

# Rhododendron Water Association

2025 Annual Meeting

Saturday May 17, 2025

Alpine Event Center

73365 E. Hwy 26

Rhododendron, OR 97049

1 **PRESENT:** President, Steve Graeper; Vice President, Bob Phillips; Secretary, Merv Novinger;  
2 Board Members, Mike Miskowicz, Bill Nylund, and Jerry King.  
3 Others present: Executive Secretary, Laura Patty; Water Master, David Jacob.

4 **ABSENT:** Treasurer, Molly Espenel.

## 5 **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

### 6 **Quorum Determination:**

7 Graeper determined a quorum was present for the meeting to proceed with 6 of the 7 Board  
8 members present. Five members of the community also attended.

### 9 **Welcome and Opening Remarks:**

10 President Steve Graeper opened the meeting at 12:06 PM. Graeper thanked everyone for  
11 attending and introduced the Board members present. He also introduced Executive Secretary,  
12 Laura Patty and Water Master, David Jacob.

## 13 **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

### 14 **Approval of 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes**

15 Graeper explained that the minutes were previously distributed via email and listed on RWA's  
16 website. He then asked for any corrections or amendments to the May 18, 2024 Annual Meeting  
17 minutes. Hearing none, he asked for a motion. Mike Miskowicz moved and Bill Nylund  
18 seconded a **motion to approve the 2024 Annual Meeting minutes as distributed.** Motion  
19 PASSED unanimously.

## 20 **SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

21 Graeper introduced Mr. Sam Weller, a Circuit Rider with Oregon Association of Water Utilities  
22 (OAWU). Mr. Weller then explained the Best Tasting Water competition that is held every year  
23 at the OAWU Spring Conference and then presented RWA with the award for **Best Tasting**  
24 **Surface Water in the State of Oregon for 2025.** Graeper accepted the award on behalf of the  
25 association.

## 26 **EXECUTIVE SECRETARY/TREASURE'S REPORT**

### 27 **Review of 2024 Financials**

28 Executive Secretary, Laura Patty explained that the 2024 financials are listed on the web site and  
29 reported on the Year End Balance Sheet for 2024. The association ended the year with a deficit  
30 Net Income of -\$39,773.

31 The 2025 financials YTD are on par with the budget. There were no questions.

### 32 **Account updates, billing changes**

33 None reported. In 2024 & again in 2025, there were rate increases and so far, there has been no  
34 positive or negative feedback received from the membership regarding the rate increases.

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1 **RWA Financial Assistance Program**

2 RWA has maintained a Bill Assistance program to help qualifying members with water dues  
3 payments. Bob Phillips and Bill Nylund oversee the confidential program. Bob Phillips reported  
4 that this year they have assisted two members and the fund has a remaining balance of \$1820. He  
5 asked the membership to be sure to communicate with any friends or relatives that program is  
6 available because it is there to help.

7 The program is funded strictly by donated funds from the RWA community.

8 **WATER MASTER REPORT**

9 **2024 Consumer Confidence Report**

10 Water Master and Filtration Plant Operator, David Jacob, reported that once again RWA  
11 surpassed all minimum requirements for water quality standards. The 2024 Consumer  
12 Confidence Report (CCR) is available for all to view on the web site. He noted the 2024 CCR  
13 includes the January 2024 Boil Water notice explanation and he mentioned that the federally  
14 mandated lead service line inventory must now be included in the CCR report. He pointed out  
15 that RWA has no lead in any of our service lines.

16 **Arlie Mitchell Bridge Replacement**

17 Jacob reported that in 2024, Clackamas County replaced the bridge that crosses Henry Creek on  
18 Arlie Mitchell Road. That bridge also carries a main water line that serves members on Road 19  
19 and the western part of Henry Creek Road.

20 **Hofeldt Road Water Line**

21 Jacob also reported that a main water line along Hofeldt Road developed a substantial leak.  
22 Unfortunately, it was in a section of road that crosses a seasonal creek. That line replacement  
23 required that RWA bore a 4” line under the creek to facilitate the replacement of the line.

24 Replacing the water lines in both these locations were unexpected and very expensive.

25 **Filtration Plant**

26 The filtration plant continues to operate as designed. The Slow Sand filter is performing better  
27 than expected allowing for longer cycles between cleanings.

28 **PRESIDENTS REPORT**

29 **What did the 2024 & 2025 rate increases get us?**

30 Graeper explained that the rate increases allowed RWA to bridge the financing gaps created by  
31 the unexpected source water protection in 2021, the ice storm of 2024, and several large  
32 unexpected and expensive leak repairs. While the \$100,000 Clackamas County Bank Line of  
33 Credit helped with immediate needs, the board wished to eliminate the interest burden on that  
34 LOC as rapidly as possible.

