

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 in the Nixon Training Center at the general offices of the District, 225 Douglass Street, Portland, Maine on Monday, December 10, 2018. In attendance from staff were Messrs. Crovo, Kane, Firmin, Wallace, Johnson and Meses. Lewis, Demers and Katsiaficas. President Lunt convened the Workshop at 6:42 p.m.

All Trustees were present.

1. City of Portland Water Resources Update.

Nancy Gallinaro, Water Resources Manager, presented an update on the City of Portland's Integrated Planning effort and compliance with consent and administrative orders.

Ms. Gallinaro began her presentation and noted it was the third time that she has come to address the Board. She provided a history to the Board about Portland's EPA consent Order and the Tier I-Tier III plans. The Tier III plan began in 2013 and is being worked on today.

In 2012, the City received an administrative order related to the rehabilitation and replacement of the sanitary sewer system. The stormwater utility started in 2016.

She provided some detail as to the scope of the sanitary and stormwater system, as well as providing a quick projects update. The City is using the design build process for its pump station and storage conduit projects. Pump station projects will be completed by 2020, as required.

Approximately 80% of the staff is licensed in collection system operation, and 30% are licensed in how to rate a pipe (defining pipe condition objectively). Rights of Way are being cleared.

Ms. Gallinaro also discussed updates in the asset management realm. The City is one-half way through its I/I study. Nearly 300 tons of debris have been removed from pipes in Commercial and Marginal Way. CSO volumes have decreased over the recent years as a result of City efforts.

The City and PWD work together in bidding projects. The Clean Water SRF will be used for the first time by PWD to replace water main; this was through the efforts of the City.

Trustee Rich asked about the Right of Way clearing in the Maine Ave./Ray Street area. She noted it looked like there was more water as a result of City efforts. She asked if that was normal. Ms. Gallinaro noted that was possible – depending on the area and what was cleared.

The integrated plan process was then discussed. In 2012, the EPA stated that if a municipality worked on an integrated plan, the EPA would work with the municipality on its permit. The goal of the program is to move to value based decisions. An assessment of what projects will affect water quality the most is made. Cost effectiveness is considered. Social and economic goals are reviewed to determine if they can be achieved.

The plan is an adaptive management plan. It is a response to the City's 2030 Comprehensive Plan. It is committed to supporting the working waterfront. Decisions are based on science.

PWD is a partner in the plan. It is a very public process. Public opinion matters. Managing sewer and stormwater creates jobs in the state.

A website is being developed – called BLUE Portland. Metrics are being developed. Data is continuing to be collected. The next Workshop is January 17, 2019.

Trustee Willey commented that the City had done a good job at a public meeting related to Brighton Ave.

Ms. Lewis noted that Scott Firmin is a key member of the integrated planning team. She also noted that most people don't understand the difference between PWD and the City in the wastewater area. She thanked Ms. Gallinaro for including PWD in the process and allowing PWD to be a strong player in the process.

The stormwater fee helps to stabilize the revenue available to carry out the City's obligations. Trustee Willey stated it helped allocate the costs to the public in an equitable way.

Trustee Garrison noted that integrated planning is a new concept, and that there are not many approved integrated plans across the country.

Ms. Gallinaro responded that Portland was ahead of the curve on the integrated plan process.

The Trustees thanked her for her presentation.

2. Background for Permit Report to DEP.

Scott Firmin, Director of Wastewater Services, lead a discussion on the review of the required nutrient optimization efforts at the East End Wastewater Treatment Facility and the required reportings.

Mr. Firmin discussed the annual Nutrient Optimization Progress Report of December 10, 2018. The Operations Committee agreed to move the report on to the Board for full consideration at its business meeting. Mr. Firmin is seeking endorsement from the Board for the Nutrient Report.

In PWD's permit, PWD is required to submit an annual progress report. The Casco Bay Estuary Project defined several Casco Bay Plan goals. These goals include habitat enhancement and control and reduction of nutrient pollution.

Casco Bay is changing significantly. Efforts are being made to characterize the Bay. PWD's most recent permit for the East End Plant was issued in 2017. The permit requires weekly nitrogen testing, May through October. It also requires nutrient optimization through an adaptive management approach, using the facilities PWD has in place. The integrated planning process helps in the adaptive management approach. An annual Nutrient Optimization Report is required by the Permit.

