

MASSACHUSETTS



Kathleen A. Theoharides, Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Frederick A. Laskey, Executive Director, MWRA
William Meehan, North Worcester County Quabbin Anglers, Quabbin Fishermen's Association
Louis Taverna, Chairman, MWRA Advisory Board
Fred Heyes, Swift River Valley Historical Society

Water Supply Protection Trust

June 4, 2018

MWRA Southborough Facility

Trustees

Lou Taverna, MWRA Advisory Board
Frederick A. Laskey, Executive Director, MWRA
Vandana Rao, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Brigadier General William J. Meehan, North Worcester County Anglers and the Quabbin Fishermen's Association
Fred Heyes, Swift River Historical Society

MWRA

Dave Coppes, Chief Operating Officer
Carolyn Francisco Murphy, General Counsel
Mike Altieri, Associate General Counsel
Beth Card, Director of Regulatory and Environmental Affairs
Katie Ronan, Environmental Analyst
John Gregoire, Program Manager, Reservoir Operations
Michael Cole, Budget Manager
Matt Horan, Treasurer

DCR

John Scannell, Director, Division of Water Supply Protection
Dan Clark, Director, Quabbin/Ware Region
Ken McKenzie, Director, Natural Resources
Derek Liimatainen, Assistant Regional Director, Wachusett
Lisa Gustavson, Assistant Regional Director, Quabbin/Ware
Erica Tefft, Watershed GIS Coordinator
Trish McNally, Budget Director
Herm Eck, Chief Forester
Jim French, Land Acquisition Coordinator
Jamie Carr, Regional Director, Wachusett
Conni Melia, Seasonal Regional Planner

MWRA Advisory Board

Joseph Favaloro, Executive Director
Travis Ahern, Director of Finance and Policy

WSCAC

Lexi Dewey, Executive Director

The meeting convened at 10:19 am.

1. **Approval of the Minutes** - The March 2019 Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved by the Trust.

Trustee Laskey took a moment to acknowledge the professional legacy of Jim French, who is retiring. He noted that Mr. French has been an incredible advocate of open space and protection of the water supply in central Massachusetts. Trustee Laskey presented Mr. French with a plaque and thanked him for his service. Mr. French thanked Trustee Laskey and remarked on how much he enjoyed his career and appreciated these years. Trustee Rao also thanked Mr. French on behalf of the Secretary for being such a dedicated employee and for the beneficial work he has done for the Commonwealth.

1. FY19 Spending Update – John Scannell

John explained that it is most of the way through FY19 and there is still money in the accounts. Most of it will be spent, except what is budgeted for personnel and buildings.

- Clinton Crew Headquarters - Now under construction, funds are being moved into FY20.
- New Salem Building – Was expected to be a quick project bid for modular unit. However, only one company bid and was much more costly than expected. DWSP has decided to begin designing a new building. There was some discussion and John noted that in the interim, staff are continuing to report to a rental trailer on the site.

2. Cemetery Discussion

Trustee Laskey explained that some concern has arisen from the State House and The Friends of Quabbin regarding issues at the Quabbin Park Cemetery (QPC) including lack of access to water. Trustee Laskey asked about the plan going forward and noted there needs to be access to water for plants and trees.

John Scannell explained that DWSP recently put together a plan identifying a variety of needs at the cemetery including restoring water and power, restoring the building, and removing hazardous trees. It was noted that there are approximately 60 hazardous trees at the cemetery and that DWSP has been allocating funding to remove these trees and plans to continue. In recent years, 30-50 hazardous trees have been removed per year. Trustee Heyes asked if separate line item should be created for the Cemetery and Trustee Laskey noted that the situation is embarrassing and asked for suggestions on how to address it.

John explained that the water system at QPC must be evaluated and that other needs at the cemetery need to be identified. There is currently limited water and no electrical access. The tentative plan is to restore water to enable watering of plants, as opposed to restrooms. He also explained that although the buildings are not on the historic register, they are eligible for listing. He also noted that while the buildings are salvageable, DWSP is limited on what work staff can do until lead contamination and other issues are abated.

