

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, February 13, 2023. In attendance from staff were S. Garrison, C. Crovo, D. Kane, S. Firmin, J. Wallace, P. Hunt and D. Katsiaficas. Jamie Willey attended from the public.

All Trustees were present except Trustee Cote.

President Douglas convened the workshop at 6:37 p.m.

1. LD 404 (Pending Legislation)

Paul Hunt, Environmental Services Manager, updated the Board on a bill to direct the Maine DOT to implement the recommendations of the Mountain Division Rail Use Advisory Council connecting the existing segments of the Mountain Division Rail Trail.

Mr. Hunt gave a brief history of the Mountain Division Rail Use Advisory Council. He provided the Board with the background on the reason the Council existed. The advisory report recommended that a recreational trail be developed along the rail corridor. Mr. Hunt was PWD's representative on the Council. He explained his participation on the Council. He advised the Council through the process that PWD had other land that could potentially be used for the placement of a trail, away from the water. MDOT had given up rights to place a trail adjacent to the water in 2002.

The legislation pending would accept the recommendation of the Council, which provides that the recreational trail on PWD land would be located away from the shoreline.

PWD's position on the Legislation will be neither for nor against. It will make clear it is willing to work with officials on locating the trail on PWD land away from the shore.

Concerns about safety, water quality and vandalism were expressed. Mr. Hunt responded he believed a trail would be manageable as proposed, away from the shoreline.

2. Severe Weather Response Practices

Staff provided a brief overview of severe weather preparations and response practices at PWD, using the December 23, 2022 storm as a case study.

Jim Wallace gave a presentation on how PWD prepares for weather events. PWD uses the National Weather Service for information regarding a weather event.

Mr. Wallace explained how he worked with Scott Firmin, Director of Operations - Wastewater, to plan for the December 23 storm. Staff watch the weather and fill out a form which is a storm assessment; assessments are done by level, utilizing levels 1-3. Each department has a plan for responding to the storms rated at each level. The same process is used each time an event is coming.

While a storm is in progress, staff continue to check on operations to see what each department is experiencing throughout the event. Information is shared among the departments.

Mr. Wallace described the weather that was experienced on December 23, and explained crews were pulled off the roads due to high winds. There was a large storm surge that day and many power outages. It took a long time to have power fully restored to all customers. PWD was fueling its generators with diesel fuel. The event proved to be more difficult for wastewater operations than for water operations due to the nature of the storm.

After an event passes, PWD has a “hotwash” where the event and PWD’s response is reviewed to see where problems occurred – what went well, and what needed an improved response.

Cumberland County sends out alerts through its emergency management agency which have been helpful in planning.

3. East End WWTF Rehabilitation and Renewal

Scott Firmin, Director of Operations - Wastewater, and Chris Crovo, Executive Director of Asset Management and Planning, discussed recent challenges at the East End WWTF related to aging and worn infrastructure. PWD has performed temporary repairs to extend the life of the assets until rehabilitation can be budgeted. Temporary measures are now beginning to fail and asset failures are accelerating. These issues have affected compliance, despite process control efforts from staff. Mr. Crovo and Mr. Firmin discussed the engineering and construction services procurement to address the challenges on an accelerated timeline.

Mr. Firmin explained the East End Facility has three secondary clarifiers, originally constructed in 1975, with major upgrades in 2000. A condition assessment was completed in 2019-2020. In December, and more recently, there has been a failure of the collection mechanism, and a procurement emergency has been declared. The mechanisms are beyond their useful life. Mr. Firmin showed the Board photos and a short video of the condition of the mechanisms.

Secondary clarifier #3 failed in December. Johnson & Jordan are performing repairs on the clarifier. They will also perform a condition assessment on the other clarifiers to assist PWD in performing proactive measures to keep the clarifiers operating.

The mechanisms need to be replaced. The process to select, design and order the collector mechanisms needs to be accelerated.

Mr. Crovo said that through a contract amendment, Kleinfelder was engaged to perform design services; they are already performing services for PWD on another project. Woodard & Curran has been working with PWD on an electrical project at the facility. Their contract will be amended to include work on the construction of the clarifiers.

Mr. Crovo described the process that will be used to procure equipment for the project. The Board will have a proposal to review at the end of March which will ratify the contract amendments with the engineering firms.

4. Other Business

None.

5. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Submitted by,

Donna M. Katsiaficas
Clerk