DEP estimated 2,437 lb./day for nitrogen seasonal loading. The 2018 seasonal load was 685 lb./day, a 72% reduction.

There are challenges in nutrient optimization. During the transition period, things may be more unstable. PH control may be an issue. Lowering the PH too much may effect the biology or violate the permit. Fecal coliform reduction may lead to fluctuations.

In 2019, PWD intends to increase recycle rates to get the nitrogen a little bit lower; identify possible ammonia breakthrough – where the system goes from no ammonia to a bit of ammonia; and continue process sampling to improve disinfection system performance.

There is no regulatory mandate for a nitrogen permit limit. PWD will continue to work towards nitrogen reduction however. PWD is engaged in ongoing efforts at the East End Plant, the Casco Bay Estuary Project Nutrient Council and the City of Portland Integrated Planning process in an effort for nutrient optimization and improving water quality.

Other sources of nitrogen in Casco Bay should be looked at for nutrient optimization.

The Report is in the Trustee packet. Mr. Firmin is seeking support from the Board for the report.

Trustee Garrison asked about information for non-point sources of nitrogen. Mr. Firmin noted there are estimates out there. Trustee Garrison asked if non-point source reductions were being discussed with Ms. Gallinaro. Mr. Firmin stated that it wasn't in his expertise to push for that. He believed that was more of a political issue. He is dealing with the treatment plant and its operation and permit and is leaving it to the communities to deal with.

The Nutrient Council is established by the Casco Bay Estuary partnership, which is funded by the EPA. Mr. Firmin identified the members of the Council in response to questions raised by Trustee Siviski.

Trustee Willey asked if other treatment plants like the one in South Portland are doing the same as PWD. Mr. Firmin noted PWD was the first, but others are beginning to address the nutrient issue.

Trustee Willey noted that equity was not a concept being directly discussed or addressed in this reduction effort. He requested an amendment to the proposed resolution and discussed it with the General Manager and Mr. Firmin. Ms. Lewis agreed to make the requested amendment.

Trustee Siviski asked whether the Board should endorse the report. He asked Mr. Firmin what he recommended. Mr. Firmin said he was requesting endorsement.

Trustee Cote has made prior edits of the resolution and asked if those were made. Mr. Firmin said yes, the edits were being made.

President Lunt asked why the resolution should be adopted; he asked what effect it would have. Mr. Firmin said it would be helpful giving him an indication if the Board would support a regulatory limit. This would help in permit negotiations. Trustee Rich asked how that benefits Mr. Firmin. Mr. Firmin reiterated it would help make it clear to the regulators where the Board stands on the issues in the report. President Lunt asked whether Mr. Firmin had information on future expenditures for running this program.

Ms. Lewis stated that it was her understanding the Board did not want to spend 40 million dollars on plant improvements. This is a chance for the Board to make clear they prefer to try other approaches to deal with this issue.

Trustee Garrison stated he felt there was not enough data and information and modeling about other sources of contributors of pollution to the Bay to move forward. He believes it would be worth spending money on a study to provide PWD with some defense.

Trustee Willey expressed that several communities and parties share the responsibility of Casco Bay. PWD is not alone.

Fifty thousand dollars is budgeted next year for an analyzer.

President Lunt wants to be able to justify any vote the Trustees take on this matter with information that helps the Trustees make their decision.

Mr. Firmin noted that the report was going in to DEP by December 31 whether it is endorsed by the Board because it is required by the permit.

Trustee Rich is fine endorsing the Resolution. She would like more information on costs and have talking points for the public. President Lunt agreed.

3. Performance Review Format

The Board discussed a proposed new format for the performance review of the General Manager.

The new format was discussed briefly. The goal is to have the General Manager's review in January 2019. The new form is a rewrite of the old form. Ms. Lewis will fill out the form and circulate it to the Board.

4. Other Business.

PWD is still negotiating with Cayenta on amending the project ABC contract. An update will be provided in January. Chris Crovo has taken over the asset management purchase portion of the contract; Peter Cutrone remains in charge of the Customer Service and Billing side.

The 2019 calendar will be changed to move the business meeting to the week after the workshop in December 2019.

The business meeting package will be drop boxed on Wednesday or Thursday morning.

Ms. Lewis gave an update on the East End power failure at the East End Plant. The problem appears to be on PWD property and its issue to fix. PWD is operating on a generator.

5. Adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Submitted by,

Donna M. Katsiaficas
Clerk