Trustee Meehan referenced an email to Trustee Laskey from The Friends of the Quabbin and explained that the group had brought the issue up separately to him. He remarked on his disappointment in the conditions at QPC and noted that the intent was to keep it better maintained. He suggested QPC become a recurring agenda item and that the next meeting be held onsite. He also asked DWSP to provide a prioritized list of the needs at QPC, including the cost estimates. He also asked if there was a cemetery manager.

John Scannell explained that there is an existing assessment of QPC and that he would share it with the Trust. He suggested that some of the photos may not provide an entirely accurate depiction of current conditions at QPC and reminded the Trust that gravestones are private property.

Trustee Laskey asked about gravestones damaged by mowers and John explained that DWSP takes responsibility for any damages caused by mowers. There have been a few incidents in the past and they have been resolved.

Trustee Laskey mentioned that the MOA and Enabling Act include provisions that give MWRA the responsibility to take over certain tasks when necessary. However, he noted that the cemetery is a little outside the scope of watershed protection.

John clarified that there has never been a sprinkler system at QPC and that the cause of the water system failure is unknown. He also noted that DWSP has publicly expressed its willingness to work with families of the interred to allow access to resolve grave stone issues.

There was further discussion and the Trustees agreed that the issue reflects poorly on the water system as a whole and that it would be beneficial to add QPC as a standing agenda item. The creation of a separate line item was discussed. It was noted that the FY20 work plan allows for basic maintenance at QPC and \$30,000 in the FY20 budget for hazardous tree removal. There was further discussion regarding gravestones of families who have disappeared and regulatory guidance for historic cemeteries.

Trustee Laskey reiterated support that QPC become a standing agenda item, DWSP provide the Trust with an analysis on needs and maintenance, and that the next Trust meeting be held at QPC. He also noted that he would send a response to the concerned emails.

A motion was made for the next WSPT meeting to be held at Quabbin Park Cemetery and for DWSP to provide a report of needs to the Trust. The motion was unanimously approved by the Trust

There was some discussion about the utilization of UMass interns.

Trustee Rao asked about a letter from WSCAC noting concern with deadlines. There was some discussion about the important of avoiding filtration at Carroll Water Treatment Plant. John Scannell assured the Trust that a letter from DEP following the annual inspection is standard procedure and that DWSP expects to meet the deadline.

2. Watershed Personnel Staffing Assessment – John Scannell

John reviewed the Watershed Personnel Staffing assessment that DWSP recently completed.

- Process
 - o DWSP Water Supply Protection Plan and Annual Work Plan were used to identify tasks.
 - o Identified which work group performs each task and if it was logical.
 - o Assign primary personnel lead to each task.
 - o Identify how many FTEs are needed to accomplish each task.
- Results
 - o Identified a few places where changes could be made. New titles, title changes, and titles no longer necessary.
 - o Currently 157.5 FTEs. Exercise identified need for 150 FTEs. Will work towards that number
- Changes to Staffing
 - o Currently more administrative titles than necessary.
 - o Two regional GIS staff will both begin to report to the GIS manager.
 - o Natural Resources – Additional Environmental Analyst for Wildlife. There will be two in each watershed, four in total.
 - o Need a dedicated staff member to address terrestrial invasives.
 - o Quabbin
 - Currently one aquatic biologist, need one additional.
 - Need two additional Quabbin Rangers in Ware group.
 - Need one additional Facility supervisor.
 - Need full-time maintenance supervisor.
 - Need additional maintenance equipment operators.

Trustee Meehan asked who is responsible for Quabbin Park Cemetery and John explained that there is one Superintendent for both Quabbin Park and Cemetery, although they might be separated in the future. Trustee Heyes suggested contracting out.

- Wachusett
 - Additional full-time aquatic Biologist.
 - Eliminate duplicate sign painter.
 - Ranger conversion.
 - Make vacant full-time laborer positions seasonal.
 - Reduce administrative staff.

