

**MAPLETON WATER DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

August 17, 2026 - 6:00 p.m.
Mapleton Lions Club Kitchen
88151 Riverview Avenue, Mapleton, Oregon

1. CALL TO ORDER

President West called the regular meeting of the Mapleton Water District Board of Commissioners to order at 6:07 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

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

Staff Present: Jordan Walker, Office Administrator; Matthew Ferkey, Operator.

Community Members Present: ShirleyMarie Raven.

3. SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING

The Board reviewed fire and insect hazards. Walker reported that fire extinguishers had been purchased, but not all District vehicles were confirmed to have one. West directed staff to confirm that each work vehicle has a fire extinguisher, particularly during fire season. Staff also discussed keeping wasp spray available in vehicles. Ferkey reported that the previously identified wasp nest had been removed and no additional nests had been found.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Board agreed to include discussion of a commercial customer's request for review of the sewer classification policy under Item 6.7.

Motion: Commissioner Elliott moved to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda included approval of minutes, July timesheets, and July expenditures.

Walker identified corrections to the prior minutes, including adding Ray Mader to the attendance lists for both meetings under review and adding Lucas Stang to the July 20 meeting attendance. The Board discussed providing older draft minutes earlier so commissioners have adequate review time and can bring the District's minutes current.

The Board reviewed Walker's July hours. West requested that Walker manage time to remain below 80 hours per two-week period when there is no emergency. Walker explained that the period included catch-up work and stated that future hours were expected to be lower.

Walker explained that the expenditure report was a check-detail report, so a single payment may appear across multiple account lines. Walker confirmed that eligible expenditures for the ECWAG Intake Improvements, EPA Rice Road, and Wastewater Facilities Plan projects are reimbursable.

Motion: Vice Chair Donnelly moved to approve the consent agenda with the stated corrections to the minutes. The motion was seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

6.1. Resolution 2026-20 - Support for Regional Infrastructure Fund Grant Application

Donnelly explained that the Regional Infrastructure Fund application is due September 16 and that the District proposes to seek funding for engineering work to improve chlorine contact time at the water treatment plant. The project was selected because it addresses a compliance concern, is sufficiently defined for the short application period, and is more feasible within the program's expenditure deadline than a large construction project. Ferkey stated that a properly designed project could improve chlorine contact time, allow portions of the distribution system to be isolated without shutting down the plant, and potentially reduce chlorine use and disinfection byproducts.

Donnelly reported that Regional Solutions and Business Oregon representatives viewed this as the strongest of three concepts considered. Application-related engineering costs would be covered to the extent possible with remaining Ford Family Foundation funds, with additional consultant time deferred if necessary.

Motion: Vice Chair Donnelly moved to adopt Resolution 2026-20 supporting the Mapleton Water District's application for Regional Infrastructure Fund funding. Commissioner Elliott seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

6.2. Resolution 2026-21 - Sewer Customer Septic Tank Pumping Requirements

The Board reviewed the proposed requirement that properties connected to the sewer system provide evidence of septic tank inspection and, when necessary, pumping at least once every five years. West recommended increasing the monthly noncompliance fee from \$25 to \$50, noting that customers would receive substantial advance notice before the March 31, 2027 deadline.

Motion: Vice Chair Donnelly moved to amend Section 5 of Resolution 2026-21 by increasing the monthly noncompliance fee from \$25 to \$50. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Motion: The Board moved to adopt Resolution 2026-21 as amended. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

6.3. Repairs to Sewer Treatment Plant Pump

Walker reported that a proposal from Chris remained pending. Wildish had advised that it could not schedule the work soon. Ferkey explained that one recirculating pump is out of service and the remaining pump is carrying the load, creating urgency because a second failure could disable the system. The failed pump and guide-rail assembly are approximately 25 feet below grade in a permit-required confined space. The Board agreed that District employees should not enter the space without an appropriate confined-space program, equipment, and insurance coverage.

The Board anticipated that the work might be performed in mid-September and directed staff to continue seeking a proposal. The Board also asked Walker to include a brief notice in the next customer newsletter explaining the condition of the sewer equipment and the potential financial effect once costs and timing are better known.

6.4. Open Operations Positions

Walker reported that the District had received three applications for the assistant operator position and no applications specifically for the lead operator position. Commissioners discussed the applicants' qualifications, travel distances, availability for full-time work, and the need for an operator to live close enough to provide on-call response. The Board expressed a preference to fill the lead operator position before hiring an assistant operator.

