

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 23, 2024. Attending from staff were C. Crovo, D. Kane, S. Firmin, J. Wallace, J. Hudak, D. Katsiaficas, M. Demers, M. Clements, and C. Cote. Attending from the public was Patricia Barber of Hiram.

President Lunt convened the meeting at 6:01 p.m., with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

### **ROLL CALL**

The roll was called by the Clerk. Trustees Libby and Shattuck-Heidorn were absent.

### **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

Trustee Willett made a motion to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 26, 2024, seconded by Trustee Cote. It was voted all in favor.

Trustee Cote made a motion to accept the minutes of the Workshop Meeting of September 9, 2024, seconded by Trustee McCann. It was voted all in favor.

### **INVITATION FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

### **REPORTS**

#### **Operations Committee**

Trustee Siviski provided a summary of the Operations Committee meeting on September 9, 2024.

Staff provided an update on recent CIP activities and may bring additional projects to the Committee before the end of the year.

The ozone system manufacturer provided the District with a quote to replace the failed and obsolete power control module for the Sebago Lake Treatment Facility's ozone generator #1. Due to the importance of ozone disinfection and an estimated lead time of four months, staff is moving ahead with the purchase of two control modules.

Staff discussed the secondary clarifier upgrade project at the East End Wastewater Treatment Facility. The second of three clarifiers has been upgraded. Having the two newly upgraded secondary clarifiers will significantly improve plant reliability. The replacement of original isolation gates to the clarifiers with new, electrically actuated gates was part of this project and has improved the ability to isolate the clarifiers for construction and to allow for efficient maintenance.

Work on the third clarifier is very close to the walking path. Given this visibility, the District is collaborating with the engineering team to place an information sign to inform the public about the project and the ongoing investment in infrastructure.

The Westbrook/Gorham/Windham Regional WWTF's dewatering system has experienced several challenges this year. Currently, the sludge pump is not operating reliably. While staff coordinates with the manufacturer to repair the unit, liquid sludge is being hauled offsite.

### Planning Committee

Trustee Crockett provided a summary of the Planning Committee meeting on September 9, 2024.

Staff provided updates on the following:

- **Activity at the Rt 35 Overlook Parking Area**  
People have been gathering after hours at the Sebago Lake Overlook and racing vehicles. The Standish Town Manager shares our concerns and is considering surveillance cameras and gates. The Cumberland County Sheriff's Office has pledged more regular patrolling "when possible." PWD will continue making observations and communicating these to the town manager.
- **New Floating Signs Impact**  
Rod Beaulieu reported the dramatic impact of the new floating signs delineating the no-trespassing zone in Lower Bay. The number of trespassing violations has been reduced by 90% from last summer.
- **Status of the Sebago Lake Village Stormwater Project**  
Chad Thompson reported that Standish has completed the rebuilding of the Sebago Lake Village intersection, and now most of the stormwater flows into a wetland area on PWD land and does not outlet to Sebago Lake. There are some additional ditching improvements needed to protect a historic railroad structure, and this can be done within the approved project budget.
- **Update on MDOT's Mountain Division Trail**  
A consultant hired by the MDOT has completed an analysis of trail options through and around PWD land that is consistent with PWD's insistence that the trail not run immediately adjacent to Lower Bay. The three alternatives they recommend meet this condition. At this point, the state does not have funding for the trail, which is expected to cost about \$30 million.

### Administration and Finance Committee

Trustee Cote provided a summary of the Administration and Finance Committee meeting on September 9, 2024.

Mr. Kane proposed a motion recommending an increase in water rates by an average of 5.9% effective January 1, 2025. This will be taken up under new business tonight.

Mr. Kane noted that the Board will consider approving the 2024 Budget, including water tariff and other non-tariff fees, at the November 2024 Board meeting. The tariff fees are included in the District's Terms and Conditions, and non-tariff fees are in the Non-Tariff Fee Schedule.

Mr. Davis noted that many personnel-related processes are paper-based. A small team from Employee Services and Information Services has reviewed several HRIS software options and recommends Bamboo. This will be taken up under new business tonight.

