

As voted by the Board of Trustees and in accordance with the notice of the meeting, the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Portland Water District was held at the Jeff P. Nixon Training Center, 225 Douglass Street, Portland, Maine, and via Zoom, on Monday, September 29, 2025. Attending from staff were S. Firmin, D. Katsiaticas, J. Wallace, M. Clements, D. Kane, J. Hudak, C. Brown, K. Tibbets, M. Archibald, P. Hunt, G. Pellerin, R. Doiron, P. Cutrone, and J. Ordway from Core & Main, as well as members of the public.

President Lunt convened the business meeting at 6:02 p.m., with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called by the Assistant Clerk. All Trustees were present.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Trustee Willett made a motion to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 25, 2025, seconded by Trustee Siviski. It was voted all in favor.

Trustee Willett made a motion to accept the minutes of the Workshop Meeting of September 8, 2025, seconded by Trustee Siviski. It was voted all in favor.

INVITATION FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Grace Reville, owner of 70 Caleb Street addressed the Board and complained on behalf of herself and the neighborhood about a water main renewal project conducted by Pratt and Sons. She indicated that 20 neighbors have had issues with the project and gave a list of grievances. A major issue was the communication on the project. The Board will follow up with the neighborhood after having had a chance to discuss with staff.

PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION on the Advanced Metering Infrastructure Project.

Peter Cutrone, Project Manager – Administration, provided an overview of the upcoming advanced meter infrastructure (AMI) project, noting that current meters and radio batteries have reached the end of their 20-year service life. In 2024, PWD conducted an assessment with Diameter Services, issued an RFP, and awarded the contract to Core & Main with VEPO Metering as the installation provider.

Josh Ordway from Core & Main highlighted the company's experience, resources, and past AMI deployments, emphasizing the proven reliability of the chosen meters and equipment.

The project will replace existing drive-by meters with advanced meters that automatically transmit usage data six times daily. Benefits include: increased billing accuracy and fairness, access for customers to hourly consumption data via an online portal (expected by late 2026/early 2027), leak and reverse-flow detection, as well as pressure and temperature monitoring, faster emergency response and service improvements, reduced carbon footprint by eliminating most manual meter reads, remote shutoff capability for some accounts (e.g., seasonal properties), two main residential meters will be installed (iPerl and Ally), along with commercial/industrial models. All new meters carry 20-year accuracy warranties.

The installation process will be coordinated by letter, allowing customers to schedule appointments online or by phone. Customers will receive appointment confirmations, reminders, and real-time technician identification for safety. Water service will be interrupted for approximately 30 minutes during installation, and someone 18+ must be present. No cost will be charged to customers.

Bills will begin reflecting fractional usage for greater accuracy. Customers with sub-meters will be contacted separately and may choose whether to update or discontinue them based on cost-benefit.

Customers are asked to prepare by ensuring meters are accessible. Participation is required.

Overall, the AMI project will enhance customer service, provide faster and more detailed water-use information, improve operational efficiency, and support sustainability goals.

Members of the public asked questions about the project and were informed as to the nature of the meters, their safety with respect to emission of radiation, how the technology works, where the meters will be installed, and the costs of the project.

REPORTS

Operations Committee

Trustee Crockett provided a summary of the Operations Committee meeting on September 8, 2025.

Staff recommended creating a new CIP project named Ozone Generator Renewal for the SLWTF and requested approval of a contract with PC-Hazen for design-build services to replace the ozone generators and chemical storage tanks at the Sebago Lake Water Treatment Facility.

Staff provided an update on the Westbrook CSO Storage Conduit preliminary design for a 1 MG tank along the Presumpscot River in Westbrook. They reviewed the project's current status, identified potential locations, outlined where they plan to perform geotechnical work, and presented early cost estimates.

Planning Committee

Trustee Shaughnessy provided a summary of the Planning Committee meeting on September 8, 2025.

The Committee voted to approve the release of a portion of an easement on a water main in Piper Road in exchange for a new easement for a relocated water main.

The Committee voted to approve a contribution of up to \$20,000 for the Hennick conservation program in Naples.

Staff presented an overview of the Districts Watershed Land Conservation Program progress over the years and current status. Staff also presented an update on the federal RCPP award that provides funds towards watershed improvement projects.

Staff provided an update that the District has received a draft lease for the Littlejohn Road Pump Station tower installation and is in the process of reviewing it.

Staff provided an update that the Town of Standish council declined to approve the MOU for a joint project at the end of Maple Street. The PWD General Manager and Town of Standish Manager plan to meet to discuss the project.

