



Thurston PUD Newsletter

We are committed to providing safe, reliable, affordable, and sustainable water services to our customers.

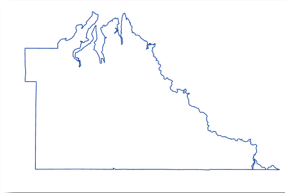
October 2022

The Thurston County Board of Commissioners May Expand to a Five-Person Board. What Could This Mean for Thurston PUD?

The population in Thurston County is rising which could mean big changes for the Thurston County Board of Commissioners and the number of seats to fill. In June, the Office of Financial Management released population figures which put the county at over 300,000 residents. This threshold of residents requires the County to introduce a ballot proposition for a vote to authorize the Board to be increased to five members. If the County reaches 400,000 residents, the switch to a five-person Board will be mandatory.

If the measure is passed, the County will further divide its voting Districts five ways, which raises the question: What does this mean for Thurston PUD?

Thurston PUD is a municipal corporation that is governed by a different set of laws than the County, specifically Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Title 54. Although headquartered in Thurston County, the PUD operates collaboratively, but separately from the County and other municipalities. The PUD is governed by a PUD Board of Commissioners and is composed of three local citizens elected for their Districts. Their duties include hiring a General Manager, establishing policy, adopting an annual budget, and determining rates, fees, and charges for water service. Currently, PUD Commissioners use the same commissioner district boundaries as Thurston County and Port of Olympia Commissioners.



If the County’s ballot receives majority voter approval, two additional County Commissioners would be elected in the 2023 general election. The Port of Olympia is expected to place a similar measure on the November ballot to expand their Commission to five members.

So, what does this mean for the PUD? The PUD and its commissioner district boundaries **will not be affected** by the County’s expansion effort. According to RCW 54, PUDs are authorized to expand to a five-person commission only if the following provisions are met:

- The PUD has a license to construct a hydroelectric project of an estimated cost of more than \$250 million dollars *or* has a population of 500,000 or more, *and*
- Voters of the District approve a ballot proposition authorizing the expansion.

At this time, Thurston PUD does not meet these requirements and will remain at a three-person Commission and will continue to use the same three district boundaries. To learn more about the Board of County Commissioner expansion, please visit the Board of County Commissioners website at www.thurstoncountywa.gov.

If you have any questions about Thurston PUD, please contact us at (360) 357-8783, toll-free at (866) 357-8783, or at PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org.

Thurston PUD Commissioners

District 1

Linda Oosterman

District 2

Russell E. Olsen

District 3

Chris Stearns

In This Issue

- ◆ Information on Commission Meetings & Public Hearings in November on Page 2
- ◆ Have You Heard about the PUD’s Generator Program? Page 2
- ◆ “What’s Happening at the PUD?” Page 3
- ◆ Prepare for Fall and Winter Storms. Page 4

OFFICE CLOSURE:

The PUD will be closed on Friday, October 28, 2022 for staff training. If you experience a water service emergency, please call us at (360) 357-8783 or toll-free at (866) 357-8783. Calls received after normal business hours will be routed to on-call staff.

Thurston PUD
1230 Ruddell Road SE
Lacey, Washington 98503
(360) 357-8783
Toll-Free: (866) 357-8783
Fax: (360) 357-1172
www.ThurstonPUD.org

Commission Meetings & Public Hearings in November

Here are some important dates of when the PUD will be conducting the process for adopting the proposed 2023 Budget and next year's proposed Rates, Fees, Charges and Surcharges.

Monday, October 3, 2022 - Special Meeting & Public Hearing

- A special Commission meeting is scheduled to hold a Public Hearing on the proposed 2023 Placeholder Budget and the proposed 2023 Ad Valorem Tax. You can read more about the proposed 2023 Placeholder budget in the September 2022 newsletter.

