



1220 Lakeway Dr • Bellingham, WA 98229

REGULAR SESSION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Minutes

October 30, 2024

Board President Todd Citron called the Regular Session to order at 8:00 a.m.

Attendees:

Commissioner Todd Citron (v)	General Manager Justin Clary
Commissioner John Carter (v)	Engineering Manager Greg Nicoll
Commissioner Bruce Ford	Finance Manager Jenny Signs
Commissioner Jeff Knakal	Operations Manager Jason Dahlstrom
Commissioner David Holland	Recording Secretary Rachael Hope

Also in attendance were Melanie Mankamyer of Wilson Engineering, Ross Ardrey and Kathleen Grauman of NW Management Consulting, and District staff Ken Zangari and Rich Munson. Attendees noted with a (v) attended the meeting virtually.

Consent Agenda

Action Taken

Carter moved, Knakal seconded, approval of:

- **Minutes for the October 9, 2024 Regular Board Meeting**
- **Minutes for the October 9, 2024 Special Meeting**
- **Accounts Payable Vouchers totaling \$79,016.23**
- **Payroll for Pay Period #21 (09.28.2024 through 10.11.2024) totaling \$49,481.79**
- **Benefits for Pay Period #21 totaling \$54,582.44**
- **Payroll for Pay Period #22 (10.12.2024 through 10.25.2024) totaling \$52,398.02**
- **Benefits for Pay Period #22 totaling \$31,037.16**
- **Payroll Taxes for 3rd Quarter 2024 totaling \$11,517.94**
- **Accounts Payable Vouchers totaling \$292,846.87**

Motion passed.

Recognition of Melanie Mankamyer's Service to the District

Like most relatively small water-sewer districts, Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District relies on consultant engineers to provide the technical expertise to construct and maintain infrastructure. Wilson Engineering has served in the role as the District's primary consultant engineer since 1987. For the past 27 years, Melanie Mankamyer of Wilson Engineering has played integral roles in many District projects.

Clary highlighted some of the projects that Mankamyer has assisted the District in completing, including multiple revision of the District's Water and Sewer Comprehensive Plans, many lift station improvements and replacements, and water treatment plant updates. Beyond planned projects, Mankamyer's institutional knowledge has been invaluable to District staff. District staff and the Board recognized her significant service to the District on the eve of her retirement.

2024 Total Compensation Study Presentation

Clary recalled that employee wages and benefits make up a significant component of a service organization's overall operating budget. The total compensation package offered to employees is a key component of promoting employee retention and maintaining institutional knowledge. With the current collective bargaining agreement between the District and AFSCME set to expire December 31, the District hired NW Management Consulting LLC to assist in the completion of a total compensation study to guide the District in any revisions to its salary matrix and to assess the District's benefits package as a means of remaining competitive with comparable agencies. Following individual staff interviews, evaluation of wages and benefits of comparable agencies, and input from District management and AFSCME representatives, NW Management Consulting staff presented its findings and recommendations to the board. Discussion followed.

Geneva Reservoir and SVWTP Booster Station Seismic Retrofits Professional Services Agreement Amendment Approval

Nicoll explained that in early 2024, the District was awarded a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant (HMG) to complete seismic retrofits to the Geneva Reservoir and the Sudden Valley WTP Booster Station building (also known as the "Pump House"). In May 2024, the Board approved the execution of a professional services agreement with Wilson Engineering (Wilson) for preliminary design services. The scope of work for this contract was limited to preliminary evaluation of an alternative proposed by Wilson to replace the Geneva reservoir with two new concrete reservoirs rather than seismically upgrading the existing reservoir.

The preliminary evaluation determined that the project cost for this option would be more than double the grant funds available and discussions with the HMG administrator, Washington State Emergency Management Division, determined that additional grant funds are not available to fund the additional costs associated with the proposed reservoir replacement. This amendment reallocates the remaining budget from the original scope of work (reservoir replacement) to the revised scope (seismic upgrade) supplemented by additional budget needed to complete the revised scope of work. Following completion of the scope of work included in Amendment 1, District staff will develop with Wilson a second amendment to the contract to add final design and bidding assistance for both the Geneva reservoir and the Pump House for the Board's consideration.

Action Taken

Ford moved, Knakal seconded, to authorize the general manager to execute Amendment No. 1 to the professional services agreement with Wilson Engineering for seismic evaluation and conceptual design for the Geneva Reservoir and SVWTP Booster Station Seismic Retrofits Project as presented. Motion passed.

Draft 2025-2026 Biennial Budget Discussion

Signs recalled that this is the third discussion of the draft 2025-26 Biennial Budget, with previous discussion and review at Board meetings on September 25 and October 9. Staff highlighted adjustments to the proposed budget since the last discussion, including further information on topics such as the District's rate structure and future capital improvement projects. Discussion followed.

General Manager’s Report

Clary updated the Board on several topics, including an October 29 interview with representatives of Standard & Poor’s Global regarding reinstatement of the District’s bond rating, initiation of negotiations with AFSCME for a successor collective bargaining agreement, and a recent meeting with staff from the District and Whatcom County Stormwater to coordinate future projects. Discussion followed.

Engineering Department Report

Nicoll highlighted several projects, including an update on construction timeline for Division 7 project and recent work with the electrical contractors. Discussion followed.

Finance Department Report

Signs’ report focused on third quarter financial reports, progress on reinstatement of the District’s bond rating, long term investments, and debt service payments. She also noted that at close of third quarter, the District had \$875,000 outstanding in FEMA requests, of which should receive 650,000 should be received during the 4th quarter of 2025. Discussion followed.

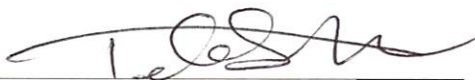
Operations & Maintenance Department Report

Dahlstrom reported on field crew and operations activity, including interviews for new Maintenance Worker 1, with hopes to make an offer by the end of the week. He also highlighted District employee Greg Soto’s participation in the American Public Works Association’s Washington conference & equipment rodeo, where he won the first place excavator competition and took ninth overall out of 60 participants. Discussion followed.

Executive Session Per RCW 42.30.110(1)(g)

Citron recessed the Regular Session to Executive Session at 10:06 a.m. It was estimated that the Executive Session would take about 10 minutes and end at 10:15 a.m. The purpose of the Executive Session was to review the performance of a public employee (General Manager performance evaluation). No action was taken, and Citron recessed the Executive Session and reconvened the Regular Meeting at 10:20 a.m.

With no further business, Citron adjourned the regular session at 10:20 a.m.



Board President, Todd Citron



Attest: _____

Recording Secretary, Rachael Hope

Minutes approved by motion at Regular Special Board Meeting on 11/13/2024