

**NORTH MARIN WATER DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
October 14, 2025**

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Joly called the special meeting of the Board of Directors of North Marin Water District to order at 10:00 a.m. at the District Headquarters, and the agenda was accepted as presented. Present were Directors Jack Baker, Ken Eichstaedt, Rick Fraites, Michael Joly, and Stephen Petterle. Also, present were General Manager Tony Williams, AGM/Chief Engineer Eric Miller, and Auditor-Controller Julie Blue.

District employees Chris Kehoe, Construction and Maintenance Superintendent, Tim Kennedy, Operations and Maintenance Manager, Tim Fuelle, Blake Hall, Sebastian Rubio-Gomez, and Corey Reed were also in attendance.

Jeff Tarantino and Kimberley Yau of Freyer and Laureta were also in attendance.

**BOARD WORKSHOP**

Attached are the minutes from the Board Workshop Special Meeting for the Novato System 2025 Master Plan Update taken by Kimberley Yau of Freyer and Laureta.

**ADJOURNMENT**

President Joly adjourned the meeting at 12:08 p.m.

Submitted by



Eileen Mulliner  
District Secretary

# Novato System 2025 Master Plan Update Board Workshop Meeting

## Meeting Minutes

**Date & Time:** October 14, 2025, 10:00 a.m.  
**Location:** North Marin Water District

Summary of discussions are written in *italics*. Summary of post-meeting notes, if any, are written in *italics and underlined*. Open action items are written in **bold**.

| Attendees: |                       | Organization                                             |
|------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| X          | Michael Joly          | North Marin Water District (District) Board of Directors |
| X          | Ken Eichstaedt        | District Board of Directors                              |
| X          | Jack Baker            | District Board of Directors                              |
| X          | Rick Fraites          | District Board of Directors                              |
| X          | Stephen Petterle      | District Board of Directors                              |
| X          | Tony Williams         | District                                                 |
| X          | Chris Kehoe           | District                                                 |
| X          | Julie Blue            | District                                                 |
| x          | Tim Kennedy           | District                                                 |
| X          | Eric Miller           | District                                                 |
| X          | Tim Fuelle            | District                                                 |
| X          | Blake Hall            | District                                                 |
| X          | Sebastian Rubio-Gomez | District                                                 |
| X          | Corey Reed            | District                                                 |
| X          | Jeffrey Tarantino     | Freyer & Laureta, Inc. (F&L)                             |
| X          | Kimberly Yau          | F&L                                                      |

### Discussion Items:

#### 1. Introduction

- The group went through brief introductions. Meeting attendees are listed above.

#### 2. Strategic Plan Alignment

- The Master Plan aligns with five action items from the 2025-30 Strategic Plan. Notably, Action Item 1.3 states to “leverage proven technology to establish a comprehensive asset management

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and preventative maintenance program.” A hydraulic model (via ArcGIS) was used to analyze the system and develop the Master Plan recommendations.

- The Strategic Plan is an organizational document while the Master Plan is an infrastructure-focused document that develops the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) by evaluating the performance of the system given certain potential risk such as aging infrastructure and natural hazards.

### 3. Part 1: District History

- The project team presented engineering aspects of the water system and how the system was historically planned. The system was sized using historical data for the consumption rate of customers and the maximum daily demand (MDD). The evolution of the water system was influenced by development. Novato’s water system now includes Zone 1 (lowest elevation) through Zone 4 (highest elevation). A majority of the District’s current pipeline assets were installed by developers in the 1950s and 1960s.
- The Board asked how District energy usage compares to Marin Municipal Water District. **PG&E no longer shares its customer’s use data, so staff cannot determine its relative energy usage other PG&E customers.**

