

Minutes of
PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT NO. 1 OF PEND OREILLE COUNTY
August 5, 2025
NEWPORT CONFERENCE ROOM, NEWPORT, WA AND
VIRTUAL VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Present: Dave Rick, President
Curtis J. Knapp, Vice President
J. Troy Moody, Secretary

Staff Present: Chris Jones, General Manager
Management/District Staff
Karen Willner, Clerk of the Board

Others: Darrel Hawes, General Manager, Stevens County PUD
Mick Yarroll, Commissioner, Stevens County PUD
Gretchen Koenig, Member of the Public

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Commissioner Dave Rick, President followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:

The minutes from the July 29, 2025 meeting, today's agenda, and the vouchers were reviewed.

As of this date, August 5, 2025, the Board, upon motion by Commissioner Knapp and seconded by Commissioner Moody approved the following:

- The agenda for August 5, 2025 meeting, and the minutes of the July 29, 2025 meeting.
- Vouchers audited certified by the auditing officer as required by RCW 42.24.080, and those expense reimbursement claims certified by RCW 42.24.090, have been recorded on a listing, which has been made available to the Board. Payment of those vouchers, included in the list referred to above and further described as follows: Voucher Nos. 10715 through 10728 in the total amount of \$43,865.39; and ACH payments in the total amount of \$162,174.44.

The motion passed unanimously.

SAFETY SPOTLIGHT:

Commissioner Knapp provided safety tips for today's meeting and pointed out the exit doors. He reported that in the event of an emergency where to go for our muster area and to see Karen Willner, Clerk of the Board, for taking attendance. He reported that it's a good idea to have In Case of Emergency app on your phone if you have a medical emergency and explained the importance of letting the person beside you know if you're not feeling well in case you go to the restroom and don't return so that person is aware and can check on you.

CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT:

Shannon Johnston, District Customer Services Supervisor, reported we have free Energy Savings Kits available for customers. The Energy Savings Kit includes a Smart Thermostat, outlet plug ins and door sweeps, the information is posted on our website, and our customer service representatives can assist. We will promote the kits in our Pend Oreille County Fair booth and this evening's Community Night Out event and there is a form for customers to complete.

She reported that tonight is a Community Night Out event in downtown Newport and Joe Hathaway, District Public Information Officer, will be there and we are coordinating a District truck to be there.

COMMISSION REPORT:

There was no report since the last meeting.

COMMISSION BUSINESS:

Commissioner Knapp is leaving today to attend the Public Power Council (PPC) and Pacific Northwest Utilities Conference Committee meetings in Portland and will be there through Friday. He reported instead of having a PPC Members Forum they will have a Bonneville Dam facility tour. He will try to attend a Northwest Open Access Network (NoaNet) Board meeting on August 13 in Spokane Valley. He will participate in Energy Northwest phone calls this week and will attend a visit with Congressman Michael Baumgartner on August 14 at Box Canyon Dam.

Commissioner Rick will attend a visit with Congressman Michael Baumgartner on August 14 at Box Canyon Dam and the Pend Oreille County Fair on August 17.

Commissioner Moody will attend the NoaNet Board meeting on August 13 in Spokane Valley, a few days at the Pend Oreille County Fair, and the visit with Congressman Michael Baumgartner on August 14 at Box Canyon Dam.

GENERAL MANAGER REPORT:

Chris Jones, District General Manager, asked John Bricher, District Finance Manager, to provide a staff introduction.

Mr. Bricher introduced David Heikkila, District Senior Accountant, and provided his background and role at the District. Mr. Bricher and the finance team are excited to have Mr. Heikkila here and reported that he started yesterday. Mr. Heikkila provided more background information. The Board welcomed Mr. Heikkila to the District.

Madie Groom, District Contracts Administrator, reported that she attended a Northwest Public Power Association Women in Public Power Conference along with Lauren Naccarato, District Utility Services Designer; Megan Malone, District Accountant; and Katie Pfitzer, District Safety Manager. She provided an overview of the conference topics including imposter syndrome and zone of incompetence trap, mentorship and sponsorship in the workplace, using AI in the workplace while keeping the personal aspect, happiness through novelty to try something new and doing micro changes, and taking a pause or breath before responding. The Board thanked Ms. Groom for attending the conference and for her presentation.

She reported yesterday we had a bid opening for the Bare Mountain Substation Transformer and staff is evaluating the bids.

Mr. Jones provided an overview of Ms. Groom's job history while at the District and commended her for her organizational skills. He reported that he expects great things from Ms. Groom. Discussion was held.

