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Appoint and reappoint voting members and ex-officio members to the Portland Utility Board

Report

Office of Mayor Ted Wheeler

City of Portland

June 3, 2021

As Mayor and Commissioner of Finance & Administration, I request Council confirmation of the following appointments to the Portland Utility Board:

Voting Member Appointment	Term	Replacing
Karen Williams	July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022	reappointment
Alexander Lopez III	July 1, 2021-June 30, 2024	Dory Robinson
Cayle Tern	July 1, 2021-June 30, 2024	Heidi Bullock
Jasmine Varela	July 1, 2021-June 30, 2024	Rob Martineau

Ex-Officio Member Appointment	Term	Replacing
Amy Chomowicz	July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022	reappointment
Arielle Bradford	July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022	Brian Laurent
Sarah Messier	July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022	Sara Petrocine

Respectfully submitted,

Ted Wheeler

Mayor

Biographies and Interest Statements for Appointees:

Introduced by

[Mayor Ted Wheeler](#)
[Commissioner Mingus Mapps](#)

Bureau

[City Budget](#)

Prepared by

Amy Archer-Masters

Date Prepared

June 3, 2021

Requested Council Date

June 23, 2021 12:00 pm

Requested Agenda Type

Regular

Time Requested

10 minutes

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Voting Member – Reappointment/1-year extension

Karen Williams brings experience in hydrogeology, watershed planning, water quality and public administration to PUB. After several years as an environmental geologist and project manager, she joined the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and supported watershed councils, local governments and others working across Oregon to measure and improve stream quality. She's now a policy analyst at DEQ and helps to reduce air pollution from cars and trucks. Karen has enjoyed past service on boards for small nonprofit organizations, her union, neighborhood association, and community budget advisory committees.

Reason for wanting to serve on the PUB – Karen Williams:

The PUB provides an opportunity to combine interests in water and environmental planning with the desire to promote good governance and civic engagement. I hope to help the community better understand how public dollars are put to use to deliver safe, reliable water and maintain healthy watersheds for current and future generations. I hope to learn from community members how city utilities are meeting or not meeting their needs and how PUB can best advocate for them. I also hope my PUB service can promote programs and policies that support training, career opportunities, and professional well-being for utility bureaus' workers and contractors.

Voting Members - New Appointments

Alexander Lopez III (Alex) is a social worker and environmental geologist (registered in Oregon and Washington) working to center community perspectives in environmental remediation and policy. Utilizing his scientific background and social work education and experience, he strives to understand, call attention to, and mitigate the human impacts of environmental degradation, particularly on communities that have suffered historic and ongoing marginalization. Alex has over 15 years of experience performing environmental remediation work in Oregon and has worked on projects ranging in size from large superfund sites to small residential properties. He has experience with local, state, and federal environmental regulations and uses that experience while engaging with the public to help community members understand the legal and technical aspects of environmental cleanup work. He is particularly interested in brownfield redevelopment and superfund community engagement. Additionally, Alex has an interest in environmental policy, particularly as it relates to environmental justice issues. Alex holds bachelor's degrees in Geology (geophysics) and Mathematics from the University of Texas and will be graduating with a Master of Social Work in August 2021.

Reason for wanting to serve on the PUB – Alex Lopez:

Thank you for your consideration for appointment to the Portland Utility Board (PUB). I applied for the position on the PUB after I was made aware of the vacancy by a colleague at the Portland Harbor Community Coalition.

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I was immediately interested in the position because I believe that effective community oversight is fundamental to ensuring that government acts in the best interest of the community it serves.

I have a number of reasons for applying to serve on the PUB. First and foremost, I applied because I love Portland and want to play a role in making the city and its government work better for everyone. I am excited by the possibility of using my technical and social work skills to provide feedback to the board about community concerns. I am also excited about playing a role in city government, particularly with respect to environmental issues and drinking water infrastructure.

I also believe that my particular combination of life experiences, education, and professional experience gives me a unique perspective on the work of the Bureau of Environmental Services and the Portland Water Bureau. As a middle-class person of color and member of the LGBTQ community, I don't often see myself or my community reflected in elected officials or government representatives. I applied to the position to help ensure that all communities are given equitable opportunities to contribute to the decisions that will impact them.

My experience in environmental remediation and project management gives me a technical perspective rooted in science, policy, and finances. My social work education and experience with environmental justice advocacy give me the tools for engaging community in direct and meaningful ways. I applied to the PUB because I see it as an awesome opportunity to use the full scope of my skills to contribute to my community and city.

