

**LITTLE ROCK WATER RECLAMATION COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of the Meeting Held**  
**October 23, 2024**

The Little Rock Water Reclamation Commission (“LRWRC”) met at 4:00 p.m., Wednesday, October 23, 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  
Christina Clark, 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, Clark, and Brown appeared in person. Commissioners O’Guinn, Semans, Marsh and McBryde appeared via livestream. Director Hines was absent. Senior Staff Members: Jean Block, Michael Rhoda, Ryan Benefield, Walter Collins, Harold Hounwanou, Doug Roe, Rebecca Burkman, Angela Brooks, Les Price, Kenetta Ridgell, and Tonya Wallace. Shannon Halijan was absent.

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.

Skip Mellor, Collection System Maintenance Manager, recognized Yusuf Koba, Collection System Planning Specialist, for 20 years of service to the utility.

Rebecca Burkman, Director of Environmental Affairs, introduced the Environmental Affairs Laboratory Spotlight. She greeted the Commission and introduced her staff and gave a brief overview of the laboratory and testing procedures.

Next, Chair Hightower asked the Commissioners if they had reviewed the minutes of the September 16, 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.

Michael Rhoda, Chief Financial Officer, presented the 2025 LRWRA Operating and Capital Budget. He asked Jean Block, Chief Executive Officer, to give opening remarks where she noted that the utility's primary focus for more than 20 years has been to meet the requirements of the Consent Administrative Order (CAO), and as we have exited the CAO the utility needs to focus on managing our vertical assets which include pump stations at equipment at our three water reclamation facilities.

Mr. Rhoda noted that the capital improvement plan for 2025 is ambitious, featuring major projects that include significant investments in solids processing and infrastructure upgrades, which are essential for the long-term sustainability and efficiency of the utility. Debt service remains a significant part of the budget, with substantial allocations for principal and interest payments, maintaining a strong debt service coverage ratio that reflects the organization's commitment to financial health.

He concluded that the utility is navigating a complex financial landscape with a focus on proactive asset management and strategic investments. The utility is supported by a talented and dedicated team well-prepared to meet these challenges and continue providing essential services to the community.

Les Price, Director of Engineering Services, presented a Recommendation of Award for Fourche Creek WRF Maintenance Building Hoist. He gave a brief overview of the project and the need for a new hoist.

Staff requested the Commission to authorize CEO Jean Block to enter into a construction contract with Van Horn Construction, Inc. for the FCWRF Maintenance Building Crane in the amount of \$306,300.

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

Tonya Wallace, Director of Facility Asset Management, presented a Purchase Authorization for the Fourche Creek WRF Makeup Water Building Roof Replacement. She gave a brief overview of the project and the need for the roof replacement.

Staff requested the Commission to approve the purchase authorization for the Fourche Creek WRF Building Roof Replacement in the amount of \$109,150 and to authorize CEO

Jean Block to enter into a contract with Ketcher & Company, Inc. of North Little Rock, Arkansas.

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

Mr. Roe presented a summary of the September Financial Report. He explained in September that there was total revenue of \$5.7 million more than budget by \$225k. Operating expenses of \$2.9 million more than budget by \$137k with Salaries under budget by \$17k (-1.5%), Supplies are over budget by \$71k (25.4%), and that Contract Services over budget by \$30k (6.4%).

Ms. Block then delivered the monthly highlights which included: WEFTEC & Utility of the Future, Employee Benefits Town Halls, National Night Out, WoWA 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Family Tours, Imagine a Day Without Water, Downtown Little Rock Food Truck Festival, and the Walk for CommUNITY.

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

Chair Hightower called for any new business. Chair Hightower then stated he would like the Commission to have a retreat before the end of the year. Calling again for any other new business, and there was none.

Chair Hightower stated the next LRWRC meeting would be November 20, 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