Tuesday, November 8, 2022— Commission Meeting Cancelled; Rescheduled to November 15, 2022

Tuesday, November 15, 2022 - Special Commission Meeting & Public Hearing

- A special Commission meeting will be scheduled to hold a Public Hearing on the amended 2023 Budget, proposed 2023 Rates, Fees, Charges, and Surcharges and the proposed 2023 Ad Valorem Tax.

Tuesday, November 22, 2022 - Regular Commission Meeting & Public Hearing

- A Public Hearing will be scheduled during the regular Commission meeting on the amended 2023 Budget, proposed 2023 Rates, Fees, Charges, and Surcharges and the proposed 2023 Ad Valorem Tax.



Members of the public are welcome to attend the Public Hearings listed above, both virtually or in person. Attending virtually is safest, easiest, and what we highly recommend. The instructions on how to attend these meetings virtually via the Zoom video conferencing platform will be provided on the PUD's website at www.thurstonpud.org.

The PUD's Generator Program

Storm season in the Pacific Northwest is approaching, which can bring power outages. During a power outage, you may not have running water if your water system does not have a generator. During this time of the year we typically get asked how a water system can get a generator. The PUD created a Generator Program that can help secure financing for interested water systems through a vote of the property owners on that system. Here are some highlights of how the program works:

- Interested customers are required to demonstrate that at least 25 percent of property owners on the water system are in favor of pursuing a generator for their water system.
- Once there is enough demonstrated interest from property owners, the PUD will begin the cost estimate and voting process. Because customers will be responsible for the costs of the engineering, purchasing and installing the generator, the PUD will determine the estimated cost of the entire project and the monthly surcharge. The surcharge will come from a loan that the PUD will secure on behalf of the water system that the customers on the water system will pay over 20 years—but first, property owners have to vote in favor of it. PUD staff will send out a ballot to property owners that includes surcharge information, general information on generators, and a voting due date.
- The vote will pass only if at least 66 percent of **all** property owners vote in favor of the initiative. Next, staff will take the vote to the PUD Commissioners to review and consider. All surcharges must be approved by the PUD Board of Commissioners. If approved by the Commissioners, the PUD will secure a loan for the water system. The generator will be added to the PUD's Asset Management Plan so that operations, maintenance, and replacement costs of the generator are covered by the PUD.
- If the vote does not pass, a follow up letter will be sent to the community to summarize voting information.



An example of a generator.

Water systems are limited to a vote once every two years to help alleviate the administrative costs of these initiatives as well as allowing communities to bolster advocacy and promote buy-in.

The PUD commits to working closely with customers on water systems that are interested in seeking a generator. For more information about the District's Generator Program, please contact Teal Reopelle at treopelle@thurstonpud.org or by calling (360) 357-8783.

What's Happening at the PUD?

October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month

In an effort to help people protect themselves from online data and technology breaches, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and the National Cybersecurity Alliance (NCA) are leading a collaborative effort to raise cybersecurity awareness. This year's campaign theme, See Yourself in Cyber, focuses on the "people part" of cybersecurity. Here are four things you can do to enjoy a more cyber-secure presence online:

- 1) Enable multi-factor authentication
- 2) Use strong passwords
- 3) Recognize and report phishing attempts
- 4) Update your software

2022 Great Washington ShakeOut on 10/20 at 10:20 a.m.

For the past several years, the PUD has participated in the International ShakeOut Day on the third Thursday of October. The Great Washington ShakeOut is a statewide opportunity to practice how to be safer during large earthquakes and will occur on October 20, 2022, and the PUD plans to participate with our own drill.



While staff are performing the drill, you may be disconnected while speaking with us or you may be unable to reach our office around 10:20 a.m. on Thursday, October 20, 2022. However, once the drill is completed, our staff will be available to answer any questions or concerns you have. For more information on ShakeOut Day, please visit www.shakeout.org/washington.

