

Maine Water News

A Publication of the Maine Water Utilities Association

September 2014, Number 177

Don't Be a Detroit

Jefferson Longfellow, 2014 President

Paying water bills. It's not a complex concept to us in the water industry, but as those who have followed the news from Detroit, it has been overly complex. For those who are not familiar with this situation, the Detroit, Michigan Water and Sewer Department is disconnecting water service for unpaid bills. These disconnections were for residential accounts that are more than 60 days past due. At the start of the disconnection program, the DWSD had nearly 90 million dollars of water bills in collections. The Detroit free press stated that when the program started, 60% of those who were shut off had service restored within 24 hours, and about 40% of the remaining disconnections were restored within 48 hours.

These disconnections for non-payment were met with numerous protests. The United Nations was brought in to intervene. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has offered to pay delinquent accounts if they make a pledge to "go vegan" for a month. These protests resulted in a four-week suspension of the program, but as of August 26 the disconnections have resumed. The delay in the disconnection program was to give the customers an opportunity to become current on their accounts to avoid interruption of service.

The question remains, how did Detroit get in this problem and how can a water utility not be in a similar situation? Detroit is a city that is struggling, its industrial base is diminished, and it is dealing with a high unemployment rate of 15 percent. DWSD was facing a 50 percent delinquency rate that was growing, something needed to be done. Because it was rare that water had been disconnected in the past, past due bills were allowed to grow. The average past due bill was \$560 according to NBC news. When one is living in or near poverty, that amount is insurmountable. The key seems to not let the bills accrue, but start the unpleasant

disconnection process soon after the bill becomes past due. The process will allow for a payment plan at the least, and at best get the amount paid.

Another problem DWSD is facing is the cost of water for residential customers. The average monthly water bill is \$75. This is nearly double of the \$43 cost per month that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency lists as an average bill for U.S. customers. During the last 10 years, Detroiters have seen their water bills increase by 119 percent. Were the rates raised to the point that the population could no longer afford the cost of water? I don't know of too many Maine utility's that have had that rate of increases during the last decade. The lesson is to keep the rates reasonable.

The next problem is losing the public relations battle. It makes great press to have demonstrations of faucets opened, but no water comes out. As water utilities, we don't often promote the value of water to the public as a whole. When one pays a water bill, do they know what they are paying for? We know what we do, but there is a sizable contingent of the population that feels that water is a human right. There is no mention of the cost that is paid now and has been paid by our industry processors to have the high-quality water that we enjoy available. There is little consideration of the work done to prevent problems in watersheds and well recharge areas. The work done to treat the water, and the costs needed are considered given until there is a problem. It is easy to say water should be free, but there are two sides to a balance sheet, and to have a constant supply of potable water for human needs does have a monetary cost.

I know it will be hard for me, but we have to sell ourselves and the industry to all the good that we do. We have to put the word out on the efforts we do to provide safe potable water in the quantity needed for our communities to thrive and to quench thirst.

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Material of interest to the water supply profession will be considered for publication.
Copy deadline is the 15th day of month preceding publication.

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The Annual Golf Tournament and Clambake

The weather at Val Halla was less than ideal for the annual golf event with light rain falling, but our undeterred golfers made the most of it and had a great time. Once again, through the generosity of those who were there, we were able to raise enough money for a full scholarship via the raffles. MWUA would like to thank the event coordinators and the sponsors as well.

Thursday's weather was beautiful, contrary to early weather forecasts. It was a great day for networking and the food was splendid. Thank you to Brunswick & Topsham Water District for once again being wonderful hosts. We had a great turnout, and look forward to next year's annual festivities.

Annual Golf Tournament Results

1st Place Team
Porter Gervais
Brian McGuire
Josh McGuire
Mike Pelkey

3rd Place Team
Steve Prescott
Rosie Santerre
Robbie Chadwick
Dewayne Taylor

2nd Place Team
Dave Riter
Justin Perry
Ryan Tweedie
Chip Witwicki

Closest to Pin #3
Matt Whitehouse

Closest to Pin #11
Keith Levasseur

Men's Long Drive Dave Riter
Women's Long Drive Eliza Morrison

Nominating Committee Offers Slate for 2015

Nominating Committee Chair Kathy Moriarty has informed the Board that her committee has selected a slate of candidates as nominees for Directors for 3-year terms, starting in 2015.

