

WEST SLOPE WATER DISTRICT
Regular Board of Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, November 20, 2024
Meeting Summary

CALL TO ORDER

Present: Chair Ramesh Krishnamurthy; Commissioners Chris Eppler, Susan Meamber, and Paul Schuler

Management Staff: Michael Grimm, General Manager; Wendy Irwin, Finance Manager

Absent: Commissioner Andy Smith

1.0 – CALL TO ORDER

Chair Krishnamurthy called to order the meeting of the West Slope Water District Board of Commissioners at 5:02 P.M., Wednesday, November 20, 2024. The meeting was held remotely through Zoom virtual meeting technology. The public was made aware of the meeting through the District’s website (the meeting agenda and Zoom meeting link were posted on the website).

2.0 - PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

The District did not receive any public comments regarding agenda items or other issues for the Board to consider. Chair Krishnamurthy mentioned that some people in his neighborhood noticed small black particles in their tap water. Mr. Grimm confirmed that one customer in the neighborhood contacted the District and pointed out that the water to customers in the HOA / neighborhood was turned off around September 2023 for part of the day, and some customers noticed black particles at that time. Mr. Grimm stated that he will follow-up on why the District’s valves were used to shut off water service to customers without District authorization.

3.0 – CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Eppler made a motion to accept the entire Consent Agenda Items 3.1 through 3.8. Commissioner Meamber seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously (4-0).

4.0 – DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

4.1 – General Manager’s Report: Mr. Grimm highlighted some key issues from the General Manager’s report:

Beaverton-Hillsdale Hwy Project: Mr. Grimm stated Emery & Sons has stated they will possibly file a claim for change order payments. The District has paid the contractor for the change orders that were valid, and the contractor believes they are due more money. Staff is working to resolve the issue. Any discussion of a legal settlement or final action will be shared in Executive Session with the District’s legal counsel present.

SW Garden View Avenue Water Main Project: AKS will be sending 100% plans for the District to review before the end of November.

Water System Master Plan: Mr. Grimm stated the District has reviewed and submitted comments back to Grayling Engineering on the 20-Year Capital Improvement Plan. Most of the edits and comments pertained to the priority of the listed projects and the justification for each project.

Revised Lead & Copper Rule – Mr. Grimm shared the link to District’s customer service line inventory on the 120Water website is now posted and active on the District’s website. The next set of requirements under the Revised Lead & Copper Rule Improvements will be due in 2027 and may not survive a court challenge anyway. Until more is known then, the District will continue to participate in the Portland Water Bureau’s Joint Monitoring Program (JMP) for lead & copper sampling as the District contributed two of the roughly 120 at home tap monitoring sites for the JMP.

Risk & Resilience Assessment – Mr. Grimm shared the Risk & Resilience Assessment (RRA) originally completed in 2021 has been revised in draft form by the General Manager. The whole staff will now review and amend the RRA as a collaborative group over time. As each section of the RRA is updated, the corresponding Emergency Response Plan section will be updated as well. The America’s Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA) required due date for the RRA is 2026. The RRA is a document pointing out the District’s weak links in a number of categories including resilience to winter storms, wild fires, and cybersecurity.

SDAO Award – Mr. Grimm shared with the Board recognition from SDAO for outstanding service in 2024 awarded to Daniel Gridinar for his outstanding service to the District during the Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway Water Main Project. The Board congratulated and thanked Mr. Gridinar for his great service.

Update on Portland Water Bureau & the City of Portland – Mr. Grimm stated he attended a recent meeting with Washington County Managers (GMs, City Managers, City Administrators, etc.) where Michael Jordan, current Chief Administrative Officer for the City of Portland, spoke about the City’s progress with the governance transition process. After the meeting, Mr. Grimm discussed with Mr. Jordan the District’s desire to see Portland as viable, sustainable City believing a robust Portland is good for the regional economy, and that the District will continue to support and be a collaborative partner with the Water Bureau.

