

WEST SLOPE WATER DISTRICT
Regular Board of Commissioners Meeting
December 20, 2023
Meeting Summary

CALL TO ORDER

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

Management Staff: Michael Grimm, General Manager

Absent: Wendy Irwin, Finance Manager

Public: Will Short; District Customer and Budget Committee candidate

1.0 – CALL TO ORDER

Chair Meamber called to order the meeting of the West Slope Water District Board of Commissioners at 5:00 P.M., Wednesday, December 20, 2023. The meeting was held as a hybrid meeting – in person and virtually. 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). District customer Will Short was welcomed to the meeting by the Board and staff as he attended via the Zoom meeting link. Commissioner Krishnamurthy joined the meeting at 5:02 PM

2.0 - PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

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

3.0 – CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Smith 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.

4.0 – DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

4.3 – Budget Committee – Member Selection Process – Mr. Grimm shared the status of the Budget Committee membership with one vacated position previously occupied by Commissioner Eppler needing to be filled and another position currently held by Andrew Marsch that needs to be re-appointed or filled by another candidate. Will Short informed the Board of his interest in the vacated position on the Budget Committee. Chair Meamber asked Mr. Short if there were any reasons why he wanted to be on the Budget Committee. Mr. Short replied that he believes the District is very well run and organized, but he felt the need to fulfill a civic duty in this instance. Commissioner Krishnamurthy asked if he had any financial background, and Mr. Short replied he is currently a vice-president of asset management for a national real estate investment firm managing multi-million dollar assets. Commissioner Eppler made a

motion to appoint Will Short to the unexpired term for Budget Committee Position #4 and re-appoint Andrew Marsch to Budget Committee Position #1 for a full three-year term. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

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

Long term source of supply – Mr. Grimm stated he had sent an email to all Board members with the latest draft final version of the new wholesale water sales Agreement. At the November meeting of the Board, the Commissioners asked to see a copy of the Agreement prior to a vote to accept and sign the Agreement at the January meeting. Mr. Grimm stated the Board has the Agreement to review a month in advance of the January meeting, and any questions a commissioner may have can be brought up after their review at the January meeting as part of the Agreement walk through. Commissioner Smith stated he applauded the years of work completed to create the Agreement and fully supports moving forward with signing the Agreement, but would welcome a brief walk-through session to understand the implications of the Agreement that specifically pertain to the District. Commissioner Eppler supported that approach. Chair Member asked if there were any considerations to the timing of when the District should sign the agreement. Mr. Grimm stated that Portland and all the wholesale customers agreed the best option for wholesale customers would be to sign the agreement now with an effective date of July 1, 2026. The existing wholesale agreement will remain in place until June 30, 2026 to allow the wholesale customers to realize short term wholesale rate benefits.

Beaverton-Hillsdale Hwy water main project – Mr. Grimm informed the Board that Emery & Sons have completed water main installation and are now switching services from the old water mains to the new water mains. Commissioner Smith stated he was very pleased with how well the project has been maintained to minimize disruption to customers and asked what “final paving” meant in terms of the project. Mr. Grimm stated the District is required to replace the temporary trench patch with a full lane (the center turning lane mostly) replacement that will roughly be three-inches thick of new asphalt. Mr. Grimm pointed out that the contractor has worked through roughly 68% of the contract through November 30.

RFPs for Future Projects – Mr. Grimm reported that the District received six proposals from engineering consulting firms for the design of the new SW Garden View Drive water main and three proposals for the Water System Master Plan and water rate study. Review, scoring, and ranking of the proposals will be conducted by District management staff in January.

Other issues – Mr. Grimm reported that the City of Hillsboro’s water department had their main customer phone line “spoofed” by scammers and used it to contact Hillsboro water customers falsely claiming those customers owed the City money for their water bills. West Slope WD staff posted the City of Hillsboro’s information to be aware of such scammers on the District’s website as a reminder for West Slope customers to be vigilant to watch for scammers. Mr. Grimm also informed the Board the City of Beaverton has recently been “Zoom-bombed” during virtual City Council meetings and reassured the Board that “Zoom-bombing” is considered a form of harassment and violates the District’s policies on preventing harassment and will not be tolerated. Attempts by individuals to “Zoom-bomb” the District’s Board meeting will be immediately shut down and removed from the virtual part of the meeting. Mr. Grimm also shared news that Paul Matthews has been formally hired as Tualatin Valley WD’s new Chief Executive Officer and will now be searching for a new Chief Financial Officer. Mr. Grimm gave a summary of the project he participated in to modernize the 2017 version of the Effective Utility Management (EUM) primer. In 2020-21, the West Slope WD Board of Commissioners

committed to the EUM process for utility management. Only two current Commissioners were on the Board at the time of the Board's decision to embrace the EUM process. Mr. Grimm will return to the Board with the modernized version of the primer in 2024 or 2025 in advance of the next version of the District's strategic plan. Mr. Grimm also mentioned he has compiled the framework of a succession / transition plan for the hiring of the next General Manager in 2026 consisting of tasks for both staff and the Board to follow, and that he will present this plan to the Board at a future meeting.

4.2 – Finance Manager's Report: On behalf of Ms. Irwin, Mr. Grimm pointed out the \$4000 cyber/safety grant has been received and the funds deposited into the District's bank account. The on-line bill pay portal upgrade has been a huge workload for the last few business days as customers are scrambling to set up new accounts and profiles in Xpress Bill Pay. The District is considering adding additional cyber security coverage through WHA Insurance for the annual cost of \$1,300. The added coverage would protect the District from 1st hand and 3rd hand risks and losses. Commissioner Krishnamurthy asked why the District's auditing firm is in Salem and not local in the Portland/Beaverton area. Mr. Grimm responded that Grove Mueller is a very efficient, effective, and accurate auditing firm who understands the workings of a special district, and those auditing firms are not common. Staff views the Greater Willamette Valley to be in fact the local Portland area. Chair Member reminded the Board Ms. Irwin has said in the past at a time when auditing firms are dropping customers due to their own staffing concerns, we are fortunate to have such an excellent firm working for the District.

4.4 – Acceptance of Grove Mueller Audit Report – Mr. Grimm pointed to the agenda item requesting the Board accept the auditor's opinion letter as well as the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. Commissioner Smith made a motion to accept both documents, and Commissioner Eppler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (4-0) with Chair Member abstaining from the vote as she stated she had not reviewed the documents.

5.0 – COMMISSIONERS COMMUNICATIONS


No commissioners attended any outside meetings. There were no additional agenda items brought by the Board to the meeting. There were no other agenda items presented for future meetings. Mr. Grimm informed the Board that the District office will be closed on Tuesday, December 26 with staff taking their own leave time. The January meeting will include a walk through of the new Agreement. The consensus of the Board was the meeting went well tonight.

6.0 – ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Schuler left the meeting at 6:05 PM. There being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Krishnamurthy made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Eppler seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously (4-0). Chair Member adjourned the December 20, 2023 Board of Commissioners regular meeting at 6:13 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Approved:



Michael W. Grimm, P.E.
Acting Secretary

