

The Belfast Water District Board of Trustees met on Monday, March 3, 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, Trustee Chad Otis, Superintendent Frank Short, and Administrator Tammy Morse.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Stephen Hall, seconded by Chad Otis and unanimously approved 5-0, to accept the minutes of the regularly scheduled board meeting of January 27, 2025.

**Next Meeting Date:** The Board discussed and agreed on the next meeting date of Monday, March 31, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. at the Belfast Water District office located at 41 Wight Street in Belfast, Maine.

Secretary Jill Goodwin reported to the Board of Trustees that she completed the annual review of the Belfast Water District's ten outstanding bonds to ensure the District complies with the covenants within its bond documents as required by federal and state law.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Chad Otis, seconded by Stephen Hall and approved 4-0, with 1 abstention, to accept the Secretary of the Board of Trustees review of the District's bonds per the Arbitrage and Use of Proceeds Policy.

Frank presented his Superintendent's Report as follows:

**Searsport Avenue Water Main Project:** Dirigo Engineering is in the final stages of planning for the Searsport Avenue Water Main Replacement Project and is preparing it for bidding. Following a discussion with Belfast Fire Chief Patrick Richards, five new fire hydrants will be added to the system. Additionally, two new gate valves will be installed, along with a 12-inch stub line running 80' ± across Searsport Avenue to Mill Lane for future use.

**Jackson Pit Transmission Line:** Attorney Lee Woodward has prepared the easements for the Jackson Pit Transmission Line, which are now ready for the property owners to sign. During a conversation between Frank and Jim Lord, of Dirigo Engineering, at the Maine Water Utilities Association Conference in Augusta on February 5th, Jim mentioned two potential grant opportunities and is researching them for us.

**Upper and Lower Dams:** This morning, Frank and Tammy met with our attorneys from Eaton Peabody to discuss options for the Upper and Lower Dams. If we decide to sell, the City of Belfast would have the first option to purchase them within a reasonable deadline.

**Painting Back Searsport Road Tank:** Frank spoke with Tim Sawtelle of Dirigo Engineering regarding painting the 500,000-gallon tank on Back Searsport Road. He stated it would be acceptable to postpone this work until 2026. As noted last month, our accountant, Nick Henry, recommended obtaining a firm quote for the tank painting to assess whether the cost will exceed the allocated budget of \$309,766 for 2025. If the price exceeds this amount, a decision to set aside funds for 2026 should be made before our Certificate of Deposit matures in December.

**Equipment:** Last month, Frank mentioned selling the snow scoop that attaches to our loader. The crew tried it out and expressed a desire to keep it. He also brought up purchasing a new sander for the plow truck. Since the plow truck is scheduled to be replaced in 2026, it would be best to wait until then to purchase a new truck and sander.

**Calcium Carbonate:** Frank informed the Board that our pumping had dropped to less than half. The pipe at Jackson Pit had become clogged with calcium carbonate due to water treatment with sodium hydroxide, similar to the issue encountered in 2018. A piece of this buildup broke off and partially obstructed the lower 90-degree bend at the outlet of the well, reducing the pumping to less than half of its usual capacity. D.L. Maher, who has consistently serviced our wells and assisted the District in cleaning this buildup in the past, will arrive in April to thoroughly clean our water main before heading to Searsport to rehabilitate the Searsport Water District's well. We are currently working

on a temporary solution to remove the broken piece from inside the HDPE 90-degree bend by cutting underneath to remove the piece. Fortunately, the Smart Road well has sufficient capacity to supply water to our customers.

**Interconnect:** The Town of Searsport will depend on the Belfast Water District to supply water from the interconnect for approximately one month while the Searsport Water District's well undergoes rehabilitation. Around 350,000 gallons of water will be delivered daily to Searsport until the rehabilitation is complete. Additionally, our Searsport Avenue Water Main Replacement Project may be postponed until Searsport's well is back in operation.

