

As voted by the Board of Trustees and in accordance with the notice of the meeting, the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Portland Water District was held at the Jeff P. Nixon Training Center, 225 Douglass Street, Portland, Maine, and via Zoom, on Monday, July 22, 2024. Attending from staff were C. Crovo, D. Kane, S. Firmin, J. Wallace, J. Hudak, D. Katsiaticas, M. Demers, and C. Cote. Patty Barber of Hiram attended from the public.

The meeting was convened by President Lunt at 6:02 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

### **ROLL CALL**

The roll was called by the Clerk. Trustee Shattuck-Heidorn was absent.

### **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

Trustee Cote made a motion to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 24, 2024, seconded by Trustee Willett. It was voted all in favor.

Trustee Cote made a motion to accept the minutes of the Workshop Meeting of July 8, 2024, seconded by Trustee Willett. It was voted all in favor.

### **INVITATION FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

### **REPORTS**

#### **Operations Committee**

Trustee Siviski provided a summary of the Operations Committee meeting on July 8, 2024.

Staff provided an update on the District's experience with the use of General Engineering Contracts during recent projects. Staff also reviewed the procedure related to public comment at committee meetings.

#### **Planning Committee**

Trustee Crockett provided a summary of the Planning Committee meeting on July 8, 2024.

Staff recommended a contribution of \$61,400 to conserve 85 acres in the Sebago Lake watershed. This will be taken up under new business tonight.

#### **Administration and Finance Committee**

Trustee Cote provided a summary of the Administration and Finance Committee meeting on July 8, 2024.

In 2023, the state passed a law authorizing the creation of a state-run Paid Family and Medical Leave Program. Ms. Demers presented an overview of the proposed bill and how it may impact PWD. Beginning May 1, 2026, the law provides for 12 weeks of paid time off to be available to employees for family or medical reasons, including illness, to care for a relative, or birth of a child. The state-run program would be funded by a 1% fee assessed on employee compensation starting January 1, 2025. For PWD, the fee assessed would be approximately \$160,000 a year. The State issued proposed rules for the program. PWD submitted comments on the proposed rule.

Mr. Kane discussed the 2025 Budget noting several proposed changes.

- Revenue:
  - First Draft water revenue increase is 9%. Staff will strive to decrease expenses reducing the water rate adjustment to somewhere in the 5% range.

- First Draft assessments to wastewater communities are higher than expected. Staff will seek to reduce the increase to the expected levels.
- Miscellaneous fees will be updated to cover current costs. Additionally, the fees will include additional overhead costs, such as supervisor's time, office space, and support staff time. The Committee discussed and recommended phasing the new costs into the rates over the next 3 years. The Committee will review the proposed changes at a future meeting.
- Expenses
  - Salary/Wage adjustments should reflect up-to-date inflation data
  - Defined Benefit Plan Contribution amount was discussed. The actuary calculated a contribution of \$1.6 million. Since the plan is closed and projected to need only contributions for a few more years, it was recommended staff consider reducing the annual contribution to \$1 million.
  - Staff was hoping to increase the amount of renewal and replacement funding for each of the water and wastewater funds. The higher contributions would reduce the amount of future bond financing.
  - An allocation of 10% of water revenues will continue to be allocated to a capital reserve.
  - A bond of \$1.4 million will be included in the water fund to support watershed protection efforts to purchase land easements.
  - Staff is reviewing how general costs are allocated to the water and wastewater funds and will recommend several changes. Those changes will be reviewed at a future committee meeting.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Order 24-021**, authorizing a contribution to the Mahoosuc Land Trust.

The Sebago Lake watershed encompasses 235,000 acres of land which is primarily forested. The long-term water quality of the lake will be determined, in large part, by the conservation of those forests. Our Watershed Land Conservation Policy states our commitment to, and support for, locally-initiated land conservation efforts since conserved forests naturally filter our customers' drinking water. At present, nearly 16% of the watershed is comprised of conserved land. Working with Sebago Clean Waters Partners, we are working to bring that total to 25% by 2032.

The Kimball Heirs property is 85 acres located in Albany township. Mahoosuc Land Trust (MLT) is purchasing the fee simple and will record a Declaration of Trust containing permanent non-development restrictions. The property is entirely forested and contains wetlands surrounding 5,280 feet of Walker Brook, a tributary to the Crooked River. The property is in MLT's Crooked River Focus area, and part of their strategic conservation plan, which aims to create habitat and recreational connectivity through forest conservation between the White Mountain National Forest and significant existing conserved lands such as MLT's Crooked River Headwaters conservation easement.

The recommended contribution of \$61,400 is the amount requested by Mahoosuc Land Trust and is approximately 23% of the appraised value of the property. The appraised value of the property is \$267,000. The recommended contribution represents about \$722 per acre of protected land within the watershed. PWD's contribution is to be used to acquire the Kimball Heirs land in fee for conservation purposes.

It was moved by Trustee Crockett and seconded by Trustee McCann.

It was Voted and unanimously,

ORDERED, the General Manager is authorized to contribute up to \$61,400 to the Mahosuc Land Trust to support the conservation of land known as Kimball Heirs located in Albany Township.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

None

**SECOND INVITATION FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**TRUSTEE COMMENTS**

None

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:19 p.m.

Submitted by,

Donna M. Katsiaficas  
Clerk