### 4. Part 2: Today’s District

- Current demands are lower than projected in the previous Master Plan due to conservation efforts, recycled water delivery, and customer habits. The water system performs well but there are areas with hydraulic challenges, such as at the Lynwood Pump Station, which supplies a larger area of additional development as the system expanded south over time.
- The Board asked why the figure on slide 26 shows water from the Stafford Treatment Plant and the Russian River but not recycled water. The project team indicated that this current Master Plan includes a new chapter acknowledging recycled water as a separate source of supply. However, the information in this workshop focuses on potable water.
- Currently, the system, which includes pipes, pumps, and tanks, has adequate storage for today’s needs. However, the system is starting to age. There are many pipes reaching the end of useful pipe life according to industry practices. To address the aging system, the project team indicated that the District should start considering replacement/renewal programs and increased capital investment. The risk scores show that the five facilities with the highest risk are all pump stations, which are critical for system operation.
- The group discussed the San Marin Pump Station, which is at a 6.81 risk score. It is currently sized to accommodate the new housing proposed at the old Fireman’s Fund site without raising the risk score because the risk score was based on age and San Marin Pump Station has been retrofitted recently. Lynwood Pump Station and Cherry Hill Pump Station have not been retrofitted and will be prioritized in future plans. Through analysis of future demand, the system has the right amount of storage but will have challenges with delivering to customers with hydraulic efficiency.
- The group discussed the annual renewal need curve for pipelines and the importance of taking action to mitigate aging infrastructure. The curve will reach the peak in 2035 to 2040. The curve is based only on the industry’s expected pipe lifespan and does not account for other conditions or variables that could either increase or decrease longevity.

- The group discussed the projected water pipeline replacement decade legend on slides 30 and 31 to clarify what each color meant. **The project team noted that clarification will need to be added to the figures included on slides 30 and 31 when those figures are included in the Master Plan.**
- The Board mentioned they would need to consider whether the District would have the resources, such as cash (pay-as-you-go) and the ability to borrow, to replace pipelines over the long term. The project team added that although many pipelines were shown to be due for replacement soon, other factors could shed light as to which pipelines could remain in-service, such as condition assessments. In addition, the District's past practices implemented in the 1960's could extend life of pipelines, including using inert pipeline and bedding material to prevent corrosion, and quality inspection at installation.
- The group discussed procedures in major emergencies where the focus would be on critical customers, such as emergency shelters, and not typical residential customers. It would be a slow recovery process, potentially taking months before service to residential customers return to pre-emergency levels.
- The group discussed the Ridge Road Pump Station, which was determined as one of the most critical facilities. The pump station design is scheduled to start in the next two to three years and will be on the next CIP.
- The group discussed the process of determining critical facilities. The risk score calculations incorporated the use of several factors including age, number of customers served, and consequence of failure. The list of critical facilities shown during the presentation only considered pump stations and storage facilities; pipelines were not included.
- The Board asked if ArcGIS could track how many times a pipe's condition has been assessed. **Yes, staff has developed a database that tracks this information.**
- The Board mentioned that the public would benefit from the information presented in the workshop. **The presentation will be made available to the public and will be a resource for future discussion with the public.**
- The Board asked about the percentage of total water demand in Zone 1 and Zone 2. **About 80% of the total demand occurs in Zone 1 and Zone 2.**

## 5. Part 3: Preparing the District for the Future

- The next step of the Master Plan focuses on future work that includes addressing hydraulic deficiencies and the bell curve of pipeline renewal needs, which will continue to occur in perpetuity. The current CIP projects, shown on slide 37, only includes a small portion of the system.
- The project team presented the proposed water planning boundary, which is based on the Country of Marin and Novato zoning maps. The group discussed zoning in the old Fireman's Fund area. The project team noted that the hydraulic zone has not been determined yet, but it might be in one or two zones. Even if the new water infrastructure is paid for by the developer, it may become the District's asset and long-term liability.
- The backbone assets are considered the most critical assets, which will have the largest impact on the largest number of customers in event of a failure including the ability to supply other pressure zones. Other improvement projects could consider how to improve operational strategies and resiliency projects to address projected sea level rise, flooding, and seismic risk. The Board commented that seismic activity has been extremely low.

