

LITTLE ROCK WATER RECLAMATION COMMISSION
Minutes of the Meeting Held
January 18th, 2023

The Little Rock Water Reclamation Commission (“LRWRC”) met at 4:00 p.m., Wednesday, January 18th, in the Board Room of Little Rock Water Reclamation Authority and via livestream.

Little Rock Water Reclamation Commission

Schawnee Hightower, Chair
Lauren Waldrip, Vice Chair
Jonathan Semans, Secretary
Chris Marsh, Commissioner
Debbie Shock, Commissioner
Ganelle McBryde, 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

Attendees included: Commissioners Hightower, Waldrip, and Director Hines appeared in-person. Commissioners McBryde, Marsh, and Shock appeared via livestream. Senior Staff Members: Greg Ramon, Jean Block, Howell Anderson, Michael Rhoda, Walter Collins, John Holloway, Rebecca Burkman, and Harold Hounwanou appeared in person.

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

Chair Hightower then asked Sherree Bynum, Safety Coordinator, to present the Safety Minute.

Mr. Ramon spoke of the passing of Commissioner Richard Mays, Jr. He noted his passion for public service and his long tenure on the Commission. He then acknowledged Commissioner Mays sister, Tiffany Mays, and presented her a glass water-droplet statue in honor of Mr. Mays’s life and service.

Myron Welch, Maintenance Administrator, presented Scotty Gilbreth, Inspector – Service Lines/Construction, with an award for his 20 years of service to LRWRA.

Mr. Ramon then proposed moving the February meeting from the 17th to the 22nd. Chair Hightower requested a motion to approve. A motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Chair Hightower asked the Commissioners if they had reviewed the minutes of the December 14th 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.

Tonya Wallace, Program Manager – Facilities, presented Professional Services Amendment for 18" and Larger Inspection Repair. She gave a brief overview of the project and the location of the repairs. Staff requested the Commission authorize CEO Greg Ramon to execute the Professional Services Amendment with Arcadis U.S., Inc. for the Engineering Services of the Large Diameter Sewer Main Assessment & Repairs not to exceed \$1,095,000. Chair Hightower asked if this repair was being made for anticipated growth of the city of Little Rock or for rehabilitation. Mr. Anderson replied that it was for rehabilitation.

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

Cary Beth Lipscomb, Engineering Manager - Capital Improvements, presented an Annual Construction Contract Renewal for the Infiltration and Inflow Reduction Program - Test and Seal (Joint Grouting). She gave a brief description of the Infiltration and Inflow reduction program and the contract. Staff requested the Commission accept the unit prices submitted by Gulf Coast Underground and authorize CEO Greg Ramon to negotiate and execute the contract renewal for the Infiltration & Inflow Reduction Program - Contract 4 (Test and Seal).

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

Michael Rhoda, Chief Financial Officer, then presented Resolution 2023-01 entitled:

A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE INTENT OF THE LITTLE ROCK WATER RECLAMATION COMMISSION FOR THE ISSUANCE OF CERTAIN ARKANSAS DEVELOPMENT FINANCE AUTHORITY (ADFA) BONDS AND TO ADVANCE FUNDS TO PAY COSTS OF SEWER FACILITIES' INSTALLATIONS AT CERTAIN AREAS WITHIN THE CITY OF LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS WITH THE FUNDS TO BE REIMBURSED BY LOAN PROCEEDS FROM TAX EXEMPT ADFA BONDS.

Mr. Rhoda stated the purpose of this resolution was to seek approval from the Arkansas Natural Resources Division (ANRD) for financial assistance from the

Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Program for up to \$65M and that the proceeds will fund planned improvements to the water reclamation system in 2024 - 2026. By proceeding now versus waiting until later in 2023, we would secure a lower interest rate from ANRD. Mr. Rhoda further mentioned that there would likely be recurring needs to use RLF program in the future along with revenues and cash reserves to maintain and improve the water reclamation system.

Mr. Semans asked what this money would be used for. Mr. Rhoda stated it was for various projects including: sludge dewatering, blower replacements, biosolids optimization, work on our treatment plants, pump station improvements, and general maintenance.

Mr. Rhoda requested the Commission approve Resolution No. 2023-01, a resolution declaring the intent of the Little Rock Water Reclamation Commission for the issuance of certain Arkansas Development Finance Authority (ADFA) Bonds and to advance funds to pay costs of sewer facilities' repairs related to improvements to the Water Reclamation System.

