

**Public Utility District No. 1 of Klickitat County**  
**Board of Commissioners Meeting**  
**Tuesday, March 25, 2025**  
**2:00p.m.**

**CALL TO ORDER:** President Dan G. Gunkel called the meeting to order at 2:00p.m. as advertised.

**PRESENT:** Dan G. Gunkel - President, Douglas B. Miller - Vice President, and Stoner W. Bell - Secretary

**STAFF PRESENT:** Gwyn Miller - General Manager, Shelby Manka - Accounting Clerk, Mike Nixon - Operations Manager, Sharon Blodgett - W/WW Coordinator, Brandon Walter - W/WW Superintendent, Mike DeMott - Director of Finance and Power Management, Anita Clever - Energy Services, Mark Garner - Engineering Supervisor, Justin Beierle - Engineering Superintendent, and Luann Mata - Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

**GUESTS:** Larry Hocter

**PLEDGE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

**MINUTES:** **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Miller to approve the meeting minutes from March 11, 2025 as presented. Motion carried.

**CLAIMS & PAYROLL:** Presented by Shelby Manka. Vouchers were audited and certified by the auditing officer as required by RCW 42.24.080, and all expense reimbursement claims presented were certified as required by RCW 42.24.090 and were recorded on a listing made available to the Board this 25<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2025.

**MOTION** was made by Commissioner Miller to approve accounts payable vouchers and payroll in the amounts as listed:

- Accounts Payable Voucher Nos. 222050 through 222154 in the total amount of \$673,652.29; Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) transaction Nos. 723 through 728 and Wire and Automated Clearing House (ACH) 8802171 through 8802190 in the total amount of \$2,221,898.22 for the period ending March 25, 2025; and
- Payroll ACH Direct Deposit Payroll transactions 216099 through 216182 in the total amount of \$288,063.85 for the payroll period ending March 9, 2025.

Motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** NONE

**REPORTS:**

**Water/Wastewater February Update** - Sharon Blodgett and Brandon Walter reported that the Glenwood lift station pumps have arrived. Bids to install the pumps are being prepared. This project is partially funded through the Landfill Gas (LFG) Infrastructure Project Fund. The SEPA review process for the Ponderosa Red Cedar project is currently underway with the Department of Health. The public comment period will occur at the end of April. We will advertise the call for bid concurrent with the public comment period. The Wishram generator project is pending contractor commissioning.

Staff have begun the biosolids permit submissions, which is required every five years. There are new permit categories. Wishram and Dallesport were not part of the baselines, which requires a biosolid permit. However, staff challenged the Wishram determination and after review Wishram is being changed to baseline. Dallesport is the only system we are required to report on biosolids.

The department is currently preparing for upcoming community meetings and rate discussions. Commissioner Bell asked who we contract with for biosolid removal; Natural Selection is our contractor. Commissioner Miller inquired about the projected completion date for the Ponderosa project, and staff is estimating six months.

**Operations February update** - Mike Nixon reported that we are meeting our 2025 reliability goal for the year. Customer work is still intermittent so crews are working on the Garner Road reconductoring project, which consisted of three miles of pole and wire replacements. As part of the vegetation management program, 14 miles were trimming in January and 10 miles in February. The KPUD tree crew removed 139 trees and completed 18 miles of mulcher work.

Safety training topics were reviewed.

**Engineering February update** - Mark Garner and Justin Beierle provided an update on the BPA Chenoweth line work projections. BPA has committed to completing Phase 1 prior to the beginning of fire season. Phase 2 and Phase 3 project timelines are undetermined at this time. Palouse Power and WEG Transformer will be completing the EE Clouse substation by the end of April. Additional pole replacement projects are planned in Bickleton on Schrantz, Stegeman, and Matson Roads. We also anticipate most of the cost associated with these three locations will be funded by the eagle mitigation grant funds.

Engineering of customer work has been nominal. White Salmon and Goldendale each completed six customer installations in February, with six projects pending in White Salmon and seven in Goldendale. Aaron Estey is managing development projects, while Nathaniel Hill continues work on the fire mitigation project at the Pit Bridge. Commissioner Bell asked for clarification on why we were increasing capacity at EE Clouse and how the Pacific Power and Light's operations impact the Bald Mountain Substation. He was provided with updates on both of these topics. Mark will also provide a follow-up on power safety shutoff language before fire season begins.

Mark also recognized his colleague, stating that after 18 years with the utility, Brandon Johnson, Engineering Manager was leaving at end of March. He recognized Brandon's contributions to the utility, community, and its customers. Mark specifically highlighted Brandon's honesty, hard work, and dedication to the community through his role. He recognized the gap we will have losing Brandon's institutional knowledge and expertise. He also acknowledged his contributions on many large-scale projects that improved system reliability such as the MA Collins substation upgrade, the EE Clouse substation upgrade, the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) program and countless other projects over his career. He ended by expressing his thanks and gratitude for Brandon's contributions, collaboration, and friendship over these many years and wished him the best in his future endeavors.

**COMMISSIONER DAN GUNKEL** - Commissioner Gunkel did not have a report.

**COMMISSIONER DOUGLAS MILLER** - Commissioner Miller spoke with the Moss Adams auditors. He attended the senior staff meeting and the employee safety meeting and spoke about current events and direction of the utility going forward. He also addressed the board with a suggestion on the LFG Infrastructure Committee assignment process.