Office Closures

Below is a list of office closures planned for the remainder for 2022:

- Staff training - Friday, October 28, 2022
- Veterans Day - Friday, November 11, 2022
- Thanksgiving Holiday - Thursday, November 24, 2022 **and** Friday, November 25, 2022
- Christmas Day (observed) - Monday, December 26, 2022

If you experience a water service emergency, call us immediately at (360) 357-8783 or toll-free at (866) 357-8783 to report your location. Calls received outside of normal business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday) are routed to our third party answering service and on-call staff.

Employee Spotlight

This month's spotlight features Field Technician Lead Rich Holmes. Rich was born and raised in Olympia and earned an Associate's degree in Computer Networking Administration. Prior to starting employment with the PUD in 2017, Rich owned and operated a painting company, performed information technology (IT) consulting, and worked in water system construction. Because of his strong background in IT, Rich helps the Field Operations Team with IT issues that may arise. He also serves as a co-chair on the PUD's Safety Committee. Rich enjoys riding his Harley, traveling, bowling, and spending time with his family.



Well, well, well: Rich Holmes poses with the well pump truck

Rich encourages customers to familiarize themselves with their meter and its location. "If you feel that your consumption is higher than normal, you may want to check your meter to see if you have a leak," he said. "Although not all meters are the same, your meter will have a leak indicator, usually a small dial. If the dial is moving, and there is no water running in your home, you may have a leak." Thanks, Rich!

Preparing for Fall and Winter Storms

Fall is here, and winter is right around the corner. As we prepare for lower temperatures, increased precipitation, and a greater likelihood of wind storms, here are some recommendations to prepare you:

Outside Your Home

- **Keep your gutters clean and clear of debris.** Clogged gutters can lead to costly roof damage.
- **Rake leaves and debris away from storm drains.** Help prevent flooded streets and damage to personal property by keeping storm drains clear.
- **Keep your vehicle fueled.** Fuel may not be available in a dire emergency, so make sure your vehicle is topped off during bad weather.
- **Test and/or service your generator.** If you have a generator for your home, test it annually during non-emergency situations to ensure it can perform during emergency situations.
- **Install faucet covers.** For any outdoor faucets, install insulated covers to prevent frozen or burst pipes.
- **Have the trees on your property evaluated.** If you are a homeowner with a lot of large trees located near your home, call an arborist to evaluate the trees on your property. Some companies provide free consultations.

Inside Your Home

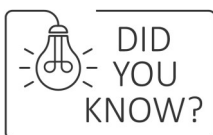
- **Ensure fire and carbon-monoxide alarms are in working order.** Regularly test your fire and carbon monoxide alarms.
- **Insulate exposed pipes.** To prevent possible freezing inside your home in colder areas like a basement, attic or garage, insulate exposed pipes and other plumbing fixtures.
- **Don't forget the flashlights.** In the case of a power outage, keep flashlights, batteries, candles, or any other kind of illumination handy. If you're using flashlights, keep batteries in stock.
- **Most importantly – keep drinking water on hand!** Keep bottled water on hand or fill buckets with water prior to an expected storm in case you experience a water outage.

Recommendations for You and Your Family

- **Prepare an emergency kit.** Visit www.ready.gov/kit for a list of basic disaster kit supplies. Be sure to have an emergency kit prepared for your vehicle as well; a list of emergency supplies for your car kit is located here: www.ready.gov/car.
- **Check with your veterinarian for animal care instructions in an emergency situation.** If you have a pet, be sure to include needed pet supplies as part of your emergency kit.
- **Know what emergency plans are in place at your workplace, school, or daycare center.** Create an emergency/communication plan for your family.
- **Check your homeowners or renters insurance policy** to review your coverage amounts and limits before you experience any property damage or loss.



If you experience a water service emergency, call us immediately at (360) 357-8783 or toll-free at (866) 357-8783 to report your location. Calls received after normal business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday) are routed to our answering service and on-call staff.



The Washington Emergency Management Division (EMD) publishes important emergency preparedness information for individuals, families, and pets. For tips, tricks, and preparedness hacks, please visit the EMD website at www.mil.wa.gov/personal.