

**Kootenai County
Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer Protection District
Policy and Budget Committee**

Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 7, 2026
4:00 p.m.
451 Government Way, 1st Floor, Meeting Room 1A/B

Committee Members Present: Larry Simms, Suzanne Scheidt, Derek Holom, Michelle Johnson, Todd Hoffman, Necia Maiani, Robert Chandler and Laurin Scarcello.

Committee Members Present Via Phone: Dave Levine

Committee Members Excused: Alyssa Gersdorf

Committee Members Absent: BiJay Adams

Also Present Were: Panhandle Health District (PHD) Environmental Health Specialist Jenny Gray, Idaho DEQ Seth Oliver, Taryn Post, Alta SE Mitchell Bergquest and BOCC Recording Secretary Choele Goltz.

A. Call to Order:

Chair Simms called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

B. Introductions/Guests Welcomed

C. Approval of Minutes: December 17, 2025

1. Motion to approve December 17, 2025, minutes made by Mr. Scarcello and seconded by Mr. Holom. The vote was taken, and the minutes approved.

D. Business

2. Staff Report (Discussion)

There were no staff reports at this time.

3. Advisory Board Officers (Action)

The Vice Chair position was open. Ms. Scheidt nominated Ms. Maiani to serve as Vice Chair, and the motion was seconded by Ms. Johnson. The vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Mr. Simms expressed willingness to continue serving as Chair. A motion to maintain Mr. Simms as Chair was made by Ms. Maiani and seconded by Ms. Scheidt. The vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Mr. Levine expressed willingness to continue serving as Treasurer. A motion to maintain Mr. Levine as Treasurer was made by Mr. Scarcello and seconded by Mr. Holom. The vote was taken, and the motion passed.

4. Dexter Peak Project (Discussion)

Chair Simms and Taryn Post, President of Dexter Peak Communications, met with the Board of Commissioners on December 30, 2025, to present the Education Outreach Project. The Board of Commissioners approved the project on December 30, 2025.

Ms. Post requested that the APD Board provide any existing PowerPoint presentations, educational materials, and talking points to incorporate into the Education Outreach

presentations. Ms. Post will attend the APD meeting on February 4, 2026, to provide a project update.

5. Open Pit Mining Update (Discussion)

Ms. Scheidt shared that she compiled feedback from the APD Board and forwarded it to David Callahan via email. The APD Board has requested consideration within Kootenai County Unified Code (KCUC), Article 2.7, Section 8.2.702 (Mining Zone Restrictions), to protect the aquifer. Requested considerations include:

- A minimum separation of 50 feet between the pit floor elevation and the highest known aquifer water elevation below the pit to ensure adequate aquifer protection. Additional mitigation measures may be required for permits within sensitive aquifer recharge areas upon review by Kootenai County or its designee.
- Protection of groundwater during and after operations in accordance with EPA Sole Source Aquifer and Idaho State Sensitive Resource designations.
- Compliance with the current Idaho Groundwater Rule and Sensitive Resource Category Aquifer Designation.
- Compliance with current Idaho Wastewater Rules.
- Ongoing monitoring and containment or removal of contaminants associated with open pit mining activities, in compliance with Kootenai County's Critical Materials Ordinance. All new and expanding mines must comply with this ordinance.

An update will be provided at the next meeting.

6. Education Outreach (Discussion)

Chair Simms discussed appointing a new Education Outreach position. Kristy Reed Johnson previously served in this role for several years and has extensive contacts and institutional knowledge. Chair Simms requested that Board members consider potential candidates prior to the next APD meeting. Ms. Scheidt emphasized the importance of fully defining the scope of responsibilities previously managed by Ms. Johnson. Ms. Scheidt will contact Ms. Johnson to gather additional information regarding her former duties. Mr. Scarcello stated he would not be opposed to contracting with Ms. Johnson to continue some of the work she has historically performed. Chair Simms agreed but noted that further information is needed to determine feasibility, including whether this could be accomplished through a grant or contractual agreement.

E. Cooperating Agency Comments (Discussion)

Jenny Gray, Panhandle Health District (PHD):

Ms. Gray reported that she will be presenting to a homeschool group in February and that additional outreach opportunities with charter schools are anticipated.

Seth Oliver, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ):

Mr. Oliver reported completion of the second round of sampling for the grant project, with 17 wells sampled during this phase. The final round of sampling is expected to be completed in March. Mr. Oliver is also developing a final sampling plan for areas near Highway 41. Additional updates will be provided in the near future.

F. Public Comment (Discussion)

Ms. Johnson requested that grant applications be added as an agenda item for the next meeting.

Ms. Maiani requested discussion of the 2026 meeting schedule at the next APD meeting.

Mr. Scarcello shared that he participated in the Farm Bureau Scholarship selection process and expressed appreciation for the high quality of responses provided by the high school applicants during interviews.

G. Adjournment (Action)

Mr. Scarcello made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Maiani seconded the motion. The vote was taken, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Choele Goltz", with a large, decorative flourish extending to the right.

Choele Goltz
Recording Secretary