

# BURLINGTON WATER DISTRICT

Manager: NW Natural Water Services - P.O. Box 699 Newberg, OR 97132

Phone: 503-554-8333; 1-855-554-8333 (TF)

Internet: BWD Website <https://burlingtonwater.specialdistrict.org/>

## Burlington Water District Board of Commissioners Meeting

### JUNE 18, 2025 MEETING MINUTES

**Meeting called to order by Gail Curtis at 6:16 pm.**

**Board members present to establish quorum for meeting:** Gail Curtis, chair; Susie Hasty, board secretary, Kris Hines, budget officer; Ricardo Lovett, board member. Also, Dan Zimmerman, bookkeeper, Curtis Olson, NW Natural Water Services representative; and Ed Hodges, engineer of record for BWD were present.

**Absent:** Anne Squier, board member

**Public Comment (limited to 10 min./issue):** None.

**Guest:** Deputy Chief Chris Barney, Chair of Multnomah Co. Fire Defense Board

Gail C. invited Deputy Chief Chris Barney to the June board meeting so the board could learn about area fire coordination. Following introductions Deputy Chief Chris Barney gave a brief PowerPoint presentation (sent to board members prior to the meeting) on fire and emergency services and coordination followed by Q & A. He said fire service in the Burlington Water District is provided through a multi-tier system involving city, county, and state resources. The district is served primarily by two staffed fire stations: one in Scappoose and Portland Fire Rescue's Station 22, with similar response times from both. Portland Fire Rescue deploys multiple engines, ladder trucks, and chiefs depending on the type of incident, including structure fires, vehicle fires, and brush fires. The **Multnomah County Fire Defense Board** coordinates mutual aid and resource mobilization among local fire chiefs and with **the Oregon Fire Service Mobilization Plan**. The plan allows resource to be distributed across counties and the state during major incidents like wildfires. This system includes pre-programmed task forces for efficient multi-agency response to neighboring counties, enhancing safety and operational efficiency. The state system can further mobilize resources through the **Oregon Fire Mobilization System** and the **Conflagration Act** for large-scale emergencies. The layered response ensures that fire protection starts locally and escalates through county and state support as needed.

**Q and A:** Questions were raised about the existence of Mutual Aid Plans specific to the Burlington area. Deputy Chief Barney said mutual aid is in place noting there are some radio coordination challenges due to different radio programs between 911 dispatch centers across counties, particularly between Multnomah and Washington Counties

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The discussion also touched on the organizational structure of BWD serving as both a water and fire district. Ed Hodges noted that separate fire districts are common, but the Burlington Water District's integration of fire services is somewhat unique. The board expressed an interest in focusing on water infrastructure while exploring the possibility of establishing a separate fire district focused solely on fire services.

**Ed Hodges, engineer of record for BWD:** Susan H. made a motion to approve the 2025 Master Plan and Kris H. seconded followed by a unanimous board approval. The board thanked Ed Hodges and his staff for providing an excellent update and for being accommodating. Ed H. said the master plan is currently under review by the Oregon Health Authority's (OHA) Drinking Water Division and that the board should anticipate a closeout meeting with the funding agency to finalize the grant process. NOTE: Subsequent to the June board meeting, the OHA approved the master plan.

## **Water Operator's Report from NWNWS representative: Curtis Olson**

There was a reported current loss factor of approximately 15 gallons per minute that translates to about 600 gallons per month. **NOTE:** Subsequent to the June board meeting, Curtis informed Gail that the system is back to normal and the loss factor according to the June readings was a 9% loss factor for the month (3 gpm not 15 gpm). The reason for the discrepancy is unclear.

The board asked about the distinction between routine maintenance and targeted leak detection activities. Meters are read annually and monthly are radio-read readings based on driving down Highway 30. Curtis noted that radio-read meters have improved the efficiency of data collection. Leak detection involves isolating sections of the water system at night to narrow down the leak location by shutting off water flow in segments and monitoring loss reductions. The process is challenging when leaks are small and dispersed. Kris H. asked what role the relatively new meters [the board funded] have had and Curtis Olson said they have helped and ongoing replacement can be expected. [Note: The board has also funded upgrades to the Mission Communications system].

As explained during the board meeting, the leak detection meters are used to track down the leaks in the system. Curtis said they can shut off everyone's water and then track where the water goes using those meters. Once an area has been defined area then more localized detection occurs using such as ground penetrating radar GPR, acoustic or correlation.

Dan Zimmerman asked if the board had received a budget estimate for the chlorine analyzer (CA) since NW Natural Water Services had billed for a budget estimate. Gail C said she would follow up to get a written vs the previous, verbal report. Gail also reminded the board that Kris H with Ricardo's support are doing the bi-weekly readings on an interim bases. Gail also said the CA needs to be budgeted [the board should determine the level of priority].

