

COOS BAY-NORTH BEND WATER BOARD
P O BOX 539 – 2305 Ocean Boulevard
Coos Bay, Oregon 97420

Minutes
Regular Board Meeting

March 19, 2026
7:00 a.m.

Coos Bay-North Bend Water Board met in open session in the Board Room at the above address, date, and time with Chair Bill Richardson presiding. Other Board members present: Rob Kilmer, Greg Solarz and Carmen Matthews. Board Members absent: none. Water Board staff present: Ivan D. Thomas, General Manager; Jeff Miller, Operations Manager; Matt Whitty, Engineering Manager; Monica Kemper, Finance Director; Micah Demanett, Meter Services Supervisor; Jason Mills, Distribution Supervisor; Lee Statham, Distribution Tech; Junibert Magalona, Accounting Tech; and Stacey Parrott, Executive Assistant & HR Specialist. Board Legal Counsel Melissa Cribbins was present. Danny Callaway with Revize LLC was present (virtually). Media present: None.

Chair Richardson opened the meeting at 7:00 a.m. and led the Board and assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Richardson asked if there were any corrections or additions to the March 5, 2026, Regular Board meeting minutes. Mr. Kilmer moved the minutes be approved as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Solarz and passed unanimously.

Chair Richardson asked if there were any public comments and there were none.

Regarding the proposed agreement with Xpress Bill Pay to provide merchant services for processing customer payments. Finance Director Monica Kemper, explained that the Coos Bay-North Bend Water Board has utilized a prior merchant services provider since 2017 for credit and debit card processing, online payment portal services, and interactive voice response (IVR) phone payments. While these services have been effective and widely used by customers, Ms. Kemper noted that the associated costs have become increasingly difficult to manage due to the percentage-based fee structure, which rises in tandem with higher billing amounts and increased usage.

Ms. Kemper introduced Xpress Bill Pay as an alternative provider, noting that it is affiliated with the Water Board's existing financial software system, which would allow for a smooth integration. The proposed agreement includes a one-time implementation cost of approximately \$2,750, in addition to travel expenses for on-site training. The vendor would provide in-person training over multiple days to ensure staff are fully equipped to utilize the new system and reporting tools.

A key advantage discussed was the availability of an electronic check (e-check) payment option, which would significantly reduce processing costs compared to credit card transactions. Staff explained that while credit card payments incur both a flat fee and a percentage of the transaction, e-check payments are processed at a flat rate of approximately \$1 per transaction. Based on current usage patterns, it was estimated that

even a modest shift in customer behavior could yield meaningful savings. For example, if approximately 6.5% of customers who currently use card payments transitioned to e-checks, the Water Board could break even on the increased annual cost. Higher conversion rates could result in substantial savings, with estimates of several hundred to several thousand dollars per month depending on adoption levels.

It was further noted that a significant portion of current transactions, approximately 50% of all payments, are made using cards, with about 65% of those being debit card transactions. While debit cards are less expensive to process than credit cards, staff emphasized that encouraging customers to transition to e-check payments would still provide notable cost savings. Additionally, the new system offers improved customer-facing features, including mobile-friendly payment options, text-to-pay functionality, and the ability for users to manage multiple accounts across agencies if they already utilize the platform elsewhere. Operational benefits were also discussed. Under the proposed system, customer service related to the payment portal would be handled directly by Xpress Bill Pay, reducing the administrative burden on Water Board staff. Implementation was expected to take approximately six to ten weeks from contract execution.

The Board discussed strategies for encouraging customer adoption of the e-check option, including bill inserts, website notifications, and potential incentive programs such as one-time bill credits. Staff expressed confidence that, given the high number of customers already using electronic payment methods, adoption of the new system would be achievable with appropriate outreach and education.

Following the discussion, Mr. Solarz moved to authorize the General Manager to sign the Gateway Services Master Agreement with Xpress Solutions, Inc dba Xpress Bill Pay for a three-year period. The motion also included a finding, in accordance with the Water Board's public contracting rules, that the services qualify as a sole source procurement due to the need for compatibility with existing systems. The motion was seconded by Mr. Matthews and passed unanimously.

Regarding entering into an agreement with Revize for website hosting and updated services for the Water Board's website, General Manager Ivan Thomas, explained that the Water Board's current website vendor had provided notice that it would be discontinuing website hosting services, necessitating the selection of a new provider.

Mr. Thomas described the process taken to identify a replacement vendor, which included researching providers that specialize in municipal and government websites, reviewing other agency websites, and conducting demonstrations with three potential vendors. These included a vendor recommended by the Water Board's IT provider, as well as platforms identified through other municipalities. After evaluating the features, usability, and cost of each option, staff recommended selecting Revize as the preferred provider. Mr. Thomas also noted that transitioning to Revize would result in a complete redesign of the Water Board's website using one of several available templates. In addition to improved appearance and functionality, a key benefit of the new platform would be ensuring compliance with accessibility standards, including ADA requirements and other regulatory obligations for public agency websites.

The proposed agreement includes a one-time implementation cost of approximately \$4,100 and an annual subscription fee of \$1,400. Staff reported that a total of \$10,000 had been budgeted for the website transition, and the proposed costs fall well within that budget. The first-year total cost, including implementation and subscription, would be approximately \$5,500.

The Board inquired about ease of use and confirmed that the platform would allow staff to efficiently manage and update content internally. It was also noted that existing elements, such as the customer payment portal access would continue to be available through links on the website. Mr. Thomas further explained that the new system would allow designated Water Board staff to serve as administrators, enabling them to update website content directly, such as posting notices, job announcements, and service updates, without relying on the vendor for routine changes. While some content on the current website has become outdated, he indicated that the transition would include a full update of website materials.

