

The Utility Service Board met Thursday, March 20, 2025, at 11:30 a.m. at 1111 McClure Road chaired by Patrick Andrews. Other board members present were: Cheryl McAvoy, Barry Turner and Nicholas Browning. Also present were: Roger Kelso, Executive Director; Ashley Getz, Associate Director of Engineering; Travis Calhoun, Associate Director of Treatment Operations; Gavin Harvey, Associate Director of Finance and Business Operations; Charlie Pride, Internal Auditor; Nichole Young, Executive Administrative Assistant; Stan Gamso, attorney; and Elaine Hilber, City Council Liaison.

VISITORS

Visitors attending were: Matt Wirth, Commonwealth Engineering; Amanda White, TyLin; Tony Akles, Strand Associates; and Brad Davis, *The Republic*.

CORRECTIONS/AGENDA CHANGES

Nichole Young provided an updated claims schedule to board members for utilities water claims and City of Columbus water and sewer claims. Also distributed, a commentary sheet to accompany the biosolids presentation slides and a larger printed version of the proposed organizational chart from the Director's Report.

REGULAR MINUTES

Cheryl McAvoy made the motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting on February 20, 2025, as prepared. Barry Turner seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

EXECUTIVE MINUTES

Cheryl McAvoy made the motion to approve the minutes from the executive meeting on February 28, 2025, as prepared. Barry Turner seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

SPECIAL MINUTES

Cheryl McAvoy made the motion to approve the minutes from the special meeting on February 28, 2025, as prepared. Barry Turner seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 3-2025 TO AUTHORIZE THE TRANSFER OF FUNDS BETWEEN ACCOUNTS FOR FEBRUARY 2025

Gavin Harvey presented a resolution prepared by Stan Gamso to authorize transfers made in February 2025 between various accounts. A copy of the transfers was attached. Transfers were made within the bounds of standard routine accounting practices for the purpose of satisfying ongoing obligations. Gavin confirmed the transfer information presented was a true and accurate

summary of the actual transfers as made by the Columbus Utilities staff and management, and all were within the normal course of Utility business.

Patrick Andrews made the motion to approve Resolution 3-2025 authorizing account transfers as presented. Cheryl McAvoy seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

M.E. SIMPSON COMPANY, INC. HYDRANT FLOW TESTING PROPOSAL

Ashley Getz presented a Proposal from M.E. Simpson Company, Inc., for hydrant flow testing of 600 hydrants for a total fee of \$42,600. Ashley recommended board approval of the proposal.

Currently in year three of a five-year testing cycle per American Water Works Association (AWWA) recommendations. Cost per hydrant increased slightly over last year. M.E. Simpson conducted last year's tests; not many vendors service this quantity of hydrants.

Board members inquired about the potential cost savings of a multi-year contract. Ashley agreed to explore this option with the vendor. Stan Gamso stated that the board could make a motion to approve the proposal with the same terms or better rate for multiple years.

Cheryl McAvoy made the motion to approve Columbus City Utilities to negotiate a multi-year contract with M.E. Simpson Company, Inc., not-to-exceed three years, for hydrant flowing testing of 600 hydrants per year with an annual amount not-to-exceed \$42,600; subsequent years two and three to be negotiated at same or favorable terms as presented. Nicholas Browning seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

REVISED BIOSOLIDS PROGRAM

Ashley Getz and Travis Calhoun presented the new revised plan for biosolids to the board.

Travis stated that CCU currently produces a Class B biosolid, in the amount of approximately 12,000 wet tons per year. The Bartholomew County landfill does not accept biosolids, currently hauling to the Medora landfill with some land application as weather permits. Landfill can turn away loads based on weather and available cells; travel distance is prohibitive to three loads per day and causes significant wear on equipment and tires.

Ashley reported concerns with landfill availability, and the possibility of future regulation changes. The process that is currently working now, will likely not work in the future. The master plan included aerobic digesters, but a biosolid drying option will be more resilient solution.

Travis shared that biosolid drying results in 80% volume reduction and creates a permitted Class A Exceptional Quality (EQ) biosolid; a better product and virtually odor free. Estimate a reduction in biosolids from 12,000 wet tons to 2,200 tons per year. Class A biosolids are pathogen free, and could be disposed of as compost, fertilizer, soil amendment or landfill cover material at no cost.

Ashley stated that the biosolid drying option is currently more expensive than the current plan. However, with the wastewater bonds set to fall off in 2026, this project could be completed with no additional rate increases per Baker Tilly's assessment.

