

**WEST SLOPE WATER DISTRICT**  
Regular Board of Commissioners Meeting  
Wednesday, January 15, 2025  
**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 Ramesh Krishnamurthy; Commissioner Andy Smith

Public: None

\*\*\*\*\*

**1.0 – CALL TO ORDER**

In the absence of Chair Krishnamurthy, Acting Chair Schuler called to order the meeting of the West Slope Water District Board of Commissioners at 5:00 P.M., Wednesday, January 15, 2025. 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 (the meeting agenda and Zoom meeting 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 made a motion to accept the entire Consent Agenda Items 3.1 through 3.8. Commissioner Eppler 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:

Water System Master Plan: Mr. Grimm stated Grayling is working on the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of the Water System Master Plan heading toward a District review. Staff met with HDR staff to review the outreach flier for the public to explain the new water rate structure. The next step to pursue funding options for the future Reservoir #4 project can be taken when we have a final preliminary design report from Grayling. Staff has reviewed the first draft of the report and are waiting on the next version. All work on the Master Plan is scheduled to be completed by late Spring. Staff will introduce the project if available for SDAO’s legislative event in Salem in March. Staff is still moving forward on hosting an informational meeting here at the District office in April to showcase the new rate structure and talk about future capital projects.

May 20 Board Elections: Mr. Grimm shared the District's newsletter currently in the mail has details about the three open Board of Commissioner positions and how to apply to run for a Board position. Mr. Grimm reminded the Board the deadline to file as a candidate is March 20, 2025.

Other Issues: Judy Clarke with Team HR, LLC, will attend work session on January 29 at the District office. Portland will announce the new wholesale water rates for FY2025-26 at the February 12 Water Manager's Advisory Board meeting. The District is in a holding pattern with legal counsel over claims from Emery & Sons regarding the Beaverton Hillsdale Highway water main project. Mark Landauer will be able to present to the Board at the February 19 meeting the key proposed bills for this legislative session that will impact water utilities.

4.2 – Finance Manager's Report: Ms. Irwin shared the key dates for implementation of the new water rate structure concluding with the rate structure taking effect in October 2025. The District will be hosting an informational meeting on the proposed rates, and work has started on the planning for the meeting. The District will be inviting all customers via post card mailers to all District residents and will personally reach out to key District customers. The meeting will be structured with specific speakers and an agenda. It will also be a chance for District customers to meet members of the Board and to hear the reasoning behind the decision to adopt a new water rate structure. Staff is thinking a mid-April date from 5:00 to 6:30 PM. Ms. Irwin commented that staff will also encourage the Budget Committee members to attend the inhouse meeting so the public can meet both the Board and the Budget Committee and improve trust and transparency with District customers. Commissioner Eppler agreed with the plan to show the customers the why behind all of the work the District has done promoting equity of cost to District customers. Ms. Irwin stated she finished work on renewing the District's liability and employee health insurance renewal for 2025. The District now has the TextMyGov platform in place to use when the District has the need to flash alert customers quickly. December leak adjustments are shown in her report. She noted that there were no customer leak adjustments for the month of January so far. Mr. Grimm stated he is gathering salary range data from other special districts for general manager and finance manager positions. Ms. Irwin shared she attended local training hosted by our local section's Utility Management Committee Recruit, Train & Retain for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Currently, the industry tends to poach workers from one organization to the next from the same employee pool. The industry is NOT doing well at adding NEW employees to the pool, however. People entering the workforce today (Millennials and Gen Z-ers) view their work differently in ways from the previous generations, seeking jobs they deem are worthwhile, focusing on social justice, providing them security, and having a higher meaning.

4.3 – Budget Committee Process for FYE 2026: Mr. Grimm gave a brief overview of the three actions requested to continue with the budget adoption process. Staff recommends to the Board the approval of Ms. Irwin as the Budget Officer and recommends the Board approve the proposed budget calendar. As one of the key budget items, Ms. Irwin stated the District's operation manager recommends building a weatherized structure to house the District's vector truck. In January 2024 during the subfreezing temperatures, parts of the vector truck froze despite the water being drained from the vehicle. Commissioner Eppler made a motion to appoint Wendy Irwin, District Finance Manager, as the Budget Officer; acknowledge and concur with staff's preliminary budget concepts; and approve the Budget Calendar for the FYE2026 Budget Adoption Process. Commissioner Meamber seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously (3-0).

4.4 – Acceptance of Final Water Rate Study Report: Mr. Grimm commented this is the same agenda item brought to the Board in December but instead this time with the correct final water rate study report included in the Board packet. Despite the copy still being stamped as draft, HDR submitted this report with the intent their work is complete. The document will become the final report upon approval by the Board. Commissioner Meamber made a motion to accept the December 2025 version of the Water Rate Study Report from HDR. Commissioner Eppler seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously (3-0). Staff will continue to implement the findings from the study and the new water rate structure this year.

**5.0 – COMMISSIONERS COMMUNICATIONS**

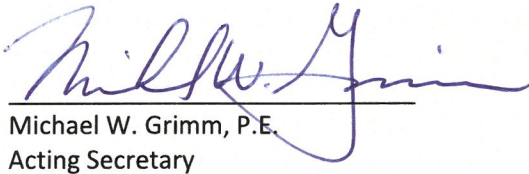
There were no outside meetings attended by the Commissioners. The Board commented that each had met with Team HR, Inc. regarding the General Manager’s performance evaluation. There were no other topics or issues to be raised at this meeting. Acting Chair Schuler announced he will be traveling and miss the Board’s February meeting. The other Board members requested the Board postpone the General Manager’s performance evaluation until the March 19, 2025, Board meeting so all Commissioners could be present. The consensus of the Board was that the meeting went well.

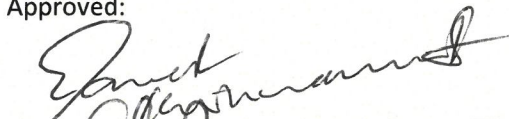
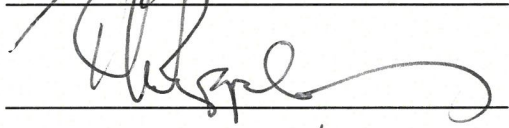
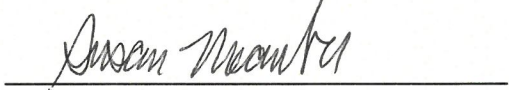
**6.0 – ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Eppler made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Meamber seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously (3-0). Acting Chair Schuler adjourned the January 15, 2025, Board of Commissioners regular meeting at 6:18 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Approved:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael W. Grimm, P.E.  
Acting Secretary

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_