

**WEST SLOPE WATER DISTRICT**  
Regular Board of Commissioners Meeting  
September 21, 2022  
**Meeting Summary**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Present on Virtual Meeting: Chair Paul Schuler, Commissioners Andy Smith, and Carol Wild

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

Absent: Commissioners Ramesh Krishnamurthy and Susan Meamber

Public: None

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**1.0 – CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Schuler called to order the regular meeting of the West Slope Water District Board of Commissioners at 5:02 P.M., Wednesday, September 21, 2022. The meeting was held through Zoom remote teleconferencing 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 had not received any public comments regarding agenda items or other issues for the Board to consider

**3.0 – CONSENT AGENDA**

Commissioner Smith made a motion to accept the complete Consent Agenda. Commissioner Wild seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously (3-0).

**4.0 – DISTRICT ACTIVITIES**

**4.1 – General Managers Report**

Mr. Grimm highlighted several key issues from the General Manager’s report:

- Long term source of supply: Mr. Grimm shared a brief summary the current agreement discussion regarding Portland’s “Reserve Capacity” (capacity that is currently being allocated to TVWD, Gresham, and Rockwood but will go unused when those systems drop off as wholesale customers on July 1, 2026). The current issue is how will the cost of the unused capacity be covered by Portland and the wholesale customers. Chair Schuler asked if Portland will charge water systems who are not current/regular wholesale customers for reserving available water. Mr. Grimm stated Portland will include in the new wholesale water sales agreement the opportunity to purchase

available or “on-demand” water as a backup supply or as a way for a wholesale customer to meet peak day demands. How emergency backup service and augmented storage service will be addressed in the new water rate model are the last two issues to be resolved after base extra-capacity allocation & peaking factors is addressed.

- Beaverton-Hillsdale Hwy Water Main Project: Mr. Grimm shared with the Board the protest period for the construction contract has passed with no parties protesting the award. The contract will need to be signed by both parties and discussions will begin on obtaining permits, ordering materials, setting schedules, etc.
- Staff continues to communicate with 120Water on information formatting and identifying gaps in data content for the District’s customer service line inventory.
- The electronic “arrow” sign board has been delivered to the District and installed on the District’s utility truck.
- SDAO Annual Conference will be at Sunriver February 9-12, 2023. Registration will open in December. Mr. Grimm encouraged all commissioners to consider attending the event in person.

#### 4.2 – SW Gardenview Drive Water Main Break

Mr. Grimm shared the events that occurred August 30 – September 1 and the District’s response when the 8-inch cast iron pipe ruptured along a longitudinal break in the pipe (see events listed in Agenda Item 4.2 in 9/21/2022 meeting Board packet). The main break began around 9:30 AM while the District operations staff were in the field and administrative staff were in the midst of working with the District’s contract auditors. Mr. Grimm praised the District’s field and administrative staff for their immediate, efficient, and effective response to the water main break and their ability to think and perform on-the-fly as conditions and information changed throughout the event. Mr. Grimm stated the event was a significant learning experience for District staff, and staff will plan to have an after-action debriefing of the event to document what went well and where improvements could be made for the next time the District experiences such an event.

Commissioner Wild commented she was pleased to know that the Fracta pipe assessment had identified that section of pipe on Gardenview as a high priority pipe. Commissioner Wild also commented how fast staff was able to print and distribute the blue door hangers to impacted homes. Commissioner Wild asked about the possibility for water customers to “sign on” to a text blast that would send a news flash notifying subscribers of water outages or other service/water quality issues. Mr. Grimm stated the District is a subscriber to News Flash which would be efficient for District wide notification but currently is not as useful to the District when trying to notify a segment of the District’s customers. One thing staff will consider in the after-action debriefing is how can GIS and the District’s customer database be used for text-based news flashes as Commissioner Wild suggested.

