

**MINUTES**  
**Colorado Springs Utilities Board Meeting**  
**Wednesday, April 19, 2023**

**Utilities Board members present via Microsoft Teams or Blue River Conference Room:**

Vice Chair Mike O'Malley, Dave Donelson, Randy Helms, Nancy Henjum, Yolanda Avila, Lynette Crow-Iverson, David Leinweber, Brian Risley and Michelle Talarico

**Staff members present via Microsoft Teams or Blue River Conference Room:** Travas Deal, Renee Adams, Tristan Gearhart, Lisa Barbato, Somer Mese, Dan Norton, Jamie Fabos, Natalie Watts, Joe Marcotte, Andie Buhl, Jessica Davis, Kandy Drake, Kalsoum Abbasi, Adam Hegstrom, Ron McKinnon, Jon Cockroft, Kevin Case, Brendan Cavanaugh, Nick Verdi, Melissa Remick, Wayne Griffin and Chris Fernandez

**City of Colorado Springs staff members present via Microsoft Teams or Blue River Conference Room:** Alex Ryden, Renee Congdon, Chris Bidlack, Jackie Rowland and Ryan Trujillo

**1. Call to Order**

Vice Chair O'Malley called the Utilities Board meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and Ms. Andie Buhl, Utilities Board Administrator, called the roll.

**2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

Mr. Adam Hegstrom, Springs Utilities' Treasury and Finance Manager, delivered the invocation and Vice Chair O'Malley led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. Consent Calendar**

**3a. Approval of Utilities Board Meeting Minutes: March 22, 2023**

Board Member Henjum moved approval of the Consent Calendar and Board Member Helms seconded the motion. The Consent Calendar was unanimously approved.

**4. Customer Comments**

There were none.

**5. Recognition**

- Wastewater Worker Appreciation and NACWA Peak Performance Awards

Ms. Tara Kelley, Wastewater Treatment Manager, explained how Governor Jared Polis has declared April 16-22, 2023 as Wastewater Worker Appreciation Week statewide. The proclamation honors Colorado's wastewater workers and their contributions to

protecting Colorado’s water resources and the environment. Mr. Nick Verdi, Wastewater Collection Operations Superintendent I, expressed appreciation for Springs Utilities’ wastewater employees. He said Springs Utilities’ wastewater employees respond 24 hours a day, seven days a week to ensure that customers’ wastewater is collected and treated to a high standard to protect the environment.

Ms. Kelley said Springs Utilities’ Las Vegas Street Water Resource Recovery Facility and J.D. Phillips Water Resource Recovery Facility also received award-winning treatment performance awards from the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA). She said the Las Vegas Street facility recently received the Platinum Peak Performance Award for demonstrating eight consecutive years (2014-2021) of 100% compliance with its discharge permit – and the J.D. Phillips facility was recognized with a Gold Peak Performance Award for 100% compliance in 2021.

Ms. Kelley introduced wastewater collection specialists and Board Members Avila, Henjum and Donelson recognized and thanked Springs Utilities’ wastewater staff and employees.

- Community Focus Fund (CFF) G.I.V.E. Month

Ms. Jamie Fabos, Public Affairs General Manager, said CFF was established by City Council resolution on March 25, 1997. She reviewed CFF’s mission statement and said it is a year-round initiative; however, during the month of April, the organization promotes G.I.V.E. (Get Involved in Volunteer Events). She said this is a concentrated effort of volunteering in the community where staff has a wide range of volunteer opportunities and engagement. Ms. Fabos also reviewed April GIVE events and CFF Steering Committee members.

Board Members Henjum, Avila and Leinweber expressed appreciation for Springs Utilities staff for their volunteer efforts and leveraging a younger volunteer audience.

## **6. Compliance Reports**

- I-2 Financial Condition and Activities (to include Contracts Over \$500K\*\*) G-7 – Q4
- I-12 Environmental Stewardship
- E-2 CEO Responsibilities
  - Water Outlook
  - ECA/GCA Monitoring

Ms. Kalsoum Abbasi, Planning Supervisor – Water Conveyance, provided a water outlook update. She reviewed Colorado Springs’ water supply system and Springs Utilities’ system diversions (from 1994 – 2022):

- Exchange (reuse) – 22%
- Local – 16%
- Arkansas River – 17%
- Colorado River – 45%

Ms. Abbasi discussed local weather conditions as of March 31, 2023 and the U.S. drought monitor which predicts that drought will persist in most of eastern Colorado. She said the snowpack in the Arkansas River Basin is 92% of normal as of April 17 and the snowpack in the Colorado River Basin is 134% of normal as of April 3.