There are four seats to be filled on the Board. The terms of Don Gobeil of Kennebunk, Kennebunkport & Wells Water District, Gordon Johnson of Portland Water District and Jon Ziegler of Boothbay Region Water District expire at the end of the calendar year. Johnson became a Director in January of 2006 and Gobeil and Ziegler first became Directors in January of 2009. In addition, there are two years left on a three-year term. The Committee has selected the following candidates: Richard Anair of Greater Augusta Utilities District; Michael Broadbent of Auburn Water & Sewer Districts; Alan Hitchcock of Caribou Utilities District; and James Wallace of Portland Water District.

Nominations for Directors are presented at the October Meeting by the Nominating Committee or from the floor by any member. The by-laws require that the membership be notified, in writing, of the committee's selections for the nomination of Directors at least ten days prior to the October meeting. Eligible candidates who can be nominated from the floor include Individual, Retired and Honorary Members of the Association who are members in good standing.

Current Directors whose terms expire at the end of 2015 include

Stephen Cox of The Maine Water Company and Jefferson Longfellow of Kennebec Water District.

Current Directors whose terms expire at the end of 2016 include Frank Kearney of Old Town Water District plus whoever is elected to serve the two years left on the three-year term.

October Meeting is the 9th in Southwest Harbor

The October Meeting will be held on Thursday, October 9th, in Southwest Harbor. The meeting will have a water quality theme and the Program Committee has been fortunate in being able to line up some excellent speakers.

Few remember, but many have heard stories about the fall of 1947, when Maine suffered from a drought of major magnitude. The years 1946 through 1949 were actually all below average years of precipitation; however the deficit for 1947 was 12" or more, depending on location. A number of locations, including Mount Desert Island, suffered the ravages of wildfire.

Jack Russell, a Director of the Friends of Acadia, was still a toddler that year. He was one of those rescued from the fire's path. He has graciously agreed to provide a unique perspective on The Great Fire of 1947.

The business meeting will include the typical regulatory and legislative updates; in addition there will be report of the Nominating Committee and a presentation of the 2015 Budget and the revised dues schedule.

The technical program will feature presentations highlighting aging infrastructure, specifically recent water storage tank replacement projects in Maine. There are a number of factors that need to be taken into consideration when sizing, siting, designing or replacing a tank. The speakers who have volunteered to cover this subject have years of experience and many stories to tell.

MDI is a wonderful place in October; the

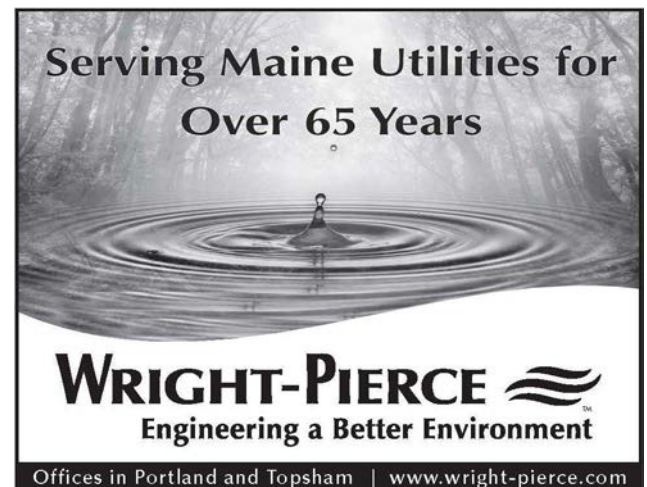
program will be very interesting and informative.

Join us in Southwest for the October meeting. See page 9 for more information, the agenda and the registration form!



Scholarship Applications Are Being Accepted

The Public Awareness Committee is now accepting applications for the Madeleine A. Storer Memorial Scholarship. The applicant must be a high school graduate, must have been an intern at a water and/or wastewater facility, and must be enrolled in an accredited secondary educational institution. Applications must be submitted by November 30th. For more information and to download the application, go to <http://www.mwua.org/about/mwua-scholarship/>.



MWUA By-Law Changes: A Follow-up

Don Gobeil, 2013 MWUA President

At the April 2014 bi-monthly meeting held in Mechanic Falls, a proposal was brought forward to the membership to amend the MWUA by-laws to allow the possibility of one Associate member to serve on the MWUA Board of Directors. The proposal sparked a



lively discussion on the part of many in attendance, ultimately leading to a vote to table action of the proposal until another meeting later in the year. We know now that it will be taken up again at the December 2014 meeting. It was felt by many at the April meeting that the change was important enough to avoid acting on it at its initial presentation, opting instead that allowing more time for careful consideration and discussion was needed. One question that came up at the outset of the



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discussion was - where did this issue come from? Did it move quickly from concept to recommendation? As President of the MWUA Board during the year (2013) that the issue was discussed and acted upon, I felt some responsibility to provide some relevant background here.

