

**WEST SLOPE WATER DISTRICT**

**Regular Board of Commissioners & Public Hearings for Water Rate Increases and the FYE 2024 Budget Adoption Hybrid Meeting**

June 21, 2023

**Meeting Summary**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Present: Chair Paul Schuler; Commissioners Ramesh Krishnamurthy, Susan Meamber, Andy Smith, and Carol Wild

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

Absent: None

Public: Ben Heil, 3920 SW 96<sup>th</sup> Avenue; Troy Wecker, 8435 SW Crestwood Lane (neither had comments or testimony for the Board to hear and consider)

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**1.0 – CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Schuler called to order the meeting of the West Slope Water District Board of Commissioners at 5:02 P.M., Wednesday, June 21, 2023. The meeting was held as a hybrid meeting – in person and virtual. 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) as well as through the local newspaper to announce the two public hearings.

**2.0 - PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS**

The District had not received any public comments regarding agenda items or other issues for the Board to consider.

Chair Schuler opened both public hearings at 5:03 PM. Mr. Grimm read an email from Keith and Linda Smith (District customers) expressing their opinion that a water rate increase is not necessary at this time citing high inflation as the main factor.

**3.0 – CONSENT AGENDA**

Commissioner Meamber made a motion to accept the entire Consent Agenda Items 3.1 through 3.7. Commissioner Krishnamurthy seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

**6.0 – DISTRICT ACTIVITIES**

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

- Beaverton-Hillsdale Hwy Water Main Project: Mr. Grimm stated the project is going very well. The contractor is doing a great job and are demonstrating they know how to

install pipe well. Saw cutting the pavement has been on-going since the first of the month. The contractors have been laying about 100 ft (5 pipe segments) each day on average. ODOT is still being difficult to work with regarding locating ODOT assets (such as ODOT's storm drain system). Commissioner Meamber asked about inspection services for the project. Mr. Grimm responded daily inspection reports are logged by AKS. District staff also take field inspection notes. Compaction testing is conducted by a third party testing laboratory (ACD Testing, Inc.)

- Long Term Source of Supply: Mr. Grimm stated he would be testifying in support of the Bull Run Water Treatment Plant before the Multnomah County Land Use Board public hearing
- AWWA Conference: Mr. Grimm attended the AWWA Annual Conference and would like to share some content learned at the conference with the Board at a future Board meeting. Mr. Grimm also attended the Water Utility Council meeting and heard a lot of disturbing points of view coming from EPA as told to the WUC by AWWA staff which may necessitate litigation by water utilities toward EPA.
- Mr. Grimm stated he is continuing to meet with consulting firms who are interested in working with the District on our upcoming capital projects. Commissioner Meamber asked if staff would be writing the RFP that will be distributed to the interested firms in late October, and Mr. Grimm stated yes. These new RFPs will be based on the template used for the Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway Water Main project. Commissioner Meamber asked if commissioners could review the RFP and Scope of Work for the Master Plan project prior to it being sent out the firms, and Mr. Grimm agreed.
- Engaging with TVWD & City of Beaverton: Mr. Grimm stated he will be having a conversation with TVWD's CEO Tom Hickmann about the rumor started at TVWD that the West Slope Board of Commissioners is pursuing a discussion regarding the merging of this District with TVWD. West Slope has not expressed any interest in pursuing a merger with any other water utility at this time, and it is well known that TVWD is looking for additional rate payers to help fund their Willamette Water Supply Project, and their Board Chair has been making inquiries to other water utilities in Washington County about joining TVWD (as a result of comments from North Plains, Cornelius, and Hillsboro). Mr. Grimm will also have a face-to-face meeting with the new Beaverton public works director Tim Elsea regarding such topics as joint projects and urban service agreements. Commissioner Smith asked when a joint meeting between the TVWD and West Slope Boards to talk about a wholesale water rate from TVWD could take place, and Mr. Grimm stated September would be the earliest time at this point.

6.2 – Finance Manager's Report: Ms. Irwin reviewed the projects currently underway. Of note is the increase in the Moody Bond Rating from A1 to Aa3. Ms. Irwin attended the Government Finance Officers Association annual conference in Portland and came away with great information. The District office replaced its old phone system with a new digital phone system. Commissioner Wild was pleased to see the Moody Bond Rate improvement for the District as the District moves forward with new capital projects in the coming years.