Ms. Abbasi said the statewide SNOTEL map shows that watersheds in Colorado are at or above normal snow water equivalent, with the exception of the Arkansas River Basin. She explained that April 1 yield forecast predicts 100% of average yield from Colorado Springs' water collection systems this year.

Ms. Abbasi said water demand in March averaged 42.4 million gallons per day, which was 3.4% more than last year. She said approximately 85% of the increase over last year is due to delivery to Fountain Valley Agreement partners during a scheduled treatment plant outage.

Ms. Abbasi reviewed monthly water use for March 2023 and reservoir levels as of March 31, 2023. She discussed Colorado Springs' system wide storage, which is about 185,900 acre-feet, or 71.7% of capacity. She said this is above the shorter-term (2001-2022) average of 68.1% for this time of year. She also said Colorado Springs' system wide storage was about 187,600 acre-feet, or 72.4% of capacity, at the end of March, which is just below the longer-term (1991-2021) average of 74% for this time of year. This equates to about 2.6 years of demand in storage. Ms. Abbasi concluded with a water outlook summary.

#### **7. Items Called Off Consent Calendar**

There were none.

The Utilities Board took a break at 1:56 p.m. and returned at 2:06 p.m.

#### **8. Acquisition of Real Property to be Used for the Central Bluffs Substation Project**

Ms. Jessica Davis, Information Technology Manager, said the Central Bluffs Substation Project will combine three aging substations into one. She said the benefits of this project include long-term operations and maintenance (O&M) savings, system reliability and safety upgrades. She said there are seven total properties that Springs Utilities is purchasing for the Central Bluffs Substation Project.

Ms. Davis reviewed details of the property acquisitions for one of the sites: 2922 Austin Bluffs Parkway. She concluded with next steps, and the Utilities Board agreed to put this item on Consent at the May 9, 2023 City Council meeting.

#### **9. Utilities Board Chair Election**

Vice Chair O'Malley asked for nominations for the Chair of the Utilities Board and explained the process that would be followed. Vice Chair O'Malley nominated Board Member Donelson for Chair and explained why. Board Member Henjum nominated Board Member Avila for Chair and explained why.

Board Member Donelson explained his vision for the next two years. Board Member Avila explained her vision for the Board and highlighted her six years of experience already serving on the Utilities Board.

Ms. Buhl polled the Utilities Board members on their preference for Chair. Board Members Crow-Iverson, Donelson, Helms, Henjum, Leinweber, O'Malley and Risley voted in favor of Board Member Donelson. Board Members Avila, Henjum and Talarico voted in favor of Board Member Avila.

Vice Chair O'Malley announced Board Member Donelson as the new Chair of the Utilities Board. Chair Donelson shared his excitement and thanked Board members for their support.

#### **10. Utilities Board Vice Chair Election**

Chair Donelson asked for nominations for the Vice Chair of the Utilities Board and explained the process that would be followed. Chair Donelson nominated current Vice Chair O'Malley to remain Vice Chair and explained why.

Current Vice Chair O'Malley explained his vision for the next two years.

Ms. Buhl polled the Utilities Board members on their preference for Vice Chair. Board Members Avila, Crow-Iverson, Donelson, Helms, Henjum, Leinweber, O'Malley, Risley and Talarico voted in favor of Board Member O'Malley.

Chair Donelson announced Board Member O'Malley as the Vice Chair of the Utilities Board.

Vice Chair O'Malley shared his excitement to continue serving in this role and thanked Board members for their support.

#### **11. Board Member Updates**

Board Member Henjum recognized the Utilities Policy Advisory Committee (UPAC)'s work on their assignment and asked Board members to attend future Finance Committee meetings. She also thanked staff for coordinating orientation for the new Utilities Board members.

Board Member Avila brought awareness to district townhalls and the language barrier concern in Colorado Springs. She also expressed excitement to work with the new Utilities Board members.

Board Member Risley said he looks forward to attending future Strategic Planning Committee meetings and working with Springs Utilities.

Board Member Talarico provided an update from last night's public meeting about the demolition of Martin Drake Power Plant. She also thanked staff for keeping the Mill Street community informed throughout the process.

Vice Chair O'Malley welcomed perspectives from the new Utilities Board Members.

Board Member Crow-Iverson echoed the language barrier concern in Colorado Springs.

Chair Donelson encouraged Board members to attend all committee meetings, regardless of whether they are members. He also thanked the Board members for electing him Chair.

## **12. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 2:36 p.m.