**Leaks:** On Monday, February 3rd, the employees of the Belfast Water District were looking forward to celebrating Don Hahn's 38 years of service. However, a routine check of the tank levels on the SCADA system revealed a concerning drop. This prompted a change in plans, as the eight-inch main in front of the new apartment complex at 115 Congress Street had broken. Unfortunately, this break was not responsible for the drop in tank levels, so searching for the source of the missing water began. A two-inch curb stop had broken to RW MacLeod Lane, and a significant leak was found on a ¾-inch service at 194 Swan Lake Avenue at the flare connection, with a water loss of 3,900,000 gallons.

On Wednesday, February 12th, Andy Gilson, from the Maine Rural Water Association, assisted with leak detection and discovered a large leak. Melted snow was flowing down the side of Airmail Lane off Searsport Avenue, revealing that the 1-inch saddle on the 10-inch A.C. main feeding the Airmail Lane service line had deteriorated, resulting in a hole approximately 1½ inches in diameter, the water loss was 1,950,000 gallons. The crew worked late into the night to repair this leak. A week later, a leak was found on the 6-inch main running down Pierce Street, a water loss of 288,000 gallons.

Despite the challenges this week, our daily water usage has returned to normal levels for this time of year.

**Upgrading Meter Reading System:** Frank mentioned that he, Tammy, and Suzette will meet with Steve Clements from Ti-Sales this Wednesday to discuss upgrading our meter reading system. Our current system is incompatible with Windows 11, and support for Windows 10 will end in October. More information will be provided at our next board meeting.

This past month, the crew:

- Cut trees for the subsurface detention pond to add parking at 41 Wight Street.
- Repaired leaks and water main breaks.
- Winterized and cleared more snow from fire hydrants.
- Attended a training class to repair A.C. pipe and participated in a tabletop exercise about handling main breaks.
- Worked on the calcium carbonite blockage at Jackson Pit Station.

In the upcoming month, the crew will:

- Winterize and clear fire hydrants of snow.
- Work at Jackson Pit Station.
- Continue with the subsurface detention pond (weather permitting).

**Synthetic Organic Compounds:** Frank informed the Board that the District has applied for a waiver from the Maine Drinking Water Program to collect water samples for Synthetic Organic Compounds (SOCs). If the waiver is approved, the District will receive a three-year exemption. The last set of SOC samples were taken in the Fall of 2023.

**Water Operator Position:** Frank told the Trustees that Kayden Richards had decided not to accept the full-time water operator position, although he would continue to work part-time until a new full-time water operator was hired.

Stephen Hall notified the Board that he had decided to step down as the Board of Trustees Treasurer yet will continue as a Trustee and nominated Chad Otis to take his place. Chairman Bruce Osgood requested a motion.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Stephen Hall, seconded by Jill Goodwin and unanimously approved 5-0, to designate Chad Otis as the Board of Trustees Treasurer.

Tammy reported to the Board of Trustees that:

- The 2-year CD matured on 2/19/25, gaining interest earnings of \$7,000. Camden National Bank offered a 1-year 3.5% APR (3.44%)
- The 2025 budget is set up based on our accountant's calculations.
- A pre-audit with our accountant, Henry Solutions, took place on February 12th. Documents will soon be submitted to the new auditing firm.

Tammy informed the Board that a Maine Public Employees Retirement System (MPERS) representative met with all Belfast Water District employees in January to discuss retirement options. In 2007, the District executed a 457 DC Retirement Plan through MPERS for District employees. MPERS is now offering an additional option, a ROTH after-tax Retirement Plan. If the Board of Trustees permits this option, a vote is necessary by the Board to amend the agreement and provide this option along with the current 457 DC Plan.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Stephen Hall, seconded by Chad Otis and unanimously approved 5-0, to adopt the amended Maine PERS Plan known as the '457 Supplemental Participation Agreement' to include a Roth (After-tax) option along with the current 457 DC Plan for the Belfast Water District employees.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Jill Goodwin, seconded by Stephen Hall and unanimously approved 5-0, to adjourn the meeting at 1:38 p.m.



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Jill B. Goodwin, Secretary/Clerk