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

Mr. Rhoda then presented Resolution 2023-02 entitled:

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING GREG RAMON, HOWELL ANDERSON,
MICHAEL RHODA, AND JOHN HOLLOWAY AS SIGNATORY AGENTS OF
LITTLE ROCK WATER RECLAMATION COMMISSION TO MAKE
APPLICATION FOR ASSISTANCE UNDER PUBLIC LAW 100-4 AND THE
ARKANSAS REVOLVING LOAN FUND AND TO SIGN THE ACCEPTANCE
AND ANY OTHER REQUIRED DOCUMENT RELATED THERETO**

Vice Chair Waldrip stated she thought Greg Ramon already had signatory authority on items like this. Mr. Ramon stated he did not have signatory authority on items such as bonds.

Mr. Rhoda requested the Commission approve Resolution No. 2023-02, a resolution designating signatory agents of Little Rock Water Reclamation Commission to make application for assistance under Public Law 100-4 and the Arkansas Revolving Loan Fund and to sign the acceptance and any other required document related thereto.

Mr. Rhoda then presented Resolution 2023-03 entitled:

**A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE RESTRUCTURING OF FIVE (5) CITY OF
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS REVENUE BONDS SECURED BY REVENUES OF THE
WATER RECLAMATION SYSTEM AND ISSUED AS PART OF THE STATE CLEAN
WATER REVOLVING LOAN FUND PROGRAM**

Mr. Rhoda gave a brief description of the advantages of debt restructuring via bond swaps. Chair Hightower noted that this appeared to be very beneficial for the utility, and Mr. Rhoda agreed. Mr. Rhoda then stated that the both the issuance of additional debt

and the ANRD RLF restructuring would require approval by the City of Little Rock's Board of Directors later in 2023.

Mr. Rhoda requested the Commission approve Resolution No. 2023-03, a resolution approving of the restructure of five Arkansas Development Finance Authority (ADFA) Bonds (Series 2013, Series 2016A, Series 2018, Series 2019, Series 2020) to be exchanged through the issuance of an ADFA 2023 RLF Bond.

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

Next, Amber Yates, Procurement Administrator, presented a Purchase Authorization to Replace One Pump at Arch Street Pump Station. She gave a brief background on pump stations and the need for the replacement at this location. Mr. Ramon gave an explanation of why the utility standardizes its pumps and the advantages of them being the same model from the same manufacturer.

Staff requested the Commission approve the purchase authorization for the replacement of one (1) pump at Arch Street Pump Station for \$306,187 and to authorize CEO Greg Ramon to enter into a contract with Instrument and Supply, Inc.

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

Naomi Roundtree, Associate Director of Human Resources, presented the H.R. 2022 Highlights. She noted the implementation of new initiatives focused on efficiencies, compliance and equity, professional development, and community involvement. She also noted some future initiatives including: reviewing and updating Employee Evaluation forms and the Employee Handbook, revamping the offboarding and exit interview process, and developing a robust Wellness Program with assistance of outside consultant. Chair Hightower stated he was impressed by the work of the H.R. team. Commissioner Waldrip asked about efforts to maintain retention at LRWRA. Ms. Roundtree acknowledged that some positions were more difficult to fill than others, but the H.R. team was proactive in recruiting. Ms. Block noted that in 2022 the utility had gotten up to 12 vacancies but has recently reverted back to the norm of having around 4.

Mr. Rhoda then presented a summary of the December Financial Report. He explained for December that total revenue of \$5.5 million exceeded budget by \$304,000 (5.8%), and that year-to-date revenues of \$66.4 million are \$3.7 million over budget (5.9%). Operating expenses of \$2.5 million less than budget by \$176,000 (6.6%) with Salaries under budget by \$51 (4.4%), Supplies under budget by \$21k (7.5%), and Contract Services over budget by \$6k (1.8%).

Jean Block, Chief Legal Officer, then gave the Legal Update. She highlighted: status of ongoing litigation; H.R. goals; and contracts.

Greg Ramon, Chief Executive Officer, delivered the monthly highlights that included: Little Rock School District Recognition, Blood Drive, Notice of Advertisement – Request for Qualifications for Public Education and Outreach, and the Adopt-a-Street Clean-up.

Chair Hightower called for other business, there was none.

Chair Hightower stated the next LRWRC meeting would be February 22nd, 2023. He then asked if there were any objections to adjourning the meeting. Hearing none, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jonathan Semans, Secretary