

May 11, 2026

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners of Columbus, Georgia, was held on Monday, May 11, 2026, at 1:30 p.m. at our Main Office, Chattahoochee Room. Vice Chair Jennifer Upshaw took the roll call, and the following Commissioners were present:

	Jennifer Upshaw, Vice Chair
	Brooks Yancey
	Oz Roberts
Absent:	Nick Smith, Chairman
	Mayor Skip Henderson

Receipt of the Minutes from the regular meeting on April 20, 2026, was presented to the Board. A motion was made by Oz Roberts and seconded by Brooks Yancey to approve the Minutes as written. Motion carried.

President Cummings introduced Harold Woods, Chief Operating Officer, to the Board. Harold has extensive experience in the gas utility industry and most recently served as a consultant. President Cummings expressed that CWW is pleased to welcome Harold to the organization.

Aric Jackson recognized the following promotions for the month of April:

- **Brittany Brossett** promoted to **Chief Administration Officer/EVP**
- **Bill Tomkiewicz** promoted to **Compliance Program Administrator**
- **Christopher Owens** promoted to **Customer Experience Technician**

A Resolution

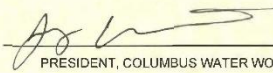
Whereas, Gard V. Burchfield, has been an employee of the Columbus Board of Water Commissioners since June, 1986 is retiring; and,

Whereas, Gard V. Burchfield, has served in the capacity of Executive Vice President/Chief Compliance Officer in the Administration Department with the Columbus Water Works; and,

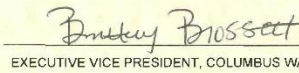
Whereas, Gard V. Burchfield, has performed in an outstanding and productive manner throughout his thirty-nine years of service;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Board of Water Commissioners of the City of Columbus, Georgia, on behalf of all the people of the City, hereby publicly expresses appreciation and heartfelt thanks to Gard V. Burchfield for his diligent and faithful service on behalf of the Columbus Water Works; and,

Be It Further Resolved that this resolution be spread upon the official minutes of this Board this eleventh day of May, 2026, and that the Secretary of this Board be directed to furnish copies of this resolution to the said Gard V. Burchfield and to the Clerk of Council of Columbus, Georgia.



PRESIDENT, COLUMBUS WATER WORKS



EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, COLUMBUS WATER WORKS



CHAIR, BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS

A Resolution

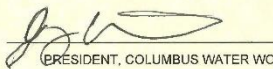
Whereas, James Harris, Jr. has been an employee of the Columbus Board of Water Commissioners since February, 2004 is retiring; and,

Whereas, James Harris, Jr. has served in the capacity of Meter Technician in the Water Accountability Department with the Columbus Water Works; and,

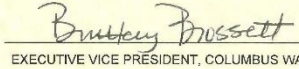
Whereas, James Harris, Jr. has performed in an outstanding and productive manner throughout his twenty-two years of service;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Board of Water Commissioners of the City of Columbus, Georgia, on behalf of all the people of the City, hereby publicly expresses appreciation and heartfelt thanks to James Harris, Jr. for his diligent and faithful service on behalf of the Columbus Water Works; and,

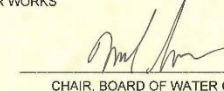
Be It Further Resolved that this resolution be spread upon the official minutes of this Board this eleventh day of May, 2026, and that the Secretary of this Board be directed to furnish copies of this resolution to the said James Harris, Jr. and to the Clerk of Council of Columbus, Georgia.



PRESIDENT, COLUMBUS WATER WORKS



EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, COLUMBUS WATER WORKS



CHAIR, BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS

A Resolution

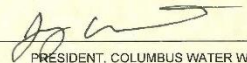
Whereas, James W. Jones, has been an employee of the Columbus Board of Water Commissioners since September, 2009 is retiring; and,

Whereas, James W. Jones, has served in the capacity of Cleaning Technician II in the Wastewater Collection Department with the Columbus Water Works; and,

Whereas, James W. Jones, has performed in an outstanding and productive manner throughout his sixteen years of service;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Board of Water Commissioners of the City of Columbus, Georgia, on behalf of all the people of the City, hereby publicly expresses appreciation and heartfelt thanks to James W. Jones for his diligent and faithful service on behalf of the Columbus Water Works; and,

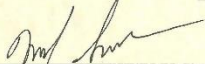
Be It Further Resolved that this resolution be spread upon the official minutes of this Board this eleventh day of May, 2026, and that the Secretary of this Board be directed to furnish copies of this resolution to the said James W. Jones and to the Clerk of Council of Columbus, Georgia.



