



Consortium Board Meeting Summary

FEBRUARY 5, 2025 CALLED TO ORDER: 6:35 PM ADJOURNED: 7:55 PM

QUORUM PRESENT – YES – 14 MEMBERS

(MEETING WAS HELD VIA ZOOM/VIDEOCONFERENCE)

Approval of October 9, 2024 Meeting Summary

Councilor Jim Yent made a motion to approve the October 9, 2024 Consortium Board meeting summary as presented. Councilor Adam Cunningham seconded the motion. The Consortium Board approved the October 9, 2024 Consortium Board meeting summary as presented (14:0:0).

Public Comment

None

Meet and Greet

Rebecca Geisen, Consortium Managing Director noted that the Consortium Board has several new members and wanted to provide time on the agenda for new and current Board members to break out into small virtual groups and introduce themselves and share information with some ice-breaker questions.

Director Report

Ms. Geisen shared the following updates:

- Ms. Geisen was elected to be the Vice Chair of the Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization (RDPO) Steering Committee.
- Ms. Geisen and Riley Berger, Consortium Program Specialist will attend the American Water Works (AWWA), Pacific Northwest Section conference in Boise, ID in May.
- Ms. Geisen will be participating in the AWWA Fly-In to Washington DC in April as the Oregon Water Utilities Council (OWUC) Chair. She'll be representing the Portland Water Bureau and the State but noted it is a great opportunity to be involved and share information.

- In November, the Consortium hosted an Advanced Meter Infrastructure (AMI) workshop. 41 attendees, both in-person and virtually, from 17 providers participated. Presenters shared business cases scenarios, and implementation and funding strategies.
- At the November Consortium Technical Committee meeting, a workforce development panel discussion was held. Staff from BAYWORK, a network of water and wastewater agencies in the San Francisco Bay Area focused on workforce reliability through regional collaboration, attended to share information about their regional workforce development model and organization.

Consortium Staffing Intergovernmental Agreement

Sarah Santner, Resource Protection and Planning Group Director for the Portland Water Bureau shared that the City of Portland has been providing staffing services for the Consortium since it began in 1997 through an intergovernmental agreement (IGA). This agreement has been renewed every five years since its inception and is scheduled to expire on June 30, 2025. The agreement needs to be updated to align with the new Consortium IGA and bylaws that were recently adopted by the Board.

Ms. Santner explained that the Consortium staff resides within the Resource Protection and Planning Group and Ms. Geisen reports directly to her as the group's director. Currently, the Consortium staff consists of two full FTE – a program manager and a program specialist position and two part-time FTE - .5 managing director and .8 management analyst position. Ms. Santner provided information on the overhead rate and calculation. She noted that per typical accounting methodologies, the overhead rate includes rent, utilities, and the assignment of some portion of administrative costs like accounting and legal support. Since 2007, the overhead rate has been fixed at 29.5%. Prior to that, it fluctuated between 34-37%. The City of Portland is currently reviewing the overhead rate methodology and anticipates the annual overhead rate will remain around 30% to ensure costs for providing services to the Consortium are recovered.

Ms. Santner advised that a survey was recently sent to Consortium Technical Committee (CTC) members to seek feedback on the staffing services the City has been providing, how is it going, and if any other members were interested in staffing the Consortium. Nineteen members completed the survey. All of the respondents supported the City of Portland continuing to provide staffing services for the Consortium.

Ms. Santner concluded that next steps include updating the staffing IGA language, sharing a draft with the CTC and Executive Committee at future meetings and sharing the final draft with the Board via email before their meeting in June. The Board will then be asked to approve the new Consortium Staffing IGA at the June Board meeting. The new IGA will take effect July 1, 2025 and run through June 30, 2035.

Program Report

Bonny Cushman, Consortium Program Manager shared the following updates:

Public Outreach:

- Winter Weather Messaging – Consortium staff worked with member staff, a graphic designer, and the Community Engagement Liaisons (CELs) to create translated web pages, graphics, and social media content designed to help the public locate their emergency water shut-off valve and know how to use it in case of a winter weather emergencies. The project included information on where to find your home emergency water shut-off valve, how to use it, and when you might need it. The web pages and social media messages are available in English, Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese.
- 2025 Consortium Media Campaigns – The Consortium runs several multimedia campaigns annually. The Consortium is partnering with Affiliated Media again to manage many elements of its 2025 campaigns. In addition, the Consortium hired consultants Interplay to assist with strategic communications and storytelling and Verbio to assist with Spanish language outreach.
- Newsletters – Staff relaunched the Consortium’s internal newsletter The Source in January and began working on relaunching the Consortium’s external newsletter RegionalH2O News. The newsletters are geared towards member staff and the public, respectively, and will provide valuable updates, information, and resources.