Ashley and Travis visited three sites in Ohio and Wisconsin that currently use this process; runs unmanned around the clock and can be operated remotely. Potential cost savings on labor, landfill and land application fees, and equipment repair.

Strand Associates have experience with this type of project; a contract will be brought forward in a future meeting. If design is started now, this project could be operational in 2027. Covers 20-year loading estimate with some additional capacity for growth.

No action.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR TANK EVALUATIONS

Ashley Getz presented a Professional Services Agreement with Strand Associates to perform Tank 1 and 2 study evaluations for a total fee of \$57,500. Ashley recommended board approval of the agreement.

Ashley stated that options will be provided for tank raising, new tanks, or a combination of the two. If changes are made to the master plan, SRF will be notified of next steps. A water BAN would pay for the project, and then it will be determined if we proceed with SRF or private bonds.

Cheryl McAvoy made the motion to approve the Strand Associates Professional Services Agreement for Preliminary Engineering Tank Evaluations for \$57,500 as presented. Patrick Andrews seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR CLIFTY AND 8TH STREET LIFT STATION IMPROVEMENTS

Ashley Getz presented a Professional Services Agreement with Commonwealth for Clifty and 8th Street Lift Station Improvements for a total fee of \$290,000. Ashley recommended board approval of the agreement.

Upgrades are due to the growth in these areas. Maps were provided along with the agreement, and board members commented that they were very thorough and explanatory.

Cheryl McAvoy made the motion to approve the Commonwealth Professional Services Agreement for Clifty and 8th Street Lift Station Improvements not-to-exceed \$290,000 as presented. Nicholas Browning seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR WATER MAIN REPLACEMENTS

Ashley Getz presented the Professional Services Agreement with TyLin for the Water Main Replacements engineering contract for a total fee of \$250,600. Ashley recommended board approval of the agreement.

Barry Turner made the motion to approve the TyLin Professional Services Agreement for Water Main Replacements for \$250,600 as presented. Cheryl McAvoy seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

REQUEST FOR SALE OF ASSETS

Gavin Harvey presented a request for sale of assets of two fully depreciated trailers to CCU employees; both trailers were previously approved by the board for disposal. If not approved, they will be sold on GovDeals auction site. Prices were determined by age and original retail value. Sale prices for each trailer are under \$1,000, permissible by Indiana Code.

Barry Turner made the motion to approve Request for Sale of Assets as presented. Cheryl McAvoy seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

INTRODUCTION OF INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

Charlie Pride presented the Internal Audit Report, if the board finds this report valuable, it will be added to the monthly standing reports section of the board packet.

This report identified strengths and weaknesses; some issues identified have already been corrected. One area of improvement will be accounts payable; some items were posted to incorrect accounts and will verify that a contract is on file for contractual service items. An audit of digital customer bills will be conducted also.

Board expressed favorable interest in this report. Audit objectives will be updated monthly. A request was made for ongoing items to be updated at the end of the report each month.

Gavin added that Charlie is currently working on fixed asset schedules and updating procedures for auditing purposes.

No action.

CLAIMS

The March water claims were presented for approval.

- An additional claim for Klein, Thorp & Jenkins, PFAS legal fees, was received after board packets were sent out

Barry Turner made the motion to approve the water summary of claims as presented by the

Columbus Utilities management as being a true and accurate summary of the actual claims as received, invoiced, and docketed and all supported by either contract or receipts received by the Columbus Utilities staff and management. Nicholas Browning seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

The March wastewater claims were presented for approval. Gavin Harvey provided a breakdown of wastewater claims.

- Gavin verified Kimbell International Brands was for new office equipment

Nicholas Browning made the motion to approve the wastewater summary of claims as presented by the Columbus Utilities management as being a true and accurate summary of the actual claims as received, invoiced, and docketed and all supported by either contract or receipts received by the Columbus Utilities staff and management. Cheryl McAvoy seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

The March SRF claims were presented for approval.

Barry Turner made the motion to approve the SRF summary of claims as presented by the Columbus Utilities management as being a true and accurate summary of the actual claims as received, invoiced, and docketed and all supported by either contract or receipts received by the Columbus Utilities staff and management. Cheryl McAvoy seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

The City of Columbus water claims were presented for approval. Gavin Harvey updated that an additional payroll cycle had been added since the original claims schedule was sent to the board.

- Updated claims schedule included an additional payroll cycle

Cheryl McAvoy made the motion to approve the City of Columbus summary of water claims as presented by the Columbus Utilities management as being a true and accurate summary of the actual claims as received, invoiced, and docketed and all supported by either contract or receipts received by the Columbus Utilities staff and management. Patrick Andrews seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

The City of Columbus wastewater claims were presented for approval. Gavin Harvey updated that an additional payroll cycle had been added since the original claims schedule was sent to the board.

