

WEST SLOPE WATER DISTRICT

Regular Board of Commissioners Meeting

Wednesday, January 21, 2026

Meeting Summary

CALL TO ORDER

Present: Chair Andy Smith, Commissioners Chris Eppler, Ramesh Krishnamurthy (virtually), Susan Meamber, and Paul Schuler

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

Absent: None

1.0 – CALL TO ORDER

Chair Smith called to order the meeting of the West Slope Water District Board of Commissioners at 4:59 P.M., Wednesday, January 21, 2026. The meeting was held in person and virtually 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 Schuler made a motion to accept the entire Consent Agenda consisting of Agenda Items 3.1 through 3.8. Commissioner Eppler seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously (5-0).

4.0 - DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

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

General Manager Transition: Mr. Grimm stated the Interview Review Panel has conducted two of the six initial round interviews. The Interview Panel will make a formal recommendation to the Board for their meeting on Tuesday, January 27. The Interview panel will make a recommendation on who the Board should consider to sit for a final interview. Depending on the Panel’s recommendation that might be one or more candidates. At the January 27 Executive Session meeting, the Board will determine the day & times (window) for the final interview round. Commissioner Meamber stated the Board should consider scheduling interviews with the two top candidates in case the top candidate turns down the position after

the interview. Commissioner Eppler commented that the Board has more flexibility if the top two candidates can be interviewed on the same day (maximize efficiency of time).

Reservoir #4 Project: Mr. Grimm stated that staff has reviewed and made some amendments to Grayling Engineer's Scope of Work (SOW), fee schedule, and project timeline based on comments by the Board from the previous Board meeting. The new tasks added were landscape architecture and a tree assessment plan for an added cost of just over \$20,000. The new SOW and other documents were included with the General Manager's report. Commissioner Meamber has some concerns about the SOW that calls a Type 3 land use review where a Type 2 level review may be all that is needed (based on the District owning the land that already supports two existing finished water reservoirs). In 2008, Portland approved a land use review for the construction of Reservoir #3 with some conditions of approval. Commissioner Meamber claimed that clarification is needed for which level is required as the amount of public outreach and engagement is needed. Commissioner Meamber stated better coordination will be needed to determine what deliverables are needed at specific dates, and Mr. Grimm stated that many of those details will be discussed and decided at the project's initial Kick-Off meeting. Chair Smith asked Commissioner Meamber if she believed the Consultant may be underestimating the level of work needed for the land use review and approval. Commissioner Meamber believes that there is a discontinuity between Consultant team members as to if a Type 2 or Type 3 level review is needed. Commissioner Meamber believes Grayling should determine which level of review is needed and examine the permitting sub-consultant's proposal to see if it aligns with Grayling's determination. Commissioner Meamber also questioned how Grayling was going to address stormwater run-off since Portland will likely not allow connection to the City's stormwater collection system, and why Grayling was not considering infiltration testing of the area. Mr. Grimm stated the District already has a stormwater retention pond with approved landscaping by the City of Portland which will be utilized for this project. Commissioner Eppler reiterated that the Grayling fee to complete the construction inspection and other work beyond the point where bid-ready plans and specifications are developed will be another \$500,000 or so.

Water Main Breaks: Mr. Grimm shared with the Board the District's water main break data since 2010 that documents all of the District's water main breaks. This list is submitted to Fracta on an annual basis to help them recreate the consequence of failure, likelihood of failure, and total business risk exposure assessment for the District. More breaks in a specific area mostly change the likelihood of failure and not necessarily the consequence of failure. Commissioner Krishnamurthy asked if the most recent breaks (since 2024) were "predicted" by the last Fracta assessment of the distribution system. Mr. Grimm responded by saying he has not taken a very deep dive into matching the recent breaks with the last Fracta assessment, but he will within the next few weeks. Mr. Grimm also stated he believed most of these breaks are on pipe segments that have previously been assessed at a moderate to very high total business risk exposure, but the District has had two water main breaks in the last 10 days on pipe segments that have not had any water main breaks since 2010.

Strategic Plan: Mr. Grimm handed out the illustrated version of the District's Strategic Plan (the Board had previously approved the Strategic Plan content). The Strategic Plan was also included in the District's January 2026 newsletter delivered to District customers with their January water bills.

Commissioner Eppler asked if any progress was made with Washington County on maintaining the County right-of-way and recouping some of the District's costs associated with encroached on the Beaverton Hillsdale Hwy project and the water main break on SW Canyon Drive. Mr.

Grimm responded that what is needed is a sit-down meeting with the County Land Use & Transportation group as well as the County Administrator. Looking for compensation for past projects might be difficult, but the bigger prize is to get the County to be better stewards of their own right-of-way to keep right-of-way conflicts from taking place. This conversation is still a work in progress.