Finally, I firmly agree that we are all entitled to clean water, a healthy community, and healthy watersheds. While we have made tremendous progress in addressing some of our environmental and infrastructure needs, we still have a very long way to go before those goals are realized. I would like to help get us there together.

I appreciate your consideration of my appointment to the PUB.

Cayle Tern earned a BS in Business Administration from California State University, Chico, and Master of Social Work from Portland State University. Cayle is a first-generation refugee from Laos, a leader in the in the Asian American and Pacific Islander Community. Cayle serves on the Pacific Islander and Asian Family Center Advisory Board, a Board Member of the East County Rising PAC, a Councilman Member of Service International Employee Union PAC (Oregon), and a recently elected Reynolds School Board Director. Cayle has 15 years' experience as a Human Services worker with the Oregon Department of Human Services. Social Justice and Equity is at the forefront of every conversation and the Portland Utility Board should be no exception.

Reason for wanting to serve on the PUB – Cayle Tern:

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I want to be appointed to the Portland Utility Board because I want to represent the voices of those that have been marginalized and silent in the policy making process. I believe that access to clean water is a human right so social economic status and income level should not be a barrier to access. I have seen first-hand the challenges that marginalized families encounter and how disruptive a shut-off is to families. We need to develop policies that ensures a sustainable source of clean water while increasing affordability and equity with access. I will contribute my experience as an individual who experienced poverty, a worker who has helped families become self-sufficient, a community advocate that represents the needs of under-represented Oregonians, and Oregon's most vulnerable citizens.

Jasmine Varela is an Operating Engineer at the Portland Water Bureau.

A member of the PWB since 2006, her experience spans 3 divisions including Maintenance & Construction (Utility Worker), Customer Service (Water Meter Technician), and Operations (Operating Engineer), additionally she has been involved with the bureau's safety committee for over 10 years. Jasmine's education includes a Bachelor of Science in Psychology, Oregon DHS certification as a Water Treatment Operator Level II and Water Distribution System Operator Level III.

Outside of work, Jasmine is a Varsity Assistant Volleyball coach at Rex Putnam High School (GO KINGSMEN!!!) and has been involved in community coaching for 23 years. She has a deep passion for helping teens become leaders on and off the court and takes her teams to the Oregon Food Bank and the Ronald McDonald House to volunteer and set an example of service in our community.

Reason for wanting to serve on the PUB – Jasmine Varela:

I am proud to provide clean, safe, drinking water to the People of Portland and surrounding communities, I also strive to uphold the public trust. I hope to offer perspective and engagement with PUB Members and bureaus as a frontline employee, operator and steward of Portland utilities. It is important to recognize the efforts of working people and the value their long and steady stewardship provides. I believe BES & PWB provide services which are critical to ensure community health and safety. To this end I take seriously the opportunity to collectively advise Portland City Council with regard to the bureaus and their missions.

Ex-Officio Member – Re-Appointment

Amy Chomowicz is a governance policy analyst for the Bureau of Environmental Services Project Management Office (PMO). During her 25-year tenure with BES, Amy has held several different positions which combined technical and policy work with program management. Amy started at BES at the grant manager for a \$10 million EPA grant for watershed restoration. She has managed several programs such as the

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Columbia Slough Watershed program, the city's Ecoroof Program and the Stormwater Stewards Tree Team. These programs were public-facing and focused on providing services to multiple types of populations in Portland using an equity lens. Amy has served on many bureau committees including the PEER program and the Committee for Equity and Diversity. Amy also has a background in energy conservation and electric utility experience.

Outside of work, Amy volunteers with Friends of Trees, and she is on the board of the Green Roof information Think-tank, a small non-profit that provides education about sustainable stormwater management. Amy has a Bachelor of Science degree in environmental science from the University of New Hampshire, and a Masters in Urban Planning from the University of Washington.

Reason for Wanting to Serve on the PUB – Amy Chomowicz:

The services BES and the Water Bureau provide are foundational to the health and well-being of the Portland community, and the bureaus must emphasize providing utility services with an explicit commitment to the safety and wellbeing of the community and the environment. Decisions must promote accountability, transparency, and the best use of public resources. At this critical point in our history, the bureaus have a responsibility and opportunity to effect positive change within the community by emphasizing equity, inclusion, human rights, and addressing intuitional racism. I believe deeply in serving the community, and my goal is to support the PUB in making the best decisions for the Portland community.

