvene to update stormwater handbook and hydrologic atlas, and to sync up the stormwater and wetlands regulations.

Stormwater management programs are required by the permit. EPA has guidelines to assist communities in meeting this permit condition. Queenan asked about the barriers to implementation. Tedder responded that education is needed. It takes about a year to get the knowledge base up. Communities need to "rebrand" what the DPW does and why it is important. Stable funding is also important. The coalitions have been key in promoting this.

Rao mentioned that the last drought was a bit more severe because of lack of infiltration due to an increase in impervious surfaces. There was the same amount of rainfall as in the 60's drought, but streamflow levels experienced lower lows. This shows the importance of recharging stormwater.

Agenda Item #3: Hydrologic Conditions and Drought Update

Zoltay provided an update on the hydrologic conditions for November. Precipitation was more than 200% of average for a November. Multiple towns reached the wettest year on record even before the year's end. Since mid-July it has rained for half of all days. Streamflow across the state were significantly above normal, hovering around 90th percentile flows with some new record high flows. Groundwater was similar with record high levels in 23 wells. Within two years many locations across the state have shifted from record lows to record highs. Reservoirs are normal with multiple reservoirs spilling. Drought conditions are not reported or projected by our federal partners. Temperature and precipitation are projected to be about normal for the next three months.

Agenda Item #4: Vote on the Minutes of May and September 2018

Rao invited separate motions to approve the meeting minutes for May and September 2018.

V	A motion was made by Weismantel with a second by Ragucci to approve the meeting
O	minutes for May 10, 2018.
T	The vote to approve was unanimous of those present, with one abstention (Balzotti).
E	

V	A motion was made by Balzotti, with a second by Weismantel to approve the meeting
O	minutes for September 13, 2018.
T	The vote to approve was unanimous of those present.
E	

Agenda Item #5: Presentation and Vote: FY 18 WRC Annual Report

Rao reminded the Commission that an annual report is required to be submitted to the legislature. Carroll highlighted the accomplishments. It has been an outstanding year: Interbasin Transfer Act revised regulations were promulgated; updated water conservation standards were adopted; a well replacement grant was secured and replaced 21 ground water wells. She added that this last task "went under the radar", but involved a lot of critical work by Zoltay, McCrory, and Steve Maybee and USGS. Another accomplishment was the water rates work discussed earlier. This year saw a wonderful effort by staff, the Commission and our partners.

Rao suggested a vote, unless there was any major changes. The sense of the Commission was to vote.

V	A motion was made by Ragucci, with a second by Weismantel to approve the Water
O	Resources Commission Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2018.
T	The vote to approve was unanimous of those present.
E	

Rao said it had been a busy year and she thanked the Commission for their input on all the issues undertaken this year. She complimented the staff for their professionalism and diligence.

Meeting adjourned, 2:35 p.m.

Documents or Exhibits Used at Meeting:

1. WRC Meeting Minutes:
 - a. May 10, 2018
 - b. September 13, 2018
2. FY 18 WRC Annual Report
3. Correspondence: Letter to Dartmouth concerning the applicability of the ITA to a well rehabilitation project
4. Ashland Related Documents:
 - Report of the Findings, Justifications and Decision of the Water Resources Commission, Relating to the Approval of the Town of Ashland's Request for an Interbasin Transfer
 - Cover Letters to the Clerks of the House and Senate and Secretary of the Commonwealth for the Ashland Interbasin Transfer Decision
 - Letter from Ashland Agreeing to Abide by the Conditions of the October 11, 2018 ITA Decision
 - Notice of Availability of the Ashland October 11, 2018 ITA Decision
5. Interbasin Transfer Act project status report, November 29, 2018.
6. 2019 Meeting Schedule, Water Resources Commission
7. Hydrologic Conditions in Massachusetts, August 2018 (available at <https://www.mass.gov/water-data-tracking>)
8. DEP Presentation: Stormwater, Drinking Water, Wastewater: Becoming Equal on the Mesa? (available at <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/12/18/12-13-18-presentation-becoming-equal-on-the-mesa.pdf>)

Compiled by: mhd

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.