

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, October 27, 2025. Attending from staff were S. Firmin, D. Katsiaficas, J. Wallace, M. Clements, D. Kane, J. Hudak, C. Brown, M. Archibald, as well as Guy Cote of the public.

President Lunt convened the business meeting at 6:00 p.m., with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

**ROLL CALL**

The roll was called by the Clerk. Trustee Douglas attended remotely.

**ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

Trustee Shaughnessy made a motion to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 29, 2025, seconded by Trustee Siviski. It was voted all in favor.

Trustee Siviski made a motion to accept the minutes of the Workshop Meeting of October 14, 2025, seconded by Trustee Crockett. It was voted all in favor.

**INVITATION FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**REPORTS**

**Operations Committee**

Trustee Crockett provided a summary of the Operations Committee meeting on October 14, 2025.

Staff presented the need to amend the 2025 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to include the replacement of the third-floor roof at the Douglas Street facility.

- The existing roof overlay, installed in 2017 and expected to last 10 years, began leaking in 2024-2025.
- With the offices currently vacant for renovations, replacing the roof now will minimize future disruptions and protect new HVAC and office materials.
- The project includes the replacement of approximately 7,600 sq. ft. of roofing and any damaged insulation.
- The committee approved adding the project to the 2025 CIP with a total budget not to exceed \$485,000, and authorized execution of a \$433,000 contract with Garland, including contingency.

Staff reviewed minor revisions to the PWD Cross Control Program with the Committee. The proposed changes primarily clarify language and reference new backflow testing software.

Staff provided an overview of the current challenges and temporary solutions for dewatering at the Westbrook Gorham Waste Water Treatment Facility. This included highlighting the history with the current Schwing system and reviewing our past use of rental centrifuges.

Trustee Willett expressed concern about the frequency of bonding projects and the cumulative impact on future rate increases, noting that some upcoming increases could reach approximately 9%. He urged caution in approving additional bonds given their long-term financial impact on ratepayers.

### **Planning Committee**

Trustee Shaughnessy provided a summary of the Planning Committee meeting on October 14, 2025.

The Committee voted to approve a Memorandum of Agreement between PWD and the Town of Windham related to the Windham School Conveyance System.

Staff provided an update on recent trends in the Main Extension and New Service Program.

### **Administration and Finance Committee**

Trustee Levinsky provided a summary of the Administration and Finance Committee meeting on October 14, 2025.

Staff presented proposed changes to the District's Terms and Conditions. The changes being proposed include the following:

- Updating fees to current costs. All fees include an additional amount to cover supervisor and office-related costs.
- Section 315: A new fee to cover the third-party cost related to backflow tests done by the District's staff.
- Section 321: Amending the frequency of testing the accuracy of meters. (see attachment 1: testing schedule).

Staff presented proposed changes to the District's Non-Tariff Fees. The changes reflect the annual adjustment to reflect the increased costs of providing the services.

Staff debriefed the committee on how district staff and other Maine water industry personnel were invited to an FBI briefing on security threats to the water industry.

Staff provided an update on the status of the submeter replacement project. Meters have been installed in 20 test sites at the District's facilities and employees' homes. The installation process went well. The Gorham pilot is expected to begin shortly.

Staff provided an update on the Home Serve Program. The recently enacted customer confidentiality law prohibits the District from sharing customers' information with Home Serve. Home Serve and the District are considering the law's implications for the program.

Staff presented a multi-year forecast as part of the 2026 Budget document. It was noted that the projected 2030 budget is \$92.9 million, a 37.5% increase over the 2026 budget. The average annual increase is 9.4%. Infrastructure investments account for approximately 60% of the increase.

### **General Manager's Report**

The General Manager mentioned the showing of the film "Unless Something Goes Terribly Wrong", which will take place on November 23 at 2:30 at the Portland Museum of Art. This film is a documentary and highlights PWD's wastewater Operations at the East End. PWD has purchased 75 tickets, and they will be available to PWD employees plus one and Trustees.

Mr. Firmin provided an update on the proposed 2026 budget, which reflects PWD's continued commitment to providing reliable drinking water to 11 communities and wastewater services to six communities. PWD operates four wastewater facilities, with a fifth under construction in North Windham, and manages assets valued at \$628 million, with a replacement cost of \$6 billion. The 2026 operating budget totals \$69.4 million, a 6.4% increase from 2025, while the capital budget is

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\$82.8 million, including \$73.8 million in bonded projects and \$7.1 million from reserves, bringing the total budget to \$152.2 million. Personnel, capital investment, debt service, and other operating costs each account for roughly one-third of the total expenses, with staffing increasing by three positions to support water crews and the new wastewater facility.

Key capital projects include water main replacements, the Sebago Lake Treatment Facility upgrades, the North Windham facility startup, a CSO storage conduit in Westbrook, Douglas Street HVAC improvements, and ongoing meter replacements. Water revenues are projected at \$35.7 million, wastewater assessments at \$30.4 million, and the proposed water rate increase averages 7.4%, equating to a \$1.92 monthly increase for residential customers.

