

BOARD OF UTILITIES COMMISSIONERS – April 8, 2025

CITY OF LA JUNTA)
COUNTY OF OTERO) SS
STATE OF COLORADO)

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Utilities Commissioners of the City of La Junta, Colorado, was called to order by Chairman Patrick Berg on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building.

Roll was called and the following Board Members were present:

Present: Joe Ayala, Mayor
Patrick Berg, Chairman
Mike Bourget, Commissioner
Keith Manweiler, Commissioner
Paul Velasquez, Council Member/Vice-Chair

Absent: None

Also present: Michael Hart, City Manager
Bill Jackson, Asst. City Manager
Erin Harris, City Attorney
Melanie Scofield, City Clerk
Aliza Libby, Director of Finance
Tom Seaba, Director of Water/WW
Chris Arguello, Electric Superintendent
Martin Montoya, Director of Engineering
Paula Mahoney, Admin. Asst.



Subject to approval at the
May 13, 2025
Utilities Board Meeting



MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Chairman Berg asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 11, 2025. Hearing none, the Chairman asked for a motion to approve the minutes as published.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MARCH 11, 2025 MINUTES AS PUBLISHED: Bourget

SECOND: Manweiler

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 5-0

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

- 1. Aliza Libby, Director of Finance: 1) If you have budget billing and pay online, it is not working properly. 2) Financials are not done yet. Have been working on Sally's duties after she retired. 3) Utility Office inadvertently put the wrong due date on the first cycle utility bills. They are due on the 10th. Notices were put up and it was also posted on Facebook.

REPORTS

A. ARPA Board: Chairman Berg commented that the ARPA report is included in the packet. We had discussion about the replacement of Gary's position on ARPA. It's been brought to my attention that his term expires 12/31 and I know that we didn't want to rush putting someone into that position. I suggest we leave that as an open discussion point and allow Gary to continue to serve in that role unless we feel a change is necessary.

Gary Cranson submitted the following report:

1. **Summary of February 2025 Financial and Operating Statements:** In February, revenue from power sales was \$17,864 (0.9%) less than budget. Cost of goods sold was \$27,217 under budget. Net operating revenue for February was \$473,305. Revenue from power sales was better than budget by \$74,842 (1.8%). Total revenues were better than budget by \$127,787. Total cost of goods sold was greater than budget by \$48,901 (1.7%). Total A & G expenses are under budget by \$42,626 (3.9%). Net Revenue for the month is \$338,951. Average of 135 days cash on hand. Debt service coverage year-to-date is 1.09X.
2. **February Operating Report:** Member Energy sales were 6.9% better than budget in February and 0.6% more than they were in February 2024. Member Energy sales YTD are 1% less than budget and 3% better than 2024 sales. Member demands of 43.6 mW was about 16.6% higher than February 2024. All in cost to members YTD is \$0.09136 per kWh which is 7.5% lower than 2024 and 9.4% lower than 2020. The avoided cost rate for March is \$42.98 per mWh.
3. **Next Regular Meeting:** May 29, 2025 10:00 AM at Otero College in La Junta.

B. Water & Wastewater Treatment (Tom Seaba):

1. R.O. Plant
 - Routine maintenance: PM on chemical pump brushes, intake screens, belts, packing, and nozzles on degassifiers, changed oil, filters, and greased wells; greased motors at booster stations; facility safety checks.
 - Washed RO's A & C.
 - Repaired leak on filter on well #11.
 - Assisted DeBourgh with permeate water. Their RO system is down as they await a replacement.
 - Meter Reading, additional facilities maintenance.
2. Distribution
 - Continuing hydrant maintenance.
 - Bring meter pits to grade at new sheriff station.
 - Install new air vac on transmission line to Industrial Park.
 - Continue work on water line for irrigation at Brick & Tile Park.
 - Meter Reading and utility billing office generated work orders, equipment maintenance.
3. Wastewater
 - Treated 26.005 million gallons. Removed 31ft³ of screenings and 46ft³ of grit.
 - RO concentrate discharge to plant was 14.906 million gallons.
 - Jetted 5,725 feet of line for six emergency calls and thirty-six manhole locate requests.
 - PISTA grit oil drained and replaced.
 - Replaced mechanical seals on WAS pump #2. All fluids replaced.
 - Replaced valve, spicket, and cracked PVC in grit building.
 - Replaced seized plug on RAS pump #2.
 - Continued work on dewatering press. Now waiting for the build to start.
4. Other Notables
 - Fulfill data requests for D&E grant.
 - Continue sampling and data collection for EC grant.
 - Several employees attended the annual CRWA conference March 17-20 in Loveland.
 - Completed application for Tyco & BASF PFAS litigation.
 - Applying for EJ grants through EPA Region. Application due end of April.
 - Farm management planning meetings and grass seed purchase.
 - Level 1 water restrictions will begin on May 15th.

