

**BOSTON GROUNDWATER TRUST (BGwT)**  
**BOARD MEETING**  
**March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

The Board of Trustees of the Boston Groundwater Trust met in the Patriot meeting room at the Lenox Hotel located at 61 Exeter Street, Boston, MA. The Executive Director electronically distributed the meeting notice and agenda to the City Clerk at Boston City Hall in accordance with the provisions of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Open Meeting Law.

Mr. Robert Whitney, co-chair, read the following statement:

"I, Robert Whitney, co-chair of the Boston Groundwater Trust, am calling this meeting to order at 4:04 pm. In accordance with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, we are conducting this meeting on-line. To ensure public access to the deliberations of the BOSTON GROUNDWATER TRUST, the public may access this meeting through telephone and video conferencing. Members of the public will have an opportunity to ask questions and provide public comment. To do so please, "raise your hand" in the application via the Zoom meeting platform. If you are calling in and cannot use the platform, you can send your questions to staff via email at [csimonelli@bgwt.org](mailto:csimonelli@bgwt.org) or via X (formerly Twitter) by tagging the X handle @BOSTONGWT and using the hashtag #MAR24MTG."

The following trustees were present at the Lenox Hotel:

Mr. Gary Saunders, Back Bay Association

The following trustees were present virtually:

Mr. Robert Whitney, Beacon Hill Civic Association

Mr. Tim Mitchell, Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay

Mr. Peter Shilland, Ellis Neighborhood Association

Ms. Janine Commerford, Greater Boston Real Estate Board

Mr. Nick Pittman, Fenway Community Development Corporation

Ms. Katherine England, Department of Green Infrastructure, City of Boston

Ms. Katherine Eshel, Chief of Staff, Environment, Energy and Open Space, City of Boston

Also present at the Lenox Hotel was:

Mr. Christian Simonelli, Executive Director, Boston Groundwater Trust

**1. Adoption of January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes**

Meeting minutes were previously emailed to Board members for review. Discussion followed.

Mr. Saunders, co-chair, moved to adopt the minutes with the changes discussed at the meeting. Mr. Whitney, co-chair, seconded the motion.

**Voted:** To adopt the Board meeting minutes for January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

**2. Financial Report**

Mr. Whitney, co-chair, and Mr. Simonelli reviewed the Trust's financials. Mr. Whitney, Treasurer, provided an overview of the virtual meeting he and Mr. Simonelli had with Fidelity Investments advisor James McCann, at which they purchased additional bonds. Discussion followed. Trustee Saunders suggested exploring longer-term maturities to take advantage of the current market environment and high interest rates. Discussion followed. Mr. Whitney and Mr. Simonelli will follow up with Fidelity and report back to the Board.

**3. FY25 Budget Draft**

Mr. Simonelli reviewed the proposed FY25 budget. He noted that Boston Water and Sewer Commission had committed to supporting the BGwT in the amount of \$48k for FY24, of which only \$25k has been received to date; the outstanding amount of \$23k has been promised by June, 2024. Discussion followed. Mr. Simonelli will revise the draft budget and bring it back to the Trustees for a vote at the next Board meeting.

**4. Trustee Re-appointments and Term Lengths Update**

Following up on the discussion from the last meeting regarding the current two-year term for Trustees, Mr. Simonelli worked with Mr. Whitney to survey existing City of Boston boards and commissions term lengths. Mr. Simonelli provided a list of 43 boards and commissions, 20 of which had term lengths of three years. Discussion followed.

Mr. Whitney will draft language for a proposed modification of the current two-year term for the Trustees to review at the May meeting. In addition, Mr. Whitney will work with Mr. Simonelli to review the Trusts' current by-laws, policies, and nominating entities, and report back to the Board. Discussion followed.

**5. Remote Well Reading Device Update**

Mr. Simonelli stated that all 30 additional units purchased from BluCloud have been installed throughout the city. Discussion followed. Topics covered included:

- Images of an installed unit.
- 2 of the 30 units are currently not responding and are slated for replacement.
- New cloud interface for public distribution and timeline for release.

**6. Current Website Design**

Mr. Simonelli reviewed the edits to the current website based on the comments provided by the Trustees at previous Board meetings in November 2023 & January 2024. Discussion followed.