Mr. Firmin highlighted that 60% of future cost increases are related to infrastructure investments and emphasized the importance of providing historical and projected metrics for labor, capital, and operational costs.

A public hearing on the water rate adjustment is scheduled for November 10, 2025, with Board consideration and adoption of the budget and rates planned for November 24, 2025, and implementation beginning January 2026.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

**Order 25-024** amending the 2025 Capitol Improvement Plan to include an additional project (Douglass Street Facility 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Room 2025-3327).

In 2017, staff hired repair services to install an overlay roofing product on the 3rd Floor Roof, following a leak identified in 2015. The repair was expected to last 10 years. However, in 2024 and early 2025, the roof began leaking again in the same locations, indicating that the 2017 repair had started to fail. Staff included the project in the 2026 CIP planning discussions.

Staff recommended replacing the roof before winter, accelerating the planned project by a few months. To fund the work without increasing long-term costs, staff have reallocated money from several under-budget projects and moved some planned expenses forward.

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

It was Voted and unanimously,

**ORDERED**, that the 2025 Capital Improvement Plan is amended to include an additional project (Douglass Street Facility 3rd Floor Roof 2025-3327) ("Project") and to fund the Project for a sum not to exceed \$485,000 related to the construction of the third-floor roof, and 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;

**BE IT FURTHER ORDERED**, that the General Manager is authorized to execute a construction contract with Garland/DBS, Inc. in the amount of \$433,259 for the replacement of the Douglass Street Facility 3rd Floor Roof.

**Order 25-025** approving the revised Cross Connection Control Program, with an effective date of January 1, 2026.

The State of Maine requires all public drinking water suppliers to maintain a Cross Connection Control Program. The program prevents the contamination of drinking water by the backflow of water

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or other liquids, mixtures, or substances into the distribution pipes of a water supply system from an unintended source.

This is a minor revision of the program. The proposed changes primarily clarify language and refer to new backflow testing software.

Staff will communicate these changes to testers, plumbing professionals, and municipal partners and update the program documents on pwd.org. The changes will then go into effect on January 1, 2026.

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

It was Voted and unanimously,

ORDERED, that the revised Cross Connection Control Program attached hereto is approved, with an effective date of January 1, 2026.

**Order 25-026** authorizing the General Manager to execute a Memorandum of Agreement with the Town of Windham, related to the Windham School Conveyance System.

PWD and the Town of Windham are preparing for the design and construction of the Windham School Conveyance System, which is the next phase of the North Windham Sewer Project. The Conveyance System will convey flow from the new Regional School Unit 14 middle school and the Windham Center area to the North Windham Wastewater Treatment Facility.

In PWD and the Town's 2020 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the District agreed to provide short-term financing for design and construction of the North Windham Sewer Project. In order to maximize funding opportunities from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund program, the Town has applied for and will provide short-term funding for the Windham School Conveyance System. The new Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) outlines this proposed change from the 2020 MOU.

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

It was Voted and unanimously,

ORDERED, the General Manager is authorized to execute a Memorandum of Agreement with the Town of Windham in substantial form as attached hereto, related to the Windham School Conveyance System. This authorization is contingent on the Town of Windham approving said agreement.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

None

## **SECOND INVITATION FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

Former Westbrook Trustee, Guy Cote, addressed the Board on the proposed budget. He raised concerns about the upcoming increase in water rates, particularly in light of the district's transition to ultrasonic water meters.

He noted that such meters typically register higher usage (2-5% more), citing a North Carolina county where revenues increased 4.2% after a complete meter replacement. Cote questioned whether the current budget accounts for potential revenue increases from the new meters, noting that wastewater charges—calculated from water usage—could amplify ratepayer impacts.

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He suggested a more gradual rate increase (e.g., 5% now, with a reevaluation in June) rather than a full 7–8% hike, to ensure adjustments reflect actual meter readings and avoid surprising residents.

#### **TRUSTEE COMMENTS**

Trustee Levinsky addressed the public and encouraged them to run for a Trustee position and public office. He also thanked the employees for everything they do and for their expertise and commitment. He also expressed admiration for the Trustees and the work they do.

Trustee Libby thanked Trustee Levinsky for his service to the Portland citizens.

Trustee Siviski also thanked the Board and the staff. He expressed admiration for the employees and the Board's commitment to the District's mission.

President Lunt presented plaques to Trustees Siviski and Levinsky because this was their last business meeting. Neither is running for re-election, and new Trustees will be elected in November. He expressed pride in PWD and its employees, Board, and mission.

Other Trustees also expressed thanks to Trustee Levinsky and Siviski for their service.

#### **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 7:15 p.m.

Submitted by,

*Donna M. Katsiaficas*

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Clerk