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## **Dan Zimmerman, Bookkeeper/Office Manager's Report:**

Financially, the district reported water sales exceeding projections at over 100%, with levied taxes nearly meeting expectations. Interest rates remain favorable at about 4.6% annual percentage yield. Expenses, including operating costs and water purchases, are tracking normally. The board recently made a payment of \$157,000 to the city for fire protection services, following a contract amendment that corrected prior overcharges based on property value assessments. The board reviewed invoices including a \$10,000 payment for the master plan update. Dan Z said payments to date totaling around \$26,000.

Curtis Olson mentioned that their customers were having “sticker shock” over the forecasted, water rate increases and suggested the board convey forecasted increases to our customers. Board has been informed of forecasted 6% water annual rate increases over the next six years by the Portland Water Bureau, linked to infrastructure improvements including the new, \$2B water filtration plant. The rate structure is based on new, City of Portland contract formula. [Note: BWD’s responsibility for regional infrastructure improvements are limited due to the small district size. Board members may wish to review the City/BWD contract]. The board is considering strategies to smooth rate increases using reserve funds to mitigate customer impact. Gail C. said she would contact the City to obtain specifics on known future rate increases.

**Motion:** Gail C made a motion to approve the \$157,075 to the City of Portland for emergency and fire services for 2024-2025; Susan H seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**Motion:** Kris H made a motion to approve the bills as presented and the motion passed unanimously.

**Motion:** Gail C made a motion to approve the May 2025 minutes as submitted, seconded by Ricardo and approved unanimously.

## **Administrative Reports:**

### **Old Business:** BWD Fire Service next steps

Gail C reported she had attended an emergency preparedness meeting sponsored by the federal government targeted at the private business sector and attended by Multnomah Co. emergency managers and staff. Gail C took the opportunity to talk individual with three different county and state fire and emergency managers about the potential of a Burlington Fire District. Gail C said one emergency manager suggested BWD coordinate with the Linnton area Neighborhood Emergency Team (NET) in lieu of the fire district. Gail C told the board she is a member of the Linnton NET and said its’ focus is on general emergency preparedness rather than fire-specific issues. The board expressed a commitment to continuing discussions on the establishment of a separate fire district, recognizing the public interest and the need for focused leadership on fire services. Gail C reminded the board that a vote would be necessary to establish a fire district and that there may be merit in

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asking the voters if they want a separate fire district at the same time a rate increase is requested. Gail asked Dan Z if he was aware of the method to forecast fire rates. Dan Z said the formula in the contract may give indication because it is based on factors including number of fire fighters, their pension and assessed City property values and BWD property values. [Note: Subsequent to the June meeting City staff told Gail C that they are currently working on the future rate. Gail C followed with an email to the City to provide that information as there is an August 4, 2025 deadline to the Tax Supervising and Conservation Commission (TSCC) if a tax measure is planned for the Nov. ballot. This deadline is followed by three other deadlines including a September 8 for the voters' pamphlet].

## **New Business:**

- a. Election results:** It was announced that Ricardo Lovett moved from being appointed to an elective board member as a result of the May 15<sup>th</sup> election. A write-in vote for Tamara Ege was also received. [Subsequent to the June board meeting, Tamara Ege certified her interest in serving on the board and following a meeting with Tamara E, Ricardo L and Gail C, Gail C qualified that Tamara's is able to serve (as required by the county). Welcome Tamara!]
- b. Motion:** Kris H made a motion and Susan H seconded the motion to appoint Gail Curtis to Position 5 of the BWD Board effective July 1, 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

**The Positions are as follows:** Position 1: Tamara Ege; Position 2: Ricardo Lovett Position 3: Kris Hines; Position 4: Anne Squier and Position 5: Gail Curtis

- c. Thank you Susie:** Susan Hasty was thanked for her four years of serving as secretary and close coordination with Dan Zimmerman. She will be missed.

**Announcements:** Ricardo L suggested that there be a board tour of the infrastructure facilities guided by one or more of our staff. [Note: Public notice will need to be posted in advance of the tour with the opportunity for the public to participate since three or more commissioners will be meeting]. Gail C asked the board if they would like to meet our attorney. It was concluded that if she would be willing to do so pro bono, the board would be interested. Gail C. will inquire.

**Motion to Adjourn:** Gail C made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 pm, seconded by Susan H, passing unanimously.

**Next meeting:** Wednesday, July 16, 2025 at 6:15 pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Gail Curtis, Recording Secretary