

The Belfast Water District Board of Trustees met on Monday, January 6, 2025, at the 41 Wight Street office.

Bruce Osgood, the Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Roll Call: The attendees present for the roll call were Chairman Bruce Osgood, Vice-Chairman Kenneth Colby Horne, Treasurer Stephen Hall, Secretary Jill Goodwin, Superintendent Frank Short, and Administrator Tammy Morse. Trustee Chad Otis was absent from the meeting. The District's Accountant, Nick Henry of Henry Solutions LLC, attended the meeting to present the Belfast Water District's 2025 Budget.

VOTED: On a motion by Stephen Hall, seconded by Kenneth Colby Horne and unanimously approved 4-0, to accept the minutes of the regularly scheduled board meeting of December 16, 2024.

Next Meeting Date: The Board discussed and agreed on the next meeting date of Monday, January 27, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. at the Belfast Water District office located at 41 Wight Street in Belfast, Maine.

VOTED: On a motion by Jill Goodwin, seconded by Kenneth Colby Horne and unanimously approved 4-0, to enter into executive session to discuss a real estate matter under 1 MRS 405 Section (6)C at 1:02 p.m.

VOTED: On a motion by Jill Goodwin, seconded by Stephen Hall and unanimously approved 4-0, to adjourn the executive session to discuss a real estate matter under 1 MRS 405 Section (6)C at 1:19 p.m.

Returned to the regularly scheduled board meeting.

The Chairman requested that Nick Henry, the District's Accountant from Henry Solutions LLC, present the 2025 Budget. Nick compared the 2025 budget to the 2024 financials and included a 1.5% increase in water rates, as permitted by the MPUC, effective September 1, 2025. He stated that the budgeted revenues to operate the system amount to \$1.862 million, with the goal of breaking even. As a guideline, the budget will utilize the depreciation amount for capital improvements, such as pumping equipment, water main upgrades, completing the parking lot expansion at 41 Wight Street, and purchasing hydrants and meters.

Nick also noted that the \$188,000 increase in Maine Municipal Bond Payments (Debt Retirement/Interest) is due to the new \$1.56 million General Resolution Loan for the Searsport Avenue Water Main Replacement Project and the Jackson Pit Transmission Line Project. The 2025 Budget difference in wages and benefits reflects a 9% increase in health insurance and the addition of a part-time office assistant.

Tammy directed the Trustees' attention to the overview of employee wages and benefits and explained the calculations involved. Frank presented his recommendations for proposed merit raises included in the 2025 budget, which would take effect at the end of January following Don Hahn's retirement from the Belfast Water District. The Trustees reviewed and discussed the Superintendent's proposed merit raises, noting that Hayden Bradford's responsibilities have increased as a Foreman, and therefore, he deserves an additional 50 cents per hour.

VOTED: On a motion by Jill Goodwin, seconded by Kenneth Colby Horne and unanimously approved 4-0, to accept the Superintendent's proposed wage increases for 2025 with an additional 50 cent merit for the District's Foreman, Hayden Bradford.

Frank notified the Board of Trustees that Don Hahn's retirement party is on Sunday, January 26, 2025, at the Waldo County Shrine Club. The Trustees discussed a suitable retirement gift to honor Don's 38 years of dedicated service to the Belfast Water District.

VOTED: On a motion by Jill Goodwin, seconded by Kenneth Colby Horne and unanimously approved 4-0, to recognize Don Hahn's 38 years of dedicated service to the Belfast Water District with a monetary gift to be presented at his retirement party.

VOTED: On a motion by Jill Goodwin, seconded by Kenneth Colby Horne and unanimously approved 4-0, to accept the 2025 Budget as presented and discussed with the District's Accountant, Nick Henry of Henry Solutions LLC.

Frank presented his Superintendent's report to the Board of Trustees:

Frank stated that he is waiting to hear from Attorney Lee Woodward to discuss drafting the right-of-way agreements for the three landowners affected by the Jackson Pit Transmission Line relocation. Frank wants to secure signatures from the other two property owners before proceeding with the payment for the easement crossing the Hutchins' property.

The Searsport Avenue Water Main Replacement Project is expected to be ready for the bidding process in February. Dirigo Engineering still has surveying work to complete. Two contractors have expressed interest in bidding on the project.

Frank said he has no updates regarding the Belfast Water District Dams from Kenn Ortmann, the Belfast Airport Manager.

Pax Mixers: Frank was pleased to report that the new Pax Mixer at the LABS 1.3 MG Storage Tank is operating as expected. However, we received an alarm from our SCADA system indicating a problem with the Pax Mixer at the Crocker Road Tank. In 2023, the Pax Mixer at the Crocker Road Tank was replaced during the tank's painting; however, the controller is now 8 years old. Our electrician, Davey Small from Arc Electric, will need to work with a technician from Pax Water Technologies to resolve this issue.

