

**UPPER BLACKSTONE CLEAN WATER**  
**50 ROUTE 20, MILLBURY, MA 01527-2199**  
**BOARD MEETING MINUTES - BOARD ROOM/HYBRID MEETING**  
**October 18, 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:

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

**Upper Blackstone Staff**

Karla Sangrey	Engineer Director/Treasurer
Mike Andrus	Deputy Director
Diane Shea	Finance Manager
Liz Mailhot	HR Manager
Denise Mancini	HR Assistant/District Clerk

**ITEM II - APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES** – October 4, 2023

**Minutes** – Member Antonelli moved to approve the amended minutes to change paragraph one of the Regional Biosolids Study to read, “adjacent sites” of the meeting on October 4, 2023. Member Fink seconded, and approval of minutes was noted as follows: Chairman Labovites, yes; Vice Chairman Guerin, yes; Secretary Woodsmall, yes; Member Paquin, yes; Member Manseau, yes; Member Antonelli, yes; Member Nelson, yes; and Member Fink, yes.

**ITEM III - FINANCE**

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

Warrant        \$ 553,560.62        (10/16/2023)

**Aging Report** - Ms. Shea said all is going well and the payments are timely. Ms. Sangrey said the September financials will be available at the next meeting.

**ITEM IV ADMINISTRATION**

**Integrated Planning Update** – Member Fink said a Teams meeting is going to be held on October 30<sup>th</sup> regarding the EPA's interest in the specifics of the Worcester IDDE pilot study project. He said the attorneys and others met with the team regarding the EPA's expectations and how to respond to alleviate their concerns. Ms. Sangrey said the quarterly update for the administrative order (AOC), due October 15<sup>th</sup>, has been sent and she will provide Chairman Labovites with a copy of it. In the meantime, she received a draft of a formal request letter from Attorney Cox which she will be sending out within a few days. She asked if any of the member communities had any experience with reporting incidents with the IDDE program and whether they'd had any success with it. This prompted a discussion that included concerns regarding the difficulty of implementing corrections for illicit discharges given the financial effect it has on homeowners. Chairman Labovites pointed out that one of the key factors is the homeowners being aware that they own the sewer connection. Some suggestions that were offered included be consistent, fair, understanding and structure a plan, make sure ordinances are in enforcement, offer incentives for the homeowner to take care of the repair promptly, and provide a deadline with a warning that if the repair is not made, the city will do it and will bill the homeowner. Vice Chairman Guerin said there are programs available to assist.

**Capital Projects Updates, Mike Andrus, Deputy Director**

**Standby Power Design** – Mr. Andrus said the SRF application was submitted on October 15<sup>th</sup> and will go out to bid in the Spring of 2024.

**Plant Water Pipe Repairs** – Mr. Andrus reported the substantive repairs are complete and the project is in cleanup mode. When asked, he said the purchase order was for \$350K and the final cost will be in the vicinity of \$360K due to the flowable fill not being in the original scope.

**Regional Biosolids Study** – The design team is currently focusing on technology and siting, with five locations being sited, two of which are in the vicinity of Upper Blackstone.

**Fleet Electrification** – The final recommendation report from National Grid has been received and work with JK Muir to form a plan to implement the purchase of the vehicles and charging stations has begun.

**Disinfection System Improvements** – Improvements are still progressing.

**Headworks Upgrade** – The evaluation report from the consulting engineer is under review and comments will be submitted.

**Millbury Force Main Repair 10-12-10-14** – Ms. Sangrey said Upper Blackstone was contacted last Thursday to accept trucked in waste while the Millbury Pump Station had to be shut down to repair a broken coupling in the force main. She said she and Mr. Andrus had the opportunity to meet with Mark Hollis, Director of Engineering for Millbury and to go over the incident and repair plan with him. Ms. Sangrey said Mr. Hollis and some of his staff will be visiting our facility soon. Member Nelson said Thursday's incident was not related to the force main break that occurred in 2020 and it was a hard and costly repair. He also confirmed that no flow reached the receiving water this time and that the DEP was on site. Mr. Andrus said the incident was handled well.

**Draft proposal for Section 308 Information Request for PFAS sampling** – Ms. Sangrey said it was brought to her attention that there is a draft document circulating among NACWA affiliates regarding a Clean Water Act Section 308 informational request from the EPA to collect samples and provide PFAS data. She said the draft includes the four hundred (400) biggest treatment plants around the country, eight of which are in Massachusetts and includes the MWRA. They are looking for information on industrial users, influent, effluent and biosolids samples. Vice Chairman Guerin asked if the request is to do sampling or asking for prior sampling data. Ms. Sangrey was not sure but said Upper Blackstone may already have data that has been collected for the past five years. She added the sampling is very expensive (close to \$1000 each for PFAS, per Mr. Andrus) and involves other issues including quality control and duplicates. The timeframe anticipated to do sampling is late 2024, early 2025. Ms. Sangrey added there is at least one plant in every New England state included in the draft.

**ITEM V – OPERATIONS**

**Flow Summary** – Ms. Sangrey said there is nothing to report; that the team is doing their job well managing the rainfall and high flows.

**September Effluent Summary Report** – Ms. Sangrey said there have been no exceedances. Adding, the toxicity testing is finished for October and the results will be on the next report.

#### **ITEM VI – COMMUNICATIONS**

**MCWRS** – Vice Chairman Guerin said a few of the draft NPDES permits have been finalized, but the major stormwater planning has been modified to now include an adaptation plan. The plan allows twenty-four (24) months to identify the vulnerable critical assets; thirty-six (36) months to do an adaptive measures assessment; and forty-eight (48) months from the effective date of the permit for the implementation of a maintenance schedule. In addition, annual progress reporting is required. The focus is still on protecting facilities from flooding. Vice Chairman Guerin said a virtual member chat is being planned for next Thursday to discuss whether the new plan is acceptable and if it should be a stand-alone program with federal funding and assistance. He added some guidance is provided, which includes the optional Climate Resilience Evaluation and Awareness Tool (CREAT) program. Years ago, he was asked to work with a WPI student on the software for the program and provide feedback. He felt it was not useful and he would never use the program. The Vice Chairman added the MWRA will be invited to the member chat.

#### **ITEM VII – PERSONNEL**

**Postings, New Hires, Resignations** – Ms. Mailhot said there is nothing to report.

**Work for Water - New England** – Ms. Sangrey said she and Ms. Mailhot attended a Steering Committee meeting on Tuesday. They have been involved with the committee for approximately a year now, which is an initiative for New England Water Environment Association (NEWEA) and New England Water Works Association (NEWWA) to consolidate efforts for recruitment, training, and communications for attracting and hiring people to the water profession. NEWEA hired a consultant from Baywork from California to help structure the initiative. Ms. Mailhot said there will be three more breakout meetings and an in-person meeting prior to January. Hopefully the NEWEA annual conference will include a soft introduction to membership. If successful all job postings will be channeled through Work for Water New England, thereby eliminating job boards, and creating a unified effort to help everyone. Ms. Mailhot said it is anticipated to take four to five years to implement the program. Ms. Sangrey said the funding for the program will most likely come from the utilities and a sustainable business plan is being developed. Chairman Labovites said the water industry has been progressive over the last couple of years and Member Fink said the program makes sense for the water industries and that branding will make a difference.

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

10/31, 11/15, 12/6, 12/20

#### **ITEM X – ADJOURNMENT**

At 2:17 p.m. Member Manseau motioned to adjourn the meeting. Member Nelson seconded, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

*Denise Mancini*

Denise Mancini,  
District Clerk