

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 at the Jeff P. Nixon Training Center, 225 Douglass Street, Portland, Maine, and via Zoom, on Monday, September 18, 2023. Attending from staff were S. Garrison, C. Crovo, D. Kane, J. Wallace, S. Firmin, J. Hudak, D. Katsiaficas, M. Demers, and C. Cote.

The meeting was convened by President Lunt at 6:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL

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

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Trustee Willett motioned to accept the minutes of the August 28, 2023, Regular Meeting, seconded by Trustee Siviski. It was voted all in favor.

Trustee Beck motioned to accept the minutes of the September 11, 2023, Workshop Meeting, seconded by Trustee Siviski. It was voted all in favor.

INVITATION FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

None

REPORTS

Operations Committee

Trustee McCann provided a summary of the Operations Committee meeting on September 11, 2023.

Staff provided the following recommendations:

- To amend the construction services contract with Hazen for support on the ongoing Westbrook/Gorham WWTF project.
- To award an engineering contract to Hazen for the assessment of the pumps at the Fore River Pump Station.
- The purchase and installation of replacement of the sludge collection in clarifier #1.

These items will be taken up under new business.

Planning Committee

Trustee Douglas provided a summary of the Planning Committee meeting on September 11, 2023.

She noted the following items of business will be taken up tonight.

- Request for a match to support the Sebago Lake Phase V Erosion Control 319 Grant
- Request for Contribution of up to \$21,000 to Mahoosuc Land Trust to support the Sawin Hill Conservation Project

- Refreshing of the Portland Water District Logo

In 2006, when the Board was first considering the adoption of a policy about support for conservation efforts, the Board asked staff to reach out to some of our upper watershed municipal contacts and find out the degree to which they supported the effort. Staff heard overwhelmingly positive comments from them. Because PWD has continued this conservation work for the subsequent 16 years and the pace has increased significantly, a few years ago staff initiated a series of meetings with upper watershed town officials to learn if opinions had changed. Most importantly, in the eight meetings held since 2020, all of the municipal officials were supportive of land conservation in their town. Some anti land conservation sentiment was only mentioned by two town officials, but overall the officials PWD met with in these eight meetings think more people support land conservation than oppose it.

Staff reported that Silver Street Development Corporation is in the process of drafting a proposal for the purchase of the Munjoy Hill Reservoir for the Committee to consider in their October Committee meeting.

Administration and Finance Committee

Trustee Cote provided a summary of the Administration and Finance Committee meeting on September 11, 2023.

Trustee Cote noted the following items of business will be taken up tonight.

- Portland Bond Resolution Amendment
- A Request for Proposal for Audit Services for the Years Beginning January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2026
- 2024 Water Rates Adjustment Recommendation

General Manager's Report

- PWD has won the American Metropolitan Water Association's (AMWA) prestigious Sustainability Award, completing the triple crown of awards from AMWA.
- PWD has been testing the streams that flow into Sebago Lake for *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) and/or Fecal coliform bacteria for decades. Recent improvements in genetic testing have made *E. coli* identification economically feasible. Results from August has shown that dog feces are the major source of *E. coli* in Standish Brook and a wide range of wild animal species of *E. coli* are found at our Panther Run sample location in Raymond. No human *E. coli* was found in any samples tested.
- Lead and Copper Rule (LCR) monitoring that began in early June has concluded.
- There is a continued movement towards online customer bill payments. Approximately three out of four customer bill payments are done online. In addition, over half of PWD customers now receive electronic bills, saving customers in aggregate tens of thousands of dollars per year in printing, mailing, and handling costs and helping to protect the environment.
- Total Water Revenues are 3.5% below the year-to-date (YTD) budget as of the end of August. Revenues have improved since July when they were down 5.3%. That result

matches up with lower YTD metered water consumption and production at the Sebago Lake Water Treatment Facility. The rainy/cloudy summer dampened usage.

- The second draft of the 2024 Operating Budget has been developed. The overall expense budget has been reduced from the second draft. It was projected to be up 9% from 2023 but is now projected to be up 8.3%, lower than the first draft numbers presented to the PWD Board of Trustees at the July Workshop. The proposed 2024 budget requires an average increase of 6.4%, with a 5.6% increase to residential rates.

