

MAPLETON WATER DISTRICT

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

August 4, 2026 - 3:00 p.m.

Mapleton Lions Club Kitchen

88151 Riverview Avenue, Mapleton, Oregon

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair West called the special meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Chair Vanessa West; Vice Chair Art Donnelly; Commissioner Dustin Basurto; Commissioner Steve Elliott

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Matt Ferkey, Lead Operator; Jordan Walker, Office Administrator

Community Members Present: Ray Mader

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ferkey requested that two time-sensitive items be added under Discussion Items: a second ground-penetrating radar (GPR) option and new hydrants for the Rice Road project. The Board agreed to consider these items before the job-description matters.

Vice Chair Donnelly moved to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded. Chair West, Vice Chair Donnelly, Commissioner Basurto, and Commissioner Elliott voted in favor. The motion carried unanimously.

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

4.1. Second GPR Option

Ferkey presented a quote for a new dual-frequency GPR unit operating at 400 and 800 MHz. The unit was approximately \$2,200 to \$2,300 more than the previously considered single-frequency demo unit, but included a warranty and offered improved resolution at shallow depths. Ferkey explained that the higher frequency may help distinguish shallow utilities and reduce false indications, although further research and consultation were warranted. The Board discussed cart size, field conditions, portability, security, warranty coverage, and the relative condition and capabilities of the two units.

Vice Chair Donnelly moved to authorize a budget of up to \$18,500 for purchase of a GPR unit, with the specific unit to be selected by the operator and operations manager after additional review. Commissioner Elliott seconded. Chair West, Vice Chair Donnelly, Commissioner Basurto, and Commissioner Elliott voted in favor. The motion carried unanimously.

4.2. New Hydrants for the Rice Road Project

Ferkey reported that the project currently contemplated reconnecting existing hydrants after the new main was installed and pressure tested. Preliminary information suggested that purchasing new hydrants might cost less than \$1,000 more per hydrant than reconnecting the existing hydrants, before accounting for removal and change-order costs. New hydrants would also avoid reusing older equipment, while serviceable removed hydrants could be retained as District spares.

The Board expressed interest but noted that the total cost was not yet established and that the project budget was tight. Ferkey was directed to obtain complete pricing, including the number and cost of new hydrants, removal of existing hydrants, and any contract change-order costs, for later Board consideration. No action was taken.

4.3. Review and Approval of Operations Job Descriptions Post-Legal Review

Walker summarized legal counsel's review of the Lead Operator and Assistant Operator job descriptions, particularly the recommendations concerning on-call expectations and the employee handbook. The Board agreed that a more comprehensive on-call policy should be added to the handbook, but that completion of the handbook revision should not delay recruitment. The job descriptions should continue to state the essential availability and call-out expectations so applicants understand them before accepting employment.

After reviewing the drafts, the Board directed the following revisions:

- Clarify that call-outs are paid for actual time worked in excess of the one hour of regular availability pay; retain the two-hour minimum for emergency call-outs.
- Reconcile the inconsistent 50-pound and 60-pound lifting requirements and use one consistent requirement.
- Add wastewater certification expectations to the Lead Operator's post-hire certification requirements, including the currently applicable collection and treatment certifications.
- Apply relevant revisions consistently to both job descriptions.
- Require the Assistant Operator to have a valid driver's license and a reliable vehicle suitable for responding throughout the District because the District does not provide an operations vehicle.
- Clarify the Assistant Operator's response-time, on-call, availability-pay, and emergency call-out provisions, including an expectation of at least two on-call days per week and coverage needed for leave and schedule changes.
- Make clear that both positions perform water and wastewater duties and that schedules, training, and multi-person assignments may be coordinated by the Lead Operator in consultation with the Board or a Board-designated manager.
- State that recruitment will remain open until the positions are filled.

The Board concluded that a formal resolution was not necessary before posting. Walker was directed to make the revisions, circulate the final drafts to the Board for a last review, and post the openings after receiving confirmation.

4.4. Job Posting Process

Walker proposed posting the openings through the Oregon Association of Water Utilities, the state employment service, the District website, Facebook, and other no-cost or low-cost employment sites. Commissioners would also share the posting with local contacts and relevant community groups. The Board did not support purchasing an expensive newspaper advertisement unless it appeared likely to produce qualified applicants. Walker will retain a record of the places where the openings are posted and provide the information to the Board.

4.5. Application Review and Hiring Process

The Board discussed reviewing applications promptly rather than waiting for a fixed closing date. The positions will remain open until filled, but the Board may schedule a meeting once approximately three applications have been received and intends to establish an initial review timeframe before the next regular meeting. Members emphasized avoiding delays that could cause qualified applicants to withdraw.

The Board discussed using executive sessions for applicant review and interviews, ensuring that all commissioners can review application materials and participate meaningfully in the selection. A two-stage process may be used, with initial in-person interviews followed by a second round for selected candidates. Walker will draft a proposed screening, interview, deliberation, and selection process, including how to proceed if none of the candidates is acceptable.

The Board also discussed essential physical requirements, probationary employment, performance reviews, employment documents, and background checks. Existing District policy includes a probationary period and performance-review provisions. Walker will seek guidance from human-resources resources or OAWU concerning employment documentation and will research compliant applicant notice and authorization procedures for any background investigation.

Chair West reported that the District should begin seeking interim certified wastewater coverage because the hiring process may not produce a fully certified operator before Ferkey's departure. Walker will prepare outreach and contact potential resources in consultation with the District's wastewater contact.

4.6. Compensation Range and Policies

The Board discussed competitive wages, differing levels of responsibility, experience, certifications, and the need for a consistent and legally supportable basis for starting offers. The Board directed that the postings list compensation of \$24.00 to \$34.00 per hour for the Lead Operator and \$18.00 to \$24.00 per hour for the Assistant Operator, depending on experience and qualifications.

Walker will prepare an internal compensation rubric tying starting pay and future advancement to relevant experience, certifications, and job responsibility. The Board also discussed using the existing probationary period to evaluate performance and revisit compensation as appropriate.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ferkey reported that a contractor expected to address the wastewater recirculation pump was unavailable and booked until November. The wastewater treatment plant was operating with one recirculation pump while the second remained out of service. Commissioners and staff discussed the urgency of locating another qualified contractor. Walker was directed to contact Monty through OAWU for recommendations and to copy Commissioners Elliott and Basurto and the District's wastewater contact on the communication.

6. ADJOURN

Vice Chair Donnelly moved to adjourn. Commissioner Basurto seconded. Chair West, Vice Chair Donnelly, Commissioner Basurto, and Commissioner Elliott voted in favor. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:35 p.m.