

Minutes of
PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT NO. 1 OF PEND OREILLE COUNTY
May 6, 2025
NEWPORT CONFERENCE ROOM, NEWPORT, WA AND
VIRTUAL VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

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

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

Others: Craig Nelsen, NoaNet CEO
Koby Haikkila, Member of the Public
Paul Haas, Member of the Public
Cliff Bauer, Member of the Public
Gretchen Koenig, Member of the Public

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Commissioner Dave Rick, President.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:

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

As of this date, May 6, 2025, the Board, upon motion by Commissioner Knapp and seconded by Commissioner Moody approved the following:

- The revised agenda for May 6, 2025 meeting, and the minutes of the April 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. 10430 through 10439 in the total amount of \$52,044.24; ACH payments in the total amount of \$522,824.73; and Wire transfers in the total amount of \$254,374.15.

The motion passed unanimously.

SAFETY SPOTLIGHT:

Katie Pfitzer, District Safety Manager, provided a Safety Management System implementation update and reported a safety checklist module for implementing QR codes is completed.

She provided a safety update and reported there was one non-recordable incident for an employee thumb strain. A vital de-escalation safety training and a non-qualified worker training were held last month. This month's safety meeting will include an ePanic button drill.

CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT:

Shannon Johnston, District Customer Service Supervisor, reported that May is National Dam Safety Awareness Month and May 31 is National Dam Safety Day. She explained the importance of staying a safe distance away from dams "Keep Your Distance and Keep Your Life" and water safety tips of wearing a lifejacket, staying away from dams and danger, and wearing a whistle. The District will be handing out safety whistles that attach to life jackets.

COMMISSION REPORT:

Commissioner Moody attended a United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Albeni Falls Dam meeting on April 2 at the Camas Wellness Center in Cusick and provided an overview.

Commissioner Knapp attended the USACE Albeni Falls Dam meeting on April 1 in Ponderay and provided an overview. Discussion was held.

COMMISSION BUSINESS:

Commissioner Moody will attend an Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) meeting on May 14 in Ione.

Commissioner Knapp will attend virtual Public Power Council meetings on May 7 and 8 and a virtual Pacific Northwest Utilities Conference Committee meeting on May 9.

Commissioner Rick will attend an Ione Town Council meeting on May 7 in Ione and the EDAC meeting on May 14 in Ione.

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC/OPEN COMMENT PERIOD:

Commissioner Rick read a format summary of the Business from the Public/Open Comment Period session. He asked if there was any business or comments from the public.

Koby Haikkila, a member of the public, is concerned and frustrated about the recent power surges on Highway 211 that caused damage to his house and meter. He has had power surges in the past that blew up his arrestors and when he notified the District about the damage and was told it was caused by Mother Nature. He is concerned this is a safety and fire issue and he is concerned for his family and for his kids. He questioned when does it not become an Act of God and is it a maintenance or mechanical issue. He is spending a lot of money out of pocket and he has pictures of smoke rings around his meter. He commented the District needs to do something to fix this ongoing issue.

Paul Haas, a member of the public, has had power surges and parts of his outside meter blew apart. He reported that this is becoming common and from a public record request he submitted to the District, he has District call logs and has talked to former District employees about the potential cause. He reported there is a coalition of customers on Highway 211 and they are hoping the District can help their ratepayers. He stated someone at the District needs to take responsibility because something is wrong – is it a shared neutral, the switches in the Cusick Substation, and/or the District's Vegetation Management Program. He is hoping the coalition can have a common goal for safety and is asking for responsibility. He commented the District should expect to be inundated with public records requests. He commented that there were Highway 211 corridor upgrades in the past and hopes the District pays the damage claims and takes care of its customers.

Mr. Haikkila reported that Saturday morning was a sunny day with no wind and no storm. When it comes to safety, he wants the District to think of their kids, house, and safety and when does it become safety or ignorance.

Mr. Haas reported the dead tree was on a customer's private property. He wants to know if the District's Vegetation Management crew knocks on doors to ask if they can safely take down a tree and if the District has that authority.

Cliff Bauer, a member of the public, reported that he has lost money before due to power surges and equipment is damaged and is here today to listen.

Following a short recess, the meeting resumed.

PUBLIC HEARING – POLE ATTACHMENT RATES:

Pursuant to notice given to the Newport Miner, a Public Hearing to discuss the Pole Attachment Rates was held at 9:30 a.m. There was one member of the public in attendance.

