

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 via teleconference, on Monday, August 24, 2020. Attending from staff were Messrs. Kane, Crovo, Wallace, Firmin and Mses. Lewis, Katsiaficas and Walker. The meeting was convened by President Douglas at 6:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called by the Clerk. All Trustees were present.

CONVENE MEETING

Trustee Garrison made a motion to conduct the meeting remotely, seconded by Trustee Beck. Voted all in favor.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

It was moved by Trustee Cote, seconded by Trustee Beck.

Voted all in favor to waive the reading and accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting of July 27, 2020 and the minutes of the Workshop Meeting of August 10, 2020.

INVITATION FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

None

REPORTS

Operations Committee

Trustee Beck provided a summary of the Operations Committee meeting on August 10, 2020. Staff presented a recommendation to award a contract for engineering services for the Wastewater Network #2 Upgrade Project and the Windham Center Elevated Water Storage Tank Replacement Project. Both will be taken up under new business. Staff provided a summary of the events associated with the loss of power on July 19 at the East End. Staff discussed the generator testing program, the history of the generator rebuild and maintenance, and the response to obtain a backup generator on site.

Planning Committee

Trustee Siviski provided a summary of the Planning Committee meeting on August 10, 2020. Josh Hudak the District's Facility Manager reviewed the District's recent pandemic related improvements along with general building improvements and security upgrades at Douglass Street. He noted that the following improvements have been made or are in the process of being implemented on District facilities and treatment plants. Staff provided a brief update on the District's compliance to the City of Portland's Energy Use Reporting ordinance for both Douglass Street and East End Facilities. It was noted that staff has been updating the reporting database monthly by entering all utility bills such as electricity, gas, heating oil, and water use.

Administration and Finance Committee

Trustee Garrison provided a summary of the Administration and Finance Committee meeting on August 10, 2020. Mary Demers presented the results of the most recent employee satisfaction at last month's meeting. She summarized the results and responded to a number of question. It was suggested after the next survey staff obtain a better understanding of the results (e.g. – focus group, follow-up questionnaire, etc.). She also provided an overview of the health insurance program offered by the District. She noted negotiations with Harvard Pilgrim was recently completed for the 2021 plan year with the result of reducing their proposed rate increase of 8.8%

to 2.75%. It was suggested a discussion of possible health insurance options be held with the Board before the 2021 labor contract negotiation.

General Manager's Report

Ms. Lewis provided several updates to the Board.

Surveys were sent to employees who are currently working remotely, to assess their level of concern with the pandemic, their level of satisfaction with their current work situation, and concerns about returning to the office. Sixty-seven surveys were returned.

On a scale of 1 (low concern) to 10 (high concern) with the pandemic, responses ranged from 4 to 11, with most responders rating an "8". The level of satisfaction with the current remote work situation was quite high, with all but 5 responders preferring to work remotely or having a hybrid part remote, part in office arrangement.

Those working remotely were concerned about increased exposure to the virus through interactions with co-workers, air circulation within the building, reducing effective communication due to distancing and masks, and use and cleaning of common areas. We are working on addressing these concerns at Douglass Street with improvements to the HVAC system, modifying work spaces, and developing protocols for shared spaces. We will share these best practices with other facilities.

A survey was also sent to field and treatment employees to get their feedback on what is working well and what needs to be improved to make them feel safe and comfortable at work.

At this time, the plan is to continue the status quo for working arrangements at least through the end of the year. Things are working well and we are being productive and staying healthy.

We are working on a Remote Work Policy and trying to identify options for people whose may need to spend some part of their day/week doing dependent care because of COVID-19.

District Finance Update

As of 7/31, YTD water revenue is just about on budget projections. (Water revenue budget is seasonally adjusted.)

- Revenue from residential customers is up, and from commercial, industrial and government customers is down.

As of 8/21, water consumption for August 2020 is down 7% compared to the same period in August 2019.

Expenses through July are about \$857K below budget, which is about \$450K below budget when seasonally adjusted.

- This is largely due to keeping non-critical positions vacant, deferring non-critical work, and reducing travel.

All the Wastewater funds are doing better than expected through July.

A detailed update of the District's finances will be the major topic of the September workshop.

