



Water Supply Protection Trust

June 4, 2025

Virtual Meeting conducted via
Webex

Environmental Affairs

Frederick A. Laskey, Executive Director, MWRA

*William Meehan, North Worcester County Quabbin Anglers,
Quabbin Fishermen's Association*

Matthew A. Romero, MWRA Advisory Board

Fred Heyes, Swift River Valley Historical Society

Trustees

Frederick A. Laskey, Executive Director, MWRA

Matthew Romero, Executive Director, MWRA Advisory Board (Designee for Richard E. Raiche, MWRA Advisory Board)

Vandana Rao, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Brigadier General William J. Meehan, North Worcester County Anglers and Quabbin Fishermen's Association

MWRA

Dave Coppes, Chief Operating Officer

Rebecca Weidman, Deputy Chief Operating Officer

Carolyn Francisco-Murphy, General Counsel

Michael Altieri, Associate General Counsel, Environmental and Energy

Katie Ronan, Chief of Staff

Thomas Durkin, Director of Finance

Colleen Rizzi, Director of Environmental and Regulatory Affairs

Stephen Estes-Smargiassi, Director of Planning & Sustainability

Valerie Moran, Director of Waterworks

Michael Cole, Budget Director

James Coyne, Budget Manager

John Gregoire, Senior Program Manager, Reservoir Operations

Hillary Monahan, Project Manager, Environmental Permitting

DCR

John Scannell, Director, Division of Water Supply Protection

Dan Clark, Regional Director, Quabbin/Ware

Lisa Gustavsen, Deputy Regional Director, Quabbin/Ware

Kelley Freda, Regional Director, Wachusett/Sudbury

Joel Zimmerman, Watershed Planning Coordinator

Jarrett Sparks, Budget Director

Jeffrey Gagner, Project Engineer

Ken MacKenzie, Director, Natural Resources

Scott Campbell, Director of Government Affairs

WSCAC

Moussa Siri, Executive Director

Other

Daniel Hammock, North Worcester County Quabbin Anglers Association

Clayton Sydla, Quabbin Fishermen's Association

Read Porter, Deputy General Counsel, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

The meeting was convened at 10:00am.

- 1. Welcome and Introductions** – Trustee Laskey welcomed attendees, introduced himself as the Chair and called the June 4, 2025 meeting of the Water Supply Protection Trust (WSPT) to order. It was noted that the meeting was being conducted via remote participation and would be recorded. It was also noted that Trustee Heyes would not be able to attend the meeting.
The Trustees, as well as several MWRA and DCR Division of Water Supply Protection (DWSP) staff, attended the virtual meeting via Webex. General Counsel Francisco-Murphy called the roll to establish attendance and a quorum. All Trustees were present, with the exception of Trustee Heyes.
- 2. Approval of the Minutes** – A motion was made by Trustee Rao and seconded by Trustee Romero to approve the March 12, 2025 WSPT meeting minutes. General Counsel Francisco-Murphy called the roll. The Trustees unanimously voted to approve the minutes.
- 3. FY2025 Spending Update** – John Scannell, Director of the DCR Division of Water Supply Protection, shared a Fiscal Year 2025 Expenditure Update (through April 2025, or 83% of the fiscal year):
 - **Expenditures** – About 70% total expended, on-track for the year. Mr. Scannell noted that DWSP is over budget in Contracted Services (CC) and Administrative Expenses (EE) categories. He explained that the budget for Contracted Services was 108% expended due to time spent by a retiree contracted from her retirement in August through end of calendar year to overlap and assist in training for the new Budget Director. Trustee Rao then asked a clarifying question on Item CC. Mr. Scannell explained that while the 108% does not represent the full fiscal year, DWSP will not have any other contracted expenses for May or June, and expects that number to not change.
Trustee Rao expressed appreciation for the ability to keep some retirees on for a period of time, as the overlap is helpful for training new hires. Mr. Scannell agreed. He further explained that Item EE expenses were due to a change in some charge-back costs over vehicles.
 - **Revenue** – Revenue through April is on-target for the year, totaling just over \$1M. Mr. Scannell noted that the bulk of revenue is transmission from Oakdale.
 - **Other Updates** –
 - Quabbin Window Replacement work nears completion.
 - Continued work on Forests as Climate Solutions – working with EEA on forest reserves, data dashboard, and forest monitoring projects.
 - 2nd Phase of Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment ending with a GIS dashboard that will show level of risks to natural assets.
 - Department of Fishing and Game (DFG), Office of Fishing and Boating Access (OFBA) replacement of Fishing Area 3 Ramp.
 - Quabbin BLA 3 Ramp Opening
 - Creative Educational Outreach