4.2 – Finance Manager’s Report: Ms. Irwin shared that the audit report has been completed and Agenda Item 4.4 will cover the Board’s acceptance of the audited financials. Ms. Irwin reviewed HDR’s progress on the water rate study. The next steps include the Board’s acceptance of the final water rate study report in December and a public hearing on the new tiered water rate structure in April. The new rate structure would be fully implemented by October 2025. The rate model created by HDR for the District will call for a flat rate increase of around 5% for the next fiscal year and presented in a public hearing in June 2025. All of the capital projects have been inserted into the rate model now. Ms. Irwin stated that staff will be meeting with representatives for the National Special Districts Coalition in December to discuss federal funding options for the District’s 3.0 MG Reservoir #4 project. Ms. Irwin shared a brief summary of her attendance at the Catalyst Experience where people from across the water industry gathered to learn and share ideas of how to reach and engage with customers. This is important to West Slope as the District moves forward with big capstone projects to not just rely on “traditional” public outreach methods. The event was based on the book *The Art of Gathering*.

Staff met with our WHA Insurance representative about employee medical and dental benefits for 2025. One option WHA presented to staff for consideration is coverage through SDAO/SDIS which would allow the District to keep the health care coverage similar to the current Providence coverage.

4.3 – Budget Committee – Member Selection Process: Mr. Grimm presented the current (2024) Budget Committee Member roster and pointed out that two of the five volunteer members have terms that expire at the end of 2024. Mr. Will Short and Mr. Michael Smith both have terms that expire on December 31. Chair Krishnamurthy suggested staff contact both Mr. Smith and Mr. Short to see if both are interested in another three-year term, and if not “cast a wider net” to find member replacements. Commissioner Eppler agreed that the first step would be to check with the two current members to learn about their continued interest on the Budget Committee. Commissioner Meamber stated she supports inquiring with the two existing members but would like to see more diversity at some point among both the Budget Committee and the Board. The consensus of the Board was to proceed with contacting the two current members with expiring terms.

4.4 – Acceptance of the West Slope WD Audited Financials 6.30.2024: Ms. Irwin gave a brief summary of the work completed by the District’s auditors REDW, and Ms. Irwin pointed to the governance letter to the Board included in the Board’s packet as well as the full audit report. REDW issued a clean opinion for the District without any modifications. Chair Krishnamurthy asked if the auditor’s report is required for the District. Mr. Irwin responded that Oregon law requires special districts like West Slope to be annually audited and make the audit report available to the public and the Secretary of State’s office. Additionally, bond holders of the District’s debt (Reservoir #3) can review the District’s financial position if they desire. The District’s Budget is a forward-facing document, but the audit report is a historical document of past performance required to be completed within 6 months of the close of the fiscal year. Commissioner Eppler made a motion to accept the annual financial report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. Commissioner Meamber seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously (4-0). Commissioner Schuler thanked Ms. Irwin for her great work to complete the audit report with a clean opinion. Ms. Irwin thanked the Board and reminded them that the audit report is for the Board’s ability to oversee the District’s financial health and position.

4.5 – General Manager’s Performance Evaluation Process Discussion: Mr. Grimm shared the Scope of Work (SOW) for Team HR, Inc. to assist the Board with the General Manager’s performance evaluation process. Commissioner Meamber stated she would like to see the SOW amended to include an emphasis on achieving specific goals the Board creates with Team HR for the General Manager. Commissioner Eppler suggested the Board present Team HR with the six or seven goals and objectives that are important to the Board and work with Team HR to quantify performance measures. Mr. Grimm suggested amending Task 4 to reflect the comments of the Board at this meeting and returning the new SOW to Team HR to sign. Commissioners Meamber and Eppler suggested that the General Manager be part of the discussions on which goals and objectives are to be used in the evaluation. Commissioner Meamber made a motion to accept the Scope of Work from Team HR, Inc. with the stated modifications to assist the Board with General Manager’s performance evaluation. Commissioner Eppler seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously (4-0).

5.0 – COMMISSIONERS COMMUNICATIONS

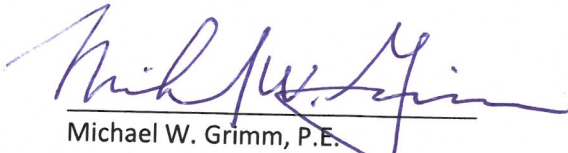
There were no outside meetings attended by the Commissioners. There were no other topics or issues to be raised at this meeting. No future agenda items were suggested. The consensus of the Board was the meeting went well.

6.0 – ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Schuler made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Eppler seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously (4-0). Chair Krishnamurthy adjourned the November 20, 2024, Board of Commissioners regular meeting at 6:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Approved:



Michael W. Grimm, P.E.
Acting Secretary

