



Board of Water Commissioners

Organizational Information




Purpose of Today

- Understanding the relationship between the City of Columbus and the Columbus Water Works
- Columbus Water Works financial position
- Concurrence to proceed with bond exploration and refinancing analysis
- Formal bond issuance request scheduled for Feb 10





How is the City of Columbus and the Board of Water Commissioners connected?

- The Board of Water Commissioners of Columbus is considered a component unit of the City of Columbus Consolidated Government, with authority to establish policies, set rates, and provide water/wastewater services.
 - The Board is an enterprise fund and receives its funding through fees received from its rate payers. The Board does not receive tax dollars nor has taxation authority.
 - As a component unit of the City of Columbus Consolidated Government, CWW regular full-time employees are eligible to participate in the City's cost-sharing pension plan/fund.
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Board of Water Commissioners

Current Board Members

Chairman – Nick Smith

Vice-Chair – Jennifer Upshaw

Member – Oz Roberts

Member – Brooks Yancey

Mayor – Skip Henderson
Ex-Officio



What is the jurisdiction and primary responsibilities of the Board of Water Commissioners?

The primary role of the Board is to act collaboratively in establishing policies that aid CWW in meeting its mission and achieving its vision. The Board hires the President (chief executive officer) to manage the day-to-day operations.


Some of the major Board responsibilities include:

- Serving as an advocate on behalf of existing and future customers, guarding CWW against undue risk;
- Set water/wastewater/combined sewer rates;
- Provide general guidance to facilitate excellence in water and wastewater services;
- Approval of annual holiday and Board meeting schedules;
- Approval of construction contracts greater than \$250k;
- Accept and respond to occasional public comments and
- Assurance of executive performance.



In addition to rate setting, another financial fiduciary responsibility of the Board is Debt Issuance

Debt Issuance – the Board issues bonds and other long-term debt instruments whereby the payment is made solely from the revenues generated by the system. Water and wastewater infrastructure is very capital-intensive. Debt issuance is one method used to finance infrastructure improvements and expansions while maintaining generational equity for our customers. CWW is an enterprise fund of the Columbus Consolidated Government; as such, all long-term debt issuance and/or debt refinancing requires concurrence from the Council of the Consolidated Government.



CWW Current Financial Standing

- **Consistent Operating Growth:** Total operating revenues reach \$96.5 million in FY25, up 6.9% from FY24, supported by continued rate adjustments and steady customer demand.
- **FY2024 Outperformance:** Revenue growth exceeded expectations, driven by increased water sales (+10.0%) and sewer revenue growth (+8.0).
- **Expenditure Management:** Total operating expenses increased by only 2.5% year-over-year, reflecting continued cost discipline and operational efficiencies.
- **Strong Coverage & Liquidity:** The system maintained a 1.98x debt service coverage ratio and approximately 490 days cash on hand, supporting operational flexibility and long-term capital planning.
- **Stable Rate Competitiveness:** Residential customers continue to benefit from moderate, regionally competitive rates. The average monthly bill of \$136.93 ranks below peer utilities in Macon, Savannah, and Augusta

Operating Revenues

\$96.5M

FY25: \$90.2M
+6.9%

Operating Expenses

\$89.2M

FY24: \$87.0M
+2.5%

Net Position

\$457.7M

FY24: \$451.6M
+1.4%

Summary of Moody's 2025 Rating



Columbus Water Works, GA (CWW, Aa2/STA) has a strong financial foundation, with regular annual rate increases contributing to steady growth in net revenues, debt service coverage, and liquidity. While CWW's debt burden is currently low, its asset condition is weaker than comparably rated entities, and management reports that construction of a new wastewater treatment plant is in discussions that could require a significant amount of new borrowing in the next three years. The project's design, financing plan, and timeline have yet to be finalized, and these factors will be important considerations in assessing the ultimate credit implication.

"CWW's strong financial position creates an opportunity to proactively address aging assets before they become emergencies."



Next Steps

- CWW is here to inform Council that the Board of Water Commissioners has approved CWW Staff to move forward with Bond Exploration for 2026 and refinancing of current bonds.
- After options have been explored, CWW will return to Council for approval before any final decision.
- CWW will return for the February 10th meeting for a formal request for Bond Issuance.

