

**LITTLE ROCK WATER RECLAMATION COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of the Meeting Held**  
**April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

The Little Rock Water Reclamation Commission (“LRWRC”) met at 4:00 p.m., Wednesday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, in the Board Room of Little Rock Water Reclamation Authority and via livestream.

**Little Rock Water Reclamation Commission**

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

**Little Rock Water Reclamation Authority Personnel**

Greg Ramon, Chief Executive Officer  
Howell Anderson, P.E., Chief Operating Officer  
Jean Block, Chief Legal Officer  
Michael Rhoda, Chief Financial Officer  
Walter Collins, P.E., Director of Operations & Facilities  
John Holloway, P.E., Director of Engineering Services  
Rebecca Burkman, Director of Environmental Affairs  
Harold Hounwanou, P.E., Director of Collection System Maintenance  
Tonya Wallace, Director of Facility Asset Management

Attendees included: Commissioners Hightower, Marsh, McBryde, O’Guinn, and Director Hines appeared in-person. Commissioner Shock appeared via livestream. Commissioners Semans and Brown were absent. Senior Staff Members: Greg Ramon, Jean Block, Howell Anderson, Michael Rhoda, Walter Collins, Rebecca Burkman, Harold Hounwanou, and Tonya Wallace appeared in person. John Holloway was absent.

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

Chair Hightower then asked Stedman Davis, Operator, to present the Safety Minute.

Walter Collins, Director of Operations and Facilities, presented Reggie Grant, Water Reclamation Facility Supervisor, with an award for his 20 years of service to LRWRA.

Greg Ramon, Chief Executive Officer, announced newly appointed Commissioners Prentice O'Guinn and Daryl Brown.

Mr. Ramon then recognized former Commissioner Lauren Waldrip for her service on the Commission from August 2018 to March 2023 and presented her a water droplet statue for her years of service to the Commission.

Mr. Ramon noted that due Ms. Waldrip's resignation that there was a need to elect a new Vice Chair and subsequently a new Secretary. Mr. Ramon proposed Commissioner Semans for Vice Chair and Commissioner Marsh for Secretary. Chair Hightower then made the nominations. There were no objections to the nominations and Chair Hightower requested a motion to approve. A motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Next, Chair Hightower asked the Commissioners if they had reviewed the minutes of the March 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. Being that there were no revisions, Chair Hightower asked if there were any objections to approving the minutes. Hearing none, the minutes were approved.

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

Michael Rhoda, Chief Financial Officer, introduced Kyle Elmore of Forvis (formerly BKD) who presented the 2022 Financial Audit Report. Mr. Elmore explained that Forvis had issued a clean/unmodified opinion on LRWRA's financial statements for 2022. Mr. Ramon then thanked the finance staff for their hard work. Chair Hightower requested a motion to accept the 2022 Financial Audit Report. A motion was made, seconded, and accepted unanimously.

Michael Rhoda, Chief Financial Officer, presented Resolution 2023-05 entitled:

**A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE POTENTIAL FUTURE EXPENDITURE OF UP TO \$6,500,000 FROM OPERATING CASH RESERVES OR VIA OTHER AVAILABLE MEANS FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMPLETING A CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT TO EXPAND THE CAPACITY OF THE FOURCHE CREEK WATER RECLAMATION FACILITY TO ACCOMMODATE FUTURE GROWTH IN THE PORT OF LITTLE ROCK UPON THE AWARD OF A FEDERAL APPROPRIATION**

He stated that LRWRA had filed a Congressionally Directed Funding Request for fiscal year 2024 with US Senator John Boozman on March 17, 2023, and that the request is for \$32,500,000 to fund additional capacity of the Fourche Creek Water Reclamation Facility to support future growth of the Port of Little Rock. He noted the federal appropriation grants require the recipient to fund 20% of the grant amount with non-federal monies, and this project is included in the long-range capital improvement plan in the years 2026-2028 but it is unfunded presently. Commissioner McBryde asked for clarification if LRWRA staff would return to the Commission if cash reserves weren't used. Mr. Ramon stated staff would return to the Commission regardless to update them on the project and if it were a loan, it would be a voting item.

Mr. Rhoda requested approval of Resolution 2023-05. Chair Hightower requested a motion to approve. A motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Cary Beth Lipscomb, Engineering Manager - Capital Improvements, presented a Recommendation of Award for Construction for Large Diameter Main Upsizing near Booker Arts Magnet Elementary School. Ms. Lipscomb gave a brief background on the project and an explanation of the upsizing process.

