

The Utility Service Board met Thursday, January 15, 2026, at 11:30 a.m. at 1111 McClure Road chaired by Patrick Andrews. Other board members present were: Cheryl McAvoy, Barry Turner, Nicholas Browning, and Melissa Lin. Also present were: Roger Kelso, Executive Director; Ashley Getz, Associate Director of Engineering; Travis Calhoun, Associate Director of Treatment Operations; Heather Holzem, Business Office Supervisor; Robyn Ingram, Executive Administrative Assistant; Nichole Young, Water Program Manager; and Stan Gamso, counsel.

VISITORS

Visitors attending were: Mayor Mary K. Ferdon, City of Columbus; Clayton Force, Force Construction and Design; Angela Force, HNTB; Mark Kreznke, Strand Associates; Maritza Villalobos Tempest, Strand; and Mark Cvetkovich, Bowen Engineering.

ADJUSTMENTS/ ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

A special water claim schedule was provided; Heather Holzem will go over in the claims portion of the meeting. Updated water and wastewater budgets were distributed, as an update to the Finance Report.

SWEARING IN OF UTILITY SERVICE BOARD MEMBERS

Utility Service Board members, Patrick R. Andrews and Melissa Lin, were sworn in by Mayor Mary K. Ferdon, City of Columbus.

No action.

PROCLAMATION READING

Mayor Mary K. Ferdon, City of Columbus, presented a proclamation to Clayton Force.

No action.

ELECTION OF 2026 OFFICERS FOR THE UTILITY SERVICE BOARD

The following members were nominated to serve as officers for 2026.

Chairman – Patrick Andrews

Vice Chairman – Nicholas Browning

Secretary – Cheryl McAvoy

Barry Turner made the motion to accept the slate as presented. Cheryl McAvoy seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

APPOINTMENT OF UTILITY SERVICE BOARD RECORDING CLERK

Cheryl McAvoy made the motion to nominate Robyn Ingram as Recording Clerk for the Utility Service Board for calendar year 2026. Nicholas Browning seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

REGULAR MINUTES

Barry Turner made the motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting on December 18, 2025, as prepared. Cheryl McAvoy seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

Q4 2025 ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE ANALYSIS

Heather Holzem presented the Q4 2025 Accounts Receivable (AR) Analysis. Total water AR 30 days past due is 10%, an increase of 2.0% since September; there no disconnects were reported for December. Total wastewater AR 30 days past due is 9%, a decrease of 1.0% since September. Total number of accounts with amounts over past 30 days is 12% of all accounts.

The top 10 customers with the largest outstanding debt accounted for around 15% of the outstanding total.

No action.

REQUEST TO WRITE OFF BAD DEBT

Heather Holzem requested board approval of \$4,432.79 to be written off as bad debt for Q4 2025, attached list of accounts was provided. Accounts referenced are from customers that have moved, are deceased or have been returned as non-collectible from Allied Collections.

Barry Turner made the motion to approve the write-off of accounts as presented on the write-off schedule. Patrick Andrews seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

EBILLING UPDATE

Heather Holzem presented the quarterly eBilling update. Mass Facebook ads and employees actively call and email customers, with a focus on converting auto-pay customers to electronic billing. Heather reported a 12 month decrease in paper statements of 27.7% in 2025. A decline of 11.4% has occurred since September 2025. New customers are encouraged to sign up for eBilling.

Currently, 32.3% of active billing customers receive electronic statements, saving over \$4,000 per month on Smart Bill paper statements.

No action.

APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 1-2026 TO AUTHORIZE THE TRANSFER OF FUNDS BETWEEN ACCOUNTS FOR DECEMBER 2025

Heather Holzem presented a resolution prepared by Stan Gamso to authorize transfers made in December 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. Heather 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.

Nicholas Browning made the motion to approve Resolution 1-2026 authorizing account transfers as presented. Cheryl McAvoy seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING REPORT ACCEPTANCE, RESOLUTION NO. 2-2026 and RESOLUTION NO. 3-2026

Ashley Getz recommended the board approve Resolutions 2-2026 and 3-2026 accepting the Wastewater Treatment Plant Thermal Dryer Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) and the Westside Interceptor PER.

Ashley stated that the public hearings were held, and there was no attendance from the public. USB approval needed for Indiana State Revolving Fund (SRF) requirements. Project presentation slides were provided for both projects.

Patrick Andrews made the motion to approve Resolution 2-2026 accepting the Wastewater Treatment Plant Thermal Dryer Preliminary Engineering Report. Nicholas Browning seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

Nicholas Browning made the motion to approve Resolution 3-2026 accepting the Westside Interceptor Preliminary Engineering Report. Cheryl McAvoy seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

RESOLUTION NO. 4-2026 TO APPROVE SURPLUS ASSET REQUEST

Ashley Getz recommended the board approve Resolutions 4-2026 to approve the disposal of Wastewater Treatment Plant surplus assets; centrifuges that are currently being replaced.

Mark Cvetkovich, Bowen Engineering, stated that third party sludge processors or other municipalities buy this type of equipment.

Surplus assets to be sold via GovDeals, list of assets provided with Resolution 4-2026. Listed surplus generators are trailered.

Cheryl McAvoy made the motion to approve Resolution 4-2026 to approve the assets presented as surplus supplies and to be sold to the highest bidder or donated or disposed

of in an appropriate manner if the assets cannot be sold. Barry Turner seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

PUBLIC HEARING – RECOMMENDATION OF A PUBLIC-PRIVATE AGREEMENT

Ashley Getz announced the pause of the regular meeting at 12:00 pm. The public hearing for the public-private agreement with Bowen Engineering began and was opened for public comment. No comments were received, the public hearing closed at 12:01 pm, at which time the regular meeting resumed.