NEW BUSINESS

Public Hearing

President Lunt opened the public hearing for comments regarding an amendment of an existing bond. No one present from the public or attending remotely wished to speak.

President Lunt closed the public hearing.

Resolution 23-011, authorizing an amendment to allow bond proceeds to be used to finance upgrades to the electrical system at the East End Wastewater Treatment Facility and Northeast Pump Station in Portland.

In 2021, the Board authorized the issuance of a \$575,000 Portland Sewer Bond to finance upgrades to the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning System at the East End Wastewater Treatment Facility in Portland and other related infrastructure upgrades and improvements. The District issued a \$476,000 bond for these purposes on March 9, 2022. The actual cost of the HVAC project is approximately \$12,000 less than the bond amount. Staff recommended the unspent amount be allocated to the electrical system upgrade project currently underway at Portland's East End Wastewater Treatment Facility and the Northeast Pump Station. The District issued a \$5,200,000 Portland Sewer Bond for the East End electrical system upgrade project.

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

It was Voted and unanimously,

RESOLVED, Resolution 21-012 is hereby amended to allow bond proceeds to be used to finance upgrades to the electrical system at the East End Wastewater Treatment Facility and Northeast Pump Station in Portland. The full form of the Resolution attached hereto is hereby approved and shall be attached to and incorporated as part of the minutes of this meeting.

Order 23-027, authorizing a contract with BerryDunn for audit services for the fiscal years 2023 to 2026.

The District's current audit services contract expired with the completion of the audit of the 2022 financial statements. The Administration and Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees directed District staff to seek proposals for a four-year audit services contract to cover the years 2023 to 2026.

Seven audit firms were asked to submit proposals for the District's audit services. The firms selected were the largest firms in the state and/or firms that had a large number of municipal clients. The firms invited to submit audit RFPs were:

- Baker Newman Noyes
- BerryDunn
- Berry, Talbot & Royer
- Marcum LLP
- RHR Smith & Company CPA's
- Ron L Beaulieu
- Ruyon, Kersteen & Ouellette
- Wipfli

Only BerryDunn, Marcum LLP, and Wipfli submitted proposals.

All three (3) firms that bid on the job have strong technical abilities and are more than qualified to perform the annual audit. BerryDunn has a strong reputation and ultimately was chosen due to its low bid.

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

It was Voted and unanimously,

ORDERED, the General Manager is authorized to execute a contract with BerryDunn for audit services for the fiscal years 2023 to 2026.

Order 23-028, authorizing the Treasurer to begin the process of increasing water rates an average of 6.4% effective January 1, 2024.

Prior to beginning this order, Trustee Cote asked for a motion to amend the order. There were a few small changes made to the original wording after the Order had been voted on by the Committee and published on the PWD website.

Trustee Levinsky motioned to amend the order which was seconded by Trustee Siviski. All in favor.

At the July 10th Board Workshop, Staff proposed several 2024 budget parameters including the need to increase water rates by an average of 7%. Upon further review, the proposed 2024 budget requires an average increase of 6.4%, with a 5.6% increase to residential rates.

Staff will prepare the supporting documentation and arrange to hold a public hearing in November and send customer notices about the public hearing to all customers.

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

It was Voted and unanimously,

ORDERED, pursuant to Board of Trustees Policy, the Treasurer shall prepare the supporting documents for an average water rate increase of approximately 6.4% with a 5.6% increase to residential rates. The new rates to be effective January 1, 2024.

Order 23-029, authorizing actions related to the Westbrook Aeration and Secondary Clarification Upgrade.

The Westbrook Aeration and Clarifier Upgrade project began in January 2021. Significant progress on the project has been made to date including completing the blower building, upgrading the first aeration basin and placing it into service, and upgrading the first clarifier and placing it into service.

Work on the remaining aeration basin and secondary clarifier are ongoing. There have been significant delays in the supply of equipment and the work itself. The original Substantial Completion date was May 9, 2023. A Change Order to the construction contract adjusted the Substantial Completion date with an additional 141 days to September 27, 2023. Final completion is currently required 30 days later on October 27, 2023.