Chair Schuler thanked and praised the staff for their exemplary performance in the emergency event. Chair Schuler noted that it was customer observations and interactions that first alerted staff to the water main break (no water at customer taps, large volume of flowing water down Gardenview Drive, etc.) and not any kind of SCADA monitoring alarms. Mr. Grimm stated that eventually the SCADA system would have alerted staff to the main break, but the alarm would have been a low reservoir level alarm after the District would have lost 3-4 MG of water. There are no low pressure sensors in the distribution system. Since the break occurred in the morning and customers were able to immediately report a problem, the District was able to minimize the loss of water to about 0.25 MG. Commissioner Wild asked what would happen if customers reported a main break after regular business hours. Mr. Grimm responded off-hour customers calls for service are routed directly to the field operator who is on-call, and the operator makes

the initial assessment of the situation and informs the Operations Manager who develops a response plan and how many staff are needed in the response.

Ms. Irwin stated she was amazed how well all staff worked together to resolve the emergency event and restore water as quickly as possible. Ms. Irwin commented on the importance of how staff communicated with customers before and after water service was restored noting that there were still concerns about the appearance and quality of water (Is it safe to drink? Can I bathe in it or use it to brush my teeth?, etc.). Going forward, Ms. Irwin was pleased with the way customers were reached knowing that we can always improve on our methods in the future as she was impressed with how fast and efficient the field staff removed the damaged pipe and replaced it with a new pipe.

Mr. Grimm stated how proud he was of all staff who worked tirelessly in response to this critical situation and how fortunate the District is to have such employees on staff. Chair Schuler suggested the District hold a staff appreciation luncheon in honor of the excellent work during the event. Mr. Grimm thanked Chair Schuler and the rest of the Board on behalf of all District staff and stated a luncheon following staff's after-action debriefing session is gracious offer and would be very much appreciated by the staff. Commissioner Smith echoed Chair Schuler's comments thanking staff for their performance.

#### 4.3 – Training / Conference Summaries

Ms. Irwin mentioned she recently attended in-person SDAO training for elected officials and management staff. One area she particularly found very helpful was the information on revised state rules regarding District purchase and procurement processes/procedures. Other areas of importance were records retention and public records request requirements. Ms. Irwin also stated it was very beneficial to be in person to meet and network with others from District utilities and was thankful for being able to attend. Mr. Grimm reminded the Board this same training will be offered at SDAO's Annual Conference at Sunriver February 2023 as a Thursday pre-conference session.

Mr. Grimm shared information he picked up at SDAO's recent summer conference in Salem. Of particular interest to the District were sessions on how to secure greatness in the public eye (how to get the right message communicated in the right way to the public) and how to elevate the visibility of special districts in Washington, D.C. and in Salem (how do we respond to a "call to arms" to have discussions with state and federal elected officials who have historically overlooked the work and importance of special districts in favor of states, counties, and municipalities). Mr. Grimm also stated the District is interested in partnering with a national restoration company (or companies) that could be available for customers with service line / indoor plumbing leaks or be available to the District to restore private customer property that is damaged by a District water main break, for instance. Commissioner Smith shared some of his personal experience with home restoration work following a significant water pipe rupture in his home, and he mentioned finding a reputable and reliable restoration contractor is an overwhelming task, and District customers would be very appreciative if the District were able to suggest several such known contractors to District customers impacted by damage from large water leaks.

#### 5.0 – COMMISSIONERS COMMUNICATIONS

Chair Schuler stated he had attended a water reuse & western water awareness meeting for California/Nevada where water availability due to extended drought and climate change has been significantly impacted. There were no new agenda items for today's meeting.

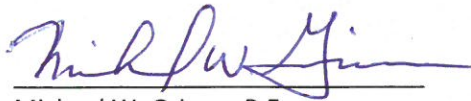
Commissioner Smith asked if it would be possible to have a legislative session update from SDAO at a future Board meeting. The Board's consensus was the meeting went well.

**6.0 - ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Smith moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Wild seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously. Chair Schuler adjourned the September 21, 2022 Regular Board of Commissioners meeting at 6:16 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Approved:



Michael W. Grimm, P.E.  
Acting Secretary