Commissioner Eppler asked for clarification that the General Manager would be in the office full time through the end of February and some days full time in the office during March while metering out accrued vacation time through the end of the month, and Mr. Grimm confirmed that assessment.

4.2 – Finance Manager’s Report: Ms. Irwin stated that she has been work on the FY 2026-27 budget using the model developed last year and working through the revenue forecast which is a little more complicated for this budget since the District changed rate models in November. Ms. Irwin has also been working diligently on tasks for the General Manager hiring process for the last few weeks. Ms. Irwin shared a problem that was discovered recently as about 100 District customers were doubled billed through the billing system at both the old flat rate and the new tiered rate. District staff credited the accounts of the impacted customers and contacted a small number of commercial customers who were impacted. Ms. Irwin pointed out the amount of leak adjustment credits paid out for the previous month was a little larger than normal but not greater than what the District budgets for on annual basis divided by 12 months.

4.3 – New General Manager Transition Plan: Mr. Grimm pointed out to the Board the recent history managing the process so the tasks are documented in this Board packet. By consensus, the Board agreed upon Tuesday, January 27 at 4:00 PM as the day the Board can hold an executive session work session to discuss the Interview Panel’s recommendation from the first round of interviews. The meeting will be held at the District office in person with a remote option.

4.4 – Budget Process: Mr. Grimm stated the Board needs to decide on naming a Budget Officer for the upcoming budget process, approve the Budget Calendar as proposed by the Finance Manager, and concur / acknowledge a few main budget concepts that will impact the FY 2026-27 Budget. Commissioner Schuler asked if there was a water rate increase factored into the revenue forecast, and Mr. Grimm stated the Board passed a water rate increase at the June 2025 meeting to take effect July 1, 2025 as well as a separate water rate increase that will be implemented July 1, 2026. For budget concepts, Ms. Irwin stated the anticipated COLA increase for employee salaries in 2026 will likely be around 2.5%. Employee insurance rates will rise somewhere between 5-7% over last fiscal year, and the District’s liability insurance will see a 10% increase in premiums. Mr. Grimm stated the Operations Manager is looking to improve the District’s vaults with new sump pumps, calibrate the large commercial customer meters, conduct maintenance on pressure regulators, and maintenance / repair on the seismic valve sensors on the District’s Sylvan Hill Reservoirs. Also, the District office compound needs to have emergency power from the propane powered generator wired to all office functions as well as to the heating and power system in the maintenance office. The Operations Staff is planning on cleaning up the materials yard with the plan to construct / install bins to store sand, gravel, soil, and spoils for water pipe maintenance tasks. The District’s 2018 Ford F-150 is at the end of its depreciated life and needs to be replaced. Capital projects that will be part of the FY 2026-27 budget include the engineering design costs for Reservoir #4, the engineering design costs for the SW Sharon Lane / SW Canyon Drive water main replacement project, and the cost to extend SCADA system monitoring to the Green Tank. Although the Portland Water Bureau (PWB) may not know the actual wholesale water rate until May or June, based on the five-year projection

released by PWB in 2025, staff anticipates a wholesale water rate of \$2.6 to \$2.7 /CCF but also understands the overall cost of water may be reduced under the new wholesale water rate agreement of only paying for water that the District will use / sell (the guaranteed minimum purchase amount will be discontinued on July 1, 2026). Commissioner Eppler made a motion to appoint Ms. Irwin as the Budget Officer, accept the Budget Calendar as presented, and confirm / acknowledge the main budget concepts as important features of the next fiscal year budget. Commissioner Schuler seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously (5-0).

5.0 – COMMISSIONERS COMMUNICATIONS

No commissioners attended any outside meetings. There were no suggestions for additional topics for this meeting or future meeting agenda items. The consensus of the Board was the meeting went well today.

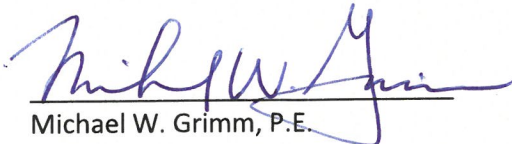
6.0 – EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair Smith left the regular meeting at 6:24 PM and entered into Executive Session at the same time for the purpose of discussing a proposed contract for the new General Manager. Chair Smith concluded the Executive Session at 6:42 PM and entered back into the regular session at the same time. No decisions were made or votes taken in Executive Session.

7.0 – ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Schuler made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Meamber seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously (5-0). Chair Smith adjourned the January 21, 2026 meeting of the Board of Commissioners at 6:43 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,


Michael W. Grimm, P.E.
Acting Secretary

Approved:

