

LITTLE ROCK WATER RECLAMATION COMMISSION
Minutes of the Meeting Held
October 29, 2025

The Little Rock Water Reclamation Commission (“LRWRC”) met at 4:00 p.m., Wednesday, October 29, 2025 at the LRWRA Conference Room and via livestream.

Little Rock Water Reclamation Commission

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

Little Rock Water Reclamation Authority Personnel

Jean Block, Chief Executive Officer
Michael Rhoda, Chief Financial Officer
Ryan Benefield, P.E., Chief Operating Officer
Deanna Ray, Chief Legal Officer
Rebecca Burkman, Director of Environmental Affairs
Harold Hounwanou, P.E., Director of Collection System Maintenance
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
Jody Sims, Director of Facilities Asset Management

Attendees included: Commissioners Marsh, McNulty, Brown, O’Guinn, Hightower, and Director Hines appeared in person. Commissioner Semans was absent. Senior Staff Members: Jean Block, Michael Rhoda, Ryan Benefield, Deanna Ray, Harold Hounwanou, Rebecca Burkman, Angela Brooks, Les Price, Jody Sims, Doug Roe and Kenetta Ridgell appeared in person.

Commissioner Marsh served as chair due to Chair Semans absence. Commissioner Marsh brought the meeting to order and called for Mr. Roe to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Jean Block, Chief Executive Officer, recognized Cary Beth Lipscomb as the new Director of Operations. She noted her previous years of service in the engineering department.

Harold Hounwanou, Director of Collection System Maintenance, presented the department spotlight. He and staff demonstrated a new, highly efficient pole camera system used for emergency response and inspecting sewer lines.

Next, Commissioner Marsh asked the Commissioners if they had reviewed the minutes of the September 10, 2025, meeting. Being that there were no revisions, Chair Semans asked if there were any objections to approving minutes. Hearing none, Chair Semans asked if there was a motion to approve the minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Commissioner Marsh then asked if there were any public comments, and there were none.

Michael Rhoda, Chief Financial Officer, gave the 2026 Budget presentation. He noted the 2026 budget proposes a 7.25% rate increase beginning February 1, with operating and maintenance expenses rising 3.5% in line with the rate study. Revenue is projected to grow 10.8% to \$76.5 million, driven by modest customer growth and usage changes. Compensation and benefits increase slightly, with merit awards planned for 2026. The capital improvement plan emphasizes renewing aging infrastructure, upgrading solids processing, and expanding capacity to support growth in Little Rock, with long-term investments estimated at \$140–163 million. Debt service for 2026 totals \$26.9 million, maintaining strong coverage and a stable Aa3 bond rating. Total funding sources for the year amount to \$133.2 million from revenue, reserves, and bonds. Mrs. Block provided closing remarks that our work is capital investment intensive nature of the work ahead.

Jay Whisker, Engineering Program Manager, presented the Recommendation of Award for the Force Main Railroad Encasement Project. He gave a brief background on the project and the need for the encasement.

Staff requested the Commission to authorize CEO Jean Block to enter into a construction contract with Harper Construction Co. Inc. for the Force Main Railroad Encasement Project in the amount of \$164,650.00.

A motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Kira Wise, Project Engineer – Facilities, presented a Request for Authorization of Professional Services Contract Pre-Construction Phase – General Contractor/Construction Manager (GCCM). She gave a brief background of the project and the need for the rehabilitation.

Staff requested the Commission to authorize CEO Jean Block to execute the professional services contract – General Contractor/Construction Manager with Van Horn Construction for the Pre-Construction Phase of the FCWRF Headworks Gate & Concrete and Final Clarifier Concrete Rehabilitation project in the amount of \$100,000.

A motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Les Price, Director of Engineering Services, presented a Variance Request for Chenal Valley Subdivision Phase 37. He gave a brief description of the area and that the

developer is requesting approval of a variance to allow connection to the LRWRA sewer system outside the natural drainage basin, but inside the City limits.

Staff requested the Commission to grant a variance to allow Chenal Valley Subdivision Phase 37 (30 lots) to connect to the LRWRA system by gravity flowing to the Adams Field WRF versus the Little Maumelle WRF.

Doug Roe, Director of Finance & Accounting, presented a summary of September Financial Report. He explained in September that Operating expenses of \$3.4 million. He noted that Salaries over budget by \$24k, Supplies are over budget by \$61k, and Contract Services under budget by \$36k.

Deanna Ray, Chief Legal Officer, gave the Legal Update. She noted continued work on reviewing contracts; reviewing safety sensitive positions; work with Environmental Affairs with Special Use Permits; working with procurement; reviewing and updating policies; addressing personnel matters.

Jean Block, Chief Executive Officer, gave the CEO Highlights that included: Food Truck Festival, National Night Out, WEFTEC Presentation, Plumbing School Tour, Watson Fall Fest, Imagine a Day without Water, Sustainability Fair, and Hispanic Heritage Celebration.

Commissioner Marsh called for any old business, and there was none.

Commissioner Marsh called for any new business, and there was none.

Commissioner Marsh stated the next LRWRC meeting would be December 3. He then asked if there were any objections to adjourning the meeting. Hearing none, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Prentice O'Guinn

Prentice O'Guinn, Secretary