Trustee Laskey reflected on the opening of the new ramp and expressed gratitude for the completed project. He acknowledged the reassuring, positive feedback received for DCR and MWRA. Mr. Scannell noted that DCR has received inquiries regarding the bridge that leads to the ramp, and requested cost information for funding opportunities to repair that structure for Fishing Area 3.

Trustee Laskey asked Mr. Scannell if he could provide a cost estimate for the bridge reconstruction. Mr. Scannell explained that engineering staff had previously generated a cost estimate and that he would share it with the Trust. Trustee Meehan seconded Trustee Laskey's request, stating that he believes the cost estimate had been \$1M. Trustee Laskey noted that he looks forward to working together to analyze what is feasible for the project.

Trustee Laskey noted that the FY2025 Spending Report was accepted and would be placed on file.

4. Approval of FY2026 Work Plan and Budget – Mr. Scannell shared a presentation on the Draft FY2026 Work Plan and Budget. The following highlights were discussed:

- Division-wide
 - Land protection efforts will continue, guided by the Land Acquisition Model for each watershed. Staff will continue to look for other sources of funding to expand protection efforts as allowed.
 - Continue the use of GIS and electronic field data collection to expand and streamline numerous protection efforts including EQA data collection, Ranger incident reporting, Quabbin Fishing Area management, and public access mapping tools.
 - Control beaver populations in the Pathogen Control Zones; work to reduce impacts of beaver in other areas of the watershed.
 - Next Phase of Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment – work to address data gaps in the model and develop some outreach materials.
 - Trustee Rao noted that EEA will be putting out new Climate Projections in the next several months, and suggested that Mr. Scannell incorporate those projections into the next phase of the Assessment.
 - Implement bird harassment programs at both reservoirs to continue source water quality standard compliance.
 - Monitor and analyze water quality in tributaries and the Reservoirs. Continue sampling of the reservoir for plankton. Continue extensive hydrologic monitoring (stream flow, groundwater, precipitation, and snowpack).
 - Continue forestry operations, with expanded focus on public process for proposal review.
 - Continue work to identify forest reserves to meet Forest and Climate Solutions goals.
 - Continue forest stand adjustment pilot project to enhance tree species diversity, resiliency, wildlife habitat, tree vigor, carbon storage and stand diversity.
 - Maintain Ranger presence to monitor and control public access. Enforce DWSP regulations through education and targeted patrols. Work with State and Environmental Police to enforce more serious violations.
 - Continue implementation of the Watershed Protection Act and Regulations (3113 CMR 11.00)
 - Continue to expand education and outreach programs both online and in-person that showcase the mission and accomplishments of DWSP.
 - Administer the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) program across the watershed system.

FY2026 Major Project Highlights

- Quabbin - Completion of Administration Building roof, Camel Brook Bridge Crossing, Complete replacement of rental boat fleet
- Wachusett - Clinton Maintenance Yard Paving, Aquatic invasive plant control South Meadow Pond Complex, Permitting/Contract assistance Route 110 Direct Discharge Elimination

Trustee Laskey raised a question regarding issues of permitting for direct discharge along Route 110 in Sterling. Mr. Scannell explained that MassDOT will soon be ready to construct the final discharge. There was discussion on various hurdles faced along the way for permitting, including a return to the Office of

Dam Safety for secondary review and additional field work requirements. Mr. Scannell expressed optimism for nearing completion in the short-term.

FY2026 Draft Operating Budget

- \$26.7M operating expenses
- \$1.0M revenue projected
- \$25.7M operating budget

A motion was made to approve the FY2026 Work Plan and Budget. General Counsel Francisco-Murphy called the roll. The Trustees unanimously voted to approve the FY2026 Work Plan and Budget.