Administration and Finance Committee

Trustee Levinsky provided a summary of the Administration and Finance Committee meeting on September 8, 2025.

Mr. Cutrone presented an update on the meter project, noting that seven antennas have been installed, and that one is pending approval from the Westbrook Planning Board. Initial announcement letters have been sent to all customers, and there will be a public informational session at the next board meeting. The project is still expected to be done within budget and deadline. Operation and Customer Service staff will receive training on September 23 and 24.

Mr. Kane provided an update on the 2026 budget. The third draft of the budget has been completed. Overall expenses are \$69.5 million, which is \$4.4M or 6.7% higher. It is better than the target expense goal of \$70.8M. Water revenues and wastewater assessments are also better than target.

An average water rate adjustment of 7.4% is needed to fund the water fund budget. For a typical customer, the increase is \$1.92.

The budget assumes 194 employees, 3 additional staff dedicated to water and wastewater field activities. The 2026 financial impact of \$83 million of capital projects is included in the budget.

The budget will be presented to the Board in October and will be reviewed in detail at the November Board meetings. A public hearing on the proposed water rate adjustment is scheduled for November 10. All customers will be sent a letter informing them about the public hearing.

Mr. Archibald provided an overview of the new safety awareness program – Ripple Effect. A pilot of the program began at the East End Treatment facility, where employees were encouraged to note employees' safe behavior. At the end of the month, one of the employees will receive a small financial award. The Committee reviewed the recognition notes submitted by employees.

General Manager's Report

The Board was updated on the General Manager's meeting with Frye Island. The Island is interested in opening a dialogue with PWD to discuss the possibility of PWD serving its residents. A future meeting will occur in October.

It was also noted that Greg Pellerin was appointed to fill the Executive Director of AMAP position, and the Board was asked to support and confirm the appointment.

NEW BUSINESS

Order 25-020 authorizing the Treasurer to begin the process of increasing water rates by approximately 7.4% effective January 1, 2026.

On September 8, 2025, the Administration and Finance Committee met and reviewed the proposed 2026 Budget. The budget included a net water fund budget of \$35,687,472, which is \$2,815,857 or 8.6% higher. Seventy percent of the increase is related to capital investments. All other expenses increased by 3.3%. To fully fund the budget, an average rate adjustment of 7.4%. A hearing on the proposed rates will occur on November 10, 2025.

It was moved by Trustee Levinsky and seconded by Trustee Lunt.

It was Voted and unanimously,

ORDERED, pursuant to Board of Trustees Policy, the Treasurer shall prepare the supporting documents for a water rate increase of approximately 7.4%, with new rates effective January 1, 2026.

Order 25-021 authorizing the General Manager to execute a professional services contract with PC Construction in the amount of \$570,967 for design phase engineering services.

In April 2025, the Board Approved an Engineering Method Request (Order 25-009) authorizing the Design-Build Method for procuring engineering and construction services for the Chemical Storage Facilities Upgrades project.

Staff has reviewed PC Construction's preliminary design proposal and recommends awarding a \$570,967 contract for the preliminary design phase. Once the preliminary design is complete, staff will amend the contract to move forward with final design and the development of Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) orders accomplishing the intent of each capital project with a budget not to exceed the approved CIP funding.

Both projects will be financed by issuing water bonds. The 2025 Bond included \$1,550,000 to pay for the project. The 2026 \$5,450,000 will be included in the proposed 2026 Budget that will be reviewed by the Board in November. The updated multi-year forecast will include the proposed 2027 \$6,000,000 bond. The estimated annual debt service payment is \$1,203,000.

It was moved by Trustee Crockett and seconded by Trustee Shattuck-Heidorn.

It was Voted and unanimously,

ORDERED, that the 2025 Capital Improvement Plan is amended in the amount of \$275,000 to include an additional project, Sebago Lake Water Treatment Facility Ozone Generator Project 2025-3372) ("Project 1"), to cover the capital expenses related to the renewal planning and engineering design for the ozone generation system; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, the General Manager is authorized to execute a professional services contract with PC Construction in the amount of \$570,967 for design phase engineering services for the Chemical Storage and Ozone Generator Design Build Project; and that the General Manager and the Treasurer, each acting singly, are authorized to take such steps as may be necessary to accomplish the intent of this vote.

Order 25-022 authorizing the General Manager to execute an easement release related to the relocation of a water main in Piper Road in Scarborough.

