

City of Willard
WATER ADVISORY BOARD
August 20, 2025

Members Present: Bryan Chapman, Scott Long, Kem Reed, Angie Wilson. (Absent: Kelly Davis)

Others Present: Rebecca Hansen, Carolyn Halverson, Trevor Hoffman, Mike Ruesch, Larry Whitman (resident), Wes Young

Upon motion by Scott Long, seconded by Angie Wilson, the committee voted unanimously to approve the meeting agenda.

Upon motion by Wilson, seconded by Long, the committee voted unanimously to approve minutes from the July 23, 2025, meeting.

Citizen Input: None.

Financial Statements

The committee acknowledged receipt of City of Willard financial statements. Reed requested an additional column showing the previous year for comparison. Reed asked the CFO for explanation of grant receipts. Carolyn Halverson explained EPA grant funds were received for the Farm Road 94 Force Main, and ARPA grant funds for the Meadows force main.

City Administrator Wes Young stated added revenue from the May 2025 rate increases is approximately \$400,000. Reed suggested the committee take more time to look over the financial statements and present any questions at the next meeting.

Director's Report

Public Works Director Trevor Hoffman explained Viking Tanks is helping develop specs for the water towers project, and the project will likely be bid in 2026.

Hoffman stated Cochran Engineering will provide direction on well and tower sites.

Hoffman reported the water line replacement on Langston St is complete. Public Works replaced 2-inch line with 6-inch C900 main. They found and repaired a significant leak.

Hoffman explained the Jackson Street water line project is nearly complete, in which they installed 8-inch PVC C900 and added a fire hydrant at Jackson and Perryman Streets.

Reed asked about the status of the 94 Force Main repair project. Hoffman stated it is out to bid, with bid opening mid September. He also stated the Jackson street sidewalk project is out to bid.

Long asked about the possibility of painting the water towers every 3 to 5 years. Young explained rates will need to support the committee's recommendations. Long asked about the possibility of a bond issue. Young answered the city has historically been averse to bond issues.

Rate Program Discussion

Young explained he plans to present a 9 percent water and 9 percent sewer rate increase to the Board of Aldermen in October, with subsequent increases of at least 9 percent each year through 2030. The proposed increases will be presented at a public hearing. The request is based on an assumption of a 1 percent growth rate in the city. He stated two active commercial development discussions are ongoing, and that a separate commercial rate might be possible in the future.

Young reported the Board of Aldermen approved retaining a lobbyist to try to acquire state funds to upgrade "B" Lift Station and extend force main. Mike Ruesch explained a future sewer plant would work with this, if the city were to build one in the future. Young explained a study 3 years ago indicated "B" lift station receives 40 percent of Willard's wastewater but has the smallest pumps. Young stated he equates the sewer project to economic development.

Wilson asked when the sewer reserve fund would reach the level required by Missouri Department of Natural Resources. Young stated he was not certain, but thought it would be approximately 5 years. Wilson stated the role of the committee is to liaison between the Board of Aldermen and utility customers, and that customers will not understand why a rate increase will take place 7 months after the previous increases of over 50 percent in May 2025.

Aid Program for Rates

Young reported that they were considering a suggestion to implement a financial aid program for qualifying customers. Wilson stated the plan is a useful idea but would need to be managed by a third party in order to prevent the perception of favoritism. She suggested looking at City Utilities' "Project Share" program that enables customers to contribute funds for aid, but the funds are allocated and disbursed by an outside party.

Unfinished Business

Reed explained that he attended the Board of Aldermen meeting at which the Board voted not to participate in the Southwest Missouri Joint Municipal Water Utility Commission. He stated he understands the board had to consider the financial implications and did not interpret their vote as a dismissal of the Water Advisory Board's recommendation to participate.

Long asked about installing a roof on the pump at "B" Lift Station and installing a fan to reduce humidity.

Upon motion to adjourn by Wilson, seconded by Long, the board voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:05pm.