

As voted by the Board of Trustees and in accordance with the notice of the meeting, the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Portland Water District was held remotely on Monday, January 23, 2023. Attending from staff were S. Garrison, C. Crovo, D. Kane, J. Wallace, D. Katsiaficas, M. Demers and C. Cote. George Rheault of Portland was in attendance from the public.

The meeting was convened by President Douglas at 6:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called by the Clerk. All Trustees were present, with Trustee Levinsky joining the meeting at 6:14 p.m.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Trustee Cote made a motion to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 27, 2022, seconded by Trustee Beck. It was voted all in favor.

Trustee Cote made a motion to accept the minutes of the Workshop Meeting of January 9, 2023, seconded by Trustee Willett. It was voted all in favor.

INVITATION FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Rheault addressed the Board regarding the underground reservoir the District owns on Munjoy Hill. He reminded the Board that it was asked of them in 2019 to consider selling the reservoir to the owner of the adjacent parcel. This was not acted on in 2019 and then the pandemic hit in early 2020. He asked the Board to consider selling the parcel again given the nature of today's economy.

REPORTS

Operations Committee

Trustee Beck provided a summary of the Operations Committee meeting on January 9, 2023. Inclement weather can disrupt operations, therefore PWD staff closely watch the weekly weather forecasts and Cumberland County Emergency Management Agency's weather briefings. When the weather is likely to impact operations, an assessment of the impact is completed by staff from AMaP, Wastewater, and Water Services. The potential impact is then shared with supervisors in advance of the storm, and they in turn initiate their appropriate pre-planned action steps. During a weather event, supervisors communicate via a Virtual Emergency Operations Center, so that all are aware of the impact and can coordinate their efforts.

There were two weather events that initiated action steps in December. While the first had a minor impact on operations, the second required a fair amount of effort and coordination between departments; a "hotwash" was held the following week to discuss its impact and consider options to improve PWD's response.

Planning Committee

Trustee Shattuck-Heidorn provided a summary of the Planning Committee meeting on January 9, 2023. Staff presented a request for a contribution of \$200,000 to Loon Echo Land Trust to go towards the preservation of 361 acres on Sebago Cove. The property has 2,500 feet of shore frontage on Sebago Lake. This will be taken up under new business. The Committee reviewed the proposed Committee Work Plan with staff and discussed other items of interest that they seek to review during 2023.

Administration and Finance Committee

Trustee Siviski provided a summary of the Administration and Finance Committee meeting on January 9, 2023. Mr. Kane noted the contract to provide water/sewer warranty program through Home Service will be expiring. The program is currently being used by 8,904 customers and has provided over \$3.6 million of benefits to customers since its inception. This will be taken up under new business.

Ms. Demers noted the Board considers a cost-of-living adjustment annually for the retirees' receiving benefits from the defined benefit plan. The plan states the Board may authorize an adjustment of 50% of the consumer price index (CPI) change up to 5%. At a previous meeting, the Committee expressed a concern that by providing for only 50% of the CPI change, the retirees' pension benefit value is eroded by inflation. Staff reviewed the various alternatives provided by other entities. The alternative most favored by the Committee was adjusting the pension benefit by 100% of CPI change up to a certain pension benefit level with a change not to exceed 5%. Staff will prepare several alternatives with the financial impact for Committee consideration at a future meeting.

General Manager's Report

Mr. Garrison reported the following:

- Water revenues exceeded budget last year; much of the excess was due to drought conditions.
- PWD helped several communities receive \$3.2 Million in federal grants last year for water and wastewater projects.
- He noted the success of the legislative tour that occurred earlier in January. Nine legislators have signed up to be co-sponsors of LD 211, a bill proposed by PWD.

NEW BUSINESS

Order 23-001, authorizing a contribution of up to \$200,000 to Loon Echo Land Trust for the purchase of a conservation easement.

The Sebago Lake watershed encompasses 235,000 acres of land which is primarily forested. The long-term water quality of the lake will be determined, in large part, by the conservation of those forests. At present, about 16% of the watershed is comprised of conserved land. Working with Sebago Clean Waters partners, we are working to bring that total to 25% by 2032. We are presently about 21,000 acres from that goal.

The Sebago Cove property is 361 acres located in the town of Naples with 2,500 feet of shore frontage on Sebago Lake. Loon Echo Land Trust is purchasing a conservation easement on the Sebago Cove property. The property is forested and contains wetlands and a brook that empties directly into Sebago Lake.

The project is supported by Sebago Clean Waters, a partnership of conservation organizations, land trusts, and the Portland Water District committed to water quality protection through forest conservation in the Sebago watershed. Additionally, the project will be partially funded by the Natural Resources Conservation Service RCPP award.

It was moved by Trustee Shattuck-Heidorn and seconded by Trustee Cote.

It was Voted and unanimously,

ORDERED, that the General Manager is authorized to contribute up to \$200,000 to the Loon Echo Land Trust to support the conservation of land known as Sebago Cove located in Naples.

Order 23-002, authorizing the adjustment of the Non-Union Salary Structure.

The Board adopted the current policy on non-union compensation in 2022. The policy notes “The minimum and maximum pay levels established for each band will remain in effect until the next salary structure review. Generally, a review of adjustments for inflation occurs every two years.” The bands were adjusted as of January 1, 2022. Because of the unusual high inflation in the past year, staff recommends the bands be adjusted for January 1, 2023. This affects only the pay scale, not employee compensation. The proposed adjustment was recommended by KMA Human Resources Consulting. If the proposed adjustment to the bands is approved, all eligible employees will receive the full annual pay adjustment that was included in the Board-approved 2023 Budget.

Trustee Lunt is opposed because he does not want to adjust pay bands on a yearly basis and prefers to review pay bands every two years as has been District past practice.

It was moved by Trustee Siviski and seconded by Trustee Cote.

It was Voted 9-1 (Trustee Lunt opposed) and,

ORDERED, the Non-Union Salary Structure, in substantial form as attached hereto, is hereby adopted to become effective January 1, 2023.

Order 23-003, authorizing a contract renewal with HomeServe USA Corporation.

Since 2006, the District has partnered with HomeServe (formerly Home Service USA) to provide an optional, customer paid warranty program. The program currently provides financial assistance for water lines, sewer lines and internal plumbing. Currently, the number of customers participating in the program is 8,904.

Unlike most HomeServe partners, the District chose not to receive a portion of the fee charged to customers and instead the customer’s fee is reduced by 5%. HomeServe has reported that 4,182 customers have received over \$3.6M in benefits from the program.

The District provides HomeServe with a list of current customers and their address. After reviewing and approving the letter to be sent to the customers, HomeServe sends out an introductory letter to customers noting the availability of the program.

It was moved by Trustee Siviski and seconded by Trustee Cote.

It was Voted and unanimously,

ORDERED, the contract with HomeServe USA Corporation to provide a water and wastewater line warranty program is hereby extended for a period of three years according to the same terms as the present contract with the District.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

SECOND INVITATION FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

None

TRUSTEE COMMENTS

Trustee Lunt thanked the employees and staff for doing their jobs every day and taking care of emergency situations.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Submitted by,

Donna M. Katsiaficas
Clerk