6.3 – Board of Commissioners – Officers Roles: Mr. Grimm shared Attachment 6.3.1 – Commissioner Officer Rotation with the Board as a guide to decide the next rotation of officer roles (Treasurer & Secretary) behind the Chair's position (Susan Meamber for 2023-2024). After a brief discussion, the Board agreed by consensus the order for 2023-24 will be (starting with the Chair) Susan Meamber, Ramesh Krishnamurthy, Andy Smith, Paul Schuler, and Chris Eppler.

Commissioner Wild shared her representation role on the Regional Water Providers Consortium (RWPC) Board on behalf of the District will expire as she steps down from the District Board of

Commissioners. The RWPC Board meets three times each year. Commissioner Wild stated the District Board could appoint a new representative either at this meeting or a future meeting (next RWPC Board meeting is in October). By consensus, the Board agreed to appoint Chair Paul Schuler to the RWPC Board to represent West Slope WD for at least one year starting July 1, 2023. Commissioner Meamber expressed an interest in serving on the RWPC Board in future years.

Mr. Grimm reminded the Board that in November, staff will be asking the Board to begin consideration the next Budget Committee roster as one member of this year's Committee will be a Commissioner starting in July and another member will have a term expiring on December 31, 2023.

#### **4.0 – PUBLIC HEARING ON THE WATER RATE INCREASE**

Chair Schuler recognized there were no written or oral testimony presented to the Board by the public for the water rate increase resolution. Commissioner Smith stated he supports the water rate increase for several reasons including the Board's desire to stay ahead of capital investments before those assets fail and need to be replaced immediately recognizing how important capital investments are to the sustainability of the District. Chair Schuler closed the public hearing at 6:10 PM. Commissioner Smith made a motion to adopt the water rate increases as proposed in Resolution #05-2023. Commissioner Wild seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously at 6:11 PM.

#### **5.0 – PUBLIC HEARING ON THE DISTRICT BUDGET**

Chair Schuler recognized there were no written or oral testimony presented to the Board by the public for the District Budget. Chair Schuler closed the public hearing at 6:12 PM. Commissioner Meamber made a motion to adopt the Budget as proposed in Resolution #06-2023 and make appropriations for spending in FYE June 30, 2024. Commissioner Krishnamurthy seconded the motion. Commissioner Smith clarified for the record that funds were included in this budget for the Water Master Plan (including a comprehensive tiered water rate study). The motion passed unanimously at 6:14 PM. Collectively, the Board thanked Ms. Irwin for her great work to develop the budget and manage the adoption process.

#### **7.0 – COMMISSIONERS COMMUNICATIONS**

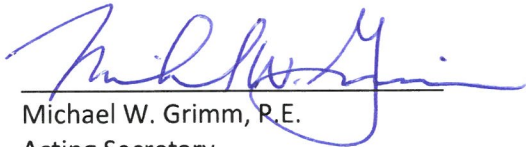
Chair Schuler stated he attended the AWWA Annual Conference in Toronto and was amazed at the international aspect of the water industry. Commissioner Smith encouraged staff to include a description of the rationale behind the rate increase in the District's next newsletter. Being able to adequately explain and educate the public on the District's CIP plan is very important. Commissioner Smith also agreed to have staff include his statements from this meeting in the newsletter supporting the budget and the water rate increase. The Board collectively thanked Chair Schuler for his very professional leadership over the last year. The Board also expressed a high desire to have a lunch together to honor Commissioner Wild and her years of great service to the District sometime in August. Commissioner Wild thanked her fellow Commissioners and District staff for the enjoyable work during the last six years.

#### **8.0 – ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Wild moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Meamber seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously. Chair Schuler adjourned the June 21, 2023 Board of Commissioners regular meeting at 6:27 PM.


Respectfully Submitted,

Approved:

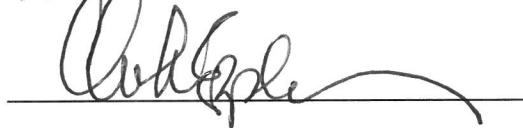


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Michael W. Grimm, P.E.  
Acting Secretary



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