

TUMWATER PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
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CONVENE: 8:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Chair Eileen Swarthout and Councilmembers Michael Althausen and Angela Jefferson.

Staff: City Attorney Karen Kirkpatrick, Finance Director Troy Niemeyer, Water Resources and Sustainability Director Dan Smith, Transportation and Engineering Director Brandon Hicks, Assistant Transportation and Engineering Director Mary Heather Ames, Engineering Services Manager Bill Lindauer, Communications Manager Ann Cook, Water Resources Program Manager Patrick Soderberg, Transportation Engineer 1 Bernie Gertje, and Administrative Assistant Cathy Nielsen.

**APPROVAL OF
MINUTES: PUBLIC
WORKS
COMMITTEE,
FEBRUARY 8, 2024:**

MOTION: Councilmember Jefferson moved, seconded by Councilmember Althausen, to approve the minutes of February 8, 2024 as published. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

**BARNES LAKE
MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT (BLMD)
2024 BUDGET AND
WORK PLAN
REVIEW:**

Director Smith provided an update on the status of the Barnes Lake Management District (BLMD).

The BLMD was established to oversee vegetation management on Barnes Lake. Some management activities were completed last year. Director Smith shared photographs of the lake. Northwest Aquatic Ecosystems completed some maintenance activities on the lake moving vegetative mats after the application of aquatic herbicide. The herbicide creates gases under the root systems of the plants, which float to the surface that are unsightly and inhibit recreation in the lake. Members of the BLMD requested the vendor move the vegetation to the shoreline for reuse of the vegetation by surrounding residents for soil amendments.

Northwest Aquatic Ecosystems applied herbicides in the lake several times last year to treat vegetation. Each year, Water Resources Specialist Dave Kangiser, who developed a volunteer water quality monitoring program, solicits lake residents as volunteers to complete measurements monthly for five months of the year to test for water clarity and sampling for phosphorus and nitrogen to assist in determining potential algae growth.

As part of technological innovations, some digital lake monitoring has been installed to measure precipitation and to track water elevation over time. Results are overlaid with precipitation to reflect how responsive the lake is to precipitation.

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In 2022, the lake experienced beaver dam activity damming up some lake outlets. Crews often removed some the dams. Staff continue to monitor data regularly.

A flexible leveler was installed to help keep water moving despite beaver activity. The tool is one way to manage beaver activity. The tool helps to maintain water levels and reduces flooding impacts to residents.

The City also monitors lake temperature to assist providers in identifying periods of active plant growth (June to October). During active vegetative growth, the contractor applies surface application of herbicides to the plants.

Councilmember Jefferson inquired as to whether fishing is allowed in the lake. She questioned the safeness of fish in a lake treated with herbicides. Director Smith explained that when herbicides are applied, notifications are provided to all residents. The chemicals applied to aquatic environments were selected because they do not affect fish or amphibians. Fishing does occur in the lake; however, no monitoring of fish occurs. Generally, the lake houses smaller fish with most of the fishing recreational.

Another tool used by the BLMD is walkabouts. Each year in September/October, members of committee walk around the lake. The 30-acre lake requires approximately two hours of walking the perimeter of the lake. The walk afford views of the lake from different perspectives.

Changes in the BLMD include new leadership. The committee has seated two chairs since the committee was established in 2007. The second chair stepped down because of health conditions. Another member since 2011 is now serving as the chair. The vice chair has been a member of the committee since 2013 and represents the condominium complex and is one of the largest property owners in the district.

The City and the BLMD are now seeking a new contractor. The owner of the company, Doug Dorling, unexpectedly passed away earlier in the year. Staff released a Request for Proposal (RFP) from local vendors. The work is challenging because of the type and shallowness of the lake. Not all vendors have the equipment to access Barnes Lake. The committee is also experiencing new staff leadership. Director Smith said he has been working with the BLMD since 2004. Based on his new position, he is limited in time to provide adequate support. He is working with the committee and with Water Resources Program Manager Soderberg, who is assuming his role to support the committee.

This year's work plan is streamlined based on the work history with the committee. The committee meets approximately six times each year. The City Council receives the annual operating budget and annual work plan.

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Following the selection of the contractor, annual assessments will be mailed to property owners with an update on the status of activities by the BLMD. Dependent upon the timing of contracting with another company, the treatment program will be initiated during the summer similar to past treatments.

The BLMD operates similar to a City enterprise fund with all revenues dedicated to the operation of the fund for completion of the work. Each year, staff works with the Finance Department to determine the beginning fund balance. This year, the beginning fund balance was \$48,216. The treatment program administered every four years costs approximately \$30,000. The BLMD receives approximately \$20,000 in revenue each year. Staff has advised the committee to anticipate an increase in cost with a new vendor. The budget also includes reimbursement of expenses incurred by the City for finance support to the committee.

Director Smith reported the committee nominated leading advocate and former Chair of the BLMD Steering Committee, Gary Bodeutsch, for Volunteer of the Year recognition by the National Lakes Management Association. Mr. Bodeutsch stepped down as Chair in 2023 and unexpectedly passed away several months later from cancer. Mr. Bodeutsch received the award prior this passing.

Director Smith shared stories and reminisced about his working relationship with Mr. Bodeutsch and Mr. Dorling and some of their adventures working together to improve and monitor the health of the Barnes Lake. In the early years of the committee, he and Mr. Dorling would board a Cessna from the airport and fly around and take pictures of Barnes Lake. Eventually drone technology put an end to the airplane flights to monitor lake conditions. Mr. Dorling was respected and loved by the BLMD committee despite not being a member of the committee.

The next step is a review of the new vendor contract. The City Council adopted the budget and work plan for the BLMD.

Councilmember Althausen thanked Director Smith for sharing information about both gentlemen and for his kind words about them. Keeping the lake healthy is a good way to honor their contributions and interests as well as their legacies over time. He referred to some legislation regarding beavers and beaver habitat management.

Chair Swarthout advised that the proposed legislation did not pass.

Director Smith advised that staff have been working within the community on different ways to manage impacts caused by beavers while recognizing the urban wildlife interface. Many successes have occurred that have been shared with other jurisdictions. Last year, staff presented some outcomes of

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the City's work, which was well received with staff receiving inquiries from others in the state. The long-term investment of monitoring or managing beavers rather than removing them has been more cost effective and efficient while creating a healthier environment as well.

Chair Swarthout inquired about the extent of any flooding during the last weather event. Director Smith said the golf course did not experience any substantive flooding. Based on the forecast from the University of Washington, the area will experience more intense and longer duration events in future years. Staff continues to explore potential flooding scenarios and recently completed a flood study of the Deschutes River, which acknowledged the likelihood of continued flooding in that area of the City.

ADJOURNMENT: **With there being no further business, Chair Swarthout adjourned the meeting at 8:41 a.m.**

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President
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