Mr. Simonelli then discussed his impressions of a new website builder, Squarespace, and pre-viewed his updated draft of the new website. Discussion followed. Mr. Simonelli will continue working on the new website and circulate a link to the Board for review and comments to discuss at the May Trustee's meeting. Discussion followed.

**7. Executive Director's Report**

BGwT Executive Director Mr. Christian Simonelli distributed his report. Discussion followed. Refer to the attached *Executive Director's Report March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024*, for a complete list of activities. In addition, Mr. Simonelli reviewed potential speakers for future Trustee meetings. Discussion followed.

**8. Other Business**

Mr. Mitchell, Trustee, discussed his review of *Reforming the Boston Zoning Code, by: Sara C. Bronin* he circulated to the Trustees which examines and proposes a reform of the zoning code. Discussion followed. Mr. Simonelli will follow up with Mr. Mitchell and report back to the Board at the next meeting.

Ms. Commerford, Secretary, inquired about the next steps for Trustees who have submitted renomination letters to the city. Discussion followed. Mr. Simonelli will follow up and email those Trustees with an update on their renomination status with the city.

**Mr. Mitchell moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Saunders seconded the motion.**

**The meeting was adjourned at 5:02pm**

**NEXT MEETING: May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024 @ 4:00 pm, at the Lenox Hotel with a virtual attendance option.**

Notes submitted by Christian Simonelli, BGwT Executive Director, 3/19/2024.

Approved 3 May 2024



J. Commerford, Secretary

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**  
**March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

1. **Readings** – Currently taking our second set of readings for 2024.
2. **Meetings and Calls – (Virtual Via Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams platforms)**
  - a. Virtually met with the City's Green Infrastructure (GI) Working Groups on the following dates:
    - i. GI Coordination/Maintenance: 1/26, 2/9, 2/23, 3/8
    - ii. GI Policy: 1/19, 2/2, 3/1
    - iii. GI Working Group: 2/8
  - b. Virtually attended the Boston Water & Sewer Commission meeting. (1/24)
  - c. Virtually met with Kelvin Wong, PE, Haley & Aldrich, to discuss my role with the Trust. (1/24)
  - d. Virtually met with BPDA staff and proponents to review the GCOD requirements for the 281-283 Franklin Street Project Office-to-Residential Application. (1/26)
  - e. Spoke with Jason Weiner and condominium association members for 190 Commonwealth Avenue in the Back Bay about wood piles and groundwater. (1/29)
  - f. Virtually attended the BPDA Long Wharf Flood Resilience Planning and Feasibility Introductory Community Workshop. (1/31)
  - g. Virtually met with John Sullivan, Chief Engineer, BWSC, to review a presentation before the Board of Commissioners. (2/7)
  - h. Virtually met with Kelvin Wong, PE, Haley & Aldrich, to discuss my role with the Trust. (2/7)
  - i. Met with Carlos Velasquez, Assistant Project Manager MassDOT, Rail & Transit Division, to discuss groundwater levels and pore pressure variability during drought periods in areas of Cape Cod and how it can impact infrastructure. (2/14)
  - j. Virtually met with co-chair Robert Whitney and advisors from Fidelity Investments to review the Trust account and purchase additional bonds. (2/16)
  - k. Attended Webinar for ArcGIS StoryMaps Live. (2/21)
  - l. Virtually met with Tracy Roth, PG, Principal Hydrogeologist, Terraphase Engineering, to discuss sea-level rise and groundwater. (2/27)
  - m. Virtually attended the Boston Water & Sewer Commission meeting. (2/28)
  - n. Spoke with Cullen Paradis of the Boston Guardian about an upcoming article on groundwater. (3/7)
  - o. Virtually testified at the Zoning Board of Appeals hearings in January & February.
  - p. Communicated with residents, engineers, attorneys, & developers throughout the GCOD to discuss ZBA procedures and advised them on what they need to submit to meet the GCOD zoning.
3. **BluCloud Automated Readers Update-** I virtually met with Daniel McCormack of Blu-Cloud on 2/28 to review the performance of the 30 units deployed and the current data hub interface.
4. **City & State Agency Updates-** All agencies will provide updates on their efforts to address groundwater at the next City-State Groundwater Working Group meeting on Thursday April 18<sup>th</sup>.