John noted that the exercise was helpful and that changes will happen over time, not all at once. He also explained that based on the assessment, DWSP has approval to fill up to 150 positions. They are working to fill vacancies, with seven positions currently in hiring and six remaining vacancies. In response to a question from Trustee Laskey, John noted that DWSP will continue to send a breakdown of shared salary employees to Tom Durkin at MWRA, including a list of staff names and the percentage of salary paid by each agency.

Joe Favaloro expressed concern with the reduced number of necessary employees identified by the assessment (150) and requested an explanation as to what has changed from FY19 to FY20.

Trustee Laskey noted that 150 employees (as identified by the assessment) has support from the Commissioner and the State House. He also expressed confidence that Secretary Theoharides understands the importance of water supply protection. Trustee Rao also expressed support and confidence in the results of the assessment and noted that it was conducted in an effort to identify the appropriate number of employees. Both Trustee Laskey and Trustee Rao credited the Advisory Board and Mr. Favaloro for making progress on this topic and getting to this point.

In response to a question from Trustee Heyes, there was some discussion about the challenges and opportunities related to preparing for upcoming retirements at agencies.

Trustee Laskey requested that DWSP continue to update the Trust on the Quabbin Park Cemetery and vacancies at DWSP.

3. Approval of FY20 Work Plan and Budget – John Scannell

John explained that there are no significant changes to the work plan that was presented at the previous WSPT meeting.

Trustee Laskey asked about chloride and if the increased use of road salts could affect source water. John explained that DWSP is working with UMass, MWRA, and communities to better manage use of road salt and noted that some communities are better than other in terms of road salt use. West Boylston recently purchased regulators for trucks. DWSP has an ongoing contract with UMass to research this matter and identify possible improvements. John also noted that DWSP now has the ability to analyze longer-term WQ trends and detection. There was further discussion regarding this matter.

In response to a question from Trustee Laskey about culverts, John explained that DWSP has an inventory of culverts and is currently working to update the information and identify any necessary upgrades. In response to a question from Trustee Heyes, John explained that this work requires notifying the local Conservation Commission but does not require a Notice of Intent.

- Quabbin Work Plan
 - Includes continued wildlife efforts, changes in the Ware River, Quabbin Road Plan.

- Trustee Taverna asked if the Gravel MOA with Petersham and New Salem is in perpetuity. DWSP is legally required to provide gravel resources to these communities, which is used for gravel roads. Looking into the statute of limitations. John noted that DWSP has done well over the years working with the communities. An annual request is sent to communities to submit gravel needs to DWSP.
- Upgrades to fishing – DWSP is now using ipads and boater ID cards. Working to improve process and track data better.
- Wachusett/Sudbury Work Plan
 - Working to address final direct discharge on Route 101 in West Boylston. MassDOT has required a more robust design process than initially anticipated.
 - Aquatic invasives removal

Trustee Taverna asked for any new updates on the railroad and Trustee Laskey said it was status quo. John Scannell mentioned that John Gregoire is continually working on emergency preparedness.

Operating Budget FY20 Proposal

- 3.1% increase over FY19 Operating Budget
- Drone Program - Currently through MassDOT, potentially contract with vendors in the future.
- Complete Clinton Crew Headquarters
- Culvert Replacement at Gate 40
- Quabbin Administration Building Roof
- Quabbin Erosion Control

A motion was made to accept the budget for discussion and approval.

Trustee Taverna explained that based on discussion and a vote by the Advisory Board, he recommends reducing the FY20 budget by \$500,000, rather than increasing. He noted concern specifically regarding the personnel section of the budget, but that the Advisory Board supports everything else. Joe Favaloro referenced historical spending and noted that despite a reduction of staff at DWSP, assessments for communities have risen by half a percent.

