

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, 1 White Rock Road, Standish, Maine on Monday, September 11, 2023. In attendance from staff were S. Garrison, C. Crovo, D. Kane, S. Firmin, and D. Katsiaficas.

All Trustees were present. President Lunt convened the workshop at 7:05 p.m.

1. Legislative Wrap-Up

Donna Katsiaficas, Corporate Counsel, provided a legislative wrap-up for the session which ended in July 2023. Ms. Katsiaficas had a PowerPoint presentation for the Board, highlighting the bills that were of interest to PWD.

Bills discussed included LD 325 which prohibits ratepayer money from being used to pay dues for trade associations. Consumer-owned water utilities were exempted from other portions of the bill prohibiting the use of ratepayer money for educational and charitable activities. The PUC is reviewing the law to see how it interacts with current PUC rules on the same subjects, and it is likely the bill will need amendment in the next legislative session. The bill was passed without a public hearing on the final language.

The other major piece of legislation discussed was the new family medical leave law. Employers will begin to pay a tax on payroll on January 1, 2025; employees will be able to begin collecting benefits on January 1, 2026. There is a cap of 1% of wages on employer and employee contributions. The Department of Labor will be working in 2024 to create rules to implement the program. If an employer has a private plan that has benefits equal to or greater than the state program that will be created, the employer will be able to file for a waiver and if granted will not be required to participate in the State program.

Possible changes to PWD's charter were discussed, as they might be brought to the legislature in January 2025. Changes include amendments to the debt service provisions of the charter, the removal of Chaffin Pond as a water source (as it was sold to Windham years ago), the removal of a payment in lieu of taxes, and a provision to deal with a Trustee vacancy on the Board when the vacancy is for less than one year. These possible amendments will be discussed early in 2024. Those amendments that are approved by the Board will be discussed with PWD's communities in order to solicit their support before bringing the changes to the legislature.

Any possible charter changes are projected to be in draft form by the end of September 2024. A sponsor will need to be obtained for the bill. If charter changes go forward, they will go before the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee of the legislature.

2. Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

3. **Adjourn**

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

Submitted by,

Carrie E. Cote
Assistant Clerk