

As voted by the Board of Trustees and in accordance with the notice of the meeting, the monthly Workshop Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Portland Water District was held remotely on Tuesday, October 13, 2020. In attendance from staff were Messrs. Crovo, Kane, Firmin, Wallace, and Meses. Lewis, Katsiaticas, Demers and Walker. Attending from the public was Nancy McDonald of Windham.

All Trustees were present except Trustee Willey.

President Douglas convened the Public Hearing at 6:30 p.m.

Special Meeting

A Public Hearing was held to receive public input on the proposed average 3.4% increase in water rates effective December 1, 2020.

In January 2020, the Board of Trustees requested staff to prepare a rate filing supporting 2.9% rate adjustment. On March 23, 2020, the Board considered a motion approving a rate schedule with the 2.9% adjustment and voted to table the motion in reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic national emergency until October 2020. On September 4, 2020, the Board was provided additional financial information by staff and it was recommended implementing a 3.4% rate adjustment to fund water operation through the end of 2021. The last rate adjustment was effective May 1, 2019.

Ms. Lewis' remarks to the public and the Board are noted on the attached PowerPoint presentation.

The District received one email stating an objection to the upcoming rate increase.

There was one member of the public present.

President Douglas asked if there were any questions from the public.

Nancy McDonald, Main Street, Windham

Ms. McDonald provided public comments as follows: Why is it a flat rate increase instead of a rate increase on a graduated basis based on high water usage given the current water crisis we are in. She is concerned that high usage consumers are not conserving water and with a flat rate increase there is no incentive for them to be conservative in their water usage.

The Public Hearing was closed at 6:57 p.m.

President Douglas opened the workshop meeting at 6:58 p.m.

1. Landslide at the Presumpscot River. Carrie Lewis, General Manager and Chris Crovo, Director of Asset Management and Planning, provided an update on the Presumpscot River landslide to the Board.

The landslide occurred September 16. As of October 12, PWD is done with the clean-up work it has to do. Initially PWD assumed DEP and the Army Corp of Engineers would take the lead.

That was not the case. The event was deemed a natural occurrence, therefore the agencies did not step forward to lead a clean-up.

Mr. Crovo provided a slide presentation, showing the material that was removed from the River. There was no removal plan. Shaw Brothers had to rely on the expertise of their staff and operators. Engineers from PWD were onsite to assist in providing advice on the location of assets and determining what debris needed to be removed and providing advice on how to stabilize the area with the rip rap removed.

Divers will go into the river in the next couple of weeks and will remove debris from the wastewater outfalls, as well as provide an assessment as to whether any of the wastewater infrastructure has been damaged. Remaining tasks include a complete survey, post permit filings, post monitoring of the bank and debris and gate installation at Hillside Road. Total estimated cost of the clean-up is between \$350,000-\$400,000.

Mr. Crovo explained the nature of the wastewater infrastructure at the river, which includes multiples diffusers and a bulkhead which is over the outfall. The area will be “jetted” out to make sure the diffusers are operational and nothing is damaged or plugged. Shaw Brothers removed approximately 5,000-10,000 yards of material from the river. The calculations will be refined when the work is completed. Much of the material removed was clay.

DEP and the State are still trying to find funding to use in stabilizing and restoring the bank of the River. The Mayor of Westbrook is trying to get funding as well.

The General Manager and Mr. Crovo thanked Trustee Cote for visiting the site and providing photos and other assistance during the debris removal process. Staff will visit the river and monitor the status of the area as a result of the rains received in today.

Trustee Cote noted that the City of Westbrook did not want any burden placed on tax payers or rate payers to clean up the slide; they are pursuing other avenues of financial assistance. They are also requiring Les Wilson and Sons to go through a Planning process to perform work on their property and stabilize the area.

2. Other Business.

Dates for Wastewater assessment meetings with municipalities have all been scheduled. Most are remote. Trustees are welcome to attend.

The request to place a banner on the India Street pump station from the City received mixed reviews from Trustees; most had no problem with the request. Ms. Lewis will work with City staff to assure the banner is acceptable.

President Douglas thanked Ms. Lewis for her presentation to the Board regarding the rate increase.

3. Adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Submitted by,

Donna M. Katsiaticas
Clerk