

WEST SLOPE WATER DISTRICT

Regular Board of Commissioners Meeting

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Meeting Summary

CALL TO ORDER

Present: Commissioners Chris Eppler, Susan Meamber, and Paul Schuler

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

Absent: Chair Andy Smith, Commissioner Ramesh Krishnamurthy

1.0 – CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chair Eppler called to order the meeting of the West Slope Water District Board of Commissioners at 5:02 P.M., Wednesday, February 18, 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 Meamber seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously (3-0).

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 that Ken Ackerman verbally agreed to accept the General Manager’s position. Judy Clarke will conduct the reference check for Mr. Ackerman. A likely start date for him will be mid-March allowing 3-4 weeks for a notice with the Portland Water Bureau. The Board will meet to discuss the offer to present in a special work session then meet one-on-one with Mr. Ackerman to confirm the contract.

Reservoir #4 Project: Mr. Grimm stated the District has a signed contract and will have the initial Kick-Off meeting with Grayling Engineering on Monday, March 16. All of Grayling’s sub-consultants will also be present at the Kick-Off meeting. Mr. Ackerman has stated he will be available to attend the meeting. Mr. Grimm stated Representative Helm and Senator Kate

Lieber's staff were both very supportive of our Reservoir #4 project. Since West Slope is not a water system in crisis (lacking funds, out of compliance, etc.), Mr. Grimm asked if both offices would be willing to support our project to Business Oregon to add credibility to the District being listed on the State's Intended Use Plan. Once on the Plan, the District will then need to file an application for the loan money. The next step for the District is to contact US House of Representative Suzanne Bonamici's office to see if the District could secure Congressional Discretionary Spending (earmarks) through her office. Currently, the District is planning on investing \$5 million of capital reserve for the project and borrowing \$7 million from the DWSRF and / or earmark money. Commissioner Eppler asked if any reservoir needed to be demolished to build Reservoir #4. Mr. Grimm stated Reservoir #4 is to be constructed in the open space on the District's property. Sometime in the 2040s when the third and final 3.0 MG is to be constructed, Reservoir #2 (built in 1961) will be demolished to make room for new Reservoir #5

SW Sharon Lane & SW Canyon Lane Design: Commissioner Meamber stated it would be helpful if Mr. Ackerman had a chance to review the RFP template that will be used to select an engineering design consultant. Mr. Grimm agreed that the RFP template will be available for review by Mr. Ackerman during his first week with the District.

ODOT Collaboration & Cost Issues: Mr. Grimm met with Oregon legislators on Water Caucus Day at the State Capitol on Monday, February 2 to discuss the lack of collaboration on the part of the District's pipe project and the extra costs the District had to bear due to right-of-way and permitting conditions placed on the District by ODOT. Mr. Grimm met with Rep. Helm, Senator Starr, and Senator Drazen as well as staff from House Transportation Committee including Chair Susan McLain and staff of other House members on the Transportation Committee (Rep Mannix, Rep Bosart-Davis, Rep Helfrich, and Rep Evans). All of the legislators and legislative staff were appalled at the systemic attitude of ODOT's project managers and permit managers. Mr. Grimm stated that this experience was not unique to just West Slope but that MANY other public utilities can share their own experiences similar to the District's experience. All of the legislators Mr. Grimm met with agreed there is value in creating a shareholder style workshop with ODOT leadership in the near future to discuss this issue as part of a larger overall strategic planning effort for the Department and asked if Mr. Grimm would be willing to be part of that workshop meeting and bring other utility managers along to testify, and Mr. Grimm agreed. While there is not a lot of optimism that ODOT will reimburse the District for the "unnecessary" expenses incurred as part of Beaverton-Hillsdale Hwy, the bigger prize is establishing a new boundary of what underground utilities are fiscally responsible for as part of our capital projects.

Final Time Projections: Mr. Grimm stated his last day at the District as the General Manager will be April 10, and will continue to be on the District payroll by virtue of using up accrued vacation leave through April 30.

4.2 – Finance Manager's Report: Ms. Irwin stated she continues to work on the FY2026-27 budget following her attendance at the SDAO Annual Conference. In the future, Ms. Irwin stated she will begin moving some of the finance information over to the Finance Manager's report so the Board can see more of what is going on with the District's financial status. Ms. Irwin stated she attended a session on AI technology in district finances while at SDAO and found the content to be very interesting ... something to think about for the future. For the District to implement AI, the District would need to adopt some policies on AI applications and uses.

5.0 – COMMISSIONERS COMMUNICATIONS

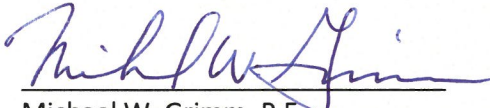
Commissioner Schuler stated he attended the Regional Water Providers Consortium Board meeting on February 4. This was the first meeting for Bonny Cushman as the new Managing Director of the Consortium following the retirement of Rebecca Geisen. There were no suggestions for additional topics for this meeting or future meeting agenda items. The consensus of the Board was the meeting went well and very efficiently quick today.

6.0 – 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 (3-0). Acting Chair Eppler adjourned the February 18, 2026 meeting of the Board of Commissioners at 5:36 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Approved:



Michael W. Grimm, P.E.
Acting Secretary

