



Columbus Water Works

*Serving our Community
Protecting the Environment*

January 13, 2025

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners of Columbus, Georgia was held on Monday, January 13, 2025, at 1:30 p.m. at our Main Office, Chattahoochee Room. Board member Jennifer Upshaw took the roll call, and the following Commissioners were present:

Jennifer Upshaw
Wes Kelley
Oz Roberts
Mayor Skip Henderson

Absent: Nick Smith

This being the first meeting of the New Year, the election of Officers was in order.

The following Officers were nominated:

Current Officers

Rodney Close, Chairman
Nick Smith, Vice Chairman
Jeremy Cummings, President
Carl Robertson, Secretary

Proposed Officers 2025

Nick Smith, Chairman
Jennifer Upshaw, Vice Chairman
Jeremy Cummings, President
Vic Burchfield, Secretary

A motion was made by Mayor Henderson and seconded by Wes Kelley to elect the above Officers for the calendar year 2025. Motion carried.

Due to the absence of Chairman Nick Smith, Vice Chair Jennifer Upshaw was Acting Chair. It was noted that Chairman Nick Smith was excused from this meeting.

President Cummings recognized outgoing Board Chairman Rodney Close. Chairman Close has served on our Water Board since January 2017 and served as Chairman of this Board from January 2022 – December 2024. He was presented with the following Resolution and gift basket as a token of our appreciation.

A RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Rodney Close has served as a member of the Board of Water Commissioners of the City of Columbus, Georgia since January 2017 and served as Chairman of this Board from January 2022 – December 2024; and

WHEREAS, the said Rodney Close has performed an outstanding public service and for eight years has devoted his time and efforts, without compensation or remuneration, to the work of this Board and the City of Columbus, Georgia.

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 the said Rodney Close, for his unselfish and diligent devotion to public service and for his able and efficient attention to public work; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be spread upon the official minutes of this Board this thirteenth Day of January 2025 and that the Secretary of this Board is directed to furnish copies of this resolution to the said Rodney Close, and to the Clerk of Council of Columbus, Georgia.

President

Executive Vice President

Vice Chairman

Member

Member

Member

The Board and staff thanked him for his many years of service. Mr. Close thanked Management and staff for the opportunity to work with such a wonderful organization.

Next, President Cummings welcomed our new Water Board member, Oz Roberts to the Board and staff. Mr. Roberts currently serves as the Historian at AFLAC. The Board welcomed Mr. Roberts.

Receipt of the Minutes from the regular meeting on November 12, 2024, was presented to the Board. A motion was made by Mayor Henderson and seconded by Wes Kelley to approve the Minutes as written. Motion carried.

Secretary Burchfield introduced Sandra Ortiz to the Board. Ms. Ortiz was present at the meeting so that she could be recognized upon her retirement. The following resolution was read and presented to Ms. Ortiz:

A Resolution

Whereas, Sandra Ortiz, has been an employee of the Columbus Board of Water Commissioners since December 2005 is retiring; and,

Whereas, Sandra Ortiz, has served in the capacity of Customer Service Representative in the Customer Service Department with the Columbus Water Works; and,

Whereas, Sandra Ortiz, has performed in an outstanding and productive manner throughout her nineteen 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 Sandra Ortiz 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 thirteenth day of January 2025, and that the Secretary of this Board be directed to furnish copies of this resolution to the said Sandra Ortiz and to the Clerk of Council of Columbus, Georgia.

The Board congratulated Ms. Ortiz on her retirement.

Vickie Clark presented the Financial Reports for November and December 2024, including Ft. Moore, to the Board. A motion was made by Wes Kelley and seconded by Oz Roberts to approve the Financial Reports. Motion carried.

President Cummings gave a brief update on the purchase of the Synovus building:

- Closed on the property on December 17, 2024
- Synovus is leasing out three drive through's
- Engineering is beginning to design the remodel
- Hope to move in by end of summer

The Board acknowledged President Cummings' Report.