Mr. Hathaway reported he will be at the Community Night Out event tonight, which is an event organized by the Newport Police to promote public safety awareness. Discussion was held.

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC/OPEN COMMENT PERIOD:

Commissioner Rick asked if there was any business or comments from the public.

Gretchen Koenig, member of the public, noted the Forest Service's fire danger sign shows we are at high risk and she inquired if the District went to a red flag warning. Mr. Jones reported we had one red flag warning so far. Ms. Koenig inquired when the District goes into that warning. Mr. Jones reported our breakers are currently on 1-Shot and when the National Weather Service (NWS) issues a red flag warning we go into an Extreme or Elevated Fire-Safe Mode. Our internal Wildfire Committee also consider weather and condition risks. Discussion was held.

Commissioner Rick thanked everyone for attending and for their comments.

Following a short recess, the meeting resumed.

April Owen, District Director of Finance, provided a mid-year employee headcount presentation and reported this information was presented to the Board last October. She reported on the headcount vacations where employees left the District and job positions

that were filled from within the District. She reviewed full-time and temporary job positions that were added. Discussion was held. She reviewed a headcount summary.

She reviewed our Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) contribution rates for employer and employee retirement benefits that is dictated by Washington State. She reported the rates for this year show the employer rate is lower than in the past. She reported this is something the District cannot control and she doesn't anticipate the rate continuing to trend lower in the future. Discussion was held.

Mr. Jones reported the Bonneville Power Administration has set its rate increases for power at about 9% and transmission at 20% which may or may not affect us. Discussion was held.

He reported on a news article that Mr. Hathaway shared where an Ashcroft, British Columbia fire was caused when an osprey dropped a fish onto the power line causing embers and the fish to fall to the ground and dry grass below and starting a fire. Discussion was held.

STEVENS COUNTY PUD VISIT:

Commissioner Rick welcomed Darrel Hawes, General Manager, and Mick Yarroll, Commissioner of Stevens County PUD, to the meeting. Commissioner Yarroll reported it is great to be here and it's a different atmosphere. Mr. Hawes reported they are a pocketed water and wastewater system utility and have roughly 15 employees - 10 operators and five administrative. They have a single rate for water and a single rate for wastewater. Discussion was held. They have some of the same issues as the District and one of their biggest challenges and/or focus is maintenance. Mr. Hawes commended the District's staff for always being helpful and responsive when they need assistance and they would love to continue and increase working with each other. Mr. Jones encouraged Mr. Hawes and Commissioner Yarroll to call the District for any assistance. The Board thanked Mr. Hawes and Commissioner Yarroll for attending today's meeting and for their information.

Following a short recess, the meeting resumed.

BOARD WORKSHOP:

- Engineering Summer Intern Presentation. Mike Schleich, District Engineering Manager, reported that having summer interns is a great opportunity for them to help with and learn our job tasks and an obligation as an employee of the community to show interns that we are investing in the community to make it better and stronger. He introduced Nick Ogle and Brennan Jones and reported they performed work to advance the science of how our electric system works. Mr. Ogle began their Evaluating Grounding Data for Analyzing Electrical Resistance Across the County presentation and reported they measured ground resistance across the county and the county has a high average resistance. Mr.

Jones reported they went to eight different locations in the county to do measurements and gather data to recommend future studies. He reported on the risks of high ground resistance and reviewed our current grounding implementation. Mr. Ogle explained they used a technique called ANOVA which determines the values of the data, sees if differences in the measurements are due to random chance or caused by specific groups, and provided a test scores example. He reviewed the data results. Mr. Jones reported on the data results at Sacheen Lake and Diamond Lake. They reviewed other additional summer projects they worked on that included identifying reclosers to be placed in Enhanced Fire-Safe Mode. Mr. Jones explained alternative grounding methods. Mr. Ogle explained grounding at critical poles in fire-prone areas. He reported the study needs to continue in order to collect more data and pursue further investigation and we need to improve grounding with the immediate testing of poles right after they are grounded. Mr. Jones and Mr. Ogle thanked the District for allowing them to work here and reported it's been great to work with the engineering staff. The Board thanked Mr. Ogle and Mr. Jones for their presentation. Discussion was held regarding future summer interns' presentations.

Commissioner Rick asked if there was any other business for the good of the order. There was none.

He reported the next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 19, 2025, starting at 8:30 a.m., in the Newport Conference Room, in Newport and via Microsoft Teams. He adjourned the meeting at 11:23 a.m.

President

ATTEST:

Secretary

General Counsel
Approved as to Form