Conservation:

- Youth Education Programming – Work continues rebooting the Consortium’s school programming. The Consortium selected the firm Institute for Learning Innovation to assist with gathering educator feedback through a survey and several focus groups. The survey went out to approximately 1,200 educators in January and the focus groups are in the planning stage. The Consortium is also in the process of going out to bid for a new school program contractor. The new school programming will launch fall 2025.
- Children’s Clean Water Festival (CCWF) – The CCWF takes place Tuesday, April 29 at the PCC, Sylvania campus. The CCWF is a half day of learning and fun for 4th and 5th grade students that includes hands-on, water-focused activities, classroom presentations, and stage shows that reinforce STEM, Common Core, and Next Generation Science concepts. Always looking for volunteers. It is a great way to connect with community youth.

Emergency Preparedness:

- UASI Grant Emergency Water Bags Project – The project was ranked 11th and is unlikely to be funded this time due to higher ranking projects and amount of funds anticipated. However, submitting an application does put the Consortium in line to apply for reprogramming funding.
- Interconnections Workshop – This Consortium sponsored workshop will focus on regional interconnections and past work putting together a GIS database of Consortium member interties and related water infrastructure and will take place in May. The initial objectives

of the workshop are to familiarize Consortium member staff with the Interconnections Geodatabase, create standard operating procedures and best management practices around activating and utilizing interties, and identifying how to best update and maintain the data that makes up the GIS geodatabase. Water providers will leave the workshop with a list of follow-up actions to take back with them and their sub-regional partners.

- EPA TTX for Water/Wastewater – Expected to occur in April/May. Will focus on coordination and communication following a winter storm with an emphasis on communication between public works and emergency services. Ms. Geisen is on the planning committee.
- UASI-funded Tabletop Exercises – As a follow-up from the Emergency Drinking Water Framework, the Consortium secured UASI grant funding for five tabletop exercises in Clark, Columbia, Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington Counties. The goal of the exercises is to advance each county's emergency drinking water planning in partnership with water providers. Ms. Geisen is working with Coordinated Consulting and Clark County to plan the first exercise which will occur sometime before the end of June.

FY 2025-26 Consortium Budget and Work Plan

Ms. Geisen advised that in the meeting materials packet is the proposed FY 2025-26 Consortium work plan and budget based on discussion and direction from the Board at their October Board meeting. There have been no changes from what was presented in October. As a reminder, the budget and workplan maintains current work and includes two funding initiatives.

The first initiative uses \$35,000 in one-time funds to conduct a community survey around trusting your tap – work that would advance the Consortium's outreach to underserved communities. The second initiative is \$5,000 in additional funding for youth education.

Consortium Board's support in October was contingent on final staffing numbers from the City of Portland and a directive to minimize dues increases.

Staffing costs have been incorporated and were less than projected, primarily due to two of four staff reaching top of class (no merit increases). The Managing Director hours were also reduced.

The proposed workplan will result in a dues-based budget of \$1,174,211. This is an increase of 3.9% from last year's budget.

The CTC and Executive Committee reviewed other options to reduce the budget but recommend that the Board support the budget and workplan as proposed. The FY 2023-24 carryover of \$136,532 has been applied.

Councilor Jim Yent made a motion to approve the FY 2025-26 Consortium budget and work plan. Commissioner Naomi Angier seconded the motion. The Consortium Board unanimously approved the FY 2025-26 Consortium budget and work plan. (14:0:0)

2025 Oregon Legislative Session

Ms. Geisen and Jessica Dorsey, CTC Chair gave an overview of water-related legislation as part of the 2025 Oregon legislative session. Over 2400 bills have been introduced thus far. February 25 is the last day a bill can be filed.

