



Commissioner Position Profile Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District

The Organization

Founded in 1968, the District operates as a special purpose district authorized under Title 57 Revised Code of Washington. The District provides water and/or sewer service to a population of approximately 11,000 customers within an 18 square mile area located wholly within the environmentally sensitive Lake Whatcom watershed. The District is operated by 18 full time professionals, a five-member board of commissioners, and has an annual budget of approximately \$8 million, which includes approximately \$1.5 million for capital improvement program projects and equipment.

The natural terrain, proximity to Lake Whatcom, and various residential communities make operating water and sewer utilities unique and challenging. The District operates a water treatment plant that provides water to Sudden Valley and Geneva residents via five reservoirs, five pump stations, and 70 miles of transmission and distribution lines. On the north shore near Agate Bay, the District provides water service by a well and water treatment plant, one pump station, and two reservoirs. The District also distributes water purchased from the city of Bellingham to its Eagleridge neighborhood customers. All water distributed by the District meets or surpasses regulatory standards—the District has received the Washington State Department of Health’s TOP Award for over 20 consecutive years of regulatory compliance at its Sudden Valley treatment plant.

The District owns and operates 28 sewer lift stations and over 75 miles of sewage collection and conveyance lines located on both the north and south shores of Lake Whatcom. The District does not treat the sewage it collects, instead delivering its wastewater to the city of Bellingham’s treatment plant for treatment and disposal under the terms of an interlocal agreement that expires in 2034. The District pays for treatment on a negotiated volumetric basis and is responsible for funding nearly 5% of the cost of capital improvements to the plant, which equates to the percentage of plant capacity required by the District.

The Board of Commissioners

The District is governed by a five-member board of commissioners who set policies and rates of the District. The District is divided into five commissioners districts, each of which is represented by a resident elected from that district to serve a six-year term of office. The current Board of Commissioners is:

- Position 1—Laura Abele (current Board President)
- Position 2—Todd Citron (current Board Secretary)
- Position 3—Bruce Ford
- Position 4—vacant
- Position 5—John Carter

Members of the Board of Commissioners are collectively responsible for establishing policy, adopting an annual budget, and providing vision and goals to the general manager. The following provides a brief description of the various duties of commissioners; the description is not intended

to be comprehensive, but rather it is an effort to summarize the primary responsibilities of the Board.

- Establish Policy
 - Adopt goals and objectives
 - Establish priorities
 - Approve/amend the operating and capital budgets
 - Approve contracts
 - Adopt resolutions
- Supervision of General Manager
 - Appoint the general manager
 - Evaluate the performance of the general manager
- Provide Public Leadership
 - Promote representative governance
 - Mediate conflicting interests while building a consensus
 - Communicate the District's vision and goals to ratepayers
 - Represent the District's interest at regional, county, state, and federal levels
- Decision-Making
 - Study problems
 - Review alternatives
 - Determine best course of public policy

Board Meetings and Time Commitment

Board meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. and the last Wednesday of each month at 8:00 a.m. Meetings are held at the District administration building located at 1220 Lakeway Drive in Bellingham and typically last between 1 and 2.5 hours.

Each month, one commissioner attends the District's staff meeting on the second Thursday of the month at 8:00 a.m. on a rotating basis.

Other optional time commitments include the annual Lake Whatcom Management Program joint councils meeting (with City of Bellingham and Whatcom County councils), bi-annual Washington Association of Water and Sewer Districts conferences, and various local government meetings on which the District has assigned Board representation.

Qualifications

To serve on the Board of Commissioners, applicant must:

- Reside within the boundaries of the commissioner district for which they are applying (map available on the District website at www.lwwsd.org);
- Be a citizen of the United States; and
- Be a registered voter at the address within the commissioner district for which they are applying.

Compensation

Commissioners are compensated per state law (Revised Code of Washington 57.12.010) for each day, or portion thereof, spent in attendance at official meetings of the District Board, or in performance of other official duties on behalf of the District. Compensation is either increased or decreased per state law. As of July 2022, the current daily compensation is \$128.



Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District
1220 Lakeway Drive
Bellingham, Washington 98229