In the structure of the MWUA, the Nominating Committee is charged with the responsibility to adopt appropriate guidelines for selecting nominees for MWUA Director each year. The manner in which they undertake this responsibility necessarily includes a desire to maintain a balanced and effective board composition in the short term, coupled with having a vision for the longer term needs of the association as well. Reflecting the diversity of the membership, geographic location, and leadership capability are some but not all of the factors that go into their recommendations. And if they believe structural

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changes are needed, i.e. size of the board, director eligibility criteria, etc. it is their responsibility to pass recommendations to the Board for action.

The current proposal before the membership to amend the by-laws to allow for an Associate member on the Board is not a new one. I recall various discussions at board meetings on this topic dating back to 2009. In the minutes of the September, 2010 Nominating Committee meeting, there was mention of amending the By-Laws to allow an Associate Member to serve on the Board. While there was support on the part of the Committee for that change, there were also some concerns. Consequently, no recommendation to the full Board was made at that time.

In both the 2011 and 2012 MWUA annual internal evaluation prepared by Jeff (normally in December), he included a bullet item that the Nominating Committee ought to consider revisiting the discussion as part of their mission. During my tenure as President, I reviewed the Association evaluations for things that needed attention and saw that this issue was still a 'loose end'. I spoke with John Storer (Nominating Committee Chair) and invited him to attend one of our Board meetings (June-2013) to have an overall discussion of this and other issues pertinent to the Nominating Committee and nominating process. Following that Board meeting, John agreed to include an

agenda item for that dialogue to occur at their next meeting.

At the August, 2013 Nominating Committee meeting it was taken up again. After a discussion on the pros and cons of an Associate member being on the Board, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend to the full Board to allow for one (but not more than one) Associate member as Director. Following that recommendation from the Nominating Committee, the full Board took up the issue at its November 2013 meeting, and again in December of 2013 and January of 2014. And finally, the issue received unanimous Board approval at the March 2014 meeting, at which point it was decided to bring an 'ought to pass' recommendation to the full membership at the April bi-monthly meeting. Procedurally, this is where we are now.

With respect to the pros and cons of implementing the by-law change, they can be broadly characterized on the pro side as an attempt to deepen the pool of potential Board candidates to include competent, respected and involved Associate members. On the con side is the 'slippery slope' argument, where it is felt that once a decision is made to move in that direction, the potential will exist for additional future changes that would lead to further dilution of the current board composition model. There is however, a shared desire on the part of everyone within the MWUA to avoid any action that would embrace or move toward an association governance model dominated by consultants and vendors (NEWWA). To that last point, it is felt by those in favor of the by-law amendment that the "one and only one" restriction is designed to prevent that, while for those in opposition, the possibility of subsequent efforts at further by-law revisions cannot be ruled out.

However this turns out, it's apparent to me that the membership of the MWUA is a passionate and engaged constituency. And that is always a positive.

Leadership Transition at Wright-Pierce; John Braccio Appointed President and CEO

John W. Braccio, PE, has been appointed President and Chief Executive Officer of Wright-Pierce, a New England based water, wastewater and infrastructure engineering firm, effective July 1, 2014. Mr. Braccio has been with the firm for 30 years and has served as a Senior Vice-President in charge of wastewater engineering in southern New England. He succeeds William E. Brown, PE.

Mr. Brown, who has been with the firm for 35 years and has served as CEO since 2002, will remain as the Chairman of the firm, focused on strategic initiatives and mentoring the next generation of company leaders.

Brown commented "Being an employee-owned firm is a cornerstone of Wright-Pierce's success, and this leadership transition is another step in our long-term commitment to internal ownership and leadership. Wright-Pierce is fortunate to have John Braccio assume the role of CEO. The combination of his leadership, and our strong team of employees, is a formula for continued success and growth in the Northeast."

Wright-Pierce is an award-winning engineering firm specializing in water, wastewater and infrastructure services for public and private clients throughout the Northeast. Founded in 1947, Wright-Pierce has a staff of approximately 200 engineers and support professionals located in seven offices throughout the Northeast.

