

August 14, 2017

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 at the Ecology Center of the District, 1 White Rock Road, Standish, Maine on August 14, 2017. In attendance from staff were Messrs. Crovo, Kane, Wallace, Firmin, Thompson and Mses. Lewis, Clements, Demers, Jackson and Katsiaficas.

All Trustees were present except Trustee Curtis.

President Lunt convened the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

1. Tour of the Rich Memorial Beach, Standish.

Trustees toured the Rich Memorial Beach along with the General Manager, Carrie Lewis, Chris Crovo, Director of Asset Management and Planning, and Chad Thompson, Source Protection Coordinator, and Laurel Jackson, Water Resource Specialist. Councilor Izzy Higgins from Standish was also in attendance.

2. Discussion of Health Guidelines for Contaminants in Water.

General Manager, Carrie Lewis led a discussion on the health guidelines for contaminants in water.

Ms. Lewis explained the 3 EPA considerations when deciding whether to regulate a contaminant. She provided a PowerPoint slide defining the considerations. If there is a specific concentration where there is a risk to health, EPA will set a maximum contaminant level goal. It is solely an indicator of public health. It will be the most conservative number the EPA can set for a goal. The maximum contaminant level is based on cost and must be set close to the MCLG. The EPA must look at the benefits associated with the MCLG. It is a more qualitative than quantitative analysis. A treatment technique may also be used (TT). One example is the level of lead allowed in a water sample. It uses best available technology and measures a level of technological performance.

If the EPA decides not to regulate something, it can take no action, or develop a health advisory. Health advisories are not enforceable but are considered technical guidance.

Environmental Working Group (EWG) is a national group that puts together an annual report. The most recent report noted there were 2 contaminants in PWD water above health guidelines. The first was hexavalent chromium. The guideline was a number put out by the state of California. It has no enforceability, even in California anymore. The second contaminant was trihalomethanes. Because PWD is above 0, it was cited in the report as above health guidelines. The report stated that 7 other contaminants were detected in PWD water. PWD was well below the legal limits for all 7 contaminants.

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Ms. Lewis then explained how PWD would communicate to its customers regarding the safety of its water.

Trustee Cote asked where the regulations applied. Ms. Lewis explained some are at the plant, some are at the distribution system and some regulations like those related to lead apply at the tap.

Trustee Garrison asked who at PWD handles water quality complaints. Many of the complaints are routed to Paul Hunt, the Environmental Services Manager and the Lake staff.

3. Value of Water Campaign.

Public Relations Manager, Michelle Clements, gave a brief review of the 3-year Value of Water Campaign that recently concluded.

Ms. Clements began her presentation by reviewing the District's Value of Water campaign. PWD began the campaign because it knew that it was going to continue to invest large amounts of money in renewing its infrastructure. The campaign helps customers think about the value of their water and relate it to the improvements that are needed to maintain the quality of the system.

The campaign began in 2014. A consultant was hired to help PWD design the campaign. Anytime there is interaction with the local media, an attempt is made by PWD to highlight how important investments in the water system are. Bill stuffers have been supplied that are unique to PWD and its customers. Mall kiosks and bus shelters had some advertising. PWD vehicles have been "wrapped" with the PWD message.

A media campaign was part of phase 2 of the campaign. Two commercials were aired on local cable TV channels. A contest was held for customers to provide a video of what their water meant to them.

For 2017, Ms. Clements recommends that the videos already produced be repurposed and put back on cable TV. They could also be used for online advertising. Another bill stuffer highlighting PWD investments is recommended. Window clings for restaurants could also be provided.

Trustee Levinsky asked if PWD could accept contributions from the outside to assist the District in its education programs. He suggested out of state sources might be tapped as a source of funds for conservation and education efforts. Trustees Lunt and Siviski expressed reservations for this type of an effort given that rates are going to be increased. Trustee Levinsky indicated ratepayers would not be solicited.

Trustee Cote asked about signage on projects that might reflect the PWD efforts in construction projects. Mr. Crovo replied that PWD does provide such signage strategically on larger projects.

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Trustee Willey suggested that videos are important to get out PWD's message. He suggested that the commercials that PWD had produced could pop up on the PWD website. It would increase the interaction with our customers. He believes there are many opportunities PWD has that are not being used to communicate with PWD customers online which PWD could take advantage of. PWD has between 17,000-19,000 visits to its website monthly.

Trustee Swinton agreed and suggested that when there are rate increases, an explanation video could be produced explaining the increase, and comparing it to the national perspective on rates. This information could be provided on the website. It would be helpful to inform customers.

President Lunt stated that right now, what is important is how to address the current rate increase situation. He is comfortable with what Ms. Clements is proposing. For those Trustees who have additional ideas, he suggested that they be forwarded to Ms. Clements and she will collect them for a couple of months, and if there is enough interest, it may be referred to Committee.

Trustee Garrison suggested that PWD might look at what other utilities across the country may be doing to communicate with their customers.

President Lunt noted he had feedback from people about PWD rate increases and he explained what PWD was doing with the extra funds. He noted that individual Trustees could do a lot to spread the word about rate increases and why they were needed.

4. Sebago Lake Beach Monitoring and Management.

Water Resource Specialist, Laurel Jackson and Source Protection Coordinator, Chad Thompson discussed the beach monitoring program and the results of the 2017 water sampling.

Ms. Jackson began the presentation with an explanation of the various uses and roles played by the Lake. PWD has a beach water-monitoring program that runs from Memorial Day to Labor Day each year. It is a voluntary program. The program tests for E Coli, a bacteria which is easy to test for. It is a good indicator of water quality. If it is present, it means there is some kind of fecal contamination; it may also indicate that other potentially harmful bacteria are present in the water.

The EPA safe swimming guideline is 235 CDFU/100 ML. The best practice is that the beach be closed if this level is exceeded; closing is voluntary on the part of the beaches. Re-testing is done 24 hours later.

Trustee Cote asked what incentive there is for beaches to close. Ms. Jackson said protecting public health.

PWD tests 16 beaches, including 3 PWD beaches and the Standish town beach. These beaches include the state park, private and public beaches.

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Water quality awareness is raised by PWD conducting the program. PWD is recognized as a water quality expert. PWD has outreach to the beach managers. PWD explains what it does and why, and gives them tips on good beach management practices to keep contamination low. PWD serves as a technical assistant for the beach managers as well.

Water quality data is collected to show the effectiveness of the 2-mile limit. The 2-mile limit is extremely effective in keeping the water clean.

The Rich Memorial Beach opened in 2017. It is sampled 3 days a week. PWD samples on Tuesdays and Standish samples on Saturdays and Sundays. No closures have occurred on the beach this year.

Chad Thompson provided an update on how things were going at the Rich Memorial Beach. He reported that as to the use of the beach, 25 – 30 cars are usually there every day during the week. Six hundred season passes have been sold. The capacity of the beach is 400 – that is combined vehicle and boat traffic. (100 vehicles and 75 boats).

PWD is getting the results of the Standish water tests straight from the lab. The Town is using the same criteria regarding water quality to manage the beach as PWD uses to manage the beach.

5. Other Business

Ms. Lewis explained to the Board PWD pulling out of the Woodfords Corner project with MDOT. Mr. Crovo explained why PWD pulled out of the project. He stated that the pipe was in good condition. The bid was extremely high and well over PWD's estimate. He explained that the only way to have done the project was to cancel another project already promised.

He explained the decision making process used by PWD to the Board.

Ms. Lewis explained there may be blow back from backing out of the project.

6. Adjourn.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Submitted by,

Donna M. Katsiaficas
Clerk