The Board directed Walker to extend and re-advertise the application period, including an additional online and local outreach effort, and to ask commissioners to share the posting. Walker was directed to contact qualified applicants regarding interviews, with Tuesday, August 25 as the preferred date if feasible. Interviews would be conducted in executive session as permitted by law.

6.5. Designated System Supervisor Proposals

The Board reviewed two proposals for wastewater designated system supervisor services at approximately \$1,100 and \$1,200 per month. Ferkey suggested asking whether a proposer certified in both treatment and distribution would offer a combined-services rate. Donnelly noted the need to plan for eventual replacement of the District's current water supervisor because of his desire to reduce his workload and health-related limitations.

The Board directed Walker to seek clarification regarding combined water and wastewater services and to obtain any pending proposal from Chris. The proposals and any sewer pump repair estimates will be reviewed at a special meeting on or about August 25 before the applicant interviews.

6.6. Fall Town Hall Regarding Water and Sewer Infrastructure

Donnelly proposed a fall community town hall to explain the District's infrastructure needs, the cost of required improvements, and the effect of grant match requirements on local rates. Former Representative Boomer Wright and Lane County Commissioner Ryan Ceniga had indicated willingness to participate, and Mapleton School was willing to host after the beginning of the school year, likely in October.

The Board emphasized that the event must remain nonpartisan. Candidates and other members of the public may be notified and invited to attend, but candidates would not be placed on the program as speakers. The Board authorized Donnelly to continue organizing the event and coordinating schedules and content with the proposed speakers and the school.

6.7. Sewer Class Information

Walker reported that reclassifying the commercial sewer account discussed at the prior meeting as residential would require an estimated 8.3 percent increase in other sewer bills if spread evenly, or approximately a 3 percent proportional increase. The Board discussed the current policy allowing reclassification after five years without commercial use and whether the period should be reduced to two years for mixed-use property.

Commissioners raised concerns about defining commercial use, storage of business property, rental activity, mixed-use zoning, multiple residential units, and the precedent created by reclassification. The Board deferred action and directed Walker to review the affected account, develop clearer criteria and financial figures, communicate with the customer regarding the review, and return the issue to a future regular meeting.

6.8. Coos Bay Wastewater Conference

Walker reported that Coos Bay was offering a two-day wastewater conference to smaller systems before opening registration more broadly. Registration was \$100 per attendee and included some meals. The Board directed Walker to reserve three registrations, with attendee names to be determined, and to confirm the cancellation and substitution policies.

6.9. Project Updates

6.9.1. EPA Rice Road

Donnelly reported that Wildish remained on schedule, with potholing expected August 18 and trenching expected the following week. The project engineer had coordinated excavation monitoring with the archeologist.

The Board reviewed change orders for three additional fire hydrants and relocation of two meters on First Avenue, together with authorization for Wildish to retain a plumbing subcontractor to reconnect customer-side service lines necessitated by the meter relocation. Donnelly reported that the changes remain within the existing grant budget because construction and engineering bids were below budget. Ferkey explained that additional fittings or service-line work may require later change orders after potholing and ground-penetrating radar results are evaluated. Right-of-entry agreements will be required from affected property owners.

Motion: Commissioner Elliott moved to approve the Rice Road change orders and related authorizations received to date, including authorization for Wildish to hire a plumbing subcontractor for the affected service connections. Vice Chair Donnelly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

6.9.2. ECWAG Intake Improvements

Donnelly reported that bid publication was awaiting a Lane County excavation permit delayed by correction of a tax-lot number. The engineer planned to publish the bid package during the coming week and extend the bid period as needed.

Donnelly reported that USDA required removal of hazardous trees above the settling tank as a condition of funding the remaining project. Of three firms contacted, Sperry Tree Care provided a viable proposal. Following District concerns, Sperry removed liability-disclaimer language and supplied a certificate of insurance naming the District as an insured party. The \$75,000 proposal matches the amount budgeted in the grant, and the work was expected in mid-September.

Motion: Commissioner Elliott moved to approve the Sperry Tree Care proposal for \$75,000 and authorize execution of the agreement. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

6.9.3. Wastewater Facilities Plan

The facilities plan has been submitted and is awaiting DEQ review. Closeout of the \$50,000 Business Oregon forgivable loan remains dependent on receipt of final invoices from Verdantas and completion of an updated signature card reflecting the current Board.

6.9.4. Storage Tank Refurbishment

Donnelly reported that the USDA application had been completed and approved through RD Apply. Funding action is not expected before the new federal fiscal year beginning October 1. If awarded on the anticipated schedule, engineering and bidding could support construction in late spring or early summer 2027.

