

## **BCWA Projects Update and FY2026 (March 1, 2025, to February 28, 2026) Rate Increase**

Dear BCWA Customers:

March 2025

Water is essential to our daily lives, and at BCWA, we are committed to delivering safe, high-quality water to every customer, every day. Our mission is to ensure a reliable supply while continuously improving our systems and services. To support this, the BCWA Board of Directors recently approved the FY2026 budget, which focuses on four key strategic priorities:

- **Maintaining water quality and securing an alternative supply**
- **Providing exceptional customer service**
- **Enhancing operational efficiency**
- **Ensuring financial stability**

Our dedicated team of professionals works diligently to achieve these goals, and we are excited to share some of our accomplishments and future plans. While challenges exist, particularly our reliance on a single water source, we are proactively addressing these issues through strategic investments and infrastructure improvements.

### **Strengthening Our Water Supply**

BCWA purchases all its water from Providence Water, sourced from the Scituate Reservoir. Our primary pipeline connects with the Providence system crossing 160 feet below the Providence River. A 2019 pipeline leak underscored the vulnerability of this connection, reinforcing the need for an additional water source. Our top priority is establishing a connection with the Pawtucket Water Supply, which would ensure a high-quality, reliable secondary source of supply. Additional information on this critical project is provided on the back of this letter.

### **Upgrading Our Infrastructure**

BCWA is responsible for maintaining over 230 miles of pipelines and approximately 1,000 hydrants. Some of our oldest pipes, made of cast iron, are over 100 years old and susceptible to breaks, leaks, and water quality issues. To address these concerns, our Capital Improvement Program focuses on ongoing system rehabilitation. Over the past decade, we have upgraded 100,000 feet of water main.

In addition to replacing aging infrastructure, we are working to improve water pressure in historically low-pressure areas. Each year, we identify priority upgrades within the funding available through our capital improvement plan, ensuring our customers receive consistent and high-quality water service.

To address our challenges and on-going commitment to provide all our customers with a safe, high-quality, and reliable water supply, **the BCWA Board of Directors approved a rate increase of 3.0% for fiscal year 2026.** Under this rate increase, which begins on water used after **March 1, 2025**, we estimate the average residential water bill will rise \$3.42 per month (\$41 per year). If you are eligible, we still allow for a senior citizen discount of \$16.06 per quarter.

Further information on the BCWA budget and the public hearing presentation held on January 23<sup>rd</sup> may be found on our website at [www.bcwari.com](http://www.bcwari.com). We understand that rate increases of any kind affect our customers' households and businesses. However, this increase enables us to effectively address the current and future needs of our customers and the communities we serve while also providing financial stability to fund our critical capital improvements.

As always, we appreciate your continued support. If you have any questions, please feel free to call 401-245-2022.

Stephen Coutu, P.E.  
Executive Director, BCWA



## BCWA Projects Update

### Pawtucket Pipeline:

In June 2022, we completed Phase 1 of the Pawtucket Pipeline Project. This large capacity (24-inch) connection to the East Providence water system provides BCWA with a reliable emergency water supply. However, East Providence's water also comes from the Providence Water system; and should there be a restriction on use or a shutdown, both East Providence and BCWA would be without a water supply.

Phase 2 of the project will be the installation of 5 miles of 30-inch pipeline from the East Providence water tanks to a connection with the Pawtucket Water Supply. East Providence has partnered with BCWA for the design of this phase. The design plans for this challenging pipeline project are anticipated to be completed this year and will require approvals from a number of State agencies.

### New Hope Street Pump Station to Improve System Pressure and Fire Flow:



We recently completed the construction of a new pump station at the Hope Street storage tank to improve system pressures and fire flow in this area of Bristol.

With the pump station in operation, system pressure has improved for 811 customers in the area and with the completion of some pipeline improvement work on Gooding Avenue scheduled for this year, we will improve pressure for an additional 94 customers.

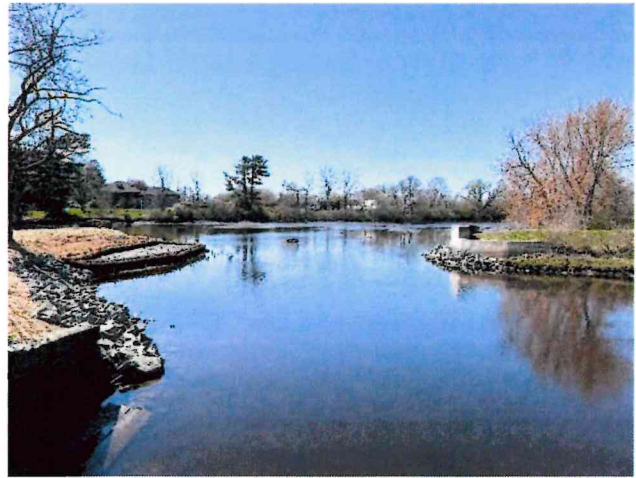
Our 10-year Capital Improvement Plan includes expanding this high pressure zone which will require a significant investment in new pipeline installation.

