

Water Commission REGULAR MEETING

DRAFT MINUTES

19 February, 2026 – 5:30 PM

222 Laporte Ave., 1st Floor, Colorado River Room

1. CALL TO ORDER

a. 5:31 PM

2. ROLL CALL

- a. Commissioners Present (In Person): Chairperson Laura Chartrand, Vice Chair James Bishop, Nick Martin, Jordan Radin,
- b. Commissioners Present (online via Teams): Paul Herman
- c. Commissioners Absent: Nicole Ng, Gregory Steed, Carson Madryga, Richard Kahn
- d. Staff Members Present (In Person): Nicole Poncelet-Johnson, Gina Shubin, Diana Schmidt, Leslie Hill, Nathaniel Sievers, Matt Fater, Wes Lamarque, Joe Wimmer, Andrew Gingerich, Jill Oropeza
- e. Staff Members Present (online via Teams): Richard Thorpe
- f. Guests: None

3. AGENDA REVIEW

Chairperson Chartrand reviewed the agenda and asked commissioners for any proposed changes. There were none.

4. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION (Public Comment)

(3 minutes per individual)

None

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Jan 15, 2026

Commissioner moved to approve the Jan 15, 2026, minutes as presented
The vote on the minutes was moved to the March regular meeting due to quorum.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. None

7. NEW BUSINESS

a. STAFF REPORTS

- i. **2024 Upper Cache La Poudre (CLP) Annual Water Quality Monitoring Program Report** (Presentation: 10 minutes, Discussion: 5 minutes)

Diana Schmidt, Watershed Specialist,

Leslie Hill, Water Quality Services Division Director

Staff presented key findings from the 2024 Source Water Monitoring Program Annual Report. The program's mission is to monitor and protect regional source water supplies within the Cache la Poudre River watershed through a collaborative partnership of five water providers. The program maintains 15 monitoring locations along the upper Cache la Poudre River to track chemical, biological, and physical water quality conditions in real time. Snowpack conditions in 2024 were generally near normal; however, monitoring data showed earlier seasonal low flows, early return to base flow conditions, and reduced fall stream flows. These trends are attributed to prolonged low-flow conditions, high-elevation reservoir operations, and ongoing watershed impacts following recent wildfires. Water quality monitoring identified elevated pH, alkalinity, and nutrient concentrations during late summer and fall, particularly in areas affected by the Cameron Peak Fire, with corresponding increases in algae observations. Despite these conditions, 2024 recorded the fewest instances of water intake shutdown thresholds being exceeded. Staff will continue monitoring long-term watershed and water quality trends.

Discussion Highlights

Commissioners discussed how real-time water quality monitoring information is communicated to treatment plant operators to support operational adjustments. Staff explained that real-time monitoring sites allow operators to respond quickly to changing conditions, including the ability to shut down pumps within minutes when water quality thresholds are exceeded. Commissioners inquired about the role of the new water quality laboratory. Staff noted the new facility will primarily provide additional space to support program growth while continuing to deliver the same watershed monitoring and analytical services. Discussion also included Poudre River intake operations and whether infrastructure upgrades could increase intake shutdown thresholds. Staff indicated no infrastructure modifications are currently planned; however, pump shutdowns are typically brief due to changing flow conditions. Operational resilience is supported through redundant water supplies, allowing the system to transition to Horsetooth Reservoir water during high turbidity events. Commissioners asked about watershed recovery timelines following wildfire impacts. Staff noted sediment and watershed stabilization typically occur over approximately five years, with recovery progress expected to be evaluated beginning in 2025.

ii. **Water & Wastewater Design Criteria Manual Update**

(Presentation: 10 minutes, Discussion: 10 minutes)

Wes Lamarque, Water Util Dev Review Engineer

Staff presented a proposal to amend the City's water and wastewater criteria to allow for large public wastewater lift stations and expanded shared service connections for residential development.

Implementation of the proposed changes would require adoption of four related ordinances amending Fort Collins City Code provisions related to wastewater lift stations and water service lines. Staff explained that the city currently does not operate public wastewater lift stations; however, anticipated development in future growth areas, including the Strauss Lakes area, will require lift stations to support planned development. A brief overview of wastewater lift station operations was provided. Under the proposal, lift stations would be developer-funded but ultimately owned and maintained by the City, including a future installation associated with development near Ziegler Road and Horsetooth Road. The proposed amendments would also expand shared water service eligibility to include single-unit detached homes, single-unit attached housing (townhomes), and accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Staff noted these changes are intended to provide a more cost-effective approach to extending utility service and accommodating new customers. Staff presented multiple examples comparing current City Code requirements with the proposed amendments, demonstrating potential cost savings and increased flexibility for future residential development.