5. Update on Quabbin Windows and Roof – Dan Clark, Regional Director of Quabbin/Ware, shared an update on Quabbin Administration Building Windows and Roof:

- Window Replacement Update: Contract value totaled \$1.6M with funds from ARPA. They have completed replacing all (120) windows; window tinting is on schedule to be completed summer 2025.

Trustee Laskey asked a question regarding window brand. Scott Campbell, Director of Government Affairs, responded that the Quabbin Administrative Building windows were sourced out of an American company in Missouri. Trustee Laskey complimented the outcome of the Window Replacement Project, noting that the windows can be highlighted in future sustainability and climate-related reports for their efficiency.

- Roof Update:
 - Background:
 - Building constructed around 1938
 - Long history of leaks, issues, and attempted repairs
 - Building Envelope Assessment in 2020
 - Problem worsened in winter 2023/2024
 - Received quotes in March 2024
 - March 2024 quote: \$1,828,700
 - Greenwood Industries: DCR roofing contract
 - Could not use DCR roofing contract
 - Pivot to Design/Chapter 149 Bid
 - Retained DCR House Doctor Services through HKT Architects
 - Current Status:
 - Final Design & Estimated Costs:
 - ECC: \$3,071,148; option to rebuild annex chimneys for ~\$150,000
 - 79% increase from original quote
 - Rationale/Justification:
 - Changes to energy code (October 2024)
 - Remove/replace 3rd floor ceiling
 - Repairs to interior walls/ceilings
 - Future Proofing: Impacted Mechanicals
 - Ventilation ducts in chimneys and attic space
 - Contingencies and escalation
 - Chimney and roof costs relatively unchanged
 - Laboratory-2020: Hazen Study Assessment
 - Assumed MWRA laboratory fume hood no longer needed and should be removed.
 - Restroom fans should be replaced per Code.

- Assumption of the report was that if windows were replaced, no additional ventilation would be required. However, per 2021 IMC, laboratory ventilation is required.
- New Roof Replacement Design Solution:
 - Insulation and ventilation upgrades to meet strengthened Energy Stretch Code.
 - Redesigned chimneys and parapet walls to address waterproofing, ventilation requirements, and condensation issues.
 - Future proofing of building mechanicals to be impacted by the work to satisfy Code requirements for improved ventilation, energy recovery, and lighting.
 - Comprehensive solution incorporating waterproofing membranes, new gutters, and repairs to damaged surfaces and finishes.
- Next Steps:
 - Construction drawings
 - C.149 bidding (summer)
 - Fall/winter 2025-2026 construction

Trustee Laskey raised a question regarding the project's bottom line and whether there are any additional projects that could be completed simultaneously, such as wiring or other electrical work. Mr. Clark responded that the bottom line is slightly over \$3M. He suggested that it would be a good opportunity to address the lighting on the 3rd floor and the ventilation system on the 3rd floor.

Trustee Romero requested that Mr. Clark provide additional information on cost estimate changes from the original numbers to be able to decipher where dollars were added and in what proportion. Trustee Romero also expressed concern for the working conditions of 3rd floor staff while disruptive construction is set to take place. Mr. Clark reassured the Trust that most staff on the 3rd floor have hybrid work flexibility. He also noted that there are offices available to be used on the 1st and 2nd floors of the building. During active construction, staff are not allowed to enter certain isolated rooms. Mr. Clark acknowledged that construction will cause significant disruption to daily operations, but reassured the Trust that the final result of the project will be well worth the disturbance that staff will temporarily endure.

Trustee Meehan raised a question regarding the ability to provide one large bill for the Trust to better visualize what needs to be done at the facility and external buildings. Mr. Clark responded that while renovation of the building itself is still a looming project, progress is being made on the first phase with the Admin Renovation Study to be undertaken by MWRA. Mr. Clark acknowledged that the scale and costs to address the renovation are still in question. He explained that the first phase is moving ahead, and DCR will have a better sense of what that larger project will entail once the Study is complete.

