

**LITTLE ROCK WATER RECLAMATION COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of the Meeting Held**  
**August 21, 2024**

The Little Rock Water Reclamation Commission (“LRWRC”) met at 4:00 p.m., Wednesday, August 21, 2024, at the Hub Conference Room and via livestream.

**Little Rock Water Reclamation Commission**

Schawnee Hightower, Chair  
Jonathan Semans, Vice Chair  
Daryl Brown, Secretary  
Ganelle McBryde, Commissioner  
Prentice O’Guinn, Commissioner  
Chris Marsh, Commissioner  
Director Lance Hines, Ex Officio Member

**Little Rock Water Reclamation Authority Personnel**

Jean Block, Chief Executive Officer  
Michael Rhoda, Chief Financial Officer  
Shannon Halijan, Chief Legal Officer  
Ryan Benefield, P.E., Chief Operating Officer  
Walter Collins, P.E., Director of Operations  
Rebecca Burkman, Director of Environmental Affairs  
Harold Hounwanou, P.E., Director of Collection System Maintenance  
Tonya Wallace, Director of Facility Asset Management  
Les Price, P.E., Director of Engineering Services  
Doug Roe, Director of Accounting & Finance  
Kenetta Ridgell, Director of Communications and Community Engagement  
Angela Brooks, Director of Human Resources

Attendees included: Commissioner Hightower and Director Hines appeared in person. Commissioners Marsh, O’Guinn, and Seamans appeared via livestream. Commissioners McBryde and Brown were absent. Senior Staff Members: Jean Block, Michael Rhoda, Shannon Halijan, Ryan Benefield, Walter Collins, Harold Hounwanou, Rebecca Burkman, Doug Roe, Angela Brooks, Les Price, Kenetta Ridgell, and Tonya Wallace.

Chair Hightower brought the meeting to order and called for Mr. Hounwanou to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Hightower then asked if there were any public comments, and there were none.

Tommy Kelley, Collection System Maintenance Supervisor, recognized Scott Raborn, Mechanic Technician, and Alan DePriest, Equipment Operator, for their 20 years of service to the utility.

Walter Collins, Director of Operations, introduced the Operations Department Spotlight. He greeted the Commission and introduced Eric Wassell, Water Reclamation Facility Senior Manager, and Brent Kirkendoll, Operations Administrator, who gave a brief overview of the department's water reclamation facilities and biosolids handling. Mr. Collins then and introduced additional staff member in attendance and their role with the utility.

Next, Chair Hightower asked the Commissioners if they had reviewed the minutes of the June 19, 2024, meeting. Being that there were no revisions, Chair Hightower asked if there were any objections to approving minutes. Hearing none, the minutes were approved.

Cary Beth Lipscomb, Engineering Manager – Capital Improvements, presented a Recommendation of Award for the Hindman Park 24-in and 18-in Sewer Rehabilitation Project. She gave a brief overview of the area affected and the need for rehabilitation of the pipe using Cured-in-Place Pipe (CIPP).

Staff requested the Commission authorize CEO Jean Block to enter into a construction contract with SAK Construction, LLC for the Hindman Park 24-in and 18-in Sewer Rehabilitation Project in the amount \$1,638,446.

Chair Hightower requested a motion to approve. A motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Ms. Lipscomb then presented a Recommendation of Award for Springer Diversion Vault Study. She gave a brief overview of the project and the need for a study to evaluate tying the 42-inch Fourche Creek line into the 60-inch Adams Field line at a new diversion structure. She noted the project will also include modifications to the hatch openings on the existing Springer Diversion and Meter Vault Structures to allow for the plug valve and meter to be removed for maintenance.

Chair Hightower noted this project could assist with additional capacity at Fourche Creek WRF for the Port of Little Rock for any expanding industries.

Staff requested the Commission authorize CEO Jean Block to negotiate and execute the professional services contract with HDR Engineering, Inc. for the Study Phase of the Springer Diversion Vault Study in the amount not to exceed \$111,836.

Chair Hightower requested a motion to approve. A motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Harold Hounwanou, Director of Collection System Maintenance, presented a Recommendation of Award for a Pipe Burst Fusion Machine. Mr. Hounwanou gave a brief overview of the in-house pipe bursting program and the need for a new machine.

Staff requested the Commission approve the recommendation of award for the McElroy Fusion Machine in the amount of \$77,276.37 and to authorize CEO Jean Block to enter a contract with Rainmaker Sales.

Chair Hightower requested a motion to approve. A motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Rebecca Burkman, Director of Environmental Affairs, gave a presentation on Industrial User Success Stories. She gave a brief overview of her department, the Industrial User Pretreatment Program, and a success story of working with a company to prevent industrial discharge that was harmful to our plants by using an automated high strength waste diversion valve.

Doug Roe, Director of Accounting & Finance, presented a summary of the July Financial Report. He explained in July that there was total revenue of \$5.9 million more than budget by \$469k. Operating expenses of \$3.8 million more than budget by \$299k with Salaries under budget by \$12k (-0.9%), Supplies are over budget by \$95k (37.5%), and that Contract Services under budget by \$40k (-3.7%).

Shannon Halijan, Chief Legal Officer, gave the Legal Update. She noted continued work on reviewing contracts; working with procurement; employee annual trainings, reviewing and updating policies; addressing personnel matters.

Ms. Block then delivered the monthly highlights which included: Southwest United for Progress Community Meeting, Project Impact, Camp Aldersgate, City of Little Rock Interns Tour Fourche Creek WRF, WoWa at Carver Elementary, AWWMA Conference, LRWRA Interns, Fourche Creek WRF Storeroom Addition, Connect 4 Success Breakfast, HR Recruitment Event, CMOM Conference Presentation – CAO Closure, RLF 2024, and a Notice of Advertisement – Fourche Creek WRF Arkansas River Outfall Revetment Repair.

Chair Hightower then requested a motion to convene to Executive Session for the purpose of conducting a performance review and evaluation of CEO Jean Block. A motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Upon reconvening, Chair Hightower called the regular meeting back into session. Next, he requested a motion to award Ms. Block a one-time 9% performance payment. A motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

He commended Ms. Block on an impressive first year. Noting in the past year she completed the 20-year Consent Administrative Order, restructured the Senior Leadership Team due to retirements, and was elected to the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) Board of Directors.

Chair Hightower called for any old business, and there was none.

Chair Hightower called for any new business, and there was none.

Chair Hightower stated the next LRWRC meeting would be September 18, 2024. He then asked if there were any objections to adjourning the meeting. Hearing none, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Daryl Brown, Secretary