

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL  
MEETING OF THE COMMISSION**

**July 20, 2021**

**1. Call to Order | Pledge of Allegiance**

The special meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Public Utility District No. 1 of Whatcom County was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Commissioner Atul Deshmane. Said meeting was open to the public and notice thereof had been given as required by law. Those present via Zoom and teleconference included Commissioner Mike Murphy, Commissioner Christine Grant, Commissioner Atul Deshmane, and Legal Counsel Jon Sitkin. Staff attending via teleconference/Zoom: Steve Jilk, General Manager; Ann Grimm, Executive Assistant; Rebecca Schlotterback, Manager of Contracts and Regulatory Compliance; Annette Smith, Director of Finance; Brian Walters, Assistant General Manager; Aaron Peterson, IT/SCADA Technician; Mike Macomber, IT/SCADA Technician; Duane Holden, Director of Utility Operations; Alec Strand, Project Manager; and, Traci Irvine Accountant I.

**Public attending via teleconference/Zoom:**

Jim Darling, Leeward Strategies  
Jack Wellman, Puget Sound Energy  
Lauren Turner, Phillips 66  
Rick Maricle, Citizen

**2. Public Comment No. 1**

No comments made.

**3. Continuation of Work Session on Strategic Initiatives 2021 Review and Prioritization**

a) Deshmane welcomed all and announced the special meeting agenda: To continue discussion from the Special Meeting of July 6, 2021, on the strategic initiatives review and to review the General Manager’s Job Description.

Jim Darling of Leeward Strategies facilitated today’s discussion. Highlights included:

**Strategic Assessment 2021**

*Goal* – Successfully navigate the transition to a new General Manager

*The Transition:*

- New GM on board in early 2022.
- GM Recruitment Process (Prothman) to begin in a few days.  
Preparation includes job profile, job description, initiatives 2021 and compensation package.
- Ongoing Initiatives
  - Broadband Vision and Partnership with Port
  - Customer Service (industrial customer base)
  - Technical Support (water associations)
  - Local Water Resources (regional issues)
  - PUD as a Go-To resource for utility issues
- FY 2022 and Beyond Initiatives
  - Clean and Renewable Energy
  - Water Supply (non-stream delivery)
  - Attracting “green industry” to Cherry Point
- Routine Staff Updates
- 2022 Draft Budget preparation and adoption
- Develop Strategies for Initiatives (ongoing)
- Strategic Plan Update (mid-year 2022)
- PUD Community Impact Analysis

**Balancing Resources**

<i>Ongoing: 2021 – 2022 and Beyond</i>	<i>2022 Forward</i>
<i>Broadband Vision:</i> Advance the community wide vision in making broadband available to underserved areas of Whatcom County	<i>Clean and Renewable Energy:</i> Develop a plan and policies in 2022 to define the PUD’s role in advancing clean and renewable, local energy
<i>Customer Service:</i> Continue the PUD’s commitment to customer services in the support of the industries that rely on PUD power and water	<i>Water Supply:</i> Explore a pilot project with Ecology funding and other partners, to demonstrate the feasibility of providing water supply to those in need.

<i>Technical Support:</i> RE-affirm the PUD’s commitment to provide technical support to water associations	<i>Green Industry – Cherry Point:</i> Explore an Interlocal agreement with the Port and County to analyze and advance ‘green’ industry at Cherry Point.
<i>Local Water Resources:</i> Continue the PUD’s support and assistance in regional efforts to protect and manage local water resources	<i>Strategic Plan Update:</i> Update the Strategic Plan 2025 with new GM
<i>PUD as a Resource:</i> Identify how the PUD can support education and understanding of utility issues.	<i>PUD Community Impact Analysis:</i> Undertake a community impact analysis to quantify and qualify the PUD’s historic and ongoing impact on the Greater Whatcom area.

<b>Initiative or Project</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Launch</b>	<b>Est. Budget Implication FY 2022</b>
<i>Broadband Vision</i>	Contract Staff and Assistant GM	2021	\$150,000 Consultant/staff to implement work with Port
<i>Customer Service</i>	GM	2021	Staff time
<i>Technical Support</i>	Contract Service Representative and Water Resource Staff Lead	2021	\$50,000 – Existing contract extension
<i>Local Water Resources</i>	Water Resource Staff – TBD	2021	\$85,000 Additional staff resources by contract
<i>PUD as a Resource</i>	GM	2021	\$50,000
<i>Commission Update</i>	GM	2021	Staff time
<i>Clean &amp; Renewable Energy</i>	Asst. GM and Contract Services	2022	\$75,000
<i>Water Supply</i>	GM and Water Resource Staff	2022	\$75,000 Grant Match
<i>Green Industry – Cherry Point</i>	Asst. GM and Contract Services	2022	\$100,000 Feasibility and Market Analysis
<i>Strategic Plan Update</i>	GM	2022	\$45,000
<i>Impact Study</i>	GM	2022	\$50,000

**b) General Manager Profile and Job Description**

The profile explains what the Commission is looking for in a new General Manager including background, education, experience, skills and critical skill set. A draft of the job description was sent to Prothman to assist in final development.

**4. Public Comment No. 2**

Rick Maricle commented on the strategic goals for next year –specifically (1) On “green energy” at Cherry Point – the Lummi and one of the major political parties is promoting the ultimate use for Cherry Point is to return it to its natural state, as part of a plan to support herring fisheries. The location of the PUD’s support might need to be somewhere else. (2) Regarding renewable energy, customers have loads that are different from the supply from renewable energy. Make sure the supply is shaped properly and there isn’t hidden carbon supply during off time generation; (3) Adjudication on water supply – the PUD needs to be involved in this process with a view towards other, undefined uses and that the PUD’s water rights will cover these.

**5. Next Steps:**

Darling will work with Sitkin and Prothman on a breakdown of details of the selection process (timing/logistics, etc.); a recommendation of how to engage staff in the selection process; and, based on the profile what the salary range/compensation package will look like. Darling will work on language regarding climate change/resilience/adaptation for the opening statement of *Initiatives 2021*; and, some wordsmithing on the skill set. All should be ready for the July 27 meeting.

(Intentionally left blank)

**6. Adjourn**

There being no further business for the meeting, Commissioner Deshmane adjourned the special meeting at 9:53 a.m.

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Atul Deshmane, President

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Michael Murphy, Vice President

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Christine Grant, Secretary

**Commission Clerk Note:** Video recordings of the Whatcom PUD Commission Meetings are available online at the following link on the PUD's Website: <https://www.pudwhatcom.org/the-commission/2021-agendas-packets-meeting-minutes-recordings/>

APPROVED: JULY 27, 2021
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