John explained that a 2% vacancy assumption was used to prepare the FY20 budget. Trustee Laskey stated that he respectfully disagreed with Trustee Taverna and thought that the funds should be appropriated to DWSP as proposed and that any surplus would stay with MWRA. Trustee Rao agreed with Trustee Laskey and expressed confidence that the remaining vacant positions would be filled. She would rather vote to approve the budget and have DWSP report back to make sure there are no disparities going forward. Trustee Laskey noted that the Advisory Board staff and CEO deserved credit for the progress that has been made related to vacancies at DWSP.

Trustee Taverna explained that he would respectfully hold his vote.

The Trust voted to approve the FY20 budget. Trustee Laskey, Trustee Rao, Trustee Heyes, Trustee Meehan voted yes to approve the budget. Trustee Taverna voted no, reiterating opposition specifically to the personnel portion of the budget.

4. DWSP Land Acquisition Model – Erica Tefft

John Scannell explained that DWSP has recently improved and expanded the GIS Land Acquisition Model. The purpose of the model is to identify and prioritize parcels of land within the watershed for purchase. The model previously was only for the Wachusett Watershed, but has been improved and expanded to cover the Quabbin and

Ware Watersheds. The bulk of large “high priority” parcels in the watersheds have been purchased and the model will be helpful to identify the next potentially valuable parcels for purchase.

Erica demonstrated the new model and explained that it uses the same criteria and weighting as the original model. The new model uses new and improved data, has more data layers, and is expanded to the Quabbin and Wachusett watersheds. In response to a question, Erica explained that parcel data comes from MassGIS, which receives data from communities.

6. Forestry Update – Herm Eck

Herm gave an update on Gypsy Moths and Oak mortality in the DWSP watersheds. He explained that Gypsy Moths have been a big issue over the past few years and that approximately 3,000 acres in the Quabbin Watershed show signs of infestation and significant tree mortality. It is hard to predict and is too early to tell how things will go this year.

Herb explained that biological treatment for Gypsy Moths in the watershed would be expensive and ineffective at this scale. Oaks makes up 30% of Quabbin watershed forest and there are hotspots of infestation. Gypsy Moth infestation weakens the trees, making them susceptible to other sources of mortality.

Trustee Laskey asked about the mold or fungus that typically kicks in to stop the Gypsy Moths. Herb explained that the worst Gypsy Moth infestation in Massachusetts was in the 1950’s, however Massachusetts is currently experiencing the worst oak mortality. He speculated that the recent wet weather could be beneficial for the fungus and noted that tree budding did not coincide with Gypsy Moth hatching this year, which may also be beneficial. However, there is no way to know. More research is beginning to be conducted on the topic.

Trustee Laskey asked about Asian Long Horned Beetles. John Scannell noted that a small patch had been found in Boylston just outside of the watershed and that DCR and federal staff continue to survey.

Trustee Taverna asked about forestry contracts and responsibility of the contractor. John Scannell explained that DWSP requires bonds and would keep a bond if the work is not completed acceptably. DWSP can also be listed as additionally insured and can pursue insurance money if necessary. John noted that they have been working with the legal team to incorporate language into contracts making it clear that DWSP has the ability to restrict subcontractors. Trustee Taverna asked if the issue from last season had been addressed. John explained that DWSP now has better staff protocols in place to prevent issues.

John explained that the hunt will continue at Wachusett next year and that changes will be made to the Quabbin Hunt. New areas in Pelham will be open for a two-week shotgun hunt and there will be a controlled hunt in Quabbin Park, which has not previously been open for hunting. There will be public meetings on the Quabbin Hunt, Ken McKenzie recently presented to Quabbin Advisory Committee.

Deer issues at the Sudbury Reservoir were discussed and John noted that DWSP is working to open the area for hunting. There was discussion about the suburban nature of this area and the challenges this presents. John stated that DWSP will listen to the public and Trustee Laskey noted that MWRA has recently approved Weston to have a controlled bow hunt around Norumbega Reservoir.

Meeting was Adjourned at 12:04 pm.