RAW WATER TRANSMISSION MAIN AND DISTRIBUTION PROJECTS GMAX PROPOSAL

Ashley Getz recommended the board approve the Raw Water Transmission Main and Distribution Projects GMAX proposal with Bowen Engineering for \$6,044,084. These projects were included in the master plan; will be funded through the SRF wastewater loan that closed in December 2025. Proposal came in close to the engineer’s estimate for the project.

Cheryl McAvoy made the motion to accept the GMAX proposal for the Raw Water Transmission Main and Distribution Projects from Bowen Engineering for \$6,044,084 and enter into a public-private agreement for the project as presented. Patrick Andrews seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT, LABOR STANDARDS

Ashley Getz recommended the board approve the contract with Administration Resources association (ARa) for labor standard services to cover next several rounds of funding. SRF requires loan recipients to use Davis Bacon wage rates; ARa to certify wage rates to the state.

Mayor Mary K. Ferdon also stated that the City of Columbus also uses ARa for similar services. Stan Gamso, counsel, had no concerns with the contract.

Barry Turner made the motion to approve the Columbus City Utilities Labor Standards contract with Administration Resources association for an amount not-to-exceed \$50,000 as presented. Cheryl McAvoy seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST TRAINING

Stan Gamso stated that Columbus City Council passed a new ethics policy in December 2025; a training and certification process will be implemented. This will be in addition to the State Board of Accounts (SBOA) conflict of interest form that is completed annually. More to come forward from the City of Columbus Human Resource department, utilities staff will help coordinate the scheduling of this training when more information is available.

No action.

2026 CONTRACT FOR PROFESSIONAL ATTORNEY SERVICES

Roger Kelso recommended the board approve the 2026 professional services contract for Stanely A. Gamso as Attorney for Columbus City Utilities (CCU). Roger highlighted an adjustment to the retainer to better align with work effort, in midrange of other counsel services for the city.

Patrick Andrews made the motion to approve the 2026 Contract for Professional Attorney Services with Stan Gamso not-to-exceed \$60,000 as presented. Nicholas Browning seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

CLAIMS

The January water claims were presented by Heather Holzem for approval.

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. Cheryl McAvoy seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

The January wastewater claims were presented by Heather Holzem for approval.

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 January SRF claims were presented by Ashley Getz for approval.

Nicholas Browning 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 January wastewater special claims were presented by Ashley Getz for approval.

- Railroad crossing permit fees, received after initial claims were processed

Patrick Andrews 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 City of Columbus water claims were presented by Heather Holzem for approval.

Cheryl McAvoy 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. Nicholas Browning seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

The City of Columbus wastewater claims were presented by Heather Holzem for approval.

Patrick Andrews 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. Cheryl McAvoy seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

FINANCE REPORT

The written finance report was presented by Heather Holzem. Heather reported that water revenue was ahead of year-to-date budgeted revenue by 1.0%. Miscellaneous revenue was down compared to both budget and prior year due to reclassifications and a decline in SRF reimbursements from the previous year. Operating expenses were down 0.1% year-to-date compared to last year.

Heather stated that wastewater revenue finished ahead for year-to-date budgeted revenue by 4.0% due to billing rate increase and increased usage. Operating expenses were down 10.8% year-to-date compared to last year.

Water revenue showed a 2.0% decrease compared to December 2024. Operating expenses were down 23.1% compared to December 2024.

Wastewater revenue showed a 14.3% increase compared to December 2024. Operating expenses were down 11.7% compared to December 2024.

Heather stated that updates on the water and wastewater budgets were due to transfers that were identified during year end adjustments.

Internal Audit report was prepared by Charlie Pride. Roger stated that Charlie will be focusing on continued accounting audits and cybersecurity efforts. Roger also shared that SBOA typically conducts annual audits around April, but no specific date has been set.

ENGINEERING REPORT

The written engineering report was presented by Ashley Getz. Ashley provided project and design updates, including upcoming projected SRF spring loan updates for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Thermal Dryer and Westside Interceptor.

Melissa Lin exited the meeting at 12:31 pm.

Ashley stated there are no recent updates from Duke Energy yet on the solar agreement.

TREATMENT OPERATIONS REPORT

The written treatment operations report was presented by Travis Calhoun. Travis reported no permit violations in 2025. Chris Buzzard at the Wastewater Treatment Plant received his Class II and Class B Industrial certifications.

Travis stated that there is new packing on the high service pump #1 at Water Treatment Plant No. 2. Soil boring samples have been taken for improvements. Industrial surcharges were down \$52,000.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The written director's report was presented by Roger Kelso. Roger provided an update on the PFAS settlement; still awaiting final payment from Dupont settlement, expected amount of \$1.5 million. Awaiting information from Claims Administrator on TYCO and BASF claims.

Roger presented an update on cybersecurity assessment efforts, staffing updates, and professional development book club orchestrated by Ashley Getz. Heather Holzem completed accounting courses in preparation for CPA exams, receiving CCU's first tuition reimbursement.

ADJOURNMENT

Nicholas Browning made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Cheryl McAvoy seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 12:46 pm.

FEBRUARY MEETING

The next regular meeting will be Thursday, February 19, 2026, at 11:30 a.m.



Patrick Andrews, Chairman
UTILITY SERVICE BOARD



Cheryl McAvoy, Secretary
UTILITY SERVICE BOARD