5. Requested Information from SECWCD (AVC Costs)
 - Current estimated cost to build the trunk line (In October '24 it was \$1.3 billion.):
 - This has not changed.
 - Current estimated cost to build all spur and delivery lines (October '24 estimate was \$75 million.):
 - This is still the same.
 - Current estimated cost for delivery line to La Junta:
 - By latest estimate, \$12,600,000.
 - A break-down of SECWCD income and how it will be used to repay conduit costs:
 - Miscellaneous review is slated to cover the cost of the conduit.
 - Status of the request to change repayment costs:
 - Legislation has been introduced on the Senate side but is sitting in committees at this time.
 - Current rate Pueblo will charge us for our water per 1000 gallons:
 - The 2025 rate is \$2.46.
 - If you are able to, perhaps you could send an updated Project and Participant cost sheet:
 - The District is currently updating O & M costs and updating the sheet that you have previously seen.
6. Holbrook
 - Meeting with our farm managers on Thursday to put the final touches on our 1041 plan. We've been working with Lex Nichols at the county so that it can be focused on the requirements Lex needs to see.
 - Created some GIS mapping to get a better idea of the boundaries that we need to revegetate. The current cost of seed is \$9.54 a pound and it takes 10 pounds per acres to appropriately revegetate. We're looking at upwards of 55-75 acres this year.
 - We had hoped to get some huge field sprinklers from Aurora. They don't want to lease them they want to divest of their stuff. So, we're waiting for them to give it over to the auctioneers so that we may try to acquire it. If we get it at auction, Aurora will also supply us with training.
 - We have several people, entities, who have approached us wanting to assist with planning our seed. Those being Aurora, one of our current lessees and then a third farmer who I think has fancy equipment he wants to put to use.

C. Sanitation (Martin Montoya):

1. March 2025 supplemental information

CUSTOMER INFORMATION

CUSTOMERS	2025	2024
RESIDENTIAL	2,775	2,794
COMMERCIAL	439	431
INDUSTRIAL	10	10
MUNICIPAL	29	28
	3,253	3,263

LANDFILL

TONS	2025	2024	2025	2024
	March	March	YTD	YTD
OTERO COUNTY LANDFILL	576.09	464.63	1,490.79	1,384.18
SOUTHEAST RECYCLING	68.94	25.74	161.73	61.14
CLEAN VALLEY - CURBSIDE	2.80	3.42	8.88	10.08
CLEAN VALLEY - TRAILER	1.36	2.66	3.04	5.75
	649.19	496.45	1,664.44	1,461.15

OTHER INCOME

ITEM	2025	2024	2025	2024
	March	March	YTD	YTD
SPECIAL PICK-UP	4	6	6	6
40-YD BOXES	45	21	105	65
20-YD BOXES	22	21	45	40
OVERAGES	14	4	33	15
COMPACTOR	4	5	11	14
TRX STATION (OPEN BOX)	31.96	30.94	83.00	82.33
TRX STATION (COMPACTOR)	11.85	7.11	22.52	25.50
TOTE REPLACEMENT	8	4	20	25

The 40-yd boxes are being rented out all the time and we've run out a couple of times. Four more boxes have been purchased.

2. Transfer Station: When the roll-offs are all out and the transfer station gets full, we have nothing to replace our roll-off with when it gets full. We do have people go out and smash the open top as much as they can but when it gets full, we have to close it down. We also have to close down if the landfill closes. This is a free service for our community and is available three days every week.
3. Cardboard Route: We're looking at a \$120,000 investment. The retained earnings for sanitation is sitting around \$1.3 million. If we do something like this, we can recoup the cost, even at the lowest option, in about three years. (A resolution will be drafted for the next meeting asking for a supplemental to the budget.)

D. Electric Department (Chris Arguello/Bill Jackson): Chris thanked the board for the approval of the breakers. It was a long process but it was an experience to see how that all takes place.

1. Line Crew
 - Daily reads, disconnects and maintenance.
 - The recent windstorm brought down multiple trees and tree limbs onto power lines throughout the town. There was also a pole on fire at the Industrial Park.
 - Had cutouts blow up at