The current construction schedule is expected to continue into early December with Final Completion in January 2024. Hazen is providing full-time resident services and office support related to overseeing the construction. To continue with these services, Hazen will require another \$156,000. Additionally, the upgraded clarifier is delivering more scum flow than previously experienced. To review operational and other necessary changes, Hazen has proposed \$7,000. The total proposed change is \$163,000.

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

It was Voted and unanimously,

ORDERED, the General Manager is hereby authorized to execute a service contract amendment with Hazen and Sawyer, in the amount of \$163,000 for construction services for the Westbrook Aeration and Secondary Clarification Upgrade (2020-416/3022), (the “Project”); and

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that a total project budget is amended by \$163,000 hereby authorized, not to exceed \$12,163,000; 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 23-030, authorizing an engineering services contract with Hazen and Sawyer for a review of the Fore River Pump Station related to its pumping system.

As part of an upgrade to the Fore River Pump Station in 2015, four large wastewater pumps were replaced. The pumps satisfied technical specifications and were accepted after installation and testing.

Vibration levels in the pumps have become excessive, which impacts their physical integrity and the piping system in the pump station. The cause of the excess vibration is not readily apparent. A series of efforts to identify the cause and possible solutions that would allow the system to operate reliably have been undertaken. This work has included pump component replacement, extended shaft replacement, piping and discharge nozzle replacements, pump rebuilds, pump modifications, operating modifications, and a full review of the system hydraulics. Despite these efforts, the pumps continue to vibrate at excessive levels that limit their performance and dramatically decrease their expected useful life.

Several reviews have confirmed that the pumps are appropriately sized and configured based on the system conditions. The system seems to be experiencing hydraulic resonance issues that result in excessive vibration. The most recent review of the issue has identified two possible solutions – full pump replacement and modification of the existing pumps that may include impeller adjustments.

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

It was Voted and unanimously,

ORDERED, the General Manager is hereby authorized to execute an engineering services contract with Hazen and Sawyer, not to exceed \$155,000 for a review of the Fore River Pump Station related to its pumping system.

Order 23-031, authorizing an increase to the 2023 CIP to replace Primary Clarifier #1 equipment.

Following the replacement of the primary clarifier equipment in Primary Clarifier #3 (chain, flights, sprockets, and related items to collect sludge) in 2018, PWD entered into a contract in 2020 to have the equipment in the remaining two clarifiers replaced.

In early 2022, a wear strip—a component of the primary clarifier equipment that sits on the bottom of each basin and prevents excessive mechanical friction—had broken off and migrated through a drain to a pump at the Northeast Pump Station. It caused significant damage to the pump. The source of the wear strip was identified as having come from Primary Clarifier #1.

After draining and cleaning the clarifier, the system was inspected by the manufacturer. Premature wear strip failure related to installation issues was determined to be the cause. The failed wear strip led to damage to other equipment in the clarifier. The damaged equipment was subsequently removed.

The manufacturer has provided a quote of \$225,000 to replace the damaged equipment. The contractor that installed the equipment in Clarifier #3 provided a quote of \$30,000 to install the equipment, and a contingency of \$35,000 is recommended.

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

It was Voted and unanimously,

ORDERED, the 2023 CIP is hereby increased by an amount not to exceed \$290,000 to replace Primary Clarifier #1 equipment.

Order 23-032, authorizing an in-kind and cash contribution to support the Sebago Lake Watershed Protection Project – Phase V.

The District has been awarded a conditional grant from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection’s Nonpoint Source Program. Funded under Section 319 of the federal Clean Water Act, this grant is supported by numerous watershed partners and will help to protect the water quality of Sebago Lake by reducing the amount of soil and sediments that enter the lake. The Watershed Erosion Control Funding Policy (formerly the Watershed Survey, Watershed Protection Plan, and Implementation Project Grant Funding Policy) outlines the District’s support for erosion control projects in the watershed and the minimum match that we require from other sources.