### General Manager's Report

Mr. Crovo reported the leak that occurred in the Stroudwater area of the river was repaired in August. About 200 feet of pipe was slip-lined, and the leak was repaired. The pipeline goes under the riverbed. Ryan Bourque and Joe Parent worked closely with the engineers and Shaw Brothers, and he thanked them for their successful efforts. He also told the Board that Sebago Technics is conducting a survey on behalf of PWD to locate 40,000 service valve locations.

Trustee Libby arrived at 6:20 p.m.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Order 24-024**, authorizing the Treasurer to begin the process of increasing water rates by approximately 5.9% effective January 1, 2025.

At the July 8<sup>th</sup> Board Workshop, staff indicated the first draft of the 2025 budget called for a water rate adjustment of 8.2%. The Board discussed and set a 2025 water rate parameter of an average increase not to exceed 6%. The proposed budget incorporates an average increase of 5.9%, with a 5.5% 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 in October.

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

It was Voted and unanimously,

ORDERED, pursuant to Board of Trustees Policy, the Treasurer shall prepare the supporting documents for a water rate increase of approximately 5.9%, with new rates effective January 1, 2025.

**Order 24-025**, authorizing an increase in the 2024 Capital Improvement Plan for a Human Resource Information System.

Currently the Employee Services Department does not have a Human Resources Information System (HRIS) and is mostly paper based in all aspects of their operations. Over the last year, Employee Services and Information Services staff have been reviewing HRIS Systems that can streamline operations and provide better service to employees. After reviewing multiple systems, the recommended system is Bamboo HR based on functionality and cost. Installation with implementation (6 to 8 weeks) will mainly be performed by Bamboo staff with limited time commitments from PWD staff.

The project budget consists of the following:

Subscription Intangible Asset	\$162,000
Implementation Costs	5,000
Implementation Cost Contingency	<u>13,000</u>
Total	<u>\$180,000</u>

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

It was Voted and unanimously,

ORDERED, that the 2024 Capital Improvement Plan is increased by \$180,000 for a Human Resource Information System.

**Resolution 24-010**, recognizing the accomplishments and contributions of retiring Director of Human Resources, Mary Demers.

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

It was Voted and unanimously,

WHEREAS, Mary E. Demers joined the Portland Water District in 2015 as the Director of Employee Services and will soon retire; and

WHEREAS, Mary E. Demers has dedicated nearly a decade supporting the employees of Portland Water District, providing leadership through both routine operations and extraordinary circumstances; and

WHEREAS, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Mary E. Demers played a critical role in ensuring the safety and well-being of employees, implementing effective health measures, and guiding the District through unprecedented challenges; and

WHEREAS, she has acted as lead liaison in union negotiations, ensuring fair representation and fostering a spirit of collaboration between management and unionized employees, contributing to a positive and productive work environment; and

WHEREAS, she championed comprehensive training and safety initiatives for all staff members; and

WHEREAS, she pioneered the development of career ladders, enhancing growth opportunities for employees;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees recognizes the efforts of Mary E. Demers and extends its appreciation on behalf of all the District's member communities, customers, and staff for her dedication and professionalism.

**Resolution 24-011**, confirming the General Manager's appointment of Michelle Clements as the Communications and Public Relations Director, effective July 1, 2024.

Michelle Clements has served as the Public Relations Manager at the Portland Water District since 1997. During this time, she has been an integral part of leadership, attending senior management meetings, providing guidance on reputation management, media relations, and communications strategies, and acting as the chief brand ambassador. Recently, her job title was updated to accurately reflect her job duties and responsibilities.

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

It was Voted and unanimously,

**RESOLVED**, to confirm the General Manager's appointment of Michelle Clements, Director of Communications and Public Relations

**OTHER BUSINESS**

None

**SECOND INVITATION FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

Patricia Barber from Hiram asked about whether the Town of Standish will be maintaining the recreational trail through Water District property. Standish will be responsible for maintaining the trail through PWD property.

**TRUSTEE COMMENTS**

President Lunt stated that it has been a pleasure working with the staff and is looking forward to getting back to normal. He recognizes there are many comings and goings here at PWD and at employers across the country. He thanked the staff and said it is a pleasure working with everyone at PWD.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

Submitted by,

Donna M. Katsiaficas  
Clerk