

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 9, 2026. In attendance from staff were D. Kane, S. Firmin, G. Pellerin, C. Poulin, J. Wallace, M. Clements, D. Katsiaficas, R. Bartels, and A. Sellick.

Trustee Shattuck-Heidorn was absent.

President Lunt convened the workshop meeting at 6:41 p.m.

1. Portland Water District Regional Biosolids Effort

Charlene Poulin, Director of Wastewater Operations, reviewed Maine’s current regulatory and legislative landscape for biosolids, highlighting PFAS-related restrictions that have shifted disposal from land application to landfills. Landfill access relies on a temporary “bulky waste” exemption (LD 297) that extends through 2027, but its future renewal is uncertain. Statewide planning efforts focus on volume reduction, regional collaboration, and emerging PFAS destruction technologies.

Greg Pellerin, Executive Director of AMAP, summarized the District’s 2023 Biosolids Master Plan, which evaluated options to ensure reliable, cost-effective management amid regulatory and market uncertainty. Immediate upgrades to dewatering equipment are underway, while advanced options—such as drying, anaerobic digestion, pyrolysis, and gasification—could reduce biosolids volume, lower truck shipments, destroy PFAS, and generate energy or beneficial byproducts and are under study and consideration. Site limitations at East End make large-scale local processing infeasible.

The Master Plan identified regionalization as a preferred strategy, enabling multiple municipalities to share costs, manage risk, and potentially access state and federal funding. Preliminary estimates for a regional facility serving 15 municipalities range from \$120–\$150 million, rising to \$200 million with PFAS destruction technologies. In 2024, the District entered an MOA with ecomaine to explore siting a facility at Ash Swamp Road, with Portland Water District leading development and ecomaine serving as host and potential landfill backup.

Board discussion focused on a possible competing facility in Sanford, cost, financing, scale, risk, and long-term strategic choice, with the underlying question being whether to remain dependent on a volatile disposal market or invest in regional infrastructure for greater stability. Trustees noted the time-sensitive nature, as construction could take 4–5 years, and continued landfill access is essential during the transition if a regional facility is to be utilized. Staff will continue advancing conceptual planning and return with further analysis on cost, financing, and partnerships.

2. Portland Water District Main Renewals

Bobby Bartels, Engineering & Construction Development Manager, and Adam Sellick, Project Engineer, presented an update on the Water Main Renewal Program, including system performance, projected replacement needs, and a recent emergency case study.

Mr. Bartels explained that while the District is currently meeting its level-of-service goal of fewer than 10 main breaks per 100 miles, asset management modeling indicates that the current replacement rate of approximately 2 miles per year will not be sufficient in the long term to keep up with the assets that need to be replaced. Projections suggest that by approximately 2033, the District may need to replace up to 8 miles of main annually to prevent rising break rates and service disruptions, and that additional resources will be required to continue meeting future needs. Staff emphasized that this is a proactive planning effort based on predictive modeling rather than a response to a current crisis. Trustees discussed the importance of clearly communicating the long-term infrastructure needs and associated financial implications. He also

highlighted ongoing improvements to the water main renewal program, including enhancements to design, inspections, and project communications.

Mr. Sellick reviewed coordination efforts with municipalities, noting that many renewal projects are aligned with local roadwork to reduce costs and disruption. In recent years, the District has begun shifting toward more risk-based replacements while continuing municipal collaboration where feasible.

Mr. Sellick also shared a 2025 Bay Street emergency project originally scheduled for water main replacement in 2027 that required immediate replacement due to repeated leaks. Staff utilized a trenchless pipe-bursting method, which enabled efficient replacement with reduced surface disruption and lower overall cost than traditional full-trench construction. The project was completed successfully and is being evaluated as a potential model for future suitable locations.

Trustees acknowledged the scale of future investment needed and emphasized the importance of strategic planning, transparent budgeting, and clear public communication as the District prepares for increased replacement rates.

3. General Manager's Comments

Scott Firmin, General Manager, addressed two items. First, regarding the City of Portland's consideration of a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT), he told the Board that he had testified at a Finance Committee meeting of the City of Portland that the Portland Water District is not a non-profit, it is a quasi -municipal entity, and it is not appropriate to ask the District to pay a PILOT fee; any payment would be voluntary, roughly \$400,000 per year. He also noted that trustees would be consulted if a payment request is made and that talking points have been prepared for potential media inquiries.

Second, he provided context on recent developments in Washington, D.C. that had been brought to his attention by Trustee Scontras, explaining how they relate to the District's operations and highlighting current measures being considered to mitigate or respond to such events. Trustees were invited to ask questions for clarification if needed.

4. Other Business

None.

5. Executive Session

Trustee McCann made a motion to go into executive session at 8:15, pursuant to 1 M.R.S. §405(6)(E), to discuss a potential legal claim with counsel, seconded by Trustee Crockett. All in favor.

Trustee Shaughnessy made a motion to come out of executive session, pursuant to 1 M.R.S., seconded by Trustee McCann. All in favor.

6. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Submitted by,

Donna M. Katsiaficas

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Clerk