6.9.5. Wastewater Rehabilitation Hardening

Donnelly reported that the Economic Development Administration application remains pending with no requests for additional information, which he considered a positive indication. The District completed the first step toward potential low-interest match funding through Business Oregon and has approximately 45 days to complete the second application stage.

6.10. Purchase Approvals

No new purchases required Board approval. Walker reported that the previously authorized reach mower had been ordered and paid for; shipment remained pending after correction of the delivery address.

7. BUSINESS REPORTS

7.1. Treasurer's Report

Walker presented the first financial statement of the new fiscal year. Walker and Donnelly will reconcile the Ford Family Foundation restricted-fund balances and confirm that expenses were assigned to the correct grant category. Walker reported that sewer cash had been reduced by current obligations and that some payments were being timed to preserve adequate cash while the District awaited EPA reimbursement for Rice Road costs and reimbursement associated with the wastewater facilities plan.

Walker also reported that ODOT had assumed responsibility for the four streetlights on the bridge after rewiring them to an ODOT meter. The District expects a small credit for recent charges and will no longer be responsible for electricity or maintenance for those four lights.

7.2. Billing Report

Walker compared collections with April because late billing in June made more recent comparisons less useful. Although delinquent balances remained elevated, collections were improving. Door hangers had been

delivered, and three shutoffs were scheduled for August 18. Walker anticipated that total delinquent balances could decline to approximately \$30,000 or less by the next report.

7.3. Risk Management Report

Walker reported that an SDIS appraiser would inspect District buildings on August 20. Staff will obtain building measurements in advance if practicable. The appraisal does not include water storage tanks.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

8.1. Grant Committee

Donnelly reported that both FEMA BRIC subapplications had been resubmitted after federal program rules changed to make phased engineering-and-construction applications ineligible. The revised requests seek engineering only for an additional storage tank and for replacement of the Chestnut-area distribution system and associated pump stations. If funded, the result would be fully engineered, bid-ready projects; separate construction funding would still be required. Donnelly confirmed that the previously anticipated approximately \$3 million in construction funding was no longer available under the revised eligibility rules.

8.2. Emergency Committee

Walker recommended reviewing the District's emergency response plan before winter, particularly to orient new commissioners.

8.3. Finance Committee

Walker reported that he had requested an update from the auditor regarding the prior fiscal year's audit and would follow up again after receiving no response by the meeting date.

8.4. Operations Committee

Basurto and Ferkey discussed returning two membrane units to service and obtaining line-bursting equipment for future service-line replacements. Ferkey reported continued difficulty obtaining responses regarding FilterTech programming and engineering assistance. West agreed to follow up with Chris, and Donnelly agreed to seek clarification from Verdantas regarding available survey or engineering services.

Ferkey reported that Rice Road tie-ins will require depressurization on multiple occasions. He will consult the designated supervisor, OAWU, and OHA regarding whether to issue a precautionary boil-water notice for affected customers rather than shutting off every meter. Ferkey also reported a Riverview service leak scheduled for contractor excavation on August 18, upcoming routine water samples, and PFAS sampling that needed to occur on August 18 or 19.

The sewer system was operating on one recirculating pump while repair proposals remained pending. Staff also noted unusual chlorine behavior that continued to be monitored.

8.5. Administration Committee

Donnelly reported discussions with Mapleton School regarding student participation in the District records organization project as a local-government educational opportunity. The Board also discussed possible student tours or observation of water and wastewater testing, subject to confirmation of insurance and safety requirements.

Walker reported that the RCAC rate study was nearing completion but that no final update had yet been received. Walker also stated that the Storage Tank Refurbishment project requires a public hearing. The hearing will be noticed in the newspaper at least 10 days in advance and held with the next regular Board meeting.

9. BOARD REPORTS

No additional Board reports were presented beyond matters discussed under the project and committee reports.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ferkey stated that his employment would end in two weeks, that he did not intend to continue as a volunteer after his employment ended, and that he did not intend to apply for the posted operations position. He noted that a proposal from him was included in the Board packet for consideration during the upcoming meeting and executive session.

11. FUTURE ITEMS

- Special meeting on or about August 25, 2026, to review designated system supervisor proposals and sewer pump repair proposals, followed by applicant interviews in executive session.
- Public hearing on the Storage Tank Refurbishment project at the next regular meeting after timely newspaper notice.
- Further review of sewer customer classification criteria and the request to reduce the noncommercial-use period from five years to two years.
- Review of the District emergency response plan before winter.

12. ADJOURN

The transcript ended without recording a formal motion or time of adjournment.