PRESIDENT, COLUMBUS WATER WORKS



EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, COLUMBUS WATER WORKS



CHAIR, BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS

A Resolution

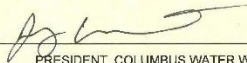
Whereas, GwenDolyn H. Ruff, has been an employee of the Columbus Board of Water Commissioners since September, 1989, is retiring; and,

Whereas, GwenDolyn H. Ruff, has served in the capacity of Chief of Strategy in the Administration Department with the Columbus Water Works; and,

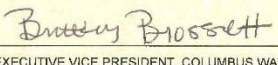
Whereas, GwenDolyn H. Ruff, has performed in an outstanding and productive manner throughout her thirty-six years of service;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Board of Water Commissioners of the City of Columbus, Georgia, on behalf of all the people of the City, hereby publicly expresses appreciation and heartfelt thanks to GwenDolyn H. Ruff for her diligent and faithful service on behalf of the Columbus Water Works; and,

Be It Further Resolved that this resolution be spread upon the official minutes of this Board this eleventh day of May, 2026, and that the Secretary of this Board be directed to furnish copies of this resolution to the said GwenDolyn H. Ruff and to the Clerk of Council of Columbus, Georgia.



PRESIDENT, COLUMBUS WATER WORKS



EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, COLUMBUS WATER WORKS



CHAIR, BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS

A Resolution

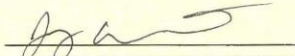
Whereas, Christopher H. Cornett has been an employee of the Columbus Board of Water Commissioners since August, 1995 is retiring; and,

Whereas, Christopher H. Cornett has served in the capacity of Assistant Manager of Regulatory Compliance in the Environmental Services Department with the Columbus Water Works; and,

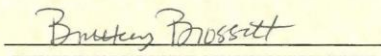
Whereas, Christopher H. Cornett has performed in an outstanding and productive manner throughout his thirty years of service;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Board of Water Commissioners of the City of Columbus, Georgia, on behalf of all the people of the City, hereby publicly expresses appreciation and heartfelt thanks to Christopher H. Cornett for his diligent and faithful service on behalf of the Columbus Water Works; and,

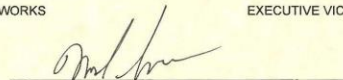
Be It Further Resolved that this resolution be spread upon the official minutes of this Board this eleventh day of May, 2026, and that the Secretary of this Board be directed to furnish copies of this resolution to the said Christopher H. Cornett and to the Clerk of Council of Columbus, Georgia.



PRESIDENT, COLUMBUS WATER WORKS



EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, COLUMBUS WATER WORKS



CHAIR, BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS

Vickie Clark presented the April 2026 Financial Report, including Ft Benning, to the Board. A motion was made by Oz Roberts and seconded by Brooks Yancey to approve the Financial Report. Motion carried.

President Cummings presented the Operating Budget for FY 2026-2027 which was previously provided to the Board for their consideration. Following the discussion, a motion was made by Oz Roberts and seconded by Brooks Yancey to adopt the Operating Budget for FY 2026-2027. Motion carried. A copy of the 2026-2027 Budget is on file at the office of Columbus Water Works.



Date: May 11, 2026

To: Mr. Nick Smith, Chairman
Mrs. Jennifer Upshaw, Vice Chair
Mr. Brooks Yancey
Mr. Oz Roberts
Mayor Skip Henderson

From: Jeremy Cummings

Re: Operation Budget for FY27

CWW staff has developed a responsible FY27 operating budget totaling approximately \$111.9 million, representing a 5.48% increase over the FY26 budget. The budget continues to prioritize operational reliability, regulatory compliance, infrastructure reinvestment, customer service, and environmental stewardship while maintaining affordability for our customers.

A significant portion of the increase is attributable to debt service costs associated with GEFA-funded capital improvement projects now entering repayment phases. Debt service increased by approximately 35.07%, reflecting CWW's continued investment in critical infrastructure improvements throughout the water and wastewater system. These investments support long-term resiliency, regulatory compliance, and protection of the Chattahoochee River watershed.

Additional increases were seen in Capital Outlay, which increased by 16.91%, and Education & Training, which increased by 15.64%, reflecting the organization's continued focus on infrastructure replacement, workforce development, employee retention, and operational excellence.

Several budget areas experienced decreases as staff worked diligently to manage operational costs and prioritize expenditures. Supplies & Maintenance decreased by 4.18%, Outside Services decreased by 1.94%, and Salaries & Wages remained relatively flat with a slight decrease of 0.91%. In addition, certain categories within the budget experienced notable reductions, including Legal Services (-20.00%), Consulting Services (-12.06%), Chemicals (-13.43%), and Vehicle/Equipment Extension & Renewal (-26.25%).