Discussion Highlights

Commissioners discussed the original intent of restricting shared utility services, noting past challenges in clearly defining repair and maintenance responsibilities among multiple property owners. Staff explained that proposed shared service updates would require varying pipe sizes depending on housing type and configuration. Scenarios requiring variances were reviewed, including situations where a sewer main is not readily accessible. Staff noted that these types of variances would be handled administratively. Discussion included considerations related to homeowner's associations (HOAs) and operational unknowns associated with shared services. Staff stated that shared service connections would require utility easements to ensure protection and access for the furthest served property. For single-unit attached housing, maintenance responsibilities would be clearly defined at the public curb stop, with covenant agreements outlining responsibilities among property owners within the structure. For single-unit detached properties, covenants would similarly define long-term maintenance obligations. Commissioners asked whether proposed ordinances account for future capacity needs at wastewater lift stations. Staff confirmed lift stations would be designed to accommodate all developable land within each designated service area. Additional discussion addressed potential future rebate or cost-recovery mechanisms associated with lift station construction. Commissioners also inquired about risks unique to lift stations compared to gravity sewer systems. Staff noted

lift stations introduce operational considerations including specialized training requirements, ongoing maintenance needs, and infrastructure lifecycle costs. The city will conduct inspections prior to assuming ownership, consistent with procedures used for other City-managed facilities. Staff reviewed typical infrastructure lifespans, including pumps and force mains, and noted associated maintenance and replacement considerations. Staff also identified additional areas in northwest and northern Fort Collins where lift stations could enable future utility service expansion.

iii. Enterprise Product Management Office (EPMO) (Presentation: 20 minutes, Discussion: 10 minutes)

Matt Fater, Senior Director Infrastructure Engineering

Staff provided an early overview of Enterprise Project Management Office (EPMO) efforts to develop a coordinated, long-range capital investment strategy for Utilities infrastructure. The presentation highlighted the City's historic investments in major water, wastewater, and stormwater systems and outlined significant reinvestment needs driven by aging infrastructure, regulatory requirements, floodplain risks, and continued community growth. Staff noted key system challenges, including aging distribution and wastewater assets, completion of the Halligan Water Supply Project, and ongoing stormwater system improvements. A 20-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is being developed to prioritize investments using risk-based decision making, cross-utility collaboration, and alignment with City Council priorities and One Water principles. Preliminary analysis indicates long-term infrastructure needs approaching \$2 billion across the utilities. Discussion focused on balancing desired investments with projected available funding and developing a sustainable financial strategy. Staff presented an early outlook on potential future rate adjustments necessary to support major capital projects. Commissioners discussed historical rate trends, bonding strategies used to spread project costs over time, and long-term investment projections. Commissioners requested future financial presentations include additional visualization of major project obligations alongside ongoing capital investments. Staff also reviewed high-level wastewater and stormwater investment priorities and outlined the timeline for integrating CIP planning into the Utilities budget process, with rate and budget recommendations anticipated for Commission consideration in mid-2026.

Discussion Highlights

Commissioners discussed long-term sustainability considerations related to the 20-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and alignment with asset lifecycles across Water Distribution, Wastewater, and Stormwater systems. Staff noted that major investments such as the Halligan Water Supply Project are expected to provide approximately a 100-year service life prior to significant reinvestment needs. Key water utility capital priorities identified

include Halligan and water storage improvements, the Water Quality Laboratory, the Poudre Raw Waterline, water supply development, and ongoing water distribution system replacement efforts. Staff highlighted the goal of achieving a 1% annual replacement rate for water distribution infrastructure, consistent with a 100-year asset lifecycle strategy. Discussion included potential future wastewater improvements, including considerations associated with Meadow Springs Ranch cleanup efforts related to PFAS biosolids treatment, and how the new CIP prioritization tool may assist in adjusting project timelines as risks or regulatory drivers evolve. Commissioners asked whether the City's infrastructure portfolio is chronologically diversified to avoid large volumes of assets reaching end-of-life simultaneously. Staff explained that system performance varies significantly due to external pressures such as soil conditions, development patterns, and environmental factors. While some older mains remain in service, certain newer infrastructure installed during periods of rapid development is experiencing earlier-than-anticipated deterioration. Staff confirmed that Utilities maintains healthy enterprise fund reserves to address unplanned infrastructure failures and provide contingency capacity for emergency replacements when needed.

iv. **Financial Monthly Report**

Staff informed Commissioners that a Preliminary Year-End Financial Report was made available in February, with the Final Year-End Financial Report scheduled for delivery in March. Joe Wimmer provided a brief overview of preliminary year-end financial results. The Water Fund ended approximately 1% higher than the prior year despite a 7% rate increase, illustrating the variability in revenues influenced by weather patterns and water demand. Overall, the Water Fund concluded the year with approximately \$7 million over budget, while the Wastewater Fund finished approximately \$5 million over budget. Wastewater revenues remain relatively stable, ending at approximately \$1.6 million under budget expenditure due primarily to savings on chemical and personnel costs. Stormwater revenues exceeded projections by approximately \$5 million, allowing additional contributions to reserves. Staff noted that all utility funds remain financially healthy and are positioned to strengthen reserve balances.

b. REGULAR (ACTION) ITEMS

None

8. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

(Committees, event attendance, etc.)

a. None

9. OTHER BUSINESS

(Commissioner concerns, announcements)

None

10. ADJOURNMENT: 7:10 PM

Minutes **to be approved** by the Chair and a vote of the Water Commission on **03/19/26**.