Following discussion, Mr. Matthews moved to authorize the General Manager to enter into a contract agreement with Revize for Water Board website hosting and website update service in the amount of \$5,500 for the first 12 months, then \$1,400 annually thereafter. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kilmer and passed unanimously.

Regarding the proposed Flex software purchase and vendor agreement from Novara Software, LLC to improve the Water Board's safety management and compliance programs, Executive Assistant and Human Resources Specialist Stacey Parrott, explained that historically, safety training, compliance tracking, inspections, safety data sheets (SDS), and related documentation have been managed through decentralized and largely manual processes, with individual departments maintaining their own records. These records have primarily been paper-based, and over time, staff turnover, evolving regulatory requirements, and increasing operational demands have made the system difficult to maintain effectively, with some documentation becoming outdated.

Ms. Parrott reported that over the past 18 months, efforts have been made to improve coordination, including implementing online training tools, developing compliance calendars, organizing shared digital files, and creating tracking spreadsheets. While these improvements have helped, it was noted that the current approach remains time-consuming, difficult to track consistently, and not easily accessible to all employees. Without a dedicated safety coordinator, maintaining compliance continues to be a challenge.

To address these issues, staff recommended implementing a centralized Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) software system. The proposed Flex software would integrate multiple functions into a single platform, including training management, SDS documentation, compliance tracking, inspection reporting, OSHA recordkeeping, and equipment management. The system would be accessible via both web and mobile applications, allowing field staff to complete trainings, submit reports, conduct inspections, and upload photos directly from their devices. Supervisors and managers would have access to dashboards, automated notifications, and reporting tools to monitor compliance and assign tasks.

Key features of the system were highlighted, including QR code functionality that allows employees to quickly access inspection forms and report issues for specific equipment or

locations in real time. The platform also includes a training library with over 1,000 courses, as well as the ability to create custom training content tailored to Water Board operations.

Ms. Parrott outlined the vendor evaluation process, noting that more than a dozen vendors were initially reviewed before narrowing the list to three finalists: StreamTECH, VelocityEHS, and Novara Software LLC. A staff panel evaluated each platform based on functionality, usability, and cost. Novara was selected as the highest-ranked option, providing the most comprehensive and cost-effective solution among those reviewed.

The total first-year cost of the software is \$13,774, which includes an annual subscription and a one-time implementation fee. It was noted that this purchase was not specifically budgeted in the current fiscal year; however, it is proposed to be funded using available savings from Fiscal Year 2026 capital projects. The ongoing annual subscription cost will be incorporated into the Fiscal Year 2027 budget, and staff recommended beginning implementation immediately to ensure the system is fully operational in the upcoming fiscal year.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Matthews moved to authorize the General Manager to enter into a contract agreement with Novara Software LLC for the purchase and implementation of Flex software in the amount of \$13,774 for the first 12 months, which includes the annual subscription and one-time implementation fee. The motion was seconded by Mr. Solarz and passed unanimously.

The Board's next regular meeting was scheduled for Thursday, April 16th, 2026, at 8:00 a.m. at the Coos Bay Public Library's Myrtlewood room.

Updates were given as follows:

- Terramar Pump Station Generator Project – two bids were received; however, both were determined to be non-responsive. One bidder submitted an insufficient bid bond that did not meet the required 10 percent threshold, and the second bidder failed to complete the required bid documentation acknowledging project addendums. As a result, neither bid could be considered. It was then indicated that the project will be rebid in the near future.
- Timber Sale – an update was provided on a potential timber sale on approximately 70 acres of Water Board property located near Ocean Boulevard and surrounding areas. The area includes a significant amount of alder, which has limited market value, and staff noted that harvesting could allow for reforestation with more desirable species in the future. In addition to long-term forest management goals, staff identified ongoing issues with homeless encampments, debris, and fire risk within the area as a motivating factor for considering the project. Site conditions were discussed, including challenging terrain that may increase logging costs, as well as the visibility of the area to nearby residents and the public.

The Board expressed interest in further evaluation, including timber cruising to better understand potential value, and discussed the importance of considering public perception and possible outreach to neighboring property owners. Staff will return with additional information for further Board consideration.

- Pony Creek Water Treatment Plant SCADA Design – the consultant has completed approximately 50 percent of the design phase. As the design progresses, staff noted that project scope and associated costs are becoming more clearly defined. Staff indicated that the project is moving forward as planned and that implementation planning is underway. Due to the critical nature of the system as the Water Board’s primary water supply control system, temporary measures such as backup power or generators may be required during installation, particularly while electrical upgrades are being completed.

It was also reported that related infrastructure improvements are in progress, including relocation of server equipment to a more suitable location with improved cooling and the addition of backup power (UPS) capabilities. These efforts are part of ongoing work to support the reliability and functionality of the upgraded SCADA system.

- Meter Change Out/AMR Installation – work recently began in Cycle 5, located in North Bend, and staff reported that the project is progressing well, with approximately one-quarter of the cycle completed to date. Staff noted that meter replacements are now being completed in-house, resulting in a slower but more manageable pace compared to prior contractor-led efforts. Approximately 360 meters have been replaced so far, compared to previous contractor rates of 1,000 to 1,200 meters per month. Staff indicated that the current pace is more sustainable and allows for better coordination with billing operations. While there was an initial adjustment period as staff transitioned into the expanded role, crews have become more efficient, and the project is proceeding smoothly.

At 7:55 a.m. Chair Richardson directed they go into executive session for the purpose of discussing information or records otherwise exempt from disclosure pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(f) and potential litigation pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(h).

The Board returned to regular session at 8:48 a.m. and there being no other business to come before the Board, Chair Richardson adjourned the meeting at 8:49 a.m.

Approved: _____, 2026

By: _____
Bill Richardson, Chair

ATTEST: _____