Ex-Officio Members – New Appointments

Sarah Messier is a Water Quality Information Program Coordinator at the Portland Water Bureau. Sarah has worked in the Water Quality Information group at PWB since 2014. Her work includes managing the outreach and education components of the Lead Hazard Reduction Program, producing the annual Drinking Water Quality Report and other water quality communication materials, preparing for emergency communication events, and increasing native language and disability access to water quality information. She is also a member of the bureau's Outreach Committee. Sarah has a Bachelor of Science in Marine and Freshwater Biology and a Masters of Science in Marine Resource Management. Outside of work, you can find Sarah exploring nature with her family, baking with her two young kids, tending her houseplants, and reading as much as she can.

Reason for Wanting to Serve on the PUB – Sarah Messier:

It's my honor to serve the people who drink Portland's water. I have a deep-rooted vision and belief in the good that government can provide, while also holding the truth that government continues to inflict harm on many of our communities. My work at the Water Bureau is focused on increasing the community trust that our tap water is safe to drink and removing

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systemic barriers to that information. I look forward to expanding on this work on PUB to continue building community trust in the Water Bureau as a steward of water quality, ratepayer funds, and the drinking water system as well as increasing access and transparency of budget priorities and decision-making. It is a privilege to serve on PUB as a Water Bureau liaison and be a voice for our bureau and the diverse communities we serve.

Arielle Bradford is currently an Environmental Technician II at the Bureau of Environmental Services. Her experience spans stormwater and wastewater service portfolios in step with real-world work, and she brings a broad range of experience in environmental science, water quality, and ecosystem restoration work. Arielle has a strong passion for equity, diversity, and inclusion. Her knowledge and experience managing the intersection of community engagement, water quality, regulatory compliance, revenue, and operations and maintenance strategies will add value to topics presented at PUB, and empower her to bring PUB greater awareness of the needs and experiences of our employees and customers, particularly Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color.

Reason for Wanting to Serve on the PUB – Arielle Bradford:

Arielle's passion and values center on serving the Portland community with a transparent lens and focus on clean and affordable water resources for all Portlanders.

Documents and Exhibits

 [Memorandum summarizing the PUB member recruitment process](#)
(99.51 Kb)

Impact Statement

 [Financial Impact Statement for PUB Appointment Report](#) (182.41 Kb)

General information

 cityinfo@portlandoregon.gov

 [503-823-4000](tel:503-823-4000)

 [711](#) Oregon Relay Service

City of Portland, Oregon

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Date: June 10, 2021

To: Mayor Wheeler and Commissioner Mapps

CC: Hayley Blonsley, Ness Zolan and Michelle Rodriguez

From: Amy Archer-Masters, Portland Utility Board Analyst

Re: Summary of PUB process for recommending new board members

Per City Code 3.123.040, the Mayor, in consultation with the Commissioners-in-Charge of the Portland Water Bureau (PWB) and Bureau of Environmental Services (BES), appoints members to the Portland Utility Board (PUB). On June 30, 2021, the terms for four voting members expire, including the term for the designated voting labor representative. The PUB is requesting the Mayor, with the confirmation of City Council, appoint Alexander Lopez III (Alex), Cayle Tern and Jasmine Varela to three-year terms and extend Karen Williams appointment by one-year to realign with the regular appointment cycles. The board also submits the bureau selected employees Amy Chomowicz, Arielle Bradford and Sarah Messier for one-year appointments as ex-officio members. The board requests these positions be confirmed by the City Council prior to their July 1, 2021 board meeting to ensure full participation at the start of the fiscal year and is available to answer any questions you may have to facilitate this process.

The labor unions coordinated the selection of the voting member to fill the appointment designated for an employee of BES or PWB in a represented bargaining unit. The board formed a subcommittee of current members of the board and bureau representatives to evaluate candidates for the remaining appointments. Below please find a summary of the processes used to solicit the new voting members and make their recommendations.

Labor Selection Process

As the labor representative and voting member of the Portland Utility Board, President of the District Council of Trade Unions (DCTU), President of AFSCME Local 189, Rob Martineau is proud to offer Jasmine Varela for appointment to the voting labor seat on the PUB.

