

**LITTLE ROCK WATER RECLAMATION COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of the Meeting Held**  
**March 20, 2024**

The Little Rock Water Reclamation Commission (“LRWRC”) met at 4:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 20, 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  
Howell Anderson, P.E., Chief Operating Officer  
Michael Rhoda, Chief Financial Officer  
Shannon Halijan, Chief Legal 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  
BJ Harrison, Director of Accounting & Finance  
Angela Brooks, Director of Human Resources

Attendees included: Commissioners Hightower, Marsh, Seamans, and Director Hines appeared in person. Commissioners Brown and O’Guinn appeared via livestream. Commissioner McBryde was absent. Senior Staff Members: Jean Block, Howell Anderson, Michael Rhoda, Shannon Halijan, Walter Collins, Harold Hounwanou, Rebecca Burkman, BJ Harrison, Angela Brooks, Les Price, and Tonya Wallace.

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

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

Patrick Grimmatt, Senior Network Manager, presented the Information Services Department Spotlight. He greeted the Commission and gave a brief overview of the department and introduced staff members and their role with the utility.

Next, Chair Hightower asked the Commissioners if they had reviewed the minutes of the February 21, 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.

BJ Harrison, Director of Accounting and Finance, presented Resolution 2024-02 entitled:

**A RESOLUTION APPROVING AND RECOMMENDING THE FINANCING FOR THE ACQUISITION, CONSTRUCTION AND EQUIPPING OF BETTERMENTS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE WATER RECLAMATION SYSTEM OF THE CITY OF LITTLE ROCK IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF SANITARY SEWER SERVICE THROUGH THE STATE OF ARKANSAS CLEAN WATER REVOLVING LOAN FUND PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY THE ARKANSAS NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION.**

Mr. Harrison gave a brief background on the Revolving Loan Fund Bonds and our work with the Arkansas Natural Resources Division with the new EPA equivalency program. He noted there will be a lower interest rate of 1.25% that will save the utility \$10 million in interest over 30 years on the \$65 million dollar loan.

Staff requested the Commission approve Resolution No 2024-02, a resolution approving and recommending the financing for the acquisition, construction and equipping of betterments and improvements to the Water Reclamation System of the City of Little Rock in order to improve the quality of sanitary sewer service through the State of Arkansas Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund Program administered by the Arkansas Natural Resources Division.

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

Shannon Halijan, Chief Legal Officer, presented a Ratification of City of Little Rock Resolution 15,920 for Housing First Village. She noted that on February 21, 2023, the City of Little Rock Board of Directors approved Resolution No. 15,920 to authorize the City Manager to enter into an agreement to provide sewer service without annexation to the proposed Housing First Village. LRWRA's engineering team has reviewed the development's plans for compliance with standard specifications.

Ms. Halijan requested the Commission ratify City of Little Rock Resolution 15,920 to facilitate the Housing First Village's connection to the LRWRA sanitary sewer system and to approve and authorize any necessary actions and measures needed to facilitate the connection of the development to the LRWRA system with the approved standards and specifications.

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

Patrick Grimmatt, Senior Network Manager, presented a Recommendation of Award for Wide Area Network Services (WAN). Mr. Grimmatt gave a brief overview of the WAN service and its importance to the utility's operations.

Staff requested the Commission to approve the recommendation of award for WAN services to AT&T for the term of five years, with the option to renew up to two additional single year terms, with an expected yearly cost of the current configuration to be less than \$110,000 per year. Additional circuits may be added at the rates approved as part of this contract, and to authorize subsequent contract renewals to be approved and signed at the discretion of CEO Jean Block if the renewal is within the best interest of the Utility and follows Resolution 2016-16 regarding change order procedures.

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

BJ Harrison, Director of Accounting and Finance, presented a summary of the February Financial Report. He explained in February that there was total revenue of \$6.2 million more than budget by \$146k. Operating expenses of \$2.6 million under budget by \$33k with Salaries under budget by \$36k (-3.1%), Supplies are over budget by \$18k (8.3%), and that Contract Services over budget by \$45k (11.7%).

Ms. Halijan then presented a FOIA and Ethics presentation. She gave background on the history of the "Freedom of Information Act" in Arkansas, explained the framework of the current FOIA, and presented several applications of the law relevant to the LRWRC.

Ms. Halijan then presented the Legal Update. She noted continued work on reviewing contracts; attending an environmental law conference; reviewing and updating policies; addressing personnel matters.

Jean Block, Chief Executive Officer, presented an update on *One Water. One Little Rock*. She gave an overview of the creation and implementation of the strategic focus for the utility, current projects, and a preview on what is ahead for *One Water. One Little Rock*.

Ms. Block then delivered the monthly highlights which included: Women of Water & Allies, Raye Jean Montague Proclamation, March Madness Townhall, Little Rock Marathon, Keep Little Rock Beautiful - Fourche Creek Clean Up, Arkansas Foodbank, Pulaski Heights Middle School, Artistry in the Rock – LRSD, Tour FCWRF, and J.A. Fair.

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 April 17, 2024. He then asked if there were any objections to adjourning the meeting. Hearing none, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Daryl Brown

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Daryl Brown, Secretary