



**TSCC Regular Business Meeting
Minutes
Tuesday, May 13, 2025
11:02 a.m.**

Chair Harmony Quiroz, Commissioners Burton, Donahue, Lugo Knapp and Moore were present, as were Executive Director Allegra Willhite and Budget Analyst Brittanie Abayare, all via Zoom meeting.

REGULAR MEETING

Chair Quiroz called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m.

District Budgets to be considered

Executive Director Willhite said the commissioners were scheduled to discuss the 2025-26 Approved Budgets for Sauvie Island Fire District, Burlington Water District, East Multnomah Soil & Water District (EMSWCD, and Multnomah Education Services District (MESD).

Sauvie Island Fire Budget Review

The Commission reviewed and certified the Sauvie Island Fire District's FY26 budget. This small district's budget remains largely unchanged, with a 38% resource decrease attributed to the cyclical nature of grant funding. Past grants have supported major capital purchases like an airboat. The district continues to rely on property taxes and maintains a capital reserve for used equipment purchases. A noticing error occurred, but the district shared the extenuating circumstances and the Commission determined no recommendation was necessary at this time. Chair Quiroz moved to certify the budget, Commissioner Burton seconded and all commissioners voted in favor to certify the budget without objections or recommendations.

Burlington Water District Budget Review

Burlington Water District's FY26 budget increased by \$386,000 to \$1.3 million, largely driven by rising wholesale water costs. The district plans to raise customer rates and has budgeted \$130,000 for infrastructure improvements and water loss prevention. A recurring concern is the district's fire protection contract with the City of Portland, which exceeds the district's property tax revenue. Commissioners discussed a recommendation for the district to develop a sustainable funding plan and communicate it transparently to residents. They suggested verifying the legality of using water rates for fire costs and exploring other service providers or a local option levy. Commissioner Burton moved to certify the budget, Commissioner Moore seconded, and all commissioners voted to certify the budget with this recommendation.

East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District (EMSWCD) Budget Review

Commissioners discussed the East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District (EMSWCD) budget and hearing questions. Staff noted that the district's budget is relatively stable. The district carries a large fund balance for potential property and easement purchases. . Commissioners expressed interest in asking EMSWCD to clearly articulate the connection between its land

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procurement strategy and its budgetary decisions. There were also questions about how EMSWCD balances programmatic investments, public engagement, and operational reserves.

MESD Budget Discussion

The Commissioners discussed the FY26 MESD budget, which remains preliminary due to the timing of school district budget decisions. MESD anticipates service reductions and approximately 74 FTE in cuts, largely in special education. Commissioners plan to ask MESD about the challenges of balancing strategic equity goals with the fact that component districts choose different levels of service. They expressed interest in how demographic shifts and special education needs are being factored into staffing and service planning. Additional questions will address MESD's use of short-term borrowing and how MESD is preparing for continued uncertainty in state and federal funding.

General Budget Process Comments and Closing Remarks

Commissioners reflected on the broader challenges facing districts, particularly small and volunteer-run entities, in complying with budget law and managing escalating service costs. They noted that while TSCC's role is advisory, transparency and consistency remain vital. Staff want to encourage districts to consult the Special Districts Association of Oregon (SDAO) for legal and structural guidance on complex funding issues.

Commissioners confirmed the schedule for upcoming budget hearings, which will include the City of Portland, Portland Public Schools, and Port of Portland the following week. The team also noted that a draft of TSCC's proposed public comment policy will be presented at the May 22 meeting.

There being no other business, Chair Quiroz adjourned the meeting at 12:58 p.m.