Staff requested the Commission award the construction contract to Arkansas Cleaning & Televising, LLC in the amount of \$1,107,863.00, conditional upon Arkansas Natural Resources Division concurrence and to authorize CEO Greg Ramon to execute a contract for the Booker Arts Magnet Elementary Upsizing Project.

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

Ms. Lipscomb then presented a Recommendation of Award for Construction for Large Diameter Sewer Rehabilitation from Baseline Road to Jamison Road. She gave a brief background on the project and explanation of the sewer rehabilitation process.

Staff requested that the Commission award the construction contract to Insituform Technologies in the amount of \$2,370,051.30 and authorize CEO Greg Ramon to execute a contract for Large Diameter Baseline Rd. to Jamison Rd. Sewer Rehabilitation.

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

Ms. Lipscomb then presented a Recommendation of Award for Professional Services for Preconstruction for a General Contractor/Construction Manager. She gave a brief background on the project, the need for the pump station at the Port of Little Rock, and how the "Construction Manager at Risk" delivery method works.

Staff requested the Commission authorize CEO Greg Ramon to execute the Professional Services GCCM contract with Haren Construction Company, Inc. for the Pre-Construction Phase of the Thibault Pump Station and Force Main in the amount of \$71,909.

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

Mr. Rhoda then presented a summary of the March Financial Report. He explained for March that total revenue of \$5.3 million less than budget by \$167,000 (3%). Operating expenses of \$2.7 million exceeded budget by \$60,000 (2.3%) with Salaries over budget by \$28k (2.4%), Supplies over budget by \$7k (2.1%), and Contract Services over budget by \$21k (6.6%). Mr. Ramon asked Mr. Rhoda to explain how the March 31<sup>st</sup> tornado affected our billing. Mr. Rhoda then explained that LRWRA is working with Central Arkansas Water to see if billing can be suppressed for homes that have been vacated as a result of storm damage in order to minimize aggravation for these

residents. So far, absent the homeowner calling in to have their water shut off there we have not identified a solution. We will continue working with CAW to identify a solution.

Jean Block, Chief Legal Officer, then gave the Legal Update. She highlighted: status of ongoing litigation; contracts; working on easements with the Pulaski County Civil Attorney; and her presentation at the AWWA|WEF Utility Management Conference.

Greg Ramon, Chief Executive Officer, delivered the monthly highlights that included: 2023 Engineering Excellence Award for Water and Wastewater, Flipping the Solar Switch, Tours at FCWRF, Southwest High School, Raye Jean Montague Day, Storm Update, Advertisement – Professional Services – Technically Based Local Limits, Advertisement – Professional Services – On-call Contract Services, Advertisement – Construction – Capacity Improvements at Benny Craig Park, and a Notification of Advertisement for Wastewater Rate Study.

Chair Hightower called for the Commission to convene into executive session to discuss an employee personnel matter. Chair Hightower requested a motion to approve. A motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously. He then requested that only the Commissioners and Mr. Ramon remain in the room and to pause recording.

After the executive session, Chair Hightower reconvened the meeting. He stated that CEO Greg Ramon has announced his intention to retire and has agreed to stay on until a successor has been named. The Commission then publicly voted on an item decided in executive session: to form an advisory sub-committee to lead the recruitment process and conduct interviews for the CEO position. The sub-committee will consist of Commissioner Chris Marsh, C.E.O. Greg Ramon, as well as former LRWRC Commissioner Lauren Waldrip. Chair Hightower requested a motion to approve. A motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Chair Hightower then thanked Mr. Ramon for his years of service to the utility since 2014. He noted his leadership and continuous improvement philosophy have placed the utility in a strong financial position as well as continually challenging staff to provide the best service to the citizens of Little Rock. Work accomplished included improving miles of pipeline and adding capacity to the water reclamation facilities, which have substantially reduced overflows. The utility is positioned to meet the ADEE Consent Administrative Order by the end of this year – a process that was started in 2001.

He noted the utility and staff have also been awarded many state and national awards, including the Utility of the Future Award, the EPA's PISCES Award, and many Peak Performance Awards.

He then thanked Greg for working closely with the Little Rock Water Reclamation Commission for many years and wished him well in his upcoming retirement.

Chair Hightower called for other business and there was none.

Chair Hightower stated the next LRWRC meeting would be May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023. He then asked if there were any objections to adjourning the meeting. Hearing none, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Chris Marsh, Secretary