

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 10, 2024. In attendance from staff were C. Crovo, D. Kane, S. Firmin, J. Wallace, M. Archibald, G. Pellerin, A. Weaver, D. Katsiaficas and M. Clements.

All Trustees were present.

President Lunt convened the workshop meeting at 6:45 p.m.

1. Legislative Update

Donna Katsiaficas, Corporation Counsel, updated the Board on recent legislation that affects the District.

She explained there are several bills aimed at repealing net billing credits and the Paid Family Leave Act.

LD 241—a bill to allow for low-income assistance for the payment of water bills. David Kane worked on the bill along with the office of public advocate. Small water utilities will oppose the bill.

LD 251- An act to protect the confidentiality of customer info. Donna worked on the bill with the PUC and public advocate. Fred McCann will be testifying on behalf of PWD. The goal is to keep our customers' information confidential.

LD 481- This is PWD's bill. It would allow a water district to borrow money to pay bond holders in the event the district was going to default on a bond payment. Then it would issue a warrant to the town and the town would collect and reimburse the district.

2. Wastewater Update

Scott Firmin, Director of Operations – Wastewater, updated the Board on wastewater surveillance testing and biosolids management.

Mr. Firmin discussed wastewater based epidemiology. PWD has been involved in wastewater testing since 2020, during the COVID era. PWD presently is one of 50 entities participating in the program. Along with Covid, PWD tests for RSV, influenza, norovirus, monkeypox, and other viruses. Info is shared with the CDC as well as on our website and other public health departments as warranted. PWD was the first in the state to be involved with this testing program.

Biosolids Management: PWD's costs for disposing of biosolids have leveled out. However, having a place to dispose of the biosolids is a continuing issue. If an expansion at Juniper Ridge does not occur, the Juniper Ridge landfill will likely be full by 2028. The best solution is to reduce the volume of waste to manage.

Thermal processing reduces volume and removes PFAS. A biosolids study is underway. It will identify 3 "shovel ready" options. East End property has limited capacity to house a facility. It makes sense to locate a facility off site; it would allow for collaboration and sharing of costs.

Many projects are being explored state wide. Waste Management is putting in two dryers in Norridgewock to process biosolids. Casella is proposing an expansion of the Juniper Ridge landfill. PWD can be part of the expansion because of its present contract with Casella. Aries

Clean Technologies is considering a sludge dryer facility, York Sewer District is looking into super critical water oxidation, a new technology. PWD is working with ecoMaine to have a sludge dryer on ecoMaine property. Sanford sewer district is also exploring a sludge dryer facility.

DEP is supporting a 50 million dollar bond to deal with the disposal of biosolids (sludge bonds).

ecoMaine has many members with biosolids disposal issues. PWD surveyed them to gauge interest in a regional project. About 20 communities expressed interest.

Mr. Firmin explained the potential project with ecoMaine and shared basic cost information. Emissions licensing is also being reviewed. These proposed projects are 100-150 Million Dollar projects.

DEP favors multiple outlets for biosolids disposal. The ecoMaine regional solution would serve many of the communities PWD serves.

3. North Windham Sewer Project Update

Andrew Weaver, Associate Engineer, will provide an update to the Board on the Project

Greg Pellerin gave a brief history of the Project team and the Agreements that created this Project.

He provided an overview of the project and the various easements needed to complete the treatment facility and the dispersal system. This required cooperation among the Town, the RSU, and PWD.

Andrew Weaver explained the structure of the primary project. MWH constructors are working with Shaw Brothers on the project. PWD has Brown and Caldwell as its engineer. This is a construction manager at risk project. GMP #1 and #2 were explained in detail, complete with sketches and plans.

Engineering services and wastewater are working with staff on SOP's for operation of the new plant.

GMP#3 is a sewer collection project near Windham Village apartments. Construction will ramp up in March. GMP #4 will be near Shaw's and the shopping center (about 6,500 linear feet of pipe for the collection system).

The Town also has plans for future extensions.

There is a Windham school conveyance project as well. The new Windham Middle School will have sewage that will be sent up River Road to the new treatment plant. Grant money has come in from the federal government to help pay for these projects. The goal is to have the school project complete in 2027. GMP #4 will probably start in the spring.

The Town will be working on getting customers connected to the system.

A discussion occurred about the capacity of the treatment plant and whether it could handle the extra expected flows that might come from development. Staff believes the limit will not be pushed too much. The Town and PWD are working together to keep a handle on the anticipated development and flow and the design of the facility and its capacity to be expanded. There is space at the present site to expand at the facility should it be needed.

4. Other Business

Michelle Clements asked if any Trustees wanted to be on the scholarship committee. Trustees Shaughnessy and Willett agreed to join.

5. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Submitted by,

Donna M. Katsiaficas
Clerk