**COMMISSIONER STONER BELL** - Commissioner Bell attended the Washington PUD Association (WPUDA) commissioner training in March. He mentioned that the Kittitas GM thought highly of our new manager. Commissioner Bell also reported that he will not be available for the first meeting in May. He requested information on long range planning, financial long-term outlook and what is involved with composing and evaluating our rate studies. Gwyn and Mike DeMott offered some background into our current planning processes. Gwyn also mentioned that a

Strategic Planning session is being planned for later this spring. Commissioner Gunkel also explained our policy on long term debt.

**GENERAL MANAGER GWYN MILLER** - Gwyn Miller reported that the Public Power Council will fill its vacated board position through an election process. Ron Schultz has returned to assist with the transition in the Engineering department. Kirt O'Leary and Travis Heilman worked over the weekend on bush removal beginning the building beautification project. The district has contacted legislators about concerns over diverting funds from the Public Works Trust Fund. Staff also contacted Yakama Power regarding the surplus of the Satus Pass distribution line on the Yakama Reservation, but no response has been received. We are also collaborating with Athan Tramountanas on the customer notification process and have reached out to our primary contact, Ray Wiseman, the Yakama Power General Manager.

Additionally, Gwyn and Mike DeMott announced they have finalized language for an addendum to the Puget Sound Energy (PSE) station service agreement. With the current contract ending in September and changes to the BP-28 contract, the addendum specifies Tier 2 power rate will be used as their contract rate.

**MOTION** made by Commissioner Miller to authorize Gwyn Miller to sign the PSE Station Service Amendment agreement. Motion carried.

Senior staff leadership training began on March 19, and Gwyn thanked the board for their support. Gwyn and Kevin Ricks attended an event at City Hall, where they discussed fire mitigation and renewable natural gas (RNG) with staff from the governor's office. They anticipate scheduling an RNG tour soon. Proposed dates for a joint meeting with the Klickitat County Board of Commissioners were discussed, with details on lunch and location to be determined.

The board inquired about filling vacant positions, emphasizing that the Human Resources role should be prioritized to alleviate existing workloads. They also highlighted the need to hire a Professional Engineer swiftly, noting that this role differs from the Engineering Manager position, providing Gwyn flexibility in the hiring process.

#### **AGENDA ITEMS:**

- A. RESOLUTION No. 1877 APPOINTMENT OF WHITE CREEK PROJECT LLC AND WC PUBLIC LLC BOARD MEMBERS: **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Miller to adopt Resolution 1877 appointing the board members for White Creek Public and White Creek Project as presented. Motion carried.
- B. RESOLUTION No. 1878 APPOINTMENT OF KLINKITAT PUD GENERAL MANAGER: **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Miller to adopt Resolution 1878 recognizing the appointment of Gwyndalyn Miller as the Klickitat PUD General Manager on March 11, 2025. Motion carried.
- C. EXECUTIVE SESSION: 3:00p.m. to evaluate legal risk of proposed board action per RCW 42.30.110 (1)(i). President Gunkel called for an Executive Session at 3:00p.m. per RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) to review Duty to Serve language noting the session would last for 30 minutes, until 3:30p.m. Joe Rehberger of Cascadia Law and Athan Tramountanas KPUD General Counsel were present via teleconference. At 3:30p.m. the board in open session requested an extension of the session for an additional 15 minutes until 3:45 retaining Athan Tramountanas for discussion. At 3:45 the board in open session once again requested an extension for an additional 15-minute extension until 4:00p.m. At 4:00p.m. the session ended. No action was taken and the meeting reconvened in open public session.
- D. GOLDENDALE EMERGENCY MICROGRID PROJECT WORKSHOP:

Anita Clever, Mike DeMott and Mark Garner conducted a workshop with the Board to continue discussions related to the Goldendale Emergency Microgrid Project. This project involves Klickitat Valley Health (KVH) and Goldendale School District (GSD) who will construct the project which will interconnect with the KPUD system. Staff provided a project overview showing the location of project infrastructure. Questions concerning the avoidance of negative impact on the KPUD system were asked and addressed by Mark. Board suggestions were made to ensure project owned infrastructure was properly identified and labeled as separate from KPUD owned infrastructure. The workshop was informational and no formal direction was taken by the Board.

- E. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Review of Performance of a Public Employee (1)(g) - President Gunkel called for an Executive Session at 4:45p.m. per RCW 42.30.110 (1)(g) noting that the session would last for 10 minutes until 4:55p.m., for the purpose of discussing the General Manager’s evaluation. The session ended at 4:55p.m. No action was taken and the meeting reconvened in open public session.

**RCW 42.30.110 – Executive Session.**

*(1) Nothing contained in this chapter may be construed to prevent a governing body from holding an executive session during a regular or special meeting;*

Commissioner Miller, speaking on behalf of the board, expressed gratitude to Brandon Johnson for his 18 years of dedicated service. He highlighted Brandon’s contributions to the development of the engineering staff, the upgrades to substations and infrastructure that benefit all KPUD customers, and the acquisition of the Trout Lake property for a new substation, which will enhance reliability in the Trout Lake Valley. The Board extended their best wishes to Brandon in his new role at Clark PUD.

**Adjourned** – There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:26p.m.

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Dan G. Gunkel, President

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Douglas B. Miller, Vice President

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Stoner W. Bell, Secretary  
Date Approved: April 8, 2025

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Luann Mata, Executive Assistant