

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
August 5, 2025
5:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present: President, John Barofsky; Vice President, Mindy Schlossberg; and Commissioners Sonya Carlson, John Brown, and Tim Morris

Commissioners Absent: None

Others Present: Frank Lawson, General Manager; Deborah Hart, Assistant General Manager/Chief Financial Officer; Brian Booth, Chief Energy Resource Officer; Karen Kelley, Chief Operations Officer; and Diedre Williams, Chief People Officer; Christopher Irvin, Water Engineering Supervisor

REGULAR MEETING

Call to Order [00:00:00]

President Barofsky called the regular meeting to order at 5:29 p.m.

Agenda Check [00:00:17]

There were no changes to the agenda.

Items from Board Members and General Manager [00:00:26]

Commissioner Brown reported attending the annual meeting of the Lane Electric Cooperative as a customer and a representative. He said several neighbors asked why the water lines in the roads have man covers that have been painted blue.

General Manager Frank Lawson said he would follow up with the information.

President Barofsky reported that he and Vice President Schlossberg attended a meeting with a consultant working on an EWEB policy and that the meeting went well.

Mr. Lawson highlighted the upcoming Safety Exposition happening on September 11, 2025. He invited Board members to attend.

Correspondence [00:02:10]

There was none.

Public Input: In-person or by Telephone [00:02:11]

The following testimony was provided to the EWEB Commissioners: The Board neither endorses or opposes, or is responsible for the accuracy of content, of testimony including any links or references provided.

Karl Morgenstern, Upper Willamette Water and Soil Conservation Board Chair, provided comments related to a request for EWEB support and investment stewarding a property. He referenced a letter recently sent to the Commissioners with further details about the proposal.

Tom Hutton, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 659 Representative, expressed opposition to management, requesting an independent third-party investigation of EWEB's Human Resources department, and citing concerns about the erosion of workplace rights, unchecked management behavior, and the failure of EWEB's internal systems to protect its employees.

Rachel McKinnis, Ward 7, expressed opposition to the use of smart meters. She reported that even with the signal turned off, she experiences adverse health effects including difficulty sleeping, difficulty focusing, and breathing issues. She requested that community members have the option of an analog meter.

Commissioner Brown addressed EWEB electrical workers in the audience. He thanked them for their presence at the meeting and said their concerns will be addressed with the proper protocol.

Commissioner Brown responded to public comment from Karl Morgenstern. He voiced his advocacy for clean water while acknowledging EWEB budget pressures. He said Commissioners will discuss the topic later in the meeting.

President Barofsky addressed public comment from union representative Tom Hutton, stating that the EWEB Board of Commissioners is a policy setting board, rather than an action board, and he would leave it to the General Manager to do what is right and if he needs more resources or input from the Board he should come to them.

Mr. Lawson stated that he has a great deal of respect for the work that employees do. He said EWEB must work within the collective bargaining agreement and organizational processes and policies. He said investigations happen when they are warranted and issues will be addressed fairly and appropriately.

Commissioner Brown asked Mr. Lawson for clarification about how Commissioners may respond to requests to listen to employee concerns.

Mr. Lawson responded that Commissioners may listen to employee concerns but must delegate action and decision-making to the General Manager.

President Barofsky asked if Commissioners can request an independent investigation.

Mr. Lawson referenced Board Linkage (BL) policies. He said the Board could direct the General Manager to conduct an independent investigation, but there are state agencies who are independent lines of appeal, so those mechanisms already exist and would not necessarily be appropriate.

BOARD ACTION AND GENERAL BUSINESS ITEMS

Approval of Consent Calendar – A, Minutes and Routine Contracts [00:19:32]

MINUTES

1. a. June 17, 2025 Work Session
- b. July 8, 2025 Regular Session

CONTRACTS

2. **David Evans and Associates, Inc.** – for the Jessen Substation Rebuild. \$170,000 based on Formal Request for Proposal (Original contract amount \$580,000, spend over last approval \$77,225, resulting cumulative total \$750,000).

3. **NAPA Genuine Parts Company dba TWGW, Inc.** – for Vendor Managed and Inventory Logistics Management Solutions for Fleets and Facilities. \$10.2 million based on a Cooperative Contract.

MOTION: Vice President Schlossberg moved to approve Consent Calendar A. The motion passed unanimously, 5:0:0; President Barofsky, Vice President Schlossberg, Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Brown, and Commissioner Morris all voting in favor.

Approval of Consent Calendar – B, Nonroutine Contracts and Other Consent Items [00:19:50]

CONTRACTS

4. **Mason, Bruce, & Girard, Inc.** – for Carmen-Smith Botanical Consulting Services. \$300,000 based on Direct Negotiation/Sole Source.

5. **PSI Water Technologies, Inc.** – for As-Needed Parts for Hayden Bridge Sodium Hypochlorite Generation System. \$200,000 over 5-years based on Direct Negotiation/Sole Source.