- Updated claims schedule included an additional payroll cycle

Nicholas Browning made the motion to approve the City of Columbus summary of wastewater claims as presented by the Columbus Utilities management as being a true and accurate summary of the actual claims as received, invoiced, and docketed and all supported by either contract or receipts received by the Columbus Utilities staff and management. Cheryl McAvoy seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

FINANCE REPORT

The written finance report was presented by Gavin Harvey. Gavin reported that water revenue was ahead of February 2024 actuals by 7.7% and ahead of budget by 4.6%; driven by the rate increase implemented last year. Operating expenses were down 6.8% from last year.

Gavin explained some timing issues and clarified miscellaneous non-water revenue such as SRF reimbursements and sold equipment. The board requested more explanation if miscellaneous revenue is greater than 10% in the future.

Sewer utility revenue was ahead of February 2024 by 9.8% actuals and ahead of budget by 3.4% due to rate increase in January 2025. Operating expenses were also 14.5% less compared to February 2024, primarily due to a decrease in pension payment from the previous year. Expenses were 21.7% less than budget due to vacant positions, a supply of chemicals purchased at the wastewater treatment plant at end of 2024, and a decrease in professional services from Baker Tilly.

Gavin shared the 2026 budget timeline. Management intends to have a preliminary budget prepared by early June and then meet in small groups with board members for feedback. A revised budget is expected by August. CCU will meet with City Council small groups and then finalize the budget in early November before formally presenting it to City Council.

Roger reported that the 2025 salary allocation came from an internal census audit that provided a more accurate split between water and sewer utilities.

ENGINEERING REPORT

The written engineering report was presented by Ashley Getz. Ashley reported nearing towards the end of the capital program funded by the last rate increase in 2021; assessing where savings can be reapplied to future projects.

Ashley shared a photo of a corroded pipe at the Woodside South force main, this repair was moved up in the replacement schedule due to damage. Similar problem seen with water mains in that area due to corrosive soil.

TREATMENT OPERATIONS REPORT

The treatment operations written report was presented by Travis Calhoun. Travis reported there were no violations at the plants or the lab.

Travis updated that Chris Buzzard at the wastewater treatment plant obtained his CDL, E-1 work continues with homeowners, spray wash is complete at the water plant, and industries in line.

A recent emergency at water treatment plant 2 involving a small chlorine gas leak due to a needle valve issue. The alarm system worked properly, and staff members followed the Emergency Response Plan (ERP); the needle valve was tightened to minimize the leak until the manufacturer repaired the valve. Columbus Fire Department was onsite to keep the perimeter, no evacuation was

needed. No additional reporting requirements. Roger stated that monitoring and safety protocols help reduce the risk of equipment failures in scenarios such as this.

Recent inclement weather caused power outages, including a power glitch at the wellfields; an operator reset the tripped breakers and affected wells. Some lift stations were also affected; some pumping was bypassed, and onsite generators were used. No issues reported at the wastewater treatment plant. Again, the ERP in place worked as intended.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The written director's report was submitted by Roger Kelso. Roger reported PFAS settlement has been floating around, will hopefully have figures to update at next month's meeting. Legal counsel is helping participate in another claim for Tyco Fire Products, a fire-fighting foam manufacturer, linked to PFAS.

Roger stated we are still on schedule with IURC; water rates should be in place by October 15.

Roger provided staffing updates and presented the revised organizational chart, which includes the addition of Deputy Director. More information is to be brought forward next month.

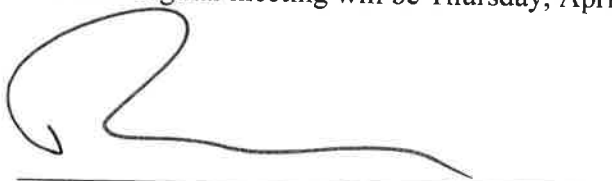
A draft copy of the annual report was provided to board members; finalized copies will be distributed to board members, Mayor Ferdon, department heads and City Council, and will be available at the utilities office for developers and customers.

ADJOURNMENT

Cheryl McAvoy made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Barry Turner seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 12:59 pm.

APRIL MEETING

The next regular meeting will be Thursday, April 17, 2025, at 11:30 a.m.



Patrick Andrews, Vice Chairman
UTILITY SERVICE BOARD



Cheryl McAvoy, Secretary
UTILITY SERVICE BOARD