John Peebles gave a brief update on the CSO Permit Appeal as follows:

- On Friday, December 13, 2024, Columbus Water Works (CWW) received a positive ruling in its multi-year legal challenge to the latest permit for its award-winning Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Control Facility, which the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) issued in 2020.
- In the decision, Judge Ronit Walker of the Georgia Office of State Administrative Hearings determined the 2020 permit was "wrongfully issued" due to the inclusion of a new effluent limit the Control Facility was not designed to meet. Judge Walker held the new effluent limit was unlawfully imposed because EPD failed to demonstrate any "reasonable potential" for CSO effluent to cause water quality problems after being treated and controlled by the existing Control Facility.
- Unless this ruling is appealed by the EPD or the Riverkeeper, the permit will be remanded to Georgia EPD to be reissued consistent with Judge Walker's order.

The Board acknowledged Mr. Peebles' report.

Next, John Peebles recognized the Environmental Services Laboratory for achieving the Platinum Award for both Drinking Water and Wastewater. He stated that they had to win the Gold Award five consecutive years to win the Platinum Award. Also, Field Services achieved the Platinum Award for both Water Distribution System

Excellence and Wastewater Collection System Excellence. They had to win the Gold Award for five consecutive years to win the Platinum Award.

The Board acknowledged Mr. Peebles' report.

Brittany Bossett presented the following project to the Board for their approval:

- This project consists of the installation of:
 - Approximately 150 linear of 4-inch ductile iron pipe
 - Two 4-inch meters and backflow devices
 - Two tapping sleeves and valves
 - Connecting to existing building
- On December 12, 2024, four bids were publicly opened and read as follows:

<u>Contractor</u>	<u>Bid Amount</u>
Gordy Construction Company	\$104,443.00
Whitfield Contractors	\$157,033.00
Vetta Construction, LLC.	\$178,165.00
Crawford Grading and Pipeline, Inc.	\$221,587.00

- The engineer's estimate was \$130,910.25. The engineer has reviewed and tabulated the bid and recommends contract award to Gordy Construction Company as the low responsive, responsible bidder, at the bid price of \$104,443.00 (Funded via Fort Moore Contract Mod).
- Staff requests Board approval to award the Building 399 Phase 3 Water Services project to Gordy Construction Company at the bid price of \$104,443.00.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Mayor Henderson and seconded by Wes Kelley to award the contract to Gordy Construction Company as the low bidder in the amount of \$104,443.00 for the building 399 Phase III Water Services (Funded via Fort Moore Contract Mod). Motion carried.

President Cummings advised the Board that the Executive team prepared a Draft Grievance and Appeal Process Policy per discussions with CWW's legal counsel. The

Draft Policy made changes to the existing policy and delegates the Grievance and Appeal Process to be administered by the President.

The Staff requests the Board to review the newly adopted grievance policy and procedures, ratify the changes and delegate the authority to the President. A motion was made by Oz Roberts and seconded by Wes Kelley to adopt the changes and delegate the authority to the President. Motion carried.

President Cummings advised the Board that the Executive Leadership team participated in a two-day workshop where the team began developing a new Vision, Mission, and Values as well as began developing a new Strategic Plan. The new Vision, Mission, and Values were introduced in January 2025. They are as follows:

- **Mission**-To serve our community; to provide safe, reliable water; to protect public health and our watershed; and to leave a legacy of financial and environmental stewardship
- **Our Vision**- To lead the Chattahoochee Valley to health and prosperity by operating a first-class water utility.
- **Values**: At Columbus Water Works we believe our values drive our behaviors, our behaviors drive our culture, and our culture drives our performance.
- **Service First**: We approach every task with a can-do attitude, focusing on solutions, empathy, and customer-oriented service.
- **Ethics and Integrity**: We act honestly and sincerely in all our dealings, building trust through transparency and open communication.
- **Respect for All**: We ensure inclusion, fairness, and a strong awareness of the differences that make our community unique.
- **Value Excellence**: We hold ourselves accountable, continuously training and developing our team to excel in every aspect of our work.
- **Environmental and Economic Stewardship**: We practice sustainability and resilience, with a commitment to fiscally and environmentally sound practices that protect our resources.

