

WWTP Ad Hoc Committee Meeting Summary Report

Meeting Date: July 30, 2026

Committee Members Present: Director Carter Ohlmann

Staff Present: General Manager Weigold; Bryce and Michael from Engineering; Carol from the Lab; Ricardo from Collections; and Marco, Michael, Luis and Robert from collections.

Contractors Present: Numerous (~8) managers and engineers from Southland and Ardurra.

Duration: Approximately 4.0 hours

Submitted by: Carter Ohlmann; 7 Aug 2026

Overview

The WWTP Ad Hoc Committee attended a workshop with Southland, Ardurra, and District staff concerning alternatives for updated/upgraded secondary clarifiers and solids handling systems (i.e. thickening, digestion and dewatering) as part of the Investment Grade Audit and preliminary design process.

The workshop was informational and technical in nature. The Committee received information, listened to the discussion among staff, engineers, and contractors, and provided limited clarifying input as appropriate. The Committee did not take action, make decisions, or develop a recommendation for Board action.

The discussion focused on alternatives and related evaluation considerations, including:

- Whether to rehabilitate existing clarifiers or construct new clarifiers;
- Rectangular vs circular clarifiers should new construction be chosen;
- Clarifier location;
- The existing and potential Process Flow Diagrams (PFD);
- Solids thickening;
- Aerobic digester alternatives including conversion of digester to solids storage;
- DAFT, screw, rotary drum, or gravity belt solid thickener alternatives;
- Existing belt filter press, new bfp, screw press or centrifuge alternatives for dewatering.

The workshop materials identified the following evaluation criteria: impacts during construction, operability, footprint, aesthetics/environmental considerations, and relative costs. The weighting presented placed the greatest emphasis on operability and relative cost.

Board-Level Summary

The principal takeaway is that the workshop addressed numerous alternatives primarily related secondary clarifiers and the handling of solids, each of which has associated costs, benefits, drawbacks, operational implications, construction issues, and long-term planning considerations. The discussion was not intended to produce a final recommendation at this stage. Rather, the purpose was to identify the viable alternatives, evaluate them against a common set of criteria, receive input from District staff, and allow Southland and Ardurra to further refine the range of options.

The alternatives are being evaluated through the application of weighted criteria, including construction impacts, operability, footprint, aesthetics/environmental considerations, and relative cost. Those criteria are intended to provide a consistent framework for comparing alternatives and developing a composite score. While the scoring process will not eliminate the need for judgment, it should help ensure that the alternatives are compared in a uniform and disciplined manner.

The workshop included a review of alternatives for the secondary clarifiers, including rehabilitation of the existing facilities and construction of new clarifiers. The discussion focused on the ability of each alternative to meet current and future treatment needs, as well as considerations related to construction, operation and maintenance, footprint, and cost. Rehabilitation would minimize new construction but presents limitations associated with the age and condition of the existing facilities. New clarifiers would provide greater long-term reliability and capacity. Based on the preliminary evaluation, new circular secondary clarifiers received the highest overall score and were identified as the preferred alternative.

The workshop also reviewed alternatives for solids thickening, digestion, and dewatering. The discussion considered whether to continue using the existing aerobic digester or use it primarily for emergency solids storage, along with several options for thickening and dewatering. Key considerations included operational reliability, energy and chemical use, staffing and maintenance requirements, equipment footprint, and solids disposal costs. For solids thickening, optimization of the existing DAFT received the highest preliminary evaluation, while a screw thickener was also viewed favorably because of its simplicity, automation, and low energy requirements. For dewatering, the alternatives included continued use or replacement of the existing belt filter press, a screw press, and a centrifuge. The screw press received the highest preliminary score, with the centrifuge also performing well due to its ability to produce a drier solids cake. The evaluations remain preliminary and will be refined as part of the subsequent design and District review process.

The analysis remains preliminary. Further engineering evaluation, cost development, and District review will be needed before any recommendation is brought to the Board. The next step is for Southland and Ardurra to consider the feedback received from District staff and return with a narrower range of options for further evaluation and eventual presentation to the Board.

Action Items Taken

None.

Recommendations to Board

None at this time.