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Gas Expansion Discussion Moves Forward, Slowly

As was noted in the last issue of Maine Water News, in June a number of representatives sat down in an attempt to formulate protocol so as to minimize the impact of new utilities upon existing facilities. At a subsequent meeting in August the discussion again focused on the disparity and inconsistencies associated

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with the planning and coordination of gas line installation.

While there are numerous provisions in law which address location permits and the required submittal of plans and other measures to minimize safety risks, it appears that many are either unaware of those requirements or choose not to follow them. The rush to install facilities in some municipalities has created a bewildering scenario. What water and wastewater personnel are learning about gas main installation practices is not always comforting.

The Association will continue to work with the various parties in an effort to achieve better planning, greater coordination and, especially, less risky outcomes.

Rulemaking Ramps Up

The Association is currently involved in a number of rulemaking activities. Most of them are the result of legislative action during the past session; however one of the proposed rules (see Chapter 1000 below) seeks to incorporate legislative and policy changes that have been adopted over the past few years.

Public Utilities Commission rulemaking includes Chapter 615: Exemptions From Regulatory Requirements For Consumer-Owned Water Utilities and

Chapter 895: Underground Facility Damage Prevention Requirements (i.e. the Dig Safe rule).

On May 9th of this year, The Department of Environmental Protection posted Chapter 1000: Guidelines for Municipal Shoreland Zoning Ordinances to rulemaking. The Water Resources Committee has reviewed Chapter 1000; the association will be participating in the rulemaking and will be developing and submitting comments.

All of these hearings will be held during the month of September.

Clean Water for Maine Political Action Committee: Yes on 6!

The November bond referendum which, if enacted, will provide \$1.8 million and \$2.4 million, respectively, for the Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Fund capitalization grant is Question 6.

Since the beginning of the summer MWUA has been involved with others in a Political Action Committee – Clean Water for Maine – that was established to advocate for passage of the referendum. The effort consists of three main components: television ads, digital media, and earned media.

The schedule calls for a kick-off press conference in mid-September, to be followed by messages via the media outlets referenced above.

PAC members represent a diverse cross section of Maine residents. The message being conveyed is: “Yes on 6” is good for Maine’s economy, good for Maine’s bottom line and good for Maine’s environment.

Board Approves Dues Increase

At the September Board meeting the Directors unanimously approved an across the board dues increase of 9%.

The action culminated discussions that commenced in August. At that meeting, the Directors focused on a proposed 2015 budget which indicated the need for a 17% increase, in order to balance the budget.

Last year at this time the Board had also discussed the need for a dues increase but chose not to do that for at least a couple of reasons.

The Corporate member dues schedule was restructured and adopted by the Directors at the August 2013 Board meeting. That restructuring expanded steps 10 and 11 to steps 10 through 17. That restructuring was, in essence, revenue neutral although several Corporate members saw either a slight decrease, or a slight increase in their dues.

The other consideration was the fact that the annual Public Utility Commission assessments increased approximately 50% and 49% in 2013 and 2012, respectively.

Given the newness of the restructuring and the impact of the PUC assessments, it was felt that it was best to forgo an increase, if at all possible

The 2014 budget included the use of prior year reserves in order to balance the budget. It is expected that at year end (September 30), the association will be close to being on target and the budgeted prior year

reserves will be utilized.

The 2015 budget, which was also approved by the Directors at their September meeting, is \$395,993. This compares to the 2014 budget of \$394,883. The 2015 budget contemplates the use of \$10,248 in prior year reserves.

The approved dues schedule for 2015 is depicted below.

Revised Corporate Dues Schedule August 2014

Revenue	Prior Step	Prior Dues	Revised Step 2014	Revised Dues 2014	Revised Dues 2015
< \$50,000	1	\$175	1	\$175	\$190
\$50,000-99,999	2	\$240	2	\$240	\$265
\$100,000-199,999	3	\$310	3	\$310	\$340
\$200,000-299,999	4	\$425	4	\$425	\$465
\$300,000-399,999	5	\$540	5	\$540	\$590
\$400,000-499,999	6	\$760	6	\$760	\$830
\$500,000-749,999	7	\$1,090	7	\$1,090	\$1,190
\$750,000-999,999	8	\$1,410	8	\$1,410	\$1,540
\$1,000,000-1,999,999	9	\$1,730	9	\$1,730	\$1,890
\$200,000,000-4,999,999	10	\$2,275			
> \$5,000,000	11	\$4,290			
\$2,000,000-2,999,999			10	\$2,155	\$2,350
\$3,000,000-3,999,999			11	\$2,580	\$2,815
\$4,000,000-4,999,999			12	\$3,005	\$3,275
\$5,000,000-9,999,999			13	\$3,430	\$3,740
\$10,000,000-14,999,999			14	3,750	\$4,090
\$15,000,000-19,999,999			15	\$4,050	\$4,415
\$20,000,000-24,999,999			16	\$4,290	\$4,680
>\$25,000,000			17	\$4,490	\$4,895

Associate Member dues will increase from \$235 to \$255, annually.