Dave Coppes, MWRA Chief Operating Officer, added that in order to hire a designer using the DCAMM Designer Selection Board (DSB), the initial Study must be completed. There was discussion regarding the DCR House Doctor Contract and MWRA Procurement Department review process.

As a follow-up, Trustee Meehan inquired about expected timeline. Mr. Clark noted that he has received an initial response and expects a response regarding the MWRA agreement within the next month to be able to move forward. Trustee Meehan requested an item on the next WSPT meeting agenda regarding this topic.

Trustee Laskey expressed agreement, noting that many positive steps are being taken to address investment in these important assets. Mr. Scannell inquired about next steps for the roof. Tom Durkin, MWRA Director of Finance, explained that FY2025's unexpended budget variance for the additional \$1.4M will be set aside for construction bills.

Trustee Laskey encouraged DCR to press ahead. General Counsel Francisco-Murphy reminded Mr. Scannell that MWRA should continue to be informed throughout the process. Mr. Scannell expressed agreement. Mr. Clark noted that he would relay the message to HKT to move forward.

6. Update of DEP Annual Review/Ranger Enforcement – Mr. Scannell reminded the Trust that MassDEP conducts an annual review of the water system and issues letters to MWRA and DWSP for both the Quabbin/Ware and Wachusett Watersheds. DWSP received the letters earlier in the year. Mr. Scannell provided the following overview:

- DEP Annual Inspection Update
 - DEP met with DCR, MWRA in the fall for field inspection
 - DEP issued letters in February 2025 with an amendment in March 2025 letters in spring
 - Letter lists requirements and any timeline for completing requirements
 - Generally, DEP requires a mid-year update letter on watershed programs and sometimes other submittals
- Quabbin/Ware River Inspection Update
 - Requirements:
 - Update letter to DEP by August 31, 2025 with info on watershed programs
 - DCR shall evaluate methods to reduce violations of DWSP's public access rules, including increased enforcement, education, and inspections. DCR shall provide an update on these efforts in the annual update to MassDEP.
 - Quabbin/Ware River Inspection Letter Requirements:
 - By January 10, 2026, MWRA shall submit to MassDEP a summary of the diversions from Ware River to Quabbin Reservoir completed during 2025, specifying dates and water volumes.
 - DCR-DWSP shall submit to MassDEP a staffing update by August 31, 2025, and at any time that DCR-DWSP determines that watershed vacancies may impact watershed programs.
 - Mr. Scannell quickly noted that DWSP is one position away from being fully-staffed at this point, and is currently moving forward with filling that position.
 - Wachusett Inspection Letter Requirements:
 - DCR shall submit an update letter to DEP by June 1, 2025 with info on watershed programs.
 - DCR shall maintain adequate staffing to implement watershed protection program
 - DCR shall evaluate methods to reduce violations of DCR-DWSP's public access rules, including increased enforcement, education, and inspections. Provide an update on these efforts in the written update to MassDEP due on June 1, 2025.
- Ranger Enforcement:
 - Mr. Scannell explained that Watershed Rangers do not have the legal ability to issue citations but have various tools such as education, outreach, and coordination with local and state law enforcement. Watershed Rangers continue to educate individuals regarding enforcement. When more significant violations occur and Rangers are able to identify the violator, a ban letter may be issued. Mr. Scannell noted that a ban letter is issued only if a violator has already obtained a permit (for instance, issues with boat rentals in fishing areas). He acknowledged that DCR is not allowed to ask for identification for general violations and subsequently cannot issue ban letters. Mr. Scannell said that Rangers have become more focused on identifying problem areas. He offered the example of dog walkers: DCR can carry out enhanced enforcement in a specific area, but in a snapshot, those numbers tend to increase. Mr. Scannell noted that DWSP has submitted the mid-year update to DEP on Wachusett, and will do the same on Quabbin in August.

Trustee Meehan expressed concern over lack of ability for Rangers to issue citations. He noted reoccurring confusion over differing opinions of legal counsel on the matter. There was discussion regarding obtaining written legal policy for Ranger enforcement. Trustee Meehan requested that a commitment be made between MWRA, the Trust, and DCR to obtain definitive policy in written form to be able to solidify a policy that takes into account both the considerations of the Code of Massachusetts Regulations and the law.

