

WEST SLOPE WATER DISTRICT

Regular Board of Commissioners Meeting & Budget Committee Meeting

Wednesday, May 20, 2026

Meeting Summary

CALL TO ORDER

Present: Chair Andy Smith, Commissioners Chris Eppler, Susan Meamber, Ramesh Krishnamurthy (Joined at 5:08) and Paul Schuler

Management Staff: Ken Ackerman, General Manager; Wendy Irwin, Finance Manager

Budget Committee Members: Andrew Marsch, Marjorie Taylor, Michael Smith, Will Short, and Ron Witcosky

Absent: None

1.0 – CALL TO ORDER

Chair Smith called to order the meeting of the West Slope Water District Board of Commissioners at 5:02 PM, Wednesday, May 20, 2026. The meeting was held in person and through Zoom virtual meeting technology. The public was made aware of the meeting through the District’s website (meeting agenda and Zoom 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.

3.0 – CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Meamber moved to approve the Consent Agenda, noting a correction to the April meeting summary regarding an incorrect personnel reference. Commissioner Schuler seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously (4-0).

4.0 – BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

Chair Smith temporarily suspended the regular meeting and called to order the Budget Committee Meeting at 5:03 PM. The Budget Committee meeting began at 5:03 PM. Commissioner Smith was nominated by Commissioner Meamber to serve as Budget Committee Chair. Chair Schuler seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously (9-0).

Mr. Ackerman stated that the budget being presented is thanks to the hard work of Ms. Irwin and is a continuation of the previous general manager’s work. The budget looks to continue to maintain the system, balance investments with rates, and keep staff.

Ms. Irwin began the Budget presentation with a summary of the previous year's accomplishments and their adherence to the District's Strategic Plan (*see separate PDF document FY26 Budget Presentation*). Key accomplishments were updates of the Vision, Mission, Values and Strategic Plan, recruitment and onboarding of the new General Manager, implementation of Tiered Rate Structure, implementation of a Customer Assistance Plan, and the successful completion of the Garden View pipe replacement project on time and under budget.

Ms. Irwin presented the current year to date information. Fiscal Year 2026 revenue is below budget, primarily due to lower water usage and the implementation of tiered rates in November, with the lowest tier set below the previous fixed rate established prior to the tiered rate policy change. Michael Smith asked why the District adopted tiered rates and was directed to the District's website for a copy of the rate study and information regarding the three-year process used to develop and adopt the rates. Andrew Marsch asked for split of bills for monthly fixed base charge vs consumption usage. Ms. Irwin said revenue split was approximately 40% fixed vs 60% consumption.

Ms. Irwin presented the FY 27 budget giving an overview of proposed budget for costs and expenses. Total purchased water costs will be slightly lower starting July 1 with new wholesale contract taking effect and only paying for water we use. Personnel Services expenditures are increasing. The CPI, used for staff COLA, was 3.8% this year and health insurance costs were up 20%. A graph also showed the five-year projection of wholesale water rates from PWB, including a significant increase projected for FY 2031. Andrew Marsch asked how we would use the rate stabilization fund in the future. Ms. Irwin stated it would be used to cover increased PWB rates and related wholesale water costs in the future. Mike Smith asked why we signed a 30-year contract with PWB with no ceiling on rates. Several responses included that the District doesn't have many options. The only other option is buying from TVWD which is currently higher priced, sourced from the Willamette, and has fluoride in its water.

Capital projects that are currently in the works are Reservoir #4, in final design phase, and Sharon and Canyon main replacement projects, scheduled to be designed and constructed this coming budget year. All capital projects in the budget include a contingency category. The timing of all projects can be adjusted depending on the availability of revenues.

No public comments were received either in person or online.

Ron Witcosky moved to approve the proposed budget with the five recommended changes identified on Slide 18 of the presentation. Chris Eppler seconded the motion. In favor: Andy Smith, Chris Eppler, Susan Meamber, Ramesh Krishnamurthy, Paul Schuler, Andrew Marsch, Marjorie Taylor, Will Short, and Ron Witcosky; Nay: Michael Smith

Approved Changes to the Proposed Budget (Must be balanced):

- 1. Increase of \$16,000 to Personnel Services for retirement contributions/COLA*
- 2. Increase of \$25,000 to Materials & Services/Purchased Water for increase in wholesale rate*
- 3. Decrease of \$6,000 to Contingency*
- 4. Decrease of \$35,000 to Transfers Out (GF to Capital Reserves)*
- 5. Reclassify \$215,000 from Reserved for Future Expenditures (Cap Res) to Unappropriated Fund Balance (GF) for FY26 transfers, beginning balances, to maintain operating reserve target.*

Budget Meeting Adjourned at 6:30 PM

5.0 - DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

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

Chair Smith asked about the need for easements at Jesuit High School and whether a different type of agreement could be used. Mr. Ackerman stated that he would investigate the matter

Commissioners discussed the formal General Manager exit interview. Asked about any tension with staff and if it would help to have Danial attend Board meeting if he feels it’s needed. Commissioners also noted that additional interaction between staff and the Board could be beneficial.

5.2- Finance Manager’s Report: Ms. Irwin highlight some issues from the Finance Report.

Commissioner Eppler asked about interest earned on our checking account balance, Ms. Irwin said the balance amount is used to offset the costs of the account.

Commissioner Krishnamurthy asked if we were still using Umpqua bank, Ms. Irwin said we bank with Columbia Bank which merged with Umpqua Bank last year.

5.3 Cost of Living Adjustment Resolution 02-2026

Mr. Ackerman noted that the COLA typically applies to all staff; however, because his employment began on March 30 under a negotiated starting salary, he requested that the Board discuss the applicability and timing of the COLA adjustment for his position. The Board elected not to apply the COLA to the General Manager effective July 1. Any salary adjustment will be considered during his six-month performance review.

Commissioner Schuler moved to adopt Resolution 02-2026. Commissioner Eppler seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

6.0 – COMMISSIONERS COMMUNICATIONS


6.1 Commissioner Schuler will be at a Consortium meeting on June 3rd.

There were no suggestions for additional topics for this meeting or future meeting agenda items. The consensus of the Board was that the meeting was productive and conducted efficiently.

7.0 – 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 (5-0). Chair Smith adjourned the May 20, 2026, meeting of the Board of Commissioners at 7:11 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Ken Ackerman, P.E.
Acting Secretary

Approved: 