Water bottle filling station grant applications were mailed last week to 2,700 businesses and non-profits last week and are available on our web site. The informational brochures have been modified to emphasize the touch-free, sanitary features of the filling stations. Applications are due by October 31 for installation in 2021.

The Southern Maine Regional Water Council's annual meeting will be on Thursday, September 17 from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Trustee Willey opined that he thought that consideration of remote work by PWD employees on a permanent basis was a board-level decision. Ms. Lewis responded that the policy for now is to apply to the pandemic time only.

NEW BUSINESS

Order 20-25, authorizing the General Manager to execute a professional services contract with Wright-Pierce for the Wastewater Network #2 Upgrade Project.

PWD's SCADA system utilizes four individual radio networks to communicate data from each of the 130+ remote sites to the SCADA servers. The data collected from these remote sites is critical for our operations and engineering groups to maintain system operation and perform PWD's mission as a public utility.

Many of these remote sites utilize communications hardware which dates back to the original installation over twenty years ago. As the network hardware is approaching the end of its lifecycle, the District is in the process of upgrading each network over time. This CIP project will include an upgrade to the radio system supporting Wastewater Network #2 (WWN2) which services PWD's remote wastewater sites in Windham, Gorham, Westbrook, and Cumberland.

PWD has received and reviewed three proposals and assembled a committee that ranked each response based on the criteria advertised in the RFP. Wright-Pierce received the best score of the three candidates and is therefore recommended for award of a contract in the amount of \$79,980 for alternatives analysis, preliminary design, hardware selection, and detailed design documentation necessary for implementation of the upgrade. Future recommendations will include construction phase engineering services based on the project scope developed during the design phase.

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

It was Voted and unanimously,

ORDERED, the General Manager is authorized to execute a professional services contract with Wright-Pierce in the amount of \$79,980 for the Wastewater Network #2 Upgrade Project (2019 -SP 177/ Project 3126); and that the General Manager and the Treasurer, each acting singly, are authorized to take such steps as may be necessary to accomplish the intent of the vote.

Order 20-026, authorizing the General Manger execute a professional services contract with Hazen and Sawyer for the Windham Center Elevated Water Storage Tank Replacement.

The existing elevated water storage tank in Windham was constructed and placed in operation in 1957. The tank was targeted for replacement in the 2003 Comprehensive Water System Strategic

Plan (CWSSP). The most recent maintenance was completed in 2019 when two leaks were repaired on the riser. The tank is beyond its useful life and due for replacement.

The engineering assessment will consider hydraulics, recommended piping improvements, and life cycle costs for various options to establish a recommend approach to replacing the tank to meet the objectives of adequate volume, high quality drinking water, and infrastructure reliability and safety.

Staff reviewed and scored six proposals from qualified teams that provided proposed methods for achieving the project goals. Based on the outcome of the review and ranking, Hazen and Sawyer received the best overall score (125). Staff therefore recommends award to Hazen and Sawyer for an amount of \$197,000, which includes design phase services from preliminary design through project bidding. Future recommendations will include construction phase engineering based on the project scope developed during the design phase.

It was moved by Trustee Beck and seconded by Trustee Rich.

It was Voted and unanimously,

ORDERED, the General Manager is authorized to execute a professional services contract with Hazen and Sawyer in the amount of \$197,000 for design phase engineering services for the Windham Center Elevated Water Storage Tank Replacement (CIP 2018-307/2658); and

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that a total engineering design phase Professional Services Contract budget is hereby authorized, not to exceed \$207,000; and that the General Manager, and the Treasurer, each acting singly, are authorized to take such steps as may be necessary to accomplish the intent of the vote.

Order 20-027, authorizing a salary adjustment for the General Manager.

The 2019 annual review of the General Manager's performance has been completed.

Trustee Garrison stated for the record that the General Manager and Senior Management Team are under compensated compared to the National Standards.

It was moved by President Douglas and seconded by Trustee Cote.

It was Voted and unanimously,

ORDERED, that the General Manager's annual compensation shall increase 3.5% effective January 1, 2020.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

SECOND INVITATION FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

None

TRUSTEE COMMENTS

Trustee Lunt thanked the staff for continuing to perform their jobs well remotely during the pandemic.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

Submitted by,

Donna M. Katsiaficas
Clerk