

Wayland Wastewater Management District Commission

The Wayland Wastewater Management District Commission (WWMDC) operates a sewer system that serves business, residential and municipal properties along Route 20 from Route 27 to the Town Center development. Wastewater discharged into the system flows to a treatment plant located on Town-owned property within the Town Center development. The treated wastewater is discharged to the Sudbury River. Beginning FY2019, the WWMDC began to share resources with the Wayland School Department for oversight of the wastewater treatment plant at Wayland High School.

Managerial Oversight of the WWMDC and High School Wastewater System: The position of Wastewater Operations Manager (WOM) was created and filled in October 2018. The WOM is responsible for and manages emergency response to alarm calls and overseeing scheduled contract work pertaining to the Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF). He also performs periodic operational work as well as preventive maintenance and repair work that was previously was done on an on-call basis by the plant contractor. Additionally, the WOM seeks to optimize the cost of maintaining and operating the system.

In FY2020, the WOM conducted a thorough review of the WWTF plant operation. He performed several repairs to enhance both the functioning and reliability of the plant. Work has been completed largely using internal resources, thereby avoiding significant charges from the plant contractor. Billing from Whitewater for plant emergencies and non-contract repairs dropped to \$1,235 in FY2020, from \$62,889 in FY2018 (the last full year before the WOM position was created). A strict monetary comparison arguably underestimates the benefit to plant operations; whereas, prior billing from Whitewater was generally just to keep the plant running. Recent work has aimed to extend the life of existing equipment and avoid the unanticipated cost of equipment failures down the road.

New operating practices have also substantially reduced the cost of transporting sludge. In FY2018 these costs were \$23,635 and in FY2020 they were reduced to \$14,823.

Although it was anticipated the WOM would devote considerable time to operating the High School Wastewater Plant, problems with that facility proved sufficiently extensive that it was decided to simply have wastewater hauled for offsite processing until additional capital investment will allow the plant to return to operation.

Discharge Permits and System Usage: The WWTF operates under permits issued jointly by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. The permits allow discharge of an annualized average limit of 52,000 gallons per day (GPD) into the Sudbury River. An application for renewal submitted in June 2013 seeks an increase in discharge capacity to 80,000 GPD. As of the end of FY2020, the renewal application remains pending with the EPA and this extra capacity is not currently required.

At the request of the Department of Public Works, the Commission revisited the process for reviewing changes to discharge permits for system users (“allocation changes”). The Board has provided the Town Engineer interim authority to sign off on allocation changes as long as 1) there is no net increase in permitted flow without Commission approval; 2) the reallocation is limited to a single parcel and approved by the site owner/manager; and 3) all allocations are based on flow allocations specified in Title 5.

During FY2020, the WWMDC explored allowing a connection from a residential development planned at the site of the former Town landfill. Under the current proposal, wastewater from the development would be sent to the plant for processing, after which it would be returned for discharge into an onsite leaching field. The Town has applied for State grants to fund the hookup, although no decision had been made by the end of FY2020.

In FY2020, the average discharge from the plant was approximately 19,270 GPD, down about 24% from 25,386 GPD in FY2019. This change is primarily driven by a reduction in system input due to vacancies at the Town Center development and business shutdowns due to pandemic restrictions. The impact of reduced system input on discharge volume was partially offset by new operational practices that extract and discharge more clean water to reduce the volume of sludge users pay to transport for disposal.

Administration and Finances: Income for FY2020 was \$754,203. Of this amount \$ 429,814 was earmarked for paying off outstanding bonds (\$402,251 betterment principal and interest payments, \$963 sewer rate relief from the state and \$26,600 transfer from general fund for FY2019 debt adjustments).

Operating income was \$324,389 (primarily \$279,143 user charges and \$30,170 prior year’s interest earned on savings) and operating expenses were \$ \$294,143.

The Commission’s undesignated fund balance at the end of FY2020 was \$1,379,496, including money collected in prior years for future bond payments. The outstanding balance of bond debt, which will come due between FY2021 and FY2034, is \$3,383,247.

The WWMDC developed a budget for FY2021 of \$794,004. This includes \$358,557 operating income and expenses, and \$435,447 bond and interest payments. The FY2021 rates were set as follows:

WWMDC FY2021 Rates			
Category	Rate	Units	Approximate Share of Revenue
Discharge Capacity (based on user’s allocated capacity)	\$6.35	\$/ccf	~ 80% of user fees
Tier 1 (water usage up to 50% of allocated capacity)	\$4.77	\$/ccf	~ 20% of user fees
Tier 2 (water usage in excess of 50% allocated capacity)	\$14.30	\$/ccf	

Commission Membership and Staffing: The WWMDC began FY2020 with two members: Rick Greene, Chair, and Uday Virkud. Michael Gitten was appointed as the third member in March 2020. Uday’s term expired June 30, 2020.

Two factors led to a reduction in the number of Commission meetings in FY2020. When the Board was operating with two members in the fall of 2019, it was unable to establish a quorum for an extended period due to international travel obligations of one member. Then the Board suspended four months of meetings (February through May) as a result of the Town’s pandemic protocols.

The Commissions Account Specialist continues to work on administrative issues, communicating with other Town departments, and managing the Board’s financial reporting.