

UPPER BLACKSTONE CLEAN WATER
50 ROUTE 20, MILLBURY, MA 01527-2199
BOARD MEETING MINUTES - BOARD ROOM/HYBRID MEETING
August 16, 2023

ITEM I - CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Labovites called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Ms. Mancini, through a roll call, recorded those in attendance and all are noted below:

<u>Board Members</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>In- person</u>	<u>Virtual</u>
Matthew Labovites	Chairman	X		X	
Philip Guerin	Vice Chairman	X		X	
John Woodsmall	Secretary	X		X	
Michael Traynor	Member	X		X	
Joanna Paquin	Member	X		X	
Donald Manseau	Member	X		X	
Robert Antonelli	Member	X		X	
Kevin Duffy	Member	X		X	
Gary Nelson	Member	X		X	
Jay Fink	Member	X		X	
Austin Cyganiewicz	Member		X		

Upper Blackstone Staff

Mike Andrus	Deputy Director
Denise Mancini	HR Assistant/District Clerk
Mark Chaplin	Lab/Pretreatment Manager
Tim Loftus	Lab/Pretreatment Manager (retired)

ITEM II - APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – July 19, 2023

Minutes – Member Antonelli moved to approve the minutes of the meeting on July 19, 2023. Member Nelson seconded, and approval of minutes was noted as follows: Chairman Labovites, yes; Vice Chairman Guerin, yes; Secretary Woodsmall, yes; Member Traynor, yes; Member Paquin, yes; Member Manseau, yes; Member Antonelli, yes; Member Duffy, yes; Member Nelson, yes; and Member Fink, yes.

ITEM III - FINANCE

Warrants – Member Traynor moved to approve the following warrants. Vice Chairman Guerin seconded, and approval of the warrants was noted as follows: Chairman Labovites, yes; Vice Chairman Guerin, yes; Secretary Woodsmall, yes; Member Traynor, yes; Member Paquin, yes; Member Manseau, yes; Member Antonelli, yes; Member Duffy, yes; Member Nelson, yes; and Member Fink, yes.

Warrants	\$ 841,186.45	(07/31/2023)
	<u>\$ 516,789.36</u>	(08/11/2023)
TOTAL	\$1,357,975.81	

Breakdown of Cash - Mr. Andrus said the cash flow is low right now, which is typical at this time of the year. He added money will be borrowed from the investment accounts as needed to maintain cash flow.

Aging Report – Mr. Andrus said there are no major concerns.

Outside Revenue Position – Mr. Andrus said the report reflects the first month of the fiscal year so far. Adding the report shows sludge and septage are picking up from where they left off, with septage being less than anticipated. He said the energy credits are above what they were last year, but not as much as Upper Blackstone’s consultants estimated. Ms. Sangrey will be following up with the consultants for an explanation.

ITEM IV ADMINISTRATION

New Lab Manager Introduction, Mark Chaplin – Mr. Chaplin was introduced, and he provided information about his education and previous position as an operator at Upper Blackstone. The Board members introduced themselves and welcomed Mr. Chaplin.

Integrated Planning Update – Chairman Labovites said there was nothing new to report. Member Fink said a phone call was going to take place between the attorneys next week with the time and date to be determined. Chairman Labovites asked if there has been any feedback from the EPA. Member Fink responded they are in favor of doing supplemental environmental projects (SEPs) and progress has been made on the amount.

Capital Projects Updates, Mike Andrus, Deputy Director

Standby Power Design – Upper Blackstone had a meeting with CDM Smith, Power Options and Solect on July 21st to review future solar plans. The meeting resulted in CDM Smith pursuing incentive programs for the various solar projects. Based on capital costs and payback periods, the current plan is to install solar on rooftops and north of the primary clarifiers, but to delay the ash landfill until the biosolids project is finalized.

Regional Biosolids Study – Massachusetts Climate Chief, Melissa Hoffer has requested a meeting with Ellen Weitzler of USEPA to discuss PFAS and climate effects of biosolids management.

Fleet Electrification – Upper Blackstone is working with National Grid and JK Muir to map out a plan to electrify UBCW’s fleet of vehicles (within approximately 5 years). National Grid has a free program for guidance but makes some invalid assumptions (i.e., one charger per vehicle). Therefore, JK Muir is assisting in deciphering their recommendations. The final recommendations from National Grid are expected at the end of this week, which will then be converted to an action plan. Mr. Andrus said National Grid’s program may be of interest to any member communities interested in fleet electrification.

Disinfection System – The improvements are progressing; the programming changes are complete and implemented; and equipment replacement/reconfiguration is under design.

Other In-House Projects –

- Lafleur Electric has been awarded the on-call electrical contract.
- Asset Management – teaming with Tighe & Bond to get a grant for a plant-wide asset management risk assessment. This is a \$250K project; the grant is for \$150K, capital expenses will be \$50K and Upper Blackstone will need to provide \$50K in FY 2025 and some “in-kind services”.
- Excavation for repairs to the plant water piping system are under construction right now.

ITEM V – OPERATIONS

Flow Summary – Mr. Andrus said there have been a few rain events, but there has been no wet weather blending and he gave credit to the operations team for doing a great job. Chairman Labovites asked if there had been any feedback from Worcester’s CSO notifications. Member Finch said there had been some general comments in the spring that were in response to newspaper articles. He added the National Parks Service is interested in having a tour of the CSO facility and they will be educated on everything that is being done.

July Effluent Summary Report – Mr. Andrus reported the plant is running well and despite all the rain, there have been no exceedances, again giving credit to the operations team for maintaining everything. Mr. Loftus pointed out the 25-year average is now included in the report.

ITEM VI – COMMUNICATIONS

MCWRS – Vice Chairman Guerin said the final changes have been made for the September 28th Symposium at the Devens Conference Center; the agenda will focus on affordability; the new MCWRS website is up, and registration is now open; and Member Woodsmall will be speaking on rates.

Deer Island Draft NPDES Permit Review – Vice Chairman Guerin said the Deer Island draft NPDES permit was discussed at the MCWRS member chat on August 3rd; the August 30th deadline has been extended to November 28th and the plan is for the Coalition to submit comments by then; and, the comments will likely focus on the major storm event planning requirements; they are not opposed to such planning, but do have concerns about the 100-year planning period and other provisions MWRA is also concerned and will comment on the co-permittee issue. He said the MWRA also takes issue with the annual visual inspection of the outfall pipe and may appeal the permit.

Vice Chairman Guerin said Attorney Bob Cox is teaching at Suffolk Law School and has a program wherein he is attempting to get law students involved with real-life legal issues. When asked if the Coalition could offer suggestions that required legal guidance, the Vice Chairman suggested help with the issue of storm planning for events. He feels an exciting opportunity to get the students involved with the Coalition.

As a side note, Vice Chairman Guerin said several river associations have issued notice to the EPA that they are going to sue them for failing to enforce the Clean Water Act as it pertains to stream flow. He said although the state has done a lot, the organizations feel the state has not done enough and raises the question of how stream flow has to do with the Clean Water Act. He said this issue will be of interest to the water suppliers and they will follow the matter.

ITEM VII – PERSONNEL

Postings, New Hires, Resignations – Ms. Mancini said the SCADA Specialist position has been reposted; a new operator started today and there are two other candidates lined up; and there are no new resignations.

ITEM VIII - DATE(s) NEXT MEETING(s) AGENDA TOPICS

9/6, 9/20, 10/4, 10/18

ITEM X – ADJOURNMENT

At 1:30 p.m. Member Manseau motioned to adjourn the meeting. Member Traynor seconded, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Mancini

Denise Mancini,
District Clerk