Trustee Romero seconded Trustee Meehan's sentiment, expressing disappointment for the slow progress made on Ranger enforcement written policy. Trustee Romero noted that he was pleased to see the issue captured in the annual letter, and inquired about next steps to proceed as a Trust, or as individual groups represented by the Trust, in order to obtain a written legal policy for Ranger enforcement. He emphasized the importance of providing Rangers with the tools they need to steward the watershed.

Trustee Laskey clarified, asking if Trustee Meehan was requesting to issue a joint letter to the Secretary's General Counsel, in which the Trust would provide a draft policy. Trustee Meehan responded that the purpose of the letter would be to indicate that the Trust requests a written legal policy on Ranger enforcement that merges the current Ranger policy with reference to the law and the Code of Massachusetts Regulations.

Trustee Rao responded, noting that DCR does not have the ability to police those who are violating watershed rules in the same manner as Environmental Police. DCR has pivoted to other mechanisms for the Watershed Rangers, including successful outreach and education efforts. She noted that records do not show more violations than in previous years. Trustee Rao stated that Mr. Scannell has presented on the topic of Ranger enforcement policy at multiple Trust meetings and suggested revisiting previous meeting notes to gain a better understanding of what is possible within current law.

Trustee Romero emphasized the importance of obtaining a written opinion analyzing the status of the law. He acknowledged that EEA has evaluated and determined that Watershed Rangers cannot police. Trustee Romero explained that it would be helpful to evaluate whether there is any alternative legal interpretation, and noted that he shares Trustee Meehan's frustration. He further suggested that the Trust consider pushing for an amendment to the legislation for a Ranger enforcement carve-out.

Dan Hammock, North Worcester County Quabbin Anglers Association, expressed agreement that the Trust should pursue working toward changing the legislation if that is what is needed and appropriate for protection of the watershed. He expressed concern over water quality endangerment.

Trustee Laskey noted the awkward nature of the issue at hand. He explained that it has been made clear that Rangers do not have the ability to step into a police role, and that the law does not support it. He proposed that that Trust could seek legislation if the Advisory Board and Trust desire to change the law, but cautioned that he would not want to cause false hope that writing a letter could provide any certain outcome. Trustee Meehan clarified that he does not advise generating new legislation. He referenced the Code of Massachusetts Regulations and expressed frustration over contradictory legal guidance.

Trustee Laskey acknowledged Trustee Meehan's frustration, noting that he believes the Trust can send a letter to the previously referenced General Counsel and explain what information is desired as a written policy. Trustee Meehan expressed agreement. Trustee Rao noted that she will also take this concern back to EEA General Counsel and provide an update on the WSPT conversation. Trustee Laskey noted that this item will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting. Trustee Romero proposed that if the Trust does not receive a written opinion by that time, the Trust might want to make a motion to officially send the letter. He noted that by September, it will be one year since first request of a written opinion. Trustee Laskey expressed agreement.

7. Quabbin Spillway Vegetation Management – Mr. Clark shared a presentation on Quabbin Spillway Vegetation Management.

- Quabbin Spillway Background
 - First spill was in 1946; spillway was dominated by grassland.
 - Spillway resembled a forest by 1980s, dominated by large trees.
 - Conditions improved by 2018. Repeated pattern of attempting to control the woody vegetation on the spillway.
 - Decided to make a concerted effort to restore the spillway to the original conditions seen in the 1940s.
 - First phase began in May 2024 - hired a contractor to clear both sides of the spillway using a “yarder” machine technique; hand-cut vegetation and cable it up the side of the spillway.
- Desired Future Conditions
 - Slopes will be primarily native warm-season grasses with a component of lowbush blueberry
 - Benefits for infrastructure:
 - Warm-season grasses have deep roots, ~20ft deep (cool-season only 3ft deep)
 - Recover quickly after a fire; during growing season can green up within 1-1.5 weeks
 - Can be burned under a variety of conditions
 - Can allow for visual inspection of the slopes
 - Benefits for habitat:
 - Increases habitat for grassland birds
 - Provides valuable pollinator habitat
- Burn Plan:
 - Seedbed preparation burn
 - Maintenance burn
 - Plan specifies weather conditions necessary to burn
 - Smoke management conditions
 - May 13, 2025:
 - Burned western cleared portion
 - Seedbed preparation
 - Similar results to eastern side, less residual debris to carry fire
 - Crew of approximately 15
 - Excellent consumption
 - Hand seeding – seeded May 14, 2025:
 - Warm season grass mix and annual rye
 - Annual rye stabilizes the soil while warm season grasses establish
 - Warm season grass mix composed of little bluestem, big bluestem, switchgrass, Indian grass