35 **Are there more “larger than normal” rate increases planned?**

36 In a word “NO!” Graeper explained that since 2010 he has committed to RWA members that  
37 there would be no “Special assessments”. It is very likely that RWA will return to the biennial  
38 rate increases once RWA receives the FEMA and Grant monies applied for.

39 **FEMA 2024 Disaster Declaration reimbursement**

40 And speaking of FEMA monies, Graeper was pleased to report that FEMA recently reimbursed  
41 RWA **\$24,266.34** for the expenses incurred during the January 2024 Ice Storm. Most of those  
42 funds were used to pay back monies borrowed against the line of credit.

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**1 OWEB Source Water Protection Grant**

2 Graeper then explained that the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) met for their  
3 annual meeting in April and overwhelmingly approved RWA’s Grant request for **\$143,460**.  
4 These Grant funds will reimburse RWA for the expenses incurred in 2021 when the association  
5 had to pay \$175,000 for an Equitable Servitude to protect Henry Creek from the ravages of clear-  
6 cut harvesting in the RWA watershed.

7 The Grant monies are a result of RWA and others who lobbied the 2023 legislature to fund  
8 projects that protect watersheds throughout the state. The 2023 legislature passed House Bill  
9 2010, which allotted \$5 Million dollars to help water systems purchase protections for their  
10 watersheds. Graeper was pleased to report that RWA was the only system to receive retroactive  
11 funding for protections already established.

12 He went on to explain that the OWEB Board, who oversees the Grant program, added another  
13 \$12,000 to the RWA Granted amount. These additional funds will allow RWA to survey the  
14 Equitable Servitude and mark the boundary for future reference, which is a requirement of the  
15 Grant. Once the survey and paperwork are complete, RWA will be receiving a total of **\$155,460**  
16 from OWEB. Those funds will allow RWA to pay the outstanding balance of **\$45,927** toward the  
17 \$100,000 Emergency Assistance loan granted by OHA in 2021.

**18 FEMA 404 Mitigation Grant Request**

19 In addition to the OWEB and FEMA funds, RWA applied to FEMA for a 404 Mitigation Grant.  
20 If awarded, and that’s a big “IF” due to issues at the federal level, the requested funding of  
21 **\$204,022.40** would go toward reimbursing RWA for the states unfunded, yet mandated  
22 mitigations that require RWA to implement measures to prevent what occurred during the  
23 January 2024 Ice Storm from reoccurring. Those measures are to install Radio-Read meters on  
24 all service connections and install additional seismically resilient Contact Time pipe at the  
25 treatment plant.

26 Graeper explained that if/when all funds applied for are paid, RWA stands to gain a grand total  
27 of **\$383,748.74**.

**28 Planned Capital Improvement Projects, recaps, and update**

29 As funding comes in from these Grants, there are numerous Capital Improvement projects that  
30 need to be addressed. However, the most pressing is the long anticipated main line improvement  
31 in the John Lake neighborhood. It is now on the schedule for completion this summer. David  
32 said that work will be contracted out and he is currently receiving bids.

33 While we plan on other capital improvements, the priority of those improvements remains very  
34 fluid as unscheduled system failures occur. David and the Board will continue to review needs of  
35 the system as funds allow.

**36 MEMBER QUESTIONS/SUGGESTIONS**

37 There were questions from members regarding the John Lake project and how it would address  
38 the pressure issues in the John Lake area, and a question in general about how much of our  
39 system is supplied by gravity and how much is pumped. David answered that John Lake is  
40 gravity supply and the new line will stabilize the pressure in that area to 29psi and only the  
41 Woodlands area is assisted with pumps.

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1 **SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

2 Graeper then recognized Mr. Ralph Pitt. Pitt, now retired from the Board, served as a long time  
3 RWA Board member and prior to that on the Faubion Water system Board. Graeper bestowed  
4 upon Pitt the unofficial title of Board Member Emeritus, because of his continued service to the  
5 RWA system.

6 **RESULTS OF BALLOTING**

7 **Director Election Results**

8 Executive Secretary Laura Patty reported that of the 365 ballots mailed to the membership only  
9 48 ballots were received. She then announced the balloting results. Both RWA Directors, Merv  
10 Novinger, and Bill Nylund were re-elected for another 3-year term.

11 Graeper then expressed his gratitude to the Board and suggested that the lack of participation by  
12 the membership only means that the Board must be doing something right, because it seems only  
13 controversy brings people to the meetings.

14 **ADJOURNMENT**

15 President Graeper thanked everyone for attending the 2025 Annual meeting and adjourned at  
16 12:47PM. The next RWA Annual Meeting will be held in May 2026.

17 Respectfully submitted,  
18 Steven Graeper, acting Recording Secretary