The District has a forty-foot wide easement for an 8-inch water main in Piper Road, a private road, in the Town of Scarborough. In 2023, it was discovered that the property owner, Piper Shores, had encroached on the easement by erecting a new building within the easement and by adding fill on top of the water main. The District and Piper Shores came to an agreement whereby Piper Shores would relocate a portion of the water main to a location acceptable to the District. The work of installing the water main has been completed to the District's satisfaction. The District will release the original easement, and a new forty-foot-wide easement will be granted to the District under the same terms of the original easement.

It was moved by Trustee Shaughnessy and seconded by Trustee McCann.

It was Voted and unanimously,

ORDERED, the General Manager is hereby authorized to execute an easement release related to the relocation of a water main in Piper Road in Scarborough in exchange for a new easement for the relocated water main; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that the General Manager and the Treasurer, each acting singly, are authorized to take such other steps as may be necessary to accomplish the intent of this vote.

Order 25-023 authorizing the General Manager to contribute up to \$20,000 to the Loon Echo Land Trust to support the conservation of land known as the Hennick property located in Naples.

The Hennick property is 27 acres located in Naples. Loon Echo Land Trust (LELT) will accept the donated land with the purpose of conserving it in perpetuity through a Declaration of Trust. The land will be owned and managed by LELT. The property is entirely forested and includes 1,250 feet of frontage on the Muddy River before it empties into Sebago Cove of Sebago Lake.

The recommended contribution of \$20,000 is the amount requested by Loon Echo Land Trust. In lieu of an appraisal, appraisal values of comparable lands conserved with a PWD contribution were utilized to calculate a range of recommended contribution values, which were between \$11,020 and \$27,954. The recommended contribution represents about \$740 per acre of protected land within the watershed. The generous donation of the full fee value by the landowner and contributions from Sebago Clean Waters and Western Maine Climate Fund will help make this acquisition possible. PWD's contribution is to be used for stewardship funds, needed to acquire the Hennick land in fee for conservation purposes.

The recommended contribution of \$20,000 is the amount requested by the applicant and is within the range of possible calculated contributions determined by PWD's site-specific assessment. The contribution will be drawn from the PUC Watershed Protection Fund, which has an available balance of \$1.1M.

It was moved by Trustee Shaughnessy and seconded by Trustee McCann.

It was Voted and unanimously,

ORDERED, the General Manager is authorized to contribute up to \$20,000 to the Loon Echo Land Trust to support the conservation of land known as the Hennick property located in Naples.

Resolution 25-014 confirming the General Manager's appointment of Greg Pellerin as the Executive Director of Asset Management and Planning, effective September 15, 2025.

Greg Pellerin has been with PWD for nearly a decade and has recently served as the Engineering and Asset Management Services Manager. Greg has a varied background in delivering capital projects and implementing engineered solutions, including 5 years as a consulting engineer. Greg has been one of several members critical to the effort to deliver the North Windham Wastewater Facility.

This position was advertised both internally and externally. Greg was selected from a very impressive pool of candidates and will be an asset to PWD in this critical position.

It was moved by Trustee Lunt and seconded by Trustee Voltz.

It was Voted and unanimously,

RESOLVED, the Board of Trustees confirms Greg Pellerin as PWD's Executive Director of Asset Management Planning, effective September 15, 2025.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

SECOND INVITATION FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

A resident asked whether the recently mentioned 7.4% rate increase could be further negotiated and also inquired about who will manage the customer web portal for water data.

PWD staff clarified that the 7.4% increase was not approved at this meeting; rather, the Board instructed the Treasurer to begin preparing documentation. The proposed rate adjustment will be addressed at a public hearing on November 10, with formal notice to follow.

TRUSTEE COMMENTS

The President of the Board provided the following remarks related to Union Contract negotiations:

The District has continued to work with Mr. Piconne and on September 4th, both parties agreed to the neutral Chair of the interest arbitration panel.

The interest arbitration hearing has been scheduled and will be held on December 4th.

Trustee Shaughnessy expressed apologies for nighttime construction on Libby Ave. without appropriate notice. The notice issue arose as a result of confusion as to who would notify the neighbors.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion may be made to go into Executive Session at any time during the meeting to discuss, pursuant to 1 M.R.S. §405(6)(A) personnel, 1 M.R.S. §405(6)(C) real estate, 1 M.R.S. §405 (6)(D) labor negotiations, or 1 M.R.S. §405(6)(E) legal matters.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Submitted by,

Donna M. Katsiaficas
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Clerk