Back Searsport Road Booster Station: The Back Searsport Road Booster Station will not switch between the two booster pumps. Frank called Davey Small, who agreed that the pump controls needed an upgrade. They also decided that variable frequency drives (VFD) should be installed to allow the pumps to start and stop gradually.

Leak Detection: Frank informed the Board that he and the Crew will continue leak detection throughout the system to identify potential leaks. Although our daily pumping is not exceptionally high, we discovered a leak in the service line leading to the Front Street Pub just before Christmas. The customer repaired their side of the service which accounted for 25,000 to 30,000 gallons per day.

Last week, Andy Gilson from the Maine Rural Water Association assisted with leak detection and found a leak in the service line to 70 Bayview Street. There was also a location of interest at the intersection of Washington Street and Waldo Avenue. Andy Gilson will return on Tuesday to help pinpoint these possible leaks.

This past month, the crew:

- Organized parts and materials in the new garage for year-end inventory.
- Winterized and removed snow from fire hydrant areas.
- Removed snow from the District's facilities.
- Performed leak detection.

In the upcoming month, the crew will:

- Continue fire hydrant maintenance and snow removal.
- Perform the inventory.
- Perform more leak detection.
- Do equipment maintenance.

Frank provided a summary of the 2024 year as follows:

New Water Services Installed, two 2-inch and twelve 1-inch:

- A meter pit on the existing 2-inch service at 139 Searsport Avenue (the Old Wentworth Building)
- 2-inch domestic service for 139 Searsport Avenue at the shore
- 1-inch domestic service at the end of the Footbridge for a dog water station
- Two 1-inch domestic services at the Little River Subdivision
- 1-inch domestic service for 146 Charles Street
- 1-inch domestic service for 73 Bayview Street
- 1-inch domestic service for 191 Congress Street
- 1-inch domestic Service for 305 High Street
- 1-inch domestic Service for the Montessori School
- 1-inch domestic Service Dana Keene off the Foot Bridge Road
- 1-inch domestic service for 125 Union Street off Condon Street
- Future 1-inch domestic for 145 Charles Street
- Future 1-inch domestic for 200 Congress Street

Leaks Repaired:

- 6-inch main break on the Robbins Road
- 8-inch main break on Waldo Avenue before the overpass
- A coupling on the 14-inch main on the Smart Road
- 10-inch A.C. main break on Searsport Avenue in August and three back-to-back main breaks on the same section of the main in October
- 1-inch service line at the end of Ocean Street
- ¾-inch service line at 194 Swan Lake Ave
- 1-inch service line 31 Field Street
- 1-inch service line 34 Searsport Avenue

Accomplishments:

- Built a cold storage building, created a pipe rack and storage area for materials at our Crocker Road Tank Site
- The Crew painted the Belfast Water District's Fire Hydrants and installed new hydrant flags on them
- Created a new right of way for the Jackson Pit Transmission Main
- Looped and renewed a dead-end waterline on Bradbury and Charles Streets
- New steps and flagpole at our office on 41 Wight Street
- Completed the Lead Service Survey mandated by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency
- Replaced the Pax Mixer in the 1.3 MG water tank at the Lincolnville Avenue Booster Station

New Equipment Purchased:

- Superintendent half-ton truck with new fire hydrant logos for all the trucks
- New ditch pump
- Tripod laser level

New Personnel:

- Equipment Operator and Water Operator, Ezra Downs
- Part-Time Office Assistant, Lisa Redmond

Tammy reported to the Board of Trustees as follows:

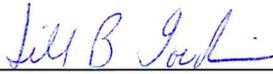
Fourth Quarter Budget Report: Tammy distributed the fourth quarter budget report to support the 2025 Budget as discussed with the District's accountant.

Maturing CDs: The 12-month certificate of deposit (CD) matured on December 23, 2024, earning \$32,000 in interest. The current interest rates are below 5%, even with other local banks. However, our established relationship with Camden National Bank is strong, and they have offered us a rate of 3.5%, similar to what other banks provide. Additionally, our 2-year CD will mature on February 19, 2025, and has earned \$6,900 in interest.

125 Cafeteria Plan: Years ago, the District implemented a 125 Cafeteria Plan for flexible spending accounts for all employees when transitioning from POS A to POS C to save money. For \$350, Go Dynamics established a new 125 Cafeteria Plan that complies with the latest laws regarding flexible spending accounts and pretax premiums for employees covering their dental and vision expenses. The annual renewal cost to maintain this plan is \$250.

Maine Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML): The Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) program will take effect on January 1, 2025. It introduces a 0.5% tax on all Maine employees. Employers in Maine with 15 or more employees must also pay this tax; however, the Belfast Water District, which has fewer than 15 employees, is exempt. The collected funds must be reported and paid quarterly through the Maine.gov Department of Labor portal.

VOTED: On a motion by Kenneth Colby Horne, seconded by Jill Goodwin and unanimously approved 4-0, to adjourn the meeting at 2:35 p.m.



Jill B. Goodwin, Secretary/Clerk