House Bills:

- HB 2169 Water Reuse – Sets a state policy on water reuse by establishing water reuse development team. (Water Caucus Bill)
- HB 2830 Pipe Standards – Bill would require jurisdictions/water providers to eliminate pipe standards and require evaluation of pipe materials by professional engineer. Limits the ability of water provider to specify types of pipes best suited to their systems and vulnerabilities and maintain systems with standardized pipe standards. Appears to benefit contractors and pipe purveyors.
- HB 2084 (SB 800) – Tax compliance for licensed contractors – Expands provisions requiring tax compliance as a condition of receiving a license to conduct a business, trade or profession or to enter into a contract with a state agency or political subdivision. Work group being convened. LOC/SDAO/AOC plus other jurisdictions shared letter of concern at recent hearing re: compliance, tracking, unintended consequences.
- HB 3078 Pilot program for water system operators – Training for water system operators. Establishes workshops on water loss. Establishes grant program for expanded water conservation programs. Focused on Groundwater and central Oregon.
- HB 2968 guarantees collection of system development charges – Applies when SDCs are deferred. State funding will reimburse local government if developer defaults.
- HB 2803 Increases fees related to Water – Requested of OWRD by the Governor. Widespread fee increases. In many cases fees are more than doubled. No increase in services or wait times, maintain current service levels. Lots of engagement from stakeholders, work group

Senate Bills:

- SB 427 – Requires OWRD to find that an action would not cause "diminishment in streamflow" when reviewing applications for changes to water rights. Current standard is that a change will not "cause injury" - prevent another right from receiving its entitled water OR result in enlargement (more water than is allowed) to the right in question. Impacts to water provider's ability to move or add point of diversion upstream. Diminishment is not defined and doesn't offer option for mitigation. SDAO/OWUC/LOC are engaged.
- SB 425 – Prohibits credit card fees if merchant doesn't accept cash.

PFAS Bills:

- HB 2947 – Directs Oregon State University to study the distribution and occurrence of PFAS in biosolids applied to ag lands not producing crops for human consumption. Focus

on wastewater solids. Report due by September 1, 2028. Conversations on exemptions for passive receivers also occurring at the federal level.

- HB 3052 – Required Oregon Department of Environmental Quality to study PFAS and report and recommendations finding by September 15, 2026.

Other Legislation:

- LC 3981 – Water Workforce Program Funding LC – Evaluate statewide needs and identify barriers and opportunities to create pathways to entering the water and wastewater workforce. Regional collaboration and resource sharing; paid on-the-job training positions.
- Reciprocity legislative concept - Review certification programs at other states and determine which are comparable to Oregon standards and adopt standards to provide reciprocity. Adopt standards for lower-level reciprocity where programs are not equivalent. Make the standards available online.

Ms. Geisen advised that the Alliance for Water Efficiency is looking for signatories for their letter to new EPA Administration. This is in response to new Executive Order that requires agency heads to identify policies that limit the “freedom to choose from a variety of goods and appliances.” This includes dishwashers, washing machines, toilets and showerheads. There is concern that this could undermine the WaterSense program of which the Consortium has been a longtime supporter.

Commissioner Naomi Angier made a motion to approve the Consortium as a signatory on the Alliance for Water Efficiency letter to the EPA Administration. Commissioner Jim Duggan seconded the motion. The Consortium Board unanimously approved the motion to approve the Consortium as a signatory on the Alliance for Water Efficiency letter to the EPA Administration.
(14:0:0)

Meeting Attendees:

24 Total Members		
Quorum = 13		
Councilor Kevin Teater – City of Beaverton	Commissioner Naomi Angier – Clackamas River Water	Greg Robertson – City of Forest Grove
Councilor Luke Roberts – City of Gladstone	Mike Whiteley – City of Gresham	Councilor Jim Yent and Jessica Dorsey – City of Hillsboro
Erica Rooney – City of Lake Oswego	Councilor Robert Massey – City of Milwaukie	Director Heidi Bullock and Brad Albert – Oak Lodge Water Services
Edward Campbell, and Sarah Santner – City of Portland	Director Tom Lewis and Kari Duncan – Rockwood Water PUD	Chair Renee Brouse – City of Sherwood
Commissioner Gary Barth – Sunrise Water Authority	Councilor Maureen Wolf – City of Tigard	Councilor Christen Sacco – City of Tualatin
Commissioner Jim Duggan – Tualatin Valley Water District	Commissioner Paul Schuler – West Slope Water District	Councilor Adam Cunningham and Martin Montalvo – City of Wilsonville
Rebecca Geisen, Bonny Cushman, Patty Burk, and Riley Berger – Consortium Staff		

Consortium members agencies not represented by elected officials at this meeting included the City of Cornelius, City of Forest Grove, City of Gresham, Lake Grove Water District, City of Lake Oswego, Oak Lodge Water Services, City of Portland, Raleigh Water District, City of Sandy, South Fork Water Board, and City of Troutdale.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 4, 2025, via Zoom/videoconference