### Divestment of Obsolete Infrastructure:

Since we no longer rely upon the Kickemuit Reservoir for our water supply, we completed the removal of both the Upper and Lower Kickemuit Reservoir Dams this past year. This project, which restored the Kickemuit River as a tidal estuary as it existed over 125 years ago, was, and continues to be, widely supported by various environmental groups. We secured \$4 million in grant funding to cover the costs associated with this project. Divesting ourselves from obsolete water system infrastructure removes the liability and costs for on-going maintenance.



*Lower Dam (Before)*



*Lower Dam (Removed)*

For additional information on these projects and others, please visit our website at [www.bcwari.com](http://www.bcwari.com).





**Tri-Town Monthly Report**  
**Summary of Notable Activities and Reports**  
**from the**  
**March 27, 2025, BCWA Board of Directors Meeting**

For detailed information on any of these subjects presented herein, please go to the BCWA website at [www.bcwari.com](http://www.bcwari.com) or contact the BCWA. Minutes and videos of all Board meetings are archived on the website.

1. **Connection to the Pawtucket Water Supply System Project:** The plans are getting advanced to the 90% completion stage. It is expected that the plans will be ready for submittal to the regulatory agencies for their review and approval this Summer. Easement documents and appraisals for properties are in preparation. Requested letters of support were sent to RI's Congressional delegation for possible funding of East Providence's work on this project.
2. **Upper and Lower Kickemuit Dams Removal Project:**
  - a. Work on the lower dam is complete.
  - b. For the upper dam, the work is essentially complete. Plantings and landscaping will be done in the Spring. The Contractor is scheduled to restart work by early May.
  - c. Despite early indications of holdups or possible cancellation of federal funding on this project, a requested reimbursement check in the amount of \$304,519 was received.
3. **2025 Water Distribution System Projects:** Bids for water distribution improvement projects for 2025 were requested on February 26. At a pre-bid meeting held on March 6, three contractors were in attendance. Five contractors downloaded plans from the BCWA's website. Bids were opened, as scheduled, on March 19, and there was one bidder, Boyle and Fogarty. After review of their bids by staff and presentation to the Board, the bid was approved, and a contract was awarded to Boyle and Fogarty. The Board also approved a contract with Pare Corporation for engineering and inspection services.
4. **Abandoned Shad Factory Pipeline:** This former above-ground water-supply pipeline is located in wetlands and in the Palmer River in Warren and Swansea. It is functionally obsolete and in disrepair. Save The Bay alerted the BCWA to grant funds it could use to complete engineering and permitting tasks on the Rhode Island portion of the pipeline. The Massachusetts portion for the same work would be the responsibility of the BCWA. The Board approved a contract with Pare Corporation to complete the work to secure permit approvals.
5. **Three-Year Financial Services Contract:** An RFP was issued for Financial Services. Two proposals were submitted and reviewed. The Board approved a contract with Hilltop Financial Services. Hilltop has provided financial services to the BCWA and had the most competitive and best value proposal.
6. **Water Purchases from Providence Water Supply Board:** Water purchases for the month of February 2025 were 4% lower than last. For the fiscal year, water purchases are still about 2% less than the prior five-year average.
7. **Lead Service Line Replacement Program:** No activity due to Winter shut down. There are 20 public-side services scheduled to be replaced this year. Additional contacts will be made with the customers who have lead service lines on their property. BCWA can provide low-cost financing to residential customers to have this work done by BCWA's contractor.

## March 27, 2025, BCWA Board of Directors Meeting Summary

8. **Agricultural Land Lease for Haying Fields:** On an annual basis, the BCWA issues an RFP to have certain property maintained by the collection of hay. A contract was awarded to Frerichs Farms by the BCWA Board.
9. **Bond Counsel Services RFP:** Proposals were received from three firms in response to an RFP. Action on selection was tabled to next month.
10. **Executive Director "2025 Organization Goals":** The BCWA Board adopted the following goals as presented by the Executive Director:
  - Continue the work with BCWA's objective to connect to the Pawtucket Water Supply, includes finalizing design and permitting, seeking funding and financing, securing easements, and solidifying East Providence and Pawtucket partnership.
  - Continue with the planning (demolition or re-uses alternatives) for the former water treatment plant structures and advance planning for a new maintenance garage.
  - With the removal of the Kickemuit River Dams and completion of that project - develop a long-term strategy for the BCWA watershed properties, including the dams and properties in Massachusetts.
  - Continue BCWA's work on the Lead Service Line Replacement Program with the goal of having all public-side services lead free by the end of the year.
  - Develop a long-term plan for the Fountain Avenue Storage Tank.
11. **Public Information/Education:** A letter (**copy included**) will be included with billings sent to all customers noting a 3% rate increase for water used after March 1, 2025. This rate increase was approved at the January 2025 BCWA Board meeting. For the average residential customer, an annual bill is expected to increase by about \$41. (Senior citizens are still eligible for a discount of \$16.06 per quarter).
12. **Next Meeting: Thursday, April 24, 2025, at 5:00pm** - BCWA Offices 450 Child Street, Warren.

As noted herein, this is a summary. For detailed information on the BCWA activities, please go to the BCWA website at [www.bcwari.com](http://www.bcwari.com) or contact the BCWA. Minutes and videos of all Board meetings are archived on the BCWA website.

Respectfully submitted,



Juan Mariscal, Chairman, BCWA