

Rhododendron Water Association

2026 Annual Meeting
Saturday May 16, 2026
Mt. Hood Village RV Park
65000 E. Hwy 26
Welches, OR 97067

1 **PRESENT:** President, Steve Graeper; Vice President, Bob Phillips; Secretary, Merv Novinger;
2 Board Members, Mike Miskowicz, and Jerry King
3 Others present: Executive Secretary, Laura Patty; Board Member Emeritus, Ralph Pitt

4 **ABSENT:** Treasurer, Molly Espenel; Board Member, Bill Nylund; Water Master David Jacob;
5 All were excused.

6 **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

7 **Quorum Determination:** Graeper determined a quorum was present for the meeting to proceed
8 with 5 of 7 Board members present. Seven members of the community also attended.

9 **Welcome and Opening Remarks:** President Steve Graeper opened the meeting at 12:10 PM.
10 Graeper thanked everyone for attending and introduced the Board members present. He also
11 introduced Executive Secretary, Laura Patty and Board Member Emeritus, Ralph Pitt.

12 **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

13 **Approval of 2025 Annual Meeting Minutes:** Graeper explained that the minutes were
14 previously distributed via email and listed on RWA's website. He then asked for any corrections
15 or amendments to the May 17, 2025 Annual Meeting minutes. There was one correction
16 mentioned, which was to remove "Board Member Emeritus" from the header on pages 2 and 3.
17 There were no additional corrections. Mike Miskowicz moved and Scott King seconded a
18 **motion to approve the 2025 Annual Meeting minutes as distributed.** Motion PASSED
19 unanimously.

20 **EXECUTIVE SECRETARY/TREASURE'S REPORT**

21 **Review of 2025 Financials:** Executive Secretary, Laura Patty explained that the 2025 financials
22 are listed on the web site and reported on the Year End Balance Sheet. The association ended the
23 year with a Net Income of \$111,710.88.

24 The 2026 financials YTD are on par with the budget. There were no questions.

25 **Account updates, billing changes and Credit Card processing fees:** At the November 2025
26 Board meeting the Board voted to implement a 3% Rate increase along with a 3% Credit Card
27 processing fee. The rate increase was communicated in the annual letter, but the annual letter
28 failed to mention the 3% Credit Card processing fee. That was an unintentional oversight and
29 Graeper took full responsibility and apologized profusely to the membership. Laura mentioned
30 that in 2025, RWA was charged \$1,471.25 in credit card processing fees.

31 **RWA Financial Assistance Program:** RWA has maintained a Bill Assistance program to help
32 qualifying members with water dues payments. Bob Phillips and Bill Nylund oversee the
33 confidential program. Phillips reported that the fund currently has a balance of \$2,531 and that
34 the fund was used as an incentive to assist a delinquent member bring his account current. There
35 are currently no outstanding requests for assistance and he asked the membership to be sure to
36 communicate with any friends or relatives that program is available because it is there to help.
37 The program is funded strictly by donated funds from the RWA community.

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1 **WATER MASTER REPORT**

2 **2025 Consumer Confidence Report:** In David Jacob’s absence, Graeper reported that once
3 again RWA surpassed all minimum requirements for water quality standards and credited Jacob
4 for his exemplary work in maintaining the water system. He pointed out that the 2025 Consumer
5 Confidence Report (CCR) is available for all to view on the web site. He also noted that the 2025
6 CCR includes the results of the 2023 Sanitary Survey conducted by Oregon Health Authority
7 (Drinking Water Division) designating RWA as an **“OUTSTANDING PERFORMER”**.

8 **PRESIDENTS REPORT**

9 **Why did the rate increase for 2026?** Graeper explained that the reason for the rate increase
10 was pretty simple, the RWA Board has a desire to stay on top of inflation and the continually
11 rising prices during these turbulent economic times nationally. Instead of the biennial 3% (1.5%
12 annually) the Board voted to implement an annual 3% rate increase in order to keep up with the
13 increasing costs of goods and services. Graeper asked for any questions or concerns from those
14 attending and heard none.

15 **Are there more “larger than normal” rate increases planned?** In a word **“NO!”** Graeper
16 explained that since he has been President, he has committed to RWA members that there would
17 be no “special assessments”. He reasserted that pledge. The RWA Board will reexamine the rate
18 structure once the national economy becomes more stable, but until then the RWA Board will
19 recommend at least a 3% rate increase annually. Graeper also brought up the fact that recent
20 Grants applied for and received have supplemented RWA’s income and he will continue to apply
21 for applicable Grant funding.

22 **OWEB Source Water Protection Grant:** Graeper then explained that in 2025 RWA received
23 the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) Source Water Protection Grant of
24 **\$153,460**. The Grant funds reimbursed RWA for expenses incurred in 2021 when the association
25 paid \$175,000 for an Equitable Servitude to protect Henry Creek from the ravages of clear-cut
26 harvesting in the RWA watershed.

27 **FEMA 404 Mitigation Grant Request:** In addition to the OWEB funds, RWA applied to
28 FEMA for a 404 Seismic Upgrade and Disaster Mitigation Grant. On February 27th of this year,
29 RWA was informed that the Grant had been funded and that RWA qualified for and was
30 awarded Grant funding. The Grant funds will be used to upgrade the water system to make it
31 more resilient in case of a seismic event.

32 **Planned Capital Improvement Projects, recaps, and update:** With the 404 Grant award,
33 RWA will begin the process of installing 750’ of 18” HDPE pipe along Henry Creek Road that
34 will be used to supplement the 100,000-gallon Redwood storage tank at the headworks. In
35 addition, David will continue installing Radio-Read meters throughout the system.
36 Other planned Capital Improvement project include planning for replacement of the main water
37 lines in the Woodlands neighborhood.

38 Bob Phillips praised the Board president for his dedication and diligence in obtaining the grant
39 funding, and both he and the President praised the Board for their support.

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1 **MEMBER QUESTIONS/SUGGESTIONS**

2 Ralph Pitt asked if there were any plans in the works to obtain an additional water source.
3 Graeper explained that the Board is currently applying to the state for a new ground water
4 permit. If a ground water right is obtained, then RWA would pursue drilling a test well on some
5 privately held property off Henry Creek Road near the headworks. However, he emphasized that
6 nothing can happen until the state grants a ground water right and the permitting process may
7 take some time. If a well is eventually drilled and produces enough water it could supplement the
8 water system in case anything catastrophic happens to compromise the current source.

9 **RESULTS OF BALLOTING**

10 **Director Election Results:** Executive Secretary Laura Patty reported that of the 365 ballots
11 mailed to the membership, 47 ballots were received. She then announced the election results.
12 RWA Directors, Steve Graeper and Mike Miskowicz were re-elected for another 3-year term.
13 There was one write-in vote for Ralph Pitt.

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

17 **ADJOURNMENT**

18 President Graeper thanked everyone for attending the 2026 Annual meeting and adjourned at
19 12:35PM. The next RWA Annual Meeting will be held in May 2027.

20 Respectfully submitted,
21 Steven Graeper, acting Recording Secretary