



orchardwater@yahoo.com

NEWSLETTER

Greetings and a belated Happy New Year!

Here's an update about our progress on well and infrastructure upgrades to the Orchard Beach Community Group water system.

Following our 2024 annual meeting, your Executive Committee continued to work with Northwest Water Systems (NWS) and the state Department of Health toward drilling the new OBCG well. This work included resolving questions concerning parcels adjacent to our wellhouse property, which stemmed from the survey of the OBCG parcel.

Ultimately we succeeded in obtaining a variance from the state Department of Health and a permit to drill a new well. After the drilling was completed, a pump was installed and the new well was capped. Once a test is conducted to confirm its pumping capacity, the engineers (NWS) can complete the DOH-required system design; that will enable us to seek quotes for creating the infrastructure to tie the new well into our existing water system.

The original estimate for the entire well project was approximately \$65,000, but not surprisingly, this could not anticipate costs such as legal fees. We expect to update the estimate after obtaining the infrastructure-related quotes.

While working to advance this major capital project, the Executive Committee also has been busy keeping up with the regulatory and compliance issues that go with operating a class A water system.

In addition, in line with a discussion at the 2024 annual meeting, the Executive Committee has continued to explore the idea of arranging with a professional organization to manage and operate the OBCG water system.

This would have advantages when it comes to complying with ever-changing regulations and the evolving needs of our community, in a way that does not seem possible with our current vendor (NWS).

It also would save the community members serving on the Executive Committee from being overwhelmed by increasingly complex demands that consume far more time than was required from past officers.

To this end, we have reached out to Mason County PUD #1 – which owns and operates numerous water systems across the county – to discuss the feasibility of arranging for it to do the same for our water system.

As part of this outreach, the Executive Committee has arranged for a community Zoom meeting with representatives from PUD #1, starting at 3 p.m. Friday, May 16. It is intended to give our members a convenient way to ask questions about what PUD #1 can offer. Here are the details you'll need.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87881670176?pwd=LKbwsvRgbDr3x2uR0cxfMntgTEADrg.1>

Meeting ID: 878 8167 0176

Passcode: 629576

Also, we have set this year's OBCG annual meeting for Saturday, June 21, beginning at 2 p.m. (location to be determined). The meeting agenda will include conducting a vote on whether to migrate the OBCG water system to the control of Mason County PUD #1.

If a majority of members at the meeting approve, PUD #1 would manage and operate the OBCG system for up to two years while the acquisition process evolves.

Information about PUD #1 that may be helpful prior to the meeting can be found at <https://mason-pud1.org>

We will be electing a Vice President at the June 21 annual meeting, as the 3-year term for that office will expire. Per OBCG bylaws..."Candidates may be nominated by members via email or mail to the Secretary/Treasurer at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting." and "Members may designate a person to vote in his or her place at a meeting of the general membership by notifying the board by sending written notice to the Secretary/Treasurer seven (7) days in advance of any meeting of the membership."

To nominate yourself or someone else, send an appropriate email to orchardwater@yahoo.com. (If nominating someone else, first confirm their wish to be a candidate.)

Thank you all in advance for your patience with moving through this process.

Dennis Frett

OBCG President