Sarah Holderman, District Director of Customer Services, provided background information and reported that these rates are for companies that attach their equipment to our poles. She explained the two rate methodology calculations and reported the proposed calculated rate per RCW 54.04.045 is \$45.61. She reported our current rate is \$25 per pole and is proposing a rate of \$30 per pole which is a \$5 increase. The new rates

would be effective January 1, 2026. Discussion was held. She reviewed the financial impact to our five customers that attach their equipment to our poles. The next steps are for the Board to consider staff and public comments with potential action at the May 20 Board meeting.

The Board thanked Ms. Holderman for her presentation.

The hearing ended at 9:39 a.m.

NORTHWEST OPEN ACCESS NETWORK (NOANET) 101 PRESENTATION:

Ms. Holderman introduced Craig Nelsen, NoaNet CEO. Mr. Nelsen provided his background information and reported they are a not-for-profit organization. He thanked the District for its supportive relationship as a NoaNet member/owner. He reviewed the company locations and structure. He provided a presentation including their Board and members, broadband infrastructure, Washington State PUD's and NoaNet history, new statewide 911 network platform contract, and work with school and hospital libraries. NoaNet is Washington State's wholesale broadband solutions provider and has done work with the Spokane Tribe of Indians and Colville Tribe of Indians. Ms. Holderman reported that we utilize a number of NoaNet services including their Network Operations Center, grant writing and grant designs, and network design for fiber broadband.

Mr. Nelsen reported on past funding opportunities including American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and Broadband Technology Opportunity Plan grants. They are getting into fixed wireless access points and he explained Long Term Evolution wireless as a cost-effective solution for communities. He reviewed the NoaNet statewide network redundant loops map. He reviewed their broadband outreach and education, engineering, construction, and maintenance and monitoring investments and opportunities. He reported that their Board approved expansion of membership and they are considering a Colville Tribe of Indians partnership contract.

He reported they decided to develop and have successfully launched an Internet Service Provider retail relationship with Chelan County PUD and are looking to grow into Douglas County. Discussion was held. He thanked the District for inviting him and for its support. The Board thanked him for his presentation.

Gretchen Koenig, a member of the public, hopes the District can help the customers in the Highway 211 area and she doesn't want anyone to get hurt.

Following a short recess, the meeting resumed.

BOARD WORKSHOP:

- Wildfire Mitigation.

Joe Hathaway, District Public Information Officer, reported we are heading into wildfire season but it's not only during the summer anymore. He provided a presentation based on the District Wildfire Mitigation Plan. He reviewed our design and construction measures, ongoing strategic planning for overhead and underground infrastructure, and installation of system protection devices with the ability to change to fire-safe mode. He reviewed our Vegetation and Fuel Management Program and reported we went from a three to a five full-time employee tree trimming crew. Discussion was held.

He reviewed our inspection and maintenance practices and operational practices during fire season. Stacie Maier, District Director of Engineering and Operations, explained how reclosers and breakers work and our settings for fire-safe mode. She reported that we are working with ECI Consultants, Inc. on a coordination study for the best way to deploy. Mr. Hathaway reviewed weather monitoring and situational awareness tools. Ms. Maier noted a Watch Duty application for fire alerts.

Mr. Hathaway reviewed a Public Safety Power Shutoff policy and reported that we have not implemented this and are evaluating the feasibility and risks for proactive shutoffs. He reviewed our community and outreach coordination communication channels. The Board thanked Mr. Hathaway and Ms. Maier for the presentation and information.

Commissioner Rick announced that following a short recess, a 30-minute executive session to review the performance of a public employee will begin at 11:10 a.m. in the Riverbend Conference Room. If the executive session needs to be extended he will rejoin the open session to publicly announce an extension. No final action will be taken during the executive session. Following the executive session, he and the Board will rejoin the open session to resume or adjourn the meeting. He reported the next meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 20 at 8:30 a.m., in the Newport Conference Room, in Newport and via Microsoft Teams.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – REVIEW PERFORMANCE OF A PUBLIC EMPLOYEE:

A 30-minute executive session to review the performance of a public employee commenced at 11:10 a.m. The following were in attendance: Board of Commissioners; and Chris Jones, Interim General Manager. At 11:40 a.m., Commissioner Rick publicly announced a 20-minute extension to the executive session. The executive session ended at 12:00 p.m. and the Board returned to open session. No final action was taken during the executive session.

He reported the next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 20, 2025, starting at 8:30 a.m., in the Newport Conference Room, in Newport and via Microsoft Teams. He adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

President

ATTEST:

Secretary

General Counsel
Approved as to Form