

Portland Utility Board

Tuesday, October 7th, 2025, 3:30 p.m.
Virtual meeting using Zoom platform
Meeting #212

Attendees

PUB Members

Lorraine Wilson
Alexis Rife
Kyle Chipman, Chair
Bruk Berhanu
Dr. Myra Khushbakht
Jenny O'Connor
Julia DeGraw (Left at 4:15)
Cormac Burke (Arrived at 3:50)
Joanne Johnson, Ex-Officio

Absent

Lauren Rosenkranz*
Darrel Bobb*
**Notice of absence provided prior to meeting*

Staff

Amy Archer-Masters, Portland Utility Board Analyst, City Budget Office
Jonna Lynn Bransford, Portland Utility Board Coordinator, City Budget Office
Quisha Light, Director, Portland Water Bureau
Ting Lu, Environment Services
Cecelia Huynh, Portland Water Bureau
Farshad Allahdadi, Environmental Services
Becky Anicker, Portland Water Bureau
Brandon Zero, Portland Water Bureau
Felicia Heaton, Portland Water Bureau

Public

T.J. Anderson, Disability Advocate
Carol Cushman, LOWV

Items Discussed, Action Items, Decisions

Acronyms & Definitions

In these notes PWB stands for Portland Water Bureau, BES for the Bureau of Environmental Services, FSB for Flood Safety Benefit, DCA for Deputy City Administrator, and PUB for the Portland Utility Board.

Video Recording

The [video of the meeting](https://www.portland.gov/pub/events/2025/10/7/portland-utility-board-meeting) as well as supporting documents can be found here:
<https://www.portland.gov/pub/events/2025/10/7/portland-utility-board-meeting>.

In the below notes the **blue timestamp** indicates the approximate place in the video where a particular topic begins as well as providing a link to that portion of the video. For example, **3:45** indicates that this topic begins at approximately 3 minutes and 45 seconds into the video. Closed captioning is available by clicking on the CC symbol in the lower right side of the video tool bar.

Meeting Summary

The board discussed the Bull Run filtration plant and concerns about limited community engagement regarding the new flood safety benefit fee being added to the utility bill. They also reviewed the Advisory Bodies Enhancement Project and implications for their engagement with leadership.

Call to Order

Kyle Chipman, PUB co-chair, called the meeting to order at approximately 3:33pm.

Disclosure of Communications

There were no required disclosures.

Public Comment

None was offered.

Review of Minutes

September 18th, 2025 minutes were distributed and were accepted as written.

Updates [5:14](#)

Leadership Team Meeting Report-back

Kyle Chipman provided a brief report about the leadership team meeting that was held on Monday, September 29th.

Filtration update [13:42](#)

At a prior meeting, PWB provided an update on their annual report to PUB, and they presented to Transportation & Infrastructure meeting yesterday. There is an opportunity for PUB members to provide input to Council when the annual report is brought before the full council on Wednesday, October 15th. PUB members discussed some of their thinking around filtration, including concerns around lead, cryptosporidium, equity impacts to the siting of the filtration facility. PUB co-chair planned to share testimony based on their familiarity with PUB's thinking on the topic. PUB staff offered to draft some points based on PUB's thoughts for review and approval by PUB.

After the conclusion of this meeting, the Bull Run Filtration Annual Report was bumped from the October 15th Council agenda due to other emerging priorities, so PUB has another opportunity to consider and plan for testimony on this topic at their October 16th meeting.

Flood Safety Benefit Fee [25:12](#)

The PUB discussed concerns about the FSB fee being added to utility bills, with members also raising issues about precedent and transparency. PUB passed a motion to submit written testimony capturing these concerns, which PUB staff agreed to draft. During public comment, a members of the public expressed worry about the cumulative effect of small fees on low-income residents.

PUB Member Questions, Concerns, Feedback

1. Lack of information provided around FSB fee. There are so many issues and challenges that the Bureaus are having related with utility fees. Concern that CFO Biery did not have information when he came to PUB, but then once they had more information they did not engage with PUB prior to bringing it to Council. Needs to be clear that the engagement didn't happen – the City made an informed decision not to do engagement, moving forward with the decision to put the charge on the utility bill. The information that came to PUB was cursory at best. There is enough momentum to take up this issues as a point of investigation.
2. **FSB Fee Feedback**
 - Difference between communication and engagement.
 - Remain concerned about adding this charge to the utility bill when customers and residents are already feeling constrained.
 - Threatens to derail the work that Bureaus are doing, which they need funds for, by putting an additional fee onto residents.
 - Setting this precedent seems dangerous

PUB decided to provide written feedback to Council before they take their final vote on second reading on October 8th.