The Board acknowledged President Cummings' report.

President Cummings presented the following meeting dates to the Board for the calendar year 2025. These dates are all on the second Monday of each month at 1:30, except June and October meetings.

Monday, January 13, 2025 – 1:30 p.m.
Monday, February 10, 2025 – 1:30 p.m.
Monday, March 10, 2025 – 1:30 p.m.
Monday, April 14, 2025– 1:30 p.m.
Monday, May 12, 2025 – 1:30 p.m.
Monday, June 16, 2025 – 1:30 p.m.*
Monday, July 14, 2025 – 1:30 p.m.
Monday, August 11, 2025 – 1:30 p.m.
Monday, September 8, 2025 – 1:30 p.m.
Tuesday, October 14, 2025 – 1:30 p.m.**
Monday, November 10, 2025 – 1:30 p.m.
Monday, December 8, 2025 – 1:30 p.m.

*Changed due to AWWA Annual Conference (June)

**Changed due to Columbus Day (October)

A motion was made by Oz Roberts and seconded by Wes Kelley to approve the above-scheduled Board meeting dates for 2025. Motion carried.

President Davis presented the following schedule of Holidays for the calendar year 2025:

- ◆ Wednesday, January 1, 2025 – New Year’s Day Holiday
- ◆ Monday, January 20, 2025 – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
- ◆ Monday, May 26, 2025 – Memorial Day Holiday
- ◆ Friday, July 4, 2025 – Independence Day Holiday
- ◆ Monday, September 1, 2025 – Labor Day (First Monday in September)
- ◆ Monday, October 13, 2025 – Columbus Day (Indigenous Peoples’ Day)
- ◆ Thursday, November 27, 2025 – Thanksgiving Day
- ◆ Friday, November 28, 2025 – Day After Thanksgiving
- ◆ Thursday, December 25, 2025 – Christmas Day
- ◆ Friday, December 26, 2025 – Day After Christmas, Floating Holiday
- ◆ One Personal Holiday – Employee’s Own Choice
- ◆ Friday, December 26, 2025 – Day After Christmas, Floating Holiday¹
- ◆ Personal Holiday – Employee’s Own Choice²

¹ FY 2025-2026 Floating Holiday recommendation for approval by the Board of Water Commissioners.

² Personal Holiday will phase out on June 25, 2025. CWW is recommending adjusting holiday policy to include Veterans Day on Tuesday, November 11, 2025, and Juneteenth on Friday, June 19, 2026, for an overall total of twelve holidays for FY2025-2026 for approval by the Board of Water Commissioners.

A motion was made by Oz Roberts and seconded by Mayor Henderson to approve the above-scheduled Board meeting dates for 2025. Motion carried.

The following Departmental Reports for November and December 2024 were provided to the Board as information only:

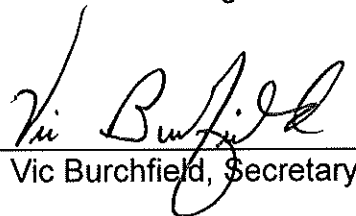
- Customer Service Reports
- Customer Advocacy/Meter Maint/Water Accountability Reports
- Engineering Reports
- Field Services Reports
- Information Services/Environmental Services Reports
- Communications Reports
- Employee Services Reports
- Water Resource Operations/Managed Maintenance Reports

There was no discussion.

President Cummings provided the following items of information to the Board:

- Jeremy Cummings received an email from Pam Burnett with GAWP acknowledging John Peebles' 4-year term of leadership on the GAWP Board and thanking him for his service.
- John Peebles received an email from Jennifer Flowers with GAWP thanking him for facilitating the Who's Who Luncheon and for his support and leadership of that group and events. The luncheon was a great success.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mayor Henderson and seconded by Wes Kelley to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.



Vic Burchfield, Secretary