- Meeting participants discussed potential future costs. The quantity of improvement is a major driver for increased costs. Pump stations often need full replacement since electrical gear cannot be reliably retrofitted. Potable water pipelines generally require full replacement. Tanks can be retrofitted cost-effectively. The District would need to look at assets on a case-by-case basis to better determine future costs.
- The group discussed the cost of the Lynwood Pump Station (\$8 million to \$12 million) and Crest Pump Station (\$1.5 million), both of which include relocation of an existing facility. The Lynwood Pump Station cost is higher due to the several thousand feet of pipe required to address the hydraulic challenges as well as a larger PS structure and equipment size. Crest Pump Station is smaller and more in line with a majority of the District's pump stations. The remaining facilities would not require relocation, so land acquisition is not considered in this Master Plan`.
- The project team indicated that when looking through the bell curve lens, the District would need to start replacing several miles of pipe per year starting in the next five years and up to 10 miles per year at the bell's peak which is estimated to occur in about 20 years. The replacement rate would start to decline in subsequent years. The Board acknowledged that the current water rate structure does not cover this forecast in pipeline replacement costs.
- The Board continued the discussion about funding. Currently, the District only charges user fees to maintain the 350 miles of pipe. Funding strategies discussed include extending the model of user fees to include capacity fees, a capital charge, or a bond measure for capital improvements. The pay/go was increased from \$1.5 million to \$4 million several years ago.
- The project team presented the investment strategy where the most critical infrastructure, including pump stations and high-risk pipelines will be the priority.
- The project team clarified that the near-term draft CIP annual expenditure presented in the Master Plan will be presented during a future Board presentation.

## 6. Further Discussion

- The group continued to discuss funding. There is one more rate year remaining from the previously approved Novato rate structure. Once the long-term CIP is developed, District staff will be able to incorporate the proposed CIP into next rate study and financial model. The group also discussed how a bond measure would affect property owners and residents or renters and whether a pay/go increase in the next year rate study would be possible given the forecasted increase in infrastructure renewal. Any increase to the annual pay/go would likely take another rate study cycle. The Board will continue to have future discussions about different funding options.
- The project team noted one thing to consider is whether the District's approach with managing future risk needs to change. The District has already begun to discuss internally various options to support an increased CIP investment, including potentially hiring more Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) employees and/or leveraging consultants. Another consideration is how to set the District up for future success, which will be discussed at future Board meetings.
- The Board agreed that public education will be important in the Strategic Plan. The Board noted that it is important to maintain the District's integrity and present the information to the public in a way that is transparent and informative. The Board suggested that Staff meet with an outside vendor with PR expertise to discuss infrastructure replacement strategy messaging.
- The Board also discussed messaging to the public. Messaging can include that tanks or pump stations need to be continually maintained, similar to painting the Golden Gate Bridge, and that proactive maintenance and replacement would result in a better system for the next generation.

- The Board noted that West Marin just had another large fee increase, with limited feedback from customers. It is possible the public may already realize the need to increase spending to replace aging infrastructure. A possible method for getting the message out could be writing a column for the Marin Independent Journal. At the next Board meeting, the Board will start discussing what to do to start communicating this to the public.
- Staff mentioned that action to fund the new CIP can kick off once the Master Plan is complete. There will be another presentation focused on the technical aspects of the Master Plan before Board acceptance, which District staff is planning for January 2026. The meeting for Board acceptance could be an opportunity to begin the public education campaign.
- The Board suggested that the project team create CIP alternatives based on various funding scenarios.

## 7. Closing Remarks

- Next Steps
  - Issue draft Master Plan
  - Master Plan presentation
  - Board acceptance
  - Develop FY26/27 budget
  - Long range investment strategy
- The key takeaways from the workshop:
  - Start discussing how to educate public about the District's aging infrastructure
  - Continue discussing ways to fund CIP
  - Maintain District integrity/reputation and confidence from the public

The meeting ended at 12:08 p.m.