Vote

Motion: Lorraine Moved that the elements of, what was said by Jenny and Alexis be submitted as PUB's position or sentiments on the addition of the FSB fee to the utility bill.
Kyle Chipman seconded

Final Discussion: Question of whether staff has capacity to draft this tonight, to which staff replied "yes."

Public Comment: Member of the public raised concern that despite the small size of the fee, Portland area residents are experiencing "death by a thousand papercuts." With costs going up, wages going down, it will be challenging to add this additional fee to the bill.

Vote:

Kyle – yes
Jenny – yes
Alexis – yes
Myra – yes
Julia – absent
Bruk – yes

Lorraine – yes
Cormac – yes
Motion passes.

Advisory Bodies Enhancement Project [54:17](#)

The Advisory Bodies Enhancement Project is moving forward with public input sessions scheduled for October 9th and 14th, with final recommendations expected to go to City Council in November. The project aims to establish best practices across all advisory boards, including PUB, with new requirements for annual reports, work plans, and engagement with city leadership. Staff highlighted that PUB's current practices align well with the proposed recommendations, though some areas for further clarification were noted.

Project components that may impact PUB's operations:

- They're developing templates for reports to Council
- Recommendations around supports that are available to board members, (for example, stipends, meeting times for accessibility, etc).
- Providing City email addresses for members
- Centralizing some timelines around recruitment, so that recruitments would take place at certain times of the year, allowing for centralized outreach and processing and potential for greater transparency and awareness to the public.
- Changes to the residency requirements. Up until now the language allowed membership for those who live, work, worship, go to school, play, or do business in the City of Portland; whereas the proposed language removes “play or do business piece,” but it retains the “live, work, worship, or go to school predominantly in Portland.” It has some exceptions for lived experience that would add value to a board
- Recommendation to review all advisory boards and commissions to ensure that their purpose is still meaningful, that they're meeting the requirements, that there are no changes recommended. They propose doing a comprehensive review of one quarter the boards each year, allowing for full review of each board every 4 years.
- Relationship to leadership
 - Formalize some expectations around Boards' relationships to leadership, including an annual report requirement with a minority report option, if appropriate. The proposal also requires an annual work plan. It identifies the designated council committee as the body that decides which advisory boards and commissions they invite to be present at public meetings or if they're going to engage in a work session.
 - If written recommendations are submitted they propose that the City should respond in writing, including whether they agree or disagree with the recommendations, and progress or actions taken to implement, and any explanation of areas of disagreement.

- Work session: while not a requirement, it states Council Committees *may* hold annual evening work sessions with advisory boards and have the executive branch, the city administration and bureau leadership in attendance. That it would review past year's work, an analysis of how the advisory board influenced city action, so that's some of what your advisory board, does do currently, and has done in prior years, when it has been an option.

The document is clear that Council will adopt their own procedures related to Advisory Board Commissions, and there is language that if the advisory board or commission has other requests for council engagement, that those would be submitted through the Deputy City Administrator that is within their area (for PUB, that's the DCA for Public Works, Priya Dhanapal). PUB staff flagged this as a potential point of concern for PUB, as it potentially limits PUB's advisory role with Council.

PUB Member Questions, Comments, & Concerns

1. PUB voting member wondered whether there might be opportunities for boards that have overlapping or related scopes to coordinate or work together.

Response:

PUB staff clarified that this has happened in the past and is always a possibility. It is not necessarily formalized within the current citywide enhancement project.

2. Another voting member described being pleased overall with the recommendations, and with the fact that PUB is already meeting many or most of the guidelines. They mentioned that they would have like to see a recommendation to have a designated Council member that could serve as a point of contact for PUB.

PUB Engagement with Leadership

This item was briefly discussed within the context of the advisory boards enhancement project topic, but was held over for the next meeting due to time.

Announcements & Next PUB Meeting

Field Trip

The board also discussed a potential field trip to West Lentz and Springwater Wetlands facilities, which was well-received by members. Friday afternoon was mentioned as a potentially good time to schedule.

Equity 101 Training

Training opportunity that can be made available to City volunteers. Details will be sent by email.

Closing

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm

The next meeting will be Tuesday, November 4th, 2025.

Possible topics

- Carryover from this meeting
- Conversation around PUB engagement with City Leaders

Likely future topics

- Affordability strategy discussion

Potential Future Topics: Carryover from prior meetings, One Water director hiring, Natural Resources Service Delivery, Permitting reorganization update, strategic & equity plans updates. STEP, PCEF updates, filtration update.