MOTION: Vice President Schlossberg moved to approve Consent Calendar B. The motion passed unanimously, 5:0:0; President Barofsky, Vice President Schlossberg, Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Brown, and Commissioner Morris all voting in favor.

Upper Willamette SWCD Investments and Opportunities [00:20:04]

Chief Financial Officer Deborah Hart and Chief Operations Officer Karen Kelley engaged the Board in a discussion about Upper Willamette Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) investments and opportunities.

Commissioner Brown expressed strong support for investing in Upper Willamette SWCD investments and opportunities, stating that he cannot think of a more important expenditure. He advocated for contributing, at the least, partial funding.

Ms. Kelley responded that the property is of high interest to EWEB and they support watershed stewardship in that location. Their recommendation is, given that other projects had to be put off because of rate impacts, to shift the current budget without raising rates to accomplish the same

thing and work with the conservation district to come up with an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA).

Mr. Lawson provided further context regarding the staff recommendation, including that investing for a number of years is not what he would classify as good stewardship of the financial resource. He suggested supporting the work through EWEB's Healthy Farms, Clean Water Program.

Vice President Schlossberg commented that it seems like a strategic opportunity for EWEB and she supports funding it in some way. She suggested fleshing out the details more.

Commissioner Carlson expressed her general support but said that funding sitting in interest gives her pause. She asked about the timeline.

Mr. Lawson indicated that a commitment indicating their level of support will need to be made no later than October 1.

Commissioner Morris said he is supportive. He suggested that the challenge may be a timing issue rather than an intent or fiscal reality issue. He agreed with other Commissioners about gathering more information before making a final decision.

President Barofsky suggested considering being a gap funder for a year or so. He is in favor of the project and is supportive of it moving forward but would like to see a management plan before making a vote.

Commissioner Carlson inquired about restrictions on properties along the river.

Mr. Lawson summarized the questions posed by Commissioners and committed to following up soon with more information.

Potential Ownership Transfer of City-Owned Fire Hydrants Discussion [00:40:43]

Mr. Lawson, Ms. Hart, and Ms. Kelley engaged the Board in a discussion about the ownership of fire hydrants via PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Lawson explained that management is seeking guidance and Board endorsement to develop a resolution to guide negotiations with the City of Eugene on a potential ownership transfer of city-owned fire hydrants.

He provided relevant background information, including that the opportunity involves nearly 4,000 fire hydrants. He outlined some of the benefits, including protection of the water system, efficiencies, and improved maintenance and quality; and some of the cons. He cited a 2% average rate increase based on a replacement rate of 60 hydrants/year.

Mr. Lawson opened the floor to questions and comments from the Board.

Commissioner Carlson said protecting the community when there is a more heightened need around fires is at the top of mind for her. She is supportive but would like to see assurances around sharing liability.

Commissioner Morris expressed general support for the potential fire hydrant ownership transfer. He asked if there are other public utilities that manage their city's fire hydrants.

Ms. Kelley responded that most public water utilities manage their own hydrants.

Vice President Schlossberg expressed her general support. She recommended negotiations, particularly regarding finances and regulations.

President Barofsky expressed his enthusiastic support, citing safety and the relatively low-rate increase.

Commissioner Brown said he is in favor of managing the hydrants in-house, but he is not in favor of taking on one hundred percent financial responsibility. He suggested a joint venture.

Recurring – Quarterly/Mid-year Operational and Organizational Goals Update & Approval of Revised 2025 Organizational Goals [01:03:18]

Mr. Lawson provided a robust quarterly update via PowerPoint presentation, outlining the following:

Part 1

Performance Summary/Status – Year-to-Date EWEB Operations
Status of 2025 Annual Goals (Approved February)
Commissioner Comment

Part 2

Revised Goals (EWEB Business Management System and Strategic Compass)
Commissioner Comments and Guidance
Approval – Revised Annual Goals

MOTION: Commissioner Carlson moved to approve the revised 2025 Annual Goals based on implementation of EWEB Business Management System. The motion passed unanimously, 5:0:0; President Barofsky, Vice President Schlossberg, Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Brown, and Commissioner Morris all voting in favor.

General Manager Transition Plan [01:31:31]

Mr. Lawson informed the Board that his last day at EWEB will be in the second quarter of 2026. He is announcing it now to give the Board the opportunity to recruit and on board another General Manager.

Chief People Officer Diedre Williams assured the Board that the process for hiring a recruitment firm has begun and staff will follow up with a recommendation.

Future Board Agendas [01:43:22]

Mr. Lawson mentioned a tour of the lower river.

Board Wrap Up [01:45:24]

Commissioner Brown asked when AMI will be fully implemented.

Mr. Lawson responded that it's 98% deployed on the electric side but behind on water.

Ms. Kelley added that water meters should be done by the end of 2026.

Adjourn [01:47:18]

President Barofsky adjourned the regular meeting at 7:17 p.m.

Recorded by Terah Van Dusen, LCOG

Assistant Secretary

President