The MWUA by-laws state that: Prior to the submission to the membership of a change in dues, the members shall be notified in writing of the recommended schedule no later than 10 days prior to that meeting. The dues schedule may be revised by a two-thirds vote of eligible members present at a meeting of the corporation.

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The new dues schedule, as well as the 2015 budget, will be presented at the October membership meeting in Southwest Harbor

Program Committee is Recruiting New Members

The Program Committee, responsible for organizing the February Meeting and Tradeshow as well as the August Golf Tournament and Clambake, is looking for individuals who are interested in serving on the committee. The committee meets monthly in varying locations. If you would like to get involved, please call Jeff McNelly at 623-9511 or email jmcnelly@mwua.org.

Board Meets With DWP Staff

Following the September Board meeting the MWUA Directors and Drinking Water Program management sat down to discuss a variety of issue of common interest.

DWP representatives presented information on staffing and funding, ongoing and anticipated rule making, and various components and aspects of the SRF program.


MWUA Directors and staff provided updates of the association's activities, including recent meetings focused on minimizing the impact and safety risks associated with the natural gas infrastructure expansion, training sessions, rulemaking impacting water utilities and other issues.

Concerning the required 20% SRF match, it was noted that a portion of the requirement had been obtained via the 2015 supplemental budget and that MWUA and others were involved in a political action committee to advocate for the Clean Water and Safe Communities bond. That bond referendum, which is Question 6 on the ballot, contains the remainder of the funds needed for the SRF match.

It was agreed that the meeting was a very productive endeavor and that there would be value in meeting a couple of times per year to discuss common issues.

February Meeting & Tradeshow

The 89th Annual February Meeting and Trade Show will once again be held at the Holiday Inn By The Bay in Portland on February 3rd and 4th, 2015. With the Program Committee diligently working on the upcoming sessions and product demos, next year's meeting will be one you won't want to miss. Look for product demo requests to be sent out in the next few weeks with vendor registrations soon following.



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From North: I-95 S to US-1A E in Brewer to ME-3 to ME-102 S in Southwest Harbor.

PROGRAM

- 8:30 – 9:00 a.m. Registration & Continental Breakfast**
- 9:00 – 9:30 a.m. The Great Fire of 1947: A Perspective for Water Supply Managers**
Jack Russell, Director, Friends of Acadia
- 9:30 – 10:00 a.m. Business Meeting**
Regulatory Update, Maine Drinking Water Program representative
Legislative Update, Jeffrey McNelly, Executive Director
Revised Dues Schedule & 2015 Budget, J.Longfellow, President; J.McNelly, Executive Director
Nominating Committee Report, Kathy Moriarty, Nominating Committee Chair
- 10:00 – 10:15 a.m. Break**

TECHNICAL PROGRAM

- 10:15– 11:15 a.m. Dealing with Aging Infrastructure: Recent Water Storage Tank Replacement Projects in Maine**
Chris Hodgson, DN Tanks; Annaleis Hafford, Olver Associates
- 11:15 –12:15 a.m. Strategies to Improve Water Quality: Evaluating & Managing Storage Facilities**
Daniel Flaig, P.E., Wright-Pierce
- 12:15 p.m. Lunch**

Jefferson Longfellow
President

Rick Anair, Bruce Berger, Nate McLaughlin
Program Coordinators

REGISTRATION FOR OCTOBER 9, 2014 BI-MONTHLY MEETING

Please return registrations by: October 2, 2014

2.0 Training Contact Hours

Name(s): _____

Affiliation _____

		Member	Non-Member	Late Registration (after 10/2/14)	
				Member	Non-Member
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<i>Vendors / Associate Members</i>	_____ @	\$30_____	\$35_____	\$40_____	\$45_____
<i>Water Systems serving less than 4,000 Customers</i>	_____ @	\$20_____	\$25_____	\$30_____	\$35_____

Total enclosed: _____

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