John Gregoire, MWRA Senior Program Manager of Reservoir Operations, added that removing large trees is helpful for eliminating possible spillway channel blockages and dam erosion. He applauded the project and commented on its dam safety benefits. Mr. Clark agreed. Mr. Coppes asked a question regarding how well the project withstood the storm event that occurred on May 22nd after the burn. Mr. Clark responded positively, noting that the slope was stable and no erosion or runoff into the spillway was observed. Trustee Romero expressed enthusiasm for the project.

Trustee Meehan inquired about the cemetery record progress. Mr. Clark noted that the total number of unknown records has decreased, and that all have been accounted for with the exception of 30 or 40 individuals. Mr. Clark noted that DCR has maximized abilities to identify those unknown individuals. Trustee Meehan suggested additional assistance by graduate students or interns to continue working on the identification effort. Mr. Clark acknowledged that the list of unknowns may not be able to be resolved. Trustee Meehan asked if a representative from Friends of the Quabbin could be of assistance. Mr. Hammock

noted that he was uncertain of any additional assistance available. There was discussion regarding the difficulty involved with identifying unknown burial records. Trustee Meehan expressed gratitude for the efforts made thus far to maintain knowledge of lineage and history of those buried.

Mr. Clark encouraged the Trust to visit the online portal for Quabbin Park Cemetery data. Trustee Laskey suggested that Phil Lamothe, GIS Analyst and developer of the Quabbin Park Cemetery Lots & Graves Viewer, present at an upcoming WSPT meeting to showcase his cemetery record database work. Trustee Meehan expressed agreement and requested that a list of the cemetery records be shared with the Swift River Valley Historical Society and Friends of Quabbin to see if anyone can provide assistance with unidentifiable records. Trustee Romero expressed appreciation for the important work that has been accomplished on the Quabbin Park Cemetery database and requested a link to the online portal to spotlight in the Advisory Board's monthly newsletter. Trustee Romero further noted that the Advisory Board recently released a podcast featuring Mr. Gregoire to highlight the Diver Assisted Suction Harvesting (DASH) program. He encouraged the Trust to listen online.

8. Quinapoxet Dam Project Update – Mr. Gregoire shared a brief update on the Quinapoxet Dam Project.

- Site walk occurred on June 3rd with design team and resident engineer to inspect and evaluate river performance. Prior two months have seen two bankfull events where water encroached on the flood plain.
- As of January 31st, the Dam is officially removed and river flow has been restored for the first time in 120 years.
- The first Google Earth fly-over image of the area was taken on March 21st, 2025.
 - Image portrays where the circular dam previously was located, the hydraulic interconnect for fish to escape back into the river, two fish block structures installed, and the entire restored channel.
 - Mirrors the appearance of the area in 1905.
- Ribbon Cutting event to take place.
- Completion of pathway down to the ADA fishing platform.
 - Pending final building permit
 - Railings set to be fabricated
 - Expected for the coming fishing season

Trustee Laskey expressed appreciation and gratitude for the vision of the Trust and for the positive outcome of the Quinapoxet Dam Project. He emphasized the importance of the Trust's role and the significant progress made collectively, noting all that has been achieved through productive collaboration. He thanked the Trust for the continued hard work involved in such achievements. Trustee Romero agreed and expressed his appreciation to Mr. Scannell for the effort made to achieve a high level of staffing.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Trustee Romero. The motion was seconded by Trustee Rao. General Counsel Francisco-Murphy called the roll. **The Trustees unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:26am.**