There are five unions that have members in at least one of the bureaus to which PUB

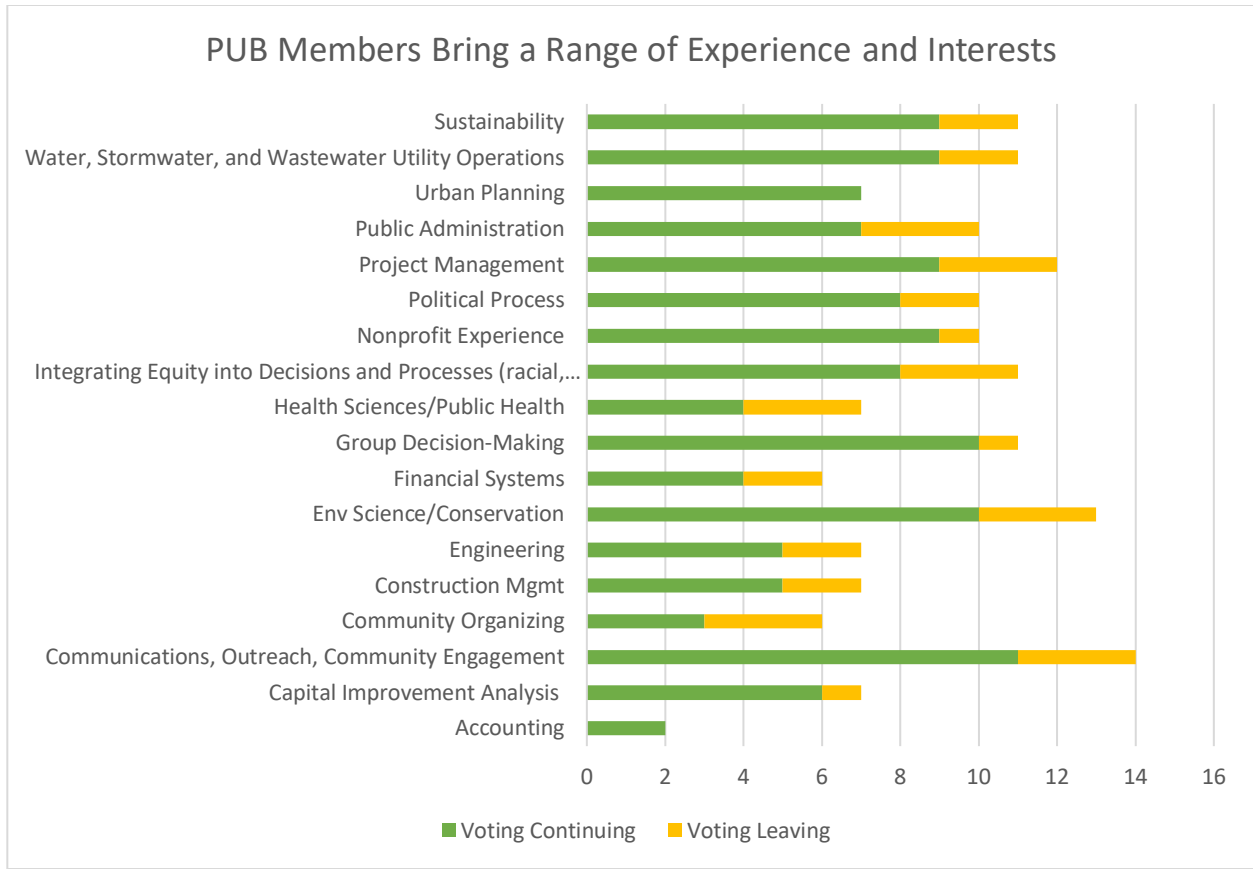
provides oversight: AFSCME 189, IBEW 48, Operating Engineers 701, PROTEC 17, LiUNA 483. Earlier this year Rob initiated conversations with representatives from these unions. All of these organizations know of and support the role of a member of PUB being a represented employee. Individually they reached out to their stewards and memberships through their communications, typically (if there is such a thing in 2020) membership meetings, Zoom calls, email and direct contact of those in BES and PWB. These efforts and conversations produced a very qualified candidate who will be a tremendous voice not just for workers in these bureaus but our community at large.

Outreach Process for Recruiting New Members

The application for PUB membership is available year-round on the websites for PUB and the Office of Community and Civic Life (Civic Life). In addition, staff proactively reached out to Council offices, community partners, the directors and leadership of both bureaus and current board members, for recommendations and assistance reaching highly qualified applicants. Due to social distancing requirements, lack of in-person events and recognition of the high level of stress in the community, the outreach relied heavily on communication through electronic means and personal outreach to potentially interested candidates.

Current Board Skills Assessment

Prior to soliciting new applications, staff updated the skills assessment of the board members to identify skills or experience areas that are currently underrepresented. The ordinance governing the PUB identifies the following skills that will serve the Board well: technical knowledge of water, stormwater, and sewer utility operation and issues, accounting, civil engineering, conservation, environmental sciences, health sciences, public administration, urban planning, or utility economics, financial and capital improvement analysis, ecosystem science, environmental protection, political process, group process, and communications. The PUB considered current makeup and potential gaps in skills, experience and demographics of the board.



Reappointment/1-year Term Extension – Karen Williams

In July 2019, Karen Williams was appointed to a two-year voting member vacancy created by an early PUB member departure. In January 2021 Karen was also appointed as a PUB co-chair. The PUB and recruitment committee recognized Karen’s positive contributions, the value of maintaining members with some tenure on the board and the circumstances that resulted in a shorter than normal initial appointment. The recruitment committee and full PUB recommend that Karen Williams’ appointment be extended by one year through June 30, 2022 to realign with a typical three-year appointment term. If interested at the end of the term, in compliance with code Karen would remain eligible to apply for reappointment through the standard recruitment process in 2022.

Applicants and Reviews

Ten individuals applied to join the PUB and applicants represented a spectrum of life

experiences and skills. A subcommittee of the board and two representatives from the bureaus identified top candidates and invited eight applicants to talk with them about their experiences and interest in the board. Two of the eight applicants later withdrew their applications due to personal conflicts. All of the interviewed candidates were determined to be qualified for the role and the committee reached consensus on the top candidates recommended for appointment. The applicants recommended by the subcommittee were determined to be the strongest candidates with a valuable range of skills and experience to complement the board.

Staggering of Terms of Membership for Voting Members

Appointments to the board for voting members is typically for three-year terms with the initial cohort staggered to ensure continuity for the board. Below is a table of terms for the current and recommended members (*). Ex-officio members are not included in this list. Selections by the bureaus are still being finalized and once recommended will be appointed for one year.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Term End</u>
*Karen Williams	June 2022
Kaliska Day	June 2022
Gabriela Saldaña López	June 2022
Karen Spencer	June 2022
Robin Castro	June 2023
Julia DeGraw	June 2023
Theresa Huang	June 2023
Tom Liptan	June 2023
* Alex Lopez	June 2024
* Cayle Tern	June 2024
* Jasmine Varela	June 2024

Ongoing Recruitment and Process Refinement

The PUB members and staff are committed to creating and maintaining a board that

reflects the diversity of Portland and balances the skills and experiences of members to provide balance from a range of perspectives. The board typically conducts recruitment in Spring in preparation for the vacancies anticipated each fiscal year. The board will continue to be strategic and creative in outreach during recruitments and are always open to any recommendations for process or recruitment improvements.

IMPACT STATEMENT

Legislation title: Appoint and reappoint voting members and ex-officio members to the Portland Utility Board (Report)

Contact name: Amy Archer-Masters

Contact phone: 503-823-8340

Presenter name: Mayor Wheeler or Commissioner Mapps

Purpose of proposed legislation and background information:

To appoint four voting members and three ex-officio members to the Portland Utility Board. These appointments are required by code. With these appointments, the board will be complete with 11 voting members and three ex-officio members.

Financial and budgetary impacts:

There is no budget impact of this action.

Community impacts and community involvement:

The Portland Utility Board (PUB) is a 14-member oversight body consisting of 11 voting members and 3 ex-officio members. The PUB provides oversight to ensure accountability and transparency of the two public utility bureaus: The Bureau of Environmental Service and the Portland Water Bureau. The creation of the board was subsequent to a recommendation by a Blue-Ribbon Commission made of public members that took considerable public testimony in identifying issues and solutions.

The voting members were selected after an open application process. Outreach for candidates included a range of public notice, social media outreach and personal contacts through board members and staff. The recommendation for three of the voting members (Karen Williams, Alexander Lopez III and Cayle Tern) was formed through a subcommittee consisting of PUB members and bureau staff. The recommendation was approved by the subcommittee and board at public meetings where public comment was solicited.

The fourth recommendation is for Jasmine Varela to fill the seat designated for an employee of BES or PWB in a represented bargaining unit. The process to identify and select a labor representative was coordinated by the departing PUB member in that role, Rob Martineau, President of the District Council of Trade Unions (DCTU) and President of AFSCME Local 189. All of the relevant unions (AFSCME 189, IBEW 48, Operating Engineers 701, PROTEC 17 and LiUNA 483) were engaged in the process of identifying and selecting the recommended appointee. Individually, the unions reached out to stewards and membership through communications (membership meetings, Zoom calls, email and direct contact).

The Bureau of Environmental Services and Portland Water Bureau select the employees for the ex-officio appointments.

100% Renewable Goal:

This action does not change the City's energy use.

Budgetary Impact Worksheet

Does this action change appropriations?

YES: Please complete the information below.

NO: Skip this section

Fund	Fund Center	Commitment Item	Functional Area	Funded Program	Grant	Sponsored Program	Amount