CWW continues to evaluate rates annually to ensure the utility can responsibly reinvest in aging infrastructure while maintaining affordable rates for customers. Despite increasing operational and capital demands, CWW has consistently maintained rates within the lower third

of comparable southeastern water and wastewater utilities while continuing to provide excellent customer service, maintain regulatory compliance, and uphold its commitment to environmental and economic stewardship.

The current \$112M Capital Improvement Plan funded by Bond and PAYGO funds is progressing as follows:

Completed projects \$ 0M

In Construction \$ 2M

In Design \$95M

This past fiscal year, the CWW team has applied for and won 20 local, state, and national awards (see attached list) as an ongoing testament to the excellence sought by CWW employees in numerous functions.

Through disciplined financial management and strategic long-term planning, CWW remains committed to providing safe, reliable, and sustainable utility services while investing in the future needs of the community.

**Columbus Water Works
Awards Received
FY2026**

NATIONAL

1. Arthur Sideny Bedell Award (Jeremy Cummings)
2. Water Environmental Federation's Volunteer Service Award (John Peebles)
3. Asset Lifecycle Management Awarded in Excellence

STATE

1. Bronze Volunteer Service Award
2. GAWP Top Op Water (Dalton Milner)
3. GAWP Lifetime Achievement Award (John Peebles)
4. GAWP Laboratory QA/QC Wastewater
5. GAWP Laboratory QA/QC Water
6. GAWP Collection System of the Year
7. Golden Hydrant Society Award
8. FBWTP of the Year
9. Camp Darby Plant of the Year
10. Leyte Range Well Plant of the Year
11. Georgia ACEC Engineering Honors Award- Uptown and South Commons CSO Improvements
12. Georgia ACEC Engineering Honors Award- Fort Benning PFAS Treatment Pilot Study
13. Georgia ACEC Engineering Merit Award- SCWRF- Digester Cover Replacement

LOCAL

1. Columbus Chamber PIE Partners at Large
2. Uptown Columbus Tree Trail "Rockefeller" Award
3. United Way President's Award
4. Christmas Parade 2025

Victoria Barrett presented the Customer Service Strategic Update. Customer Service and Customer Experience continue to move forward with a strong focus on improving the overall customer experience, strengthening organizational culture, and modernizing service delivery through technology and process improvements. Efforts remain centered on creating a more responsive, customer-focused organization while supporting employees with improved tools, training, and operational structure. Key initiatives remain focused on improving the customer and employee experience through technology modernization, process improvements, automation, and expanded self-service capabilities. Current efforts include the CIS Infinity 4.1.68 upgrade, development of AI-assisted tools for Customer Service Representatives, modernization of the Stop/Start/Transfer process through encrypted data collection and electronic signatures, and long-term planning for CIS Infinity Version 5 and customer-facing AI chatbot solutions designed to enhance 24/7 customer support and operational efficiency. A significant organizational change implemented during this period was the restructuring of Customer Service into two specialized teams: a Call Center team focused on high-volume inbound customer support and an Account Services team focused on more detailed account-related functions and customer issue resolution. This change was designed to improve operational focus, increase efficiency, strengthen accountability, and better align employee responsibilities with customer needs. Leadership continues to emphasize a positive service culture built around collaboration, professionalism, continuous improvement, and a customer-first mindset. As the organization continues progressing toward long-term strategic goals, Customer Service and Customer Experience remain

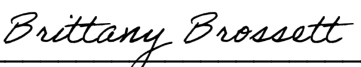
committed to delivering reliable, modern, and high-quality service that reflects the organization's core values and commitment to the community.

President Cummings presented his April Departmental Workdays. As part of the 2025 United Way Campaign, President Cummings committed to working one day in any department that achieved its departmental contribution goal. This initiative helped drive strong participation across the organization, with 8 of 16 departments meeting or exceeding their goals and Columbus Water Works ultimately surpassing its overall 2025 United Way Campaign goal. To date, President Cummings has completed 3 of the 8 departmental visits.

The following Departmental Reports for April 2026 were provided to the Board as information only:

- Customer Service Report
- Meter Maintenance/Water Accountability Report
- Engineering Report
- Field Services Report
- Information Services Report
- Environmental Services Report
- Strategic Planning, Communications, Community Outreach Report
- Employee Services Report
- Water Resource Operations/Managed Maintenance Report

There being no further business, a motion was made by Brooks Yancey and seconded by Oz Roberts to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.



Brittany Brossett, Secretary