

LITTLE ROCK WATER RECLAMATION COMMISSION
Minutes of the Meeting Held
September 20th, 2023

The Little Rock Water Reclamation Commission ("LRWRC") met at 4:00 p.m., Wednesday, September 20th, 2023, in the Hub Conference Room at the Clearwater Administration Building and via livestream.

Little Rock Water Reclamation Commission

Schawnee Hightower, Chair
Jonathan Semans, Vice Chair
Chris Marsh, Secretary
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

Jean Block, Chief Executive Officer
Howell Anderson, P.E., Chief Operating Officer
Michael Rhoda, Chief Financial Officer
Walter Collins, P.E., Director of Operations
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
BJ Harrison, Associate Director of Accounting & Finance
Naomi Roundtree, Associate Director of Human Resources

Attendees included: Commissioners Hightower, Brown, and Director Hines appeared in-person. Commissioner Marsh, Semans, and Shock appeared via livestream. Commissioners O'Guinn and McBryde were absent. Senior Staff Members: Jean Block, Howell Anderson, Michael Rhoda, Walter Collins, John Holloway, Harold Hounwanou, Rebecca Burkman, BJ Harrison, Naomi Roundtree, and Tonya Wallace 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 Alexandria Evans, Communications Assistant, to present the Safety Minute.

Chair Hightower then called Tommy Kelley, Collection Systems Maintenance Supervisor, to present Service Awards. Mr. Kelley gave remarks and presented awards to Chris Williams, Equipment Operator, for 25 years of service, Stanley Howard, Crew Leader, and Henry Covington, Crew Leader, for 20 years of service.

Howell Anderson, Chief Operating Officer, then recognized John Holloway, Director of Engineering Services, for his 33 years of service and his upcoming retirement. He thanked Mr. Holloway for his tireless efforts and commitment to the utility.

Jean Block, Chief Executive Officer, then recognized Scott Taylor, Project Administrator - Survey and Design, for his successful efforts in the Clearwater Administration Building conference room remodels.

Next, Chair Hightower asked the Commissioners if they had reviewed the minutes of the August 16, 2023, meeting. Being that there were no revisions, Chair Hightower asked if there were any objections to approving both minutes. Hearing none, both minutes were approved.

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

Kenetta Ridgell, Senior Communications & Outreach Manager, presented a Recommendation of Award for Public Education and Outreach Services. She provided a detailed background on the utility's public education and outreach projects over the years; the extent of LRWRA's successful projects with The Design Group over the past seven years; and the procurement process. She stated that six agencies provided presentations to the review committee and The Design Group received the highest score. Chair Hightower asked the frequency of meetings with the Design Group. Ms. Ridgell stated that there are standing monthly meetings and that The Design Group is very responsive to having meetings as needed. Chair Hightower asked if they were proactive in suggesting outreach opportunities, and Ms. Ridgell confirmed that they were.

Staff requested the Commission approve the recommendation of award for a one-year term contract for Public Education & Outreach services not to exceed \$150,000 and to authorize CEO Jean Block to enter into a contract with The Design Group and to authorize one-year contract renewals in the subsequent six years to be approved and signed at the discretion of the CEO 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.

Michael Rhoda, Chief Financial Officer, gave the 2023 Healthcare Update. He gave a brief overview of the plan as of August 2023. He noted the utility was funding the plan with \$3.5M this year with \$600k coming from employees and retirees, and \$2.9M from the utility. This year there are \$1.4M in claims and fees so far and a projection to end the year \$2.2-2.4M. The Reserve Account stands at \$820k and the Healthcare Operating Account is at \$2.3M.

Chair Hightower asked if any of the savings could be used for healthcare initiatives to continue to promote LRWRA's employees' health. Mr. Rhoda said, yes that LRWRA will be using a third-party to implement a new wellness plan next year. Director Lance Hines asked who reviews the larger healthcare claims, and Mr. Rhoda explained that those claims were reviewed by our administrator UMR.

Mr. Rhoda then presented the Retirement Plan Update. He gave a brief background on the role of the "Recordkeeping Service Provider" and some challenges with our current provider. He noted that our current provider rebranded, had significant leadership turnover and compliance issues, and outsourced its record-keeping platform, which significantly degraded its customer service for our employees. Mr. Rhoda explained that, after working with our fiduciary to procure services from another vendor, LRWRA selected Milliman to provide record keeping services at the conclusion of the RFP process.

Mr. Rhoda then presented a summary of the August Financial Report. He explained in August that there was total revenue of \$5.8 million less than budget by \$261k. Operating expenses of \$2.2 million less than budget by \$946k with Salaries under budget by \$3k (-.03%), Supplies are over budget by \$30k (11.8%), and that Contract Services under budget by \$70k (-8.4%).

Jean Block, Chief Executive Officer, gave the Legal Update where she highlighted hiring Shannon Halijan as the new Chief Legal Officer.


Ms. Block then delivered the monthly highlights that included: Awards and Recognitions, Community Champions, Community Outreach, Presentations, and Advertisements.

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 October 18, 2023. He then asked if there were any objections to adjourning the meeting. Hearing none, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,



Chris Marsh, Secretary