

Portland Utility Board

Tuesday, December 2nd, 2025, 3:30 p.m.
Virtual meeting using Zoom platform
Meeting #217

Attendees

PUB Members

Kyle Chipman, Co-chair
Lauren Rosenkranz, Co-chair
Cormac Burke
Alexis Rife
Bruk Berhanu
Jenny O'Connor
Lorraine Wilson
Dr. Myra Khushbakht
Joanne Johnson, Ex-Officio

Absent

Julia DeGraw*
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, Interim Director, Portland Water Bureau
Ting Lu, Interim Director, Environment Services
Farshad Allahdadi, Environment Services
Cecelia Huynh, Water Bureau
Brandon Zero, Water Bureau
Farshad Allahdadi, Environmental Services
Eben Polk, Bureau of Planning & Sustainability

Public

Carol Cushman, League of Women Voters
Michael

Background & Video

Acronyms & Definitions

In these notes PWB stands for Portland Water Bureau, BES for the Bureau of Environmental Services, PWSA for Public Works Service Area, BPS for Bureau of Planning & Sustainability, RCT for Randomized Control Trial, and PUB for the Portland Utility Board.

Video Recording

The [video of the meeting](#) as well as supporting documents can be found here:

<https://www.portland.gov/pub/events/2025/12/2/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.

Discussion, Action Items, Decisions

Meeting Summary

The meeting covered a few updates, including a request for PUB participation on an expert panel for the Bull Run Filtration Projects. The bulk of the meeting was spent in discussion around budget engagement, with the board forming working groups to address specific topic areas. The Board also reviewed a proposal for them to provide oversight around solid waste rates.

Call to Order

Kyle Chipman, PUB co-chair, called the meeting to order at approximately 3:32 p.m.

Disclosure of Communications

There were no disclosures.

Public Comment

None was offered.

Review of Minutes

Draft minutes were not ready ahead of this meeting, so none were reviewed.

Updates 4:55

Budget Guidance

The Mayor released [budget guidance \(linked here\) on November 21st](#), which was shared with PUB by email. Bureaus are not yet ready to share impacts or potential scenarios but will do so as soon as is practicable. PUB staff provided an overview of the guidance as relates to non-general fund bureaus like the utilities, describing the three scenarios that each bureau is required to plan for.

Bull Run Filtration Expert Panel

PUB has been invited to appoint two delegates to the Bull Run Filtration Expert Panel to provide guidance during the Bull Run Filtration Projects' critical 2026 construction year.

PUB Member Questions, Comments, & Concerns

1. PUB member asked for background on how this panel came to be

Response

It was recommended by the commissioner overseeing Utilities in the past but it never came to be, but is being implemented now – with experts who have experience with large mega projects from across the construction field.

2. PUB member requested more information about the other expert panelists.

Response

The other panelists have extensive expertise. They want PUB members to act as the community view to ensure that they're doing things in the best way possible. It's meant to be a second set of eyes. PUB is being tapped because they would be able to hit the ground running, rather than having to get up to speed on the background on the projects.

3. Several members expressed interest in participating, while also wanting to ensure that other members would feel comfortable volunteering, not wanting to “take up too much space.”
4. Member expressed gratitude for the opportunity to participate in this deeper way.

PUB Budget and Leadership Engagement Strategy [27:46](#)

Summary

PUB discussed the mayor's budget guidance and its implications for the utilities. They agreed to form small working groups to focus on specific areas like deferred maintenance, unified asset management, affordability, and One Water implementation.

Discussion

PUB co-chair led the group in a discussion, sharing a public-facing Miro Board in order to understand voting members' interests and district affiliation as well as to guide the conversation toward actionable next steps. Ultimately they determined that two leads from four of the topic groups will meet independently and report back to the full board by early January. Other members with capacity also expressed their interest in topic areas and may be tapped to provide input or expertise within the bounds of public meetings rules.

Identification of project teams [1:05:40](#)

Topics identified that have 2 leads that will endeavor to meet outside of regular PUB meeting time before the end of the year.

- Topic 1: Deferred Maintenance and Unified Asset Management
 - Leads: Kyle, Bruk
 - Cormac, Lauren, (Darrel volunteered after the meeting)
- Topic 2: City Budget
 - Leads: Bruk & Kyle
- Topic 3: One Water Implementation/Strategy/Planning
 - Leads: Jenny, Lorraine

- Bruk, Myra, Lauren, Alexis
- Topic 4: Affordability Programs, DEI, Equitable Affordability
 - Leads: Kyle, Myra
 - Lauren, Lorraine, Alexis, (Darrel volunteered after the meeting)

Topics identified without immediate plans to meet outside of regular PUB meetings:

- Topic 5: Natural Resources Service Delivery
 - Jenny, Lauren
- Topic 6: Clarity of Decision-making in New City Government Structure
 - Lauren

Prerequisite knowledge (lines of inquiry) identified on Miro board:

- Clear understanding of past budget cycles/decisions and current day (and future) implications
- What are the “knobs” that bureaus have available to turn to address budget challenges?

Solid Waste Rate Review Request

The board also reviewed a proposal from the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) to serve as an advisory body for solid waste rate reviews. While there was general interest in the proposal, concerns were raised about capacity and the potential for additional work during a busy budget season. The board agreed to gather more feedback and discuss the proposal further at their next meeting.

PUB questions, concerns, comments

1. PUB members expressed concerns around capacity – feeling as though it isn’t feasible for them to take this on, despite their interest in the topic.
2. Voting member expressed interest in the work, but concern about the role that the PUB will play in taking this on. A lot of Bureaus come to community and then they end up treating the Board as a “rubber stamp.” How would the information be provided to PUB such that they could fulfill a meaningful oversight role?

Response

BPS would provide all the information needed. They do have a rate review process that is pretty prescriptive, thus the deeper engagement would be more related with developing those criteria.
3. Another voting member echoes those concerns, while acknowledging the need for oversight. The capacity issue is what is concerning. Would it take away some of the focus from BES and Water Bureau?
4. Concern about the lack of specific expertise on the PUB at this time.
5. PUB voting member wondered if there are other creative ways to move forward at this time? (bi-monthly partnership, readings to provide context).
6. Could PUB create a sub-committee to come back to full PUB to provide feedback to full PUB?

PUB staff will follow up with BPS staff/Eben with some of the thoughts and concerns that were brought up in this meeting, and then come back to a future meeting.

Announcements & Next PUB Meeting

- City Administrator
 - Raymond Lee will be brought to Council for consideration on December 10th.
- Advisory Bodies Enhancement Project Final Report
 - Will be brought to Council Governance Committee Monday, December 8th
- PUB leadership team meeting December 9th
- Let PUB know of absences.
- ARC meetings

Closing

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm

The next meeting will be Thursday, November 20th, 2025.

Possible topics

- Carryover from this meeting
 - Budget and engagement planning
- Affordability Framework

Likely future topics

- Solid waste rates
- Tryon Creek

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.