The District will serve as the administrator of the grant and the project lead. The project work plan has been approved by the Maine DEP and EPA and includes plans to remediate issues at 7 significant public and private erosion sites around the lake, as well as several education and outreach initiatives. Planned project locations are: Sebago Lake State Park, Camp O-AT-KA, Camp Sunshine, two residential properties, Joy Lane in Standish, and Naomi Street in Sebago.

The total project cost for the Sebago Lake Watershed Protection Project – Phase V is \$315,173, which breaks down to \$156,369 in grant funds and \$158,804 in matching funds. Matching funds include in-kind services.

The recommended contribution of up to \$29,430 in matching funds meets the District policy for contributions to implementation projects in the direct watershed of Sebago Lake. The policy states that contributions to this type of project not exceed 30% of the total project cost. The in-kind contribution of \$29,430 represents 9.3% of the total project cost.

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

It was Voted and unanimously,

ORDERED, that the District shall make a contribution of up to \$23,580 in-kind and \$5,850 cash to support the Sebago Lake Watershed Protection Project – Phase V.

Order 23-033, authorizing a contribution to Mahoosuc Land Trust regarding the Sawin Hill Conservation Project.

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. Our Watershed Land Conservation Policy states our commitment to, and support for, locally-initiated land conservation efforts, since conserved forests naturally filter our customers' drinking water. At present, nearly 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 Sawin Hill property is 146 acres located in Albany Township. Mahoosuc Land Trust is purchasing a conservation easement on the Sawin Hill property. The property is completely forested and drains to branches of a tributary to the Crooked River. The property is in Mahoosuc Land Trust's Crooked River Focus area, and part of MLT's strategic conservation plan, which aims to provide habitat and recreational connectivity between the White Mountain National Forest and MLT's 12,300-acre Crooked River Headwaters conservation easement through forest conservation.

The recommended contribution of \$21,000 is 15% of the appraised value of the easement, a value calculated by the District's site-specific assessment. The appraised value of the easement is \$140,000. The recommended contribution is also the amount requested by the applicant. The recommended contribution represents about \$143 per acre of protected land within the watershed. The District's contribution is to be used towards the purchase of the easement.

The District contribution of \$21,000 represents 1% of our total projected match towards the RCPP award. Contributions were projected based on staff time and District funds spent on activities that support the goals of the project.

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

It was Voted and unanimously,

ORDERED, that the General Manager is authorized to contribute up to \$21,000 to the Mahoosuc Land Trust to support the conservation of land known as Sawin Hill located in Albany Township.

Resolution 23-012, supporting the refreshing of the Portland Water District (PWD) logo and branded materials.

Earlier this year we solicited feedback from employees and trustees about refreshing the PWD logo and branded materials. Many people thought that it was time to consider modernizing the heritage logo and giving it a fresh look that is consistent with tradition, but able to be used more easily with electronic and digital communications. With feedback, PWD staff created a brand style guide with a refreshed logo, colors and fonts, and template documents. The plan is to launch the refreshed materials starting November 1.

A brand says a lot; it's an identity. Branding is a key part of making a memorable impression. It makes customers aware of what an organization does, how they do it, and it influences their perceptions. It has an impact internally too. Consistent and professional branding can help attract top talent and also supports a sense of pride in the workplace. Strong branding creates many connections.

The PWD Brand Style Guide is a reference guide for a brand, providing direction and guidance to ensure that the PWD branding is used consistently across all communications. These rules and guidelines solidify the look, feel, and integrity of the PWD brand and help to ensure PWD is presented as a professional organization that is committed to delivering high-quality services.

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

It was Voted 10-1 (Libby opposed) and,

RESOLVED, the Board of Trustees supports the refreshing of the Portland Water District (PWD) logo and branded materials.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

SECOND INVITATION FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

None

TRUSTEE COMMENTS

Trustee Libby noted that former Trustee Eileen Wyatt's obituary was in the paper, and he expressed admiration for her and her accomplishments. He also congratulated Trustee Beck for his recent working-class hero award from the AFL CIO.

President Lunt also expressed admiration for former Trustee Wyatt, who lived in Cumberland.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Submitted by,

Carrie E. Cote
Assistant Clerk