

**Portland Utility Board**  
May 31, 2017, 11am – 12pm  
Room C, Portland Building  
Meeting # 24 Minutes

**Attendees:**

*PUB Members:* Alice Brawley-Chesworth, ex officio  
Allan Warman  
Lee Moore  
Meredith Connolly  
Micah Meskel  
Marie Walkiewicz, ex officio  
Mike Weedall  
Janet Hawkins

*Absent:*

\* Julia Person  
\* Scott Robinson  
\* Ted Labbe  
\* Colleen Johnson  
\* Robert Martineau

\* Notice of absence provided prior to meeting

*Staff:* Mike Stuhr (Director, Water)  
Gabe Solmer (Deputy Director, Water)  
Cecelia Huynh (Director of Finance and Support Services, Water)  
Jeff Winner (Capital Improvement Program Planning Supervisor, Water)  
Nicole Adams (Communications Director, Water)  
Edward Campbell (Resource Protection and Planning Group Manager, Water)  
Liam Frost (Policy Director, Commissioner Fish's Office)  
Todd Lofgren (Policy Director, Commissioner Fish's Office)  
  
Shannon Fairchild (Financial Analyst, City Budget Office)  
Melissa Merrell (PUB Principal Analyst, City Budget Office)

*Public:* Janice Thompson (Citizen Utility Board)  
Carol Cushman (League of Women Voters)

**I. Call to Order**

Allan opened the meeting and invited Director Stuhr and Deputy Director Solmer to brief the PUB.

**II. Water Quality Briefing. Mike Stuhr, Director, Portland Water Bureau; Gabe Solmer, Deputy Director, Portland Water Bureau**

Mike provided PUB with background information on the letter from OHA stating that they would revoke the Water Bureau's variance for *cryptosporidium* treatment. He cautioned that the information being provided today would be preliminary and the decision on treatment would be made by City Council.

He began with a brief overview of the history of the Bull Run Watershed and the evolution of the regulatory requirements stemming from the 1996 Safe Drinking Water Act. One of those requirements was that surface water systems needed to treat for *cryptosporidium*. In 2002, a citizen panel, The Bull Run Treatment Citizen's Panel submitted a [report](#) and recommendation that the bureau build a filtration plant to address the regulatory needs. In 2009, the decision of council was to pursue two tracks, first work with EPA and OHA to secure a variance from the treatment requirement and second to move forward with the design of a UV treatment facility.

The bureau completed the design phase for a UV facility but the plans were shelved when OHA granted a [variance](#) in 2012. The variance required the bureau to regularly test for *cryptosporidium* and laid out a response framework if samples tested positive. This testing requirement included observation monitoring and sampling 100 liters of water from the intake twice a week. If *cryptosporidium* is detected, the variance required the bureau do demonstration monitoring which included increasing sampling to 250 liters over 4 days a week and test no less than 13,334 liters over the course of a year. The results of this testing would have to demonstrate that the concentration of *cryptosporidium* is less than .0075 oocysts per 100 liters of water.

Between 2012 and December 2016, observation monitoring detected no *cryptosporidium* in the watershed. Between January 2017 and March 2017, testing results showed 19 oocysts in 14 positive samples. The bureau began the increased demonstration monitoring in January. For approximately a month during this time, the bureau switched from the Bull Run source to groundwater as they investigated the source and type of *cryptosporidium* being detected.

The bureau also determined that, given the threshold required by the variance, it was infeasible that they could test enough samples over the next year to demonstrate the concentration the concentration of *cryptosporidium* was less than .0075 oocysts per 100 liters of water. They [notified](#) OHA of this determination on March 8, 2017.

OHA [notified](#) the bureau on May 19, 2017 that on September 22, it will be revoking the variance. The bureau must submit a treatment plan to OHA by August 11. The bureau is planning a council work session on June 27 to bring the options to council. The very roughest estimates of costs for a UV plant is based on the plan from 2012, estimated to be about \$100 million. The filtration costs are more speculative and there are several different types of filtration that the city could choose. Those options may range between \$400 million and \$500 million.

Mike provided that the rate impact for UV could be a 1% or 2% annual rate increase and the rate impact of filtration could be roughly 4 times that. He strongly cautioned that the estimates are rough and preliminary and depend heavily on timing of construction and other assumptions.

Lee commented that primary difference between UV and filtration is that UV inactivates *cryptosporidium* while filtration removes it.

Meredith asked about the possibility of another series of positive detections that would require going back to groundwater. Mike responded that it was unknown. The bureau has been unable to pinpoint the reason for why it happened in the first place. Groundwater is \$1 million per month. The bureau isn't expecting to have to return to groundwater.

Mike clarified that the variance has not been revoked. The variance is still in place until September 22. After that date, the bureau will still be considered to be in compliance if they have submitted the plan as required and continue to do testing.

The bureau can't presuppose what council will decide but it's doing preparation work. The finance office is considering what kind of money will be used to finance construction and will look at all budgetary options. The budgetary and rate impact will depend on total cost and over how many years it will be spread. The bureau may adjust the current capital plan. It will come back to PUB with more details during the capital discussion for the next budget cycle in August or September.

Micah asked about location of a treatment facility. Mike responded that the UV treatment would be located at headworks. Filtration needs more space and would be located near Lusted Hill.

Meredith asked about the lab capability the bureau is in the process of bringing in house at the Interstate location. Mike responded that any treatment facility would take at least 5 years, during which time the bureau would need to continue testing. After a treatment facility is online, testing needs would continue to make sure treatment was working.

Micah asked if there had been any negative health effects found by Multnomah County during this time that could be attributed to the positive findings in the watershed. No. There was no detectable increase in the number of cryptosporidiosis.

Mike Weedall asked about other threats or emerging needs down the road that might lead the city to choose one option over the other. Mike S. reiterated that previously the recommendations to council had been for filtration treatment. UV does one thing – it inactivates ocyocsts. Filtration could address every other known potential contaminate. It also would mitigate other risks such as a fire in the watershed, turbidity, and others. UV would be less effective in turbidity events.

A PUB member asked if there was any chance for another variance and Mike responded no. The variance was based on best data at the time. We now have new data. These public health decisions are about preventing outbreaks and protecting the most vulnerable. Mike talked about black swan events – those that have catastrophic consequences but low probability of happening – similar to a Cascadia earthquake.

A PUB member asked about the possibility of combining the pending corrosion control facility with a crypto treatment option to try and optimize construction efficiency. Mike explained that

the infrastructure for corrosion control would be located at Lusted Hill. Injections would need to happen after UV treatment.

For planning purposes, the bureau currently has the UV design. It will need to recheck mechanical specification and availability of components. It would likely take a year to review plus four years for construction. For a filtration plant, the bureau would need about a year for planning, 1 to 2 years for design, then several years for construction. The bureau would have a compliance agreement with OHA during that time.

### III. **Public Comment**

Scott Fernandez spoke about the testing methodology and federal regulations that are one-size-fits-all. He raised concerns with chemicals used in the filtration process. Board members asks Scott if there had been to his knowledge a scientifically panel convened about Bull Run Watershed issues.

Joe Walsh expressed concerns about expenditures and the covered reservoirs.

Floy Jones talked about the draft rule in 2004 and how the federal regulations don't distinguish between types of cryptosporidium. She gave the PUB background on the citizens' panel and contracts with C2HM Hill. She also talked about her work at the state and with the council in 2009. She feels that any treatment plant would have no measurable health benefit.