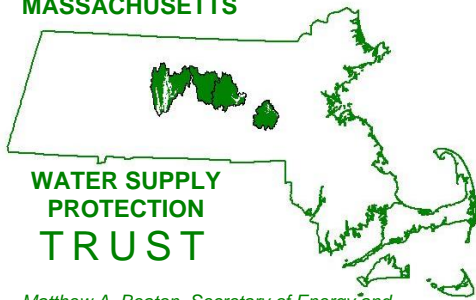


MASSACHUSETTS



Matthew A. Beaton, 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

March 6, 2019

DCR Headquarters

180 Beaman Street, West Boylston, MA

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

Beth Card, Director of Regulatory and Environmental Affairs

Mike Altieri, Associate General Counsel

Katie Ronan, Environmental Analyst

Sean Navin, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs

Dave Coppes, Chief Operating Officer

Tom Durkin, Director of Finance

Michael Cole, Budget Manager

James Halloran, Budget Director

DCR

John Scannell, Director, Division of Water Supply Protection

Dan Clark, Director, Quabbin/Ware Region

Brian Keevan, Natural Resource Analyst

Derek Liimatainen, Assistant Regional Director, Wachusett

Lisa Gustavson, Assistant Regional Director, Quabbin/Ware

MWRA Advisory Board

Joseph Favaloro, Executive Director

WSCAC

Lexi Dewey, Executive Director

The meeting convened at 10:10 am.

The December 2018 Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved by the Trust.

1. FY19 Spending Updates – John Scannell

John presented on FY19 expenditures through mid-February, which is 61% of the year. He noted that overall spending is generally normal, although Personnel is down.

- FY19 Highlights
 - Building Challenges – Both the Clinton Crew Headquarter and New Salem Building Replacement projects are about to go out to bid. DCAMM approval was delayed for both projects.
 - MWRA is going to build the Quabbin Maintenance Building, DCAMM approval was also delayed for this project but recently approved.
 - *BB Employee Expenses* was budgeted for \$11,000 but overspent by about 10%. John explained that this line item includes Travel and Employee Reimbursement and attributed overspending to conference attended by DWSP GIS staff. DWSP wants to increase this line item next year because they feel professional development is valuable and want to do more. Trustee Laskey asked if DWSP follows Administration and Finance Guidelines for travel and reimbursement. John answered that Agency and Secretary approval is always obtained.
 - Trustee Laskey asked if DWSP is tracking surplus created by lower staff headcount. John said they are and noted that building spending may be elevated this year so DWSP is keeping in touch with MWRA finance staff.

2. FY2020 Work Plan and Staffing Discussion – John Scannell

John explained that he and Trustee Rao met with EEA to discuss personnel and staffing vacancies at DWSP. The meeting produced a request from leadership to examine DWSP's organizational chart and analyze staffing needs.

- DWSP is currently compiling a list of tasks and activities undertaken to protect water supply and the watersheds. They will then identify how many staff are needed to complete each task. John noted that this is not easy, as many tasks and timelines vary.
- The Draft FY20 Work Plan is still the same from December. DWSP will inform the Trust if this exercise drastically changes the staffing needs for FY20.
- John said that this is a beneficial exercise and explained that some areas could be consolidated and others may need to grow. This exercise aims to identify the function and appropriate number of staff for individual tasks and help to prioritize.
- Trustee Rao noted that since the meeting, she has had individual conversations with each of the Trustees on this. She agreed that it is beneficial to step back and analyze staff roles and responsibilities. She also noted that this is good timing as John has settled into his new role. She suggested that although it may be tedious, the end result will provide a better sense of what the program needs and will ensure that money is spent wisely.
- Trustee Meehan asked if there are any known vacancies that are essential to fill. John answered no and noted that DWSP is currently working to fill 20 positions. He also noted that the two top positions have been filled - Ken Mackenzie was appointed as Natural Resource Director and that Derek Liimatainen was appointed as Assistant Regional Director at Wachusett. Additionally, of the top 20 positions, 5 new staff have already started work and 6 have been approved to start soon.
- Trustee Laskey noted the importance of staying focused on the mission to protect the water supply of 3 million people. He noted that after recently reading the DEP Report, he found the large number of vacancies unsettling. He noted the importance of continuing to pass inspections and that MWRA has continually given DWSP the necessary resources to protect water. He urged the importance of staying focused and being proactive.
- Trustee Taverna questioned the timing of the exercise, noting that the fourth quarter of fiscal year is approaching and wondered if July would be a better time. He also asked if whoever requested this exercise

knows the big picture of what DWSP needs to accomplish its goals. John said that he thought so and noted that DWSP has continually accomplished its goals, but has not had the chance to take a step back. He noted that DWSP was asked to undertake this exercise now, perhaps to complete before next fiscal year. He explained that he did not expect any major changes to come from this exercise, although some roles may have evolved over time and could warrant administrative or title changes.

- Expected to be done in 1-2 months. DWSP will report findings to the Commissioner and Secretary, and present to the Trust at the next meeting.
- Trustee Rao noted that the Secretary understands the mission of DWSP, the task is simply to go through the exercise and analyze findings.
- Trustee Taverna noted that the Trustees are focused on the mission and avoiding filtration. They want to ensure everything is accomplished and inspections are passed. The Trust does not want to have forestry or gravel issues because of a lack of personnel.
- Trustee Laskey noted it would also be beneficial to also analyze the diversity of the work force, promotions and hiring.

3. FY2019 Expenditure Update – John Scannell

- Revenue Update
 - Budget \$1 million
 - Total collected \$739,923 - but likely to end up higher due to Hydro and Forestry revenue.
- Trustee Rao asked about *Miscellaneous* and John explained this includes Quabbin Cemetery and NGRID revenue.
- Trustee Taverna asked if there was revenue from the Deer Hunt and John explained that hunting permits are free. Dan Clark added that their used to be a small fee for permits, but when DWSP transitioned to online applications they decided to streamline the process and eliminate fees. He noted that the fee was only about \$5 and generated very little total revenue.

4. Draft FY2020 Work Plan and Budget – John Scannell

- Highlights – Division Wide
 - Land Acquisition – DWSP is working to update their land acquisition models. They have detailed GIS models for the Wachusett Watershed which ranks parcel characteristics. Staff are currently reassessing these models and adding the Ware and Quabbin Watersheds. The goal is to better identify relative importance and critical parcels.
 - Trustee Taverna asked if DWSP ever purchases certain portions of parcels. John explained that yes, DWSP is often most concerned about back lands or streams, as opposed to frontage. They use this to negotiate with landowners.
 - Trustee Heyes asked how they decide whether to purchase Conservation Restriction or Fee. John explained that DWSP typically leads with Conservation Restrictions, but that the decision is ultimately driven by the landowner.
 - Trustee Laskey asked if staff track Agricultural Preservation Restrictions and John noted that staff conduct regular inspections of farms.
 - Land Management Plan – continuing to implement, including hunting updates.
 - GIS – Continuing to streamline field data collection using an iPad. Apps allow rangers to monitor restrictions using photos, reports and GPS coordinates. The apps also help with Environmental Quality assessments. They are collecting great data that is easy to use.
- Wachusett Hydrology Data Enhancements – Working to improve drainage system data to provide ability to identify where catch basins drain to streams.

- WRP Monitoring – Survey123 App makes it easier for staff to monitor WPRs. Staff use App to upload photos, look at old photos, and assess compliance.
 - Trustee Rao asked about violations and John explained that there have been a few over the years, but they been relatively insignificant and were resolved. He credited Caroline Raisler, DWSP Watershed Protection Restriction Stewardship Coordinator, with having great communication with landowners to ensure that they are aware of any restrictions when ownership changes.
- Division Wide Highlights (continued)
 - Continue to develop water quality database with focus on long-term trends of WQ impacts. Improving model and data will help to better monitor watersheds.
 - Aquatic Invasives – Use iPad App to track and report daily removal of aquatic invasives.
- DOT/UMass Drone Program – Began to use drones to track gulls this winter. First test flight was at Wachusett, but plan to use at Quabbin where it is more difficult to see birds. There are many additional uses for drones like for invasives, forestry, etc.
- Trustee Laskey asked if DWSP monitors or regulates salt and road treatments. John explained that DWSP is looking into tracking and perhaps reducing salt. They are currently working on a model; there will be more to come on this topic. Trustee Rao suggested they coordinate with USGS.
- Division Wide Highlights (continued)
 - Continue to manage wildlife – Gull Harassment program, deer hunts, aquatic invasives removal.
 - Continue forestry operations – Monitor to ensure there are no short-term water quality impacts.
 - Continue to maintain ranger presence. Incident reporting efforts aim to reduce repeat offenses and inform targeted education enforcement.
- Quabbin/Ware FY2020 Work Plan Highlights
 - Continue to maintain dams
 - Expand Stream Flow Monitoring program
 - Complete Ware River Public Access Plan
 - Write Quabbin Park Deer Management Plan
 - Begin construction of Quabbin Maintenance Facility
 - Finish construction of New Salem building
 - Work with MWRA on Quabbin Administration Complex capital improvements projects
 - In response to a question from Trustee Taverna, John noted that DWSP is currently working on the Draft Gravel Plan. New Salem and Petersham have gravel rights.
- Wachusett/Sudbury FY2020 Work Plan Highlights
 - Maintain BMPs on DCR land including new facilities from Direct Discharge projects.
 - Continue to streamline Water Quality data management, storage and visualization
 - Continue to address aquatic invasives
 - Continue to expand program and improve public outreach
 - Work with MassDOT to address final Direct Discharge on Rt. 110
 - Continue to work with MWRA on spill preparedness

5. FY2020 Draft Operating Budget -

- \$17.94 million FY20 Operating Budget, 3.6% increase from FY19 approved budget.
- \$1,075,000 projected revenue, which is a slight increase.
- Increase in *Line FF* for clothing expenditures. In response to a question from Trustee Laskey, John explained that the budget assumes vacant positions are filled and a 2-4% vacancy rate.
- *Line GG* for fuel is relatively constant.
- Increase to *Line HH* for drone program with MassDOT.

- Watershed Capital projects are uncertain, priority is to complete Clinton and New Salem projects. May shift money from FY19 to FY20.
- Trustee Taverna asked about the increase in clothing and whether it was part of union negotiations. John explained that DWSP has never spent much on clothing but wants to provide more safety clothing to staff.

6. Expanded Hunting in the Wachusett Watershed – Ken MacKenzie

- 2018 Wachusett Hunt - Foresters were noticing changes in the watershed due to deer. A pellet survey was conducted and found high deer density around the Reservoir. Ideally, there should be about 20 deer per square mile, the pellet survey indicated 2 – 3 times that number.
 - Two Zones
 - Reservoir Zone – Pellet Study indicated high deer impacts.
 - Other Watershed Properties – Hunted since 1996, study found low impacts.
 - This year 4,700 acres of watershed property east of Rt. 190 were opened for a controlled hunt for the first time. This includes 2,840-acre Reservoir Zone directly surrounding the Reservoir.
 - There was no change to the hunt on 9,650 acres of DWSP property west of Rt. 190, which has been opened to hunting since 1996.
 - The Reservoir Zone was open for a controlled, permit-only deer hunt during December - shotgun for the first week and primitive firearms for the remainder of the month. Received over 1,150 applications and 834 new permits were issued, excluding grandfathered permits.
 - Other new property opened east of Rt. 190 (excluding the Reservoir Zone) was managed the same as property west of Rt. 190.
- Results
 - Reservoir Zone
 - Most hunters visited the watershed in the first two days of the hunt.
 - Total of 76 deer harvested, of this 66 or 87% were Antlerless (does). This is preferable because does are key to a population and strongly tied to population growth.
 - Other DWSP Properties
 - Hard to estimate the number of deer taken on other DWSP properties because they can be checked at any station in the state or on the internet. Only information provided is whether the deer was taken on public or private land. Based on this, DWSP estimates that 60-70 deer were taken on newly opened property and a total of 130 -140 deer were taken on DWSP property in the Wachusett watershed.
- Conclusions
 - About 230 deer were taken in the reservoir towns of Boylston, West Boylston and Sterling in 2018. This is a 225% increase over average since 2010.
 - Expansion of hunt made significant impact on deer population.
 - Goal is to stop deer impacts on oaks.
 - Controlled hunt was beneficial for safety and collecting initial knowledge.
- Discussion
 - Trustee Meehan asked about estimated deer density in Quabbin. Ken explained that the pellet survey indicated it was very high. A lot of pellets and actual deer were observed. Vegetation is visibly being eaten and there is high direct impact, which DWSP hopes to begin addressing soon.
 - Trustee Laskey asked why the Drone Program is tied to MassDOT. Ken explained that MassDOT is the leader in drone technology and Legal/FAA requirements. John Scannell noted that EEA's Drone program currently operates through MassDOT because they are steps ahead.
 - Trustee Laskey asked about evidence of Moose in the watersheds. Ken said there is evidence of Moose west of Rt.190 at Wachusett and that while there is little evidence in Quabbin Park, the Moose population is very high in other areas of the Quabbin Watershed.

- Trustee Rao asked how hunting permits were distributed and Ken explained that DWSP drew ping-pong balls at a public lottery.
- Trustee Meehan asked if there was any opposition from environmentalist to the Wachusett Hunt and Ken explained that DWSP has received positive feedback.

7. Quabbin Hunt 2018 – Ken Mackenzie

- The hunt was successful at driving down population from a Water Quality standpoint.
- Only Petersham and Harwich were opened for hunting in 2018.
- Lower participation than in the past. Only 70% of permit holders attended first day of the hunt - Usually about 80% attend.
- DWSP reduced the number of antlerless permits because at Quabbin the goal is to maintain number of deer whereas at Wachusett the goal is to reduce the population.
- Scanners at access gates provide a time clock for each hunter in the watershed.
- Results
 - 35 deer harvested – 25 bucks and 10 does
 - No big impact on does (an acceptable outcome).
 - Many deer were young which could indicate a change in the population. Younger deer may mean the population is starting to rebound.
 - 71% of harvested deer were male.
 - Deer density is about 20 per square mile.

8. Winter Gull Operations – Ken MacKenzie

- 2018 was a relatively normal year with only a brief freeze over.
- Gull operations were run throughout the winter and are going well to maintain water quality.

9. Ware River Public Access Plan – Dan Clark

- DWSP conducted an online public survey regarding the plan. There were 1,000 respondents and DWSP is currently working to summarize the information collected.
 - Trustee Laskey asked if participation was limited by geography. Dan explained that the survey was open to anyone and John noted that participants were asked to specify where they live.
- DWSP conducted a meeting with user groups including representatives of the mountain bike and snowmobile communities as well as other recreational users.
 - Now want to sit down with other stakeholders including John Gregoire, USACE, local law enforcement, etc., and continue to have meetings with user groups.
- Meeting with Ware River Watershed Advisory Committee.
- Goal is to begin drafting the plan soon; DWSP is on track to complete the update this year.
 - John Scannell noted that the plan will include more limited access around the intake and aim to keep people away from streams. It will be designed to allow public access in certain zones.
- Discussion on Mountain Biking - Trustee Laskey noted that mountain biking is a hot spot and John suggested that it is time to get a policy in place and improve signage. Dan Clarke noted that DWSP has been trying to be very transparent throughout this process. Joe Favaloro noted that the issue seems to have quieted down from previous years and he asked what changed. John attributed the change to better enforcement and also suggested that the mountain bike community is engaging in the public process and trying to work cooperatively with DWSP.

10. Discussion on PFAS Compounds

Trustee Laskey explained that PFAS have not been detected in MWRA water. He noted that older firefighting foam contains PFAS and asked if there are any other potential sources of PFAS.

- John explained the DWSP has spoken with local Fire Departments in the watersheds and that they report not using, or having used, foam containing PFAS. He noted that they have not heard back from Clinton.
- Trustee Laskey suggested providing funding to abandon foam that contains PFAS.
- Beth Card noted that DEP has been in communication with local Fire Departments and was conducting a “take-back” program for fire-fighting foam that contains PFAS. She explained that according to MassDEP, pre-2003 foam is the most dangerous, while post-2003 is better, although not completely safe. Although MassDEP is advocating for free-from-PFAS foam, Fire Departments have raised some concerns because depending on the type of fire, they may not be as effective. Therefore, MassDEP is trying to guide where the chemicals are used.

11. Other Discussion

John noted that DWSP operates the cemetery building at Quabbin, which needs work and may have lead paint. Dan Clark mentioned that the Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committee has a presentation on this topic. The Friends of Quabbin want improvements for cemetery including buildings, sprinklers, lead abatement and septic. Lisa Gustavson also noted that DWSP is focused on removing dying, hazardous trees from the cemetery. This project was expensive but should be completed by next fiscal year. John noted that DWSP would support the creation of a line item.

- Trustee Laskey asked about headstones in the cemetery. John noted that headstones are the responsibility of the family and that DWSP is only responsible for the grounds. He noted that it is still an active cemetery with family plots and 15-20 burials each year.

Trustee Meehan asked about DWSP’s affiliation with UMass and wondered if it would be possible to engage the school on more projects, remembering a PhD student who was involved in the rattlesnake issue. John noted that DWSP has relationships with the Civil Engineering and Wildlife programs at UMass.

- Trustee Laskey asked if DWSP has an internship program and John explained that DWSP does occasionally use interns.
- Trustee Meehan asked if there were any activities or staff vacancies where interns could be used. John suggested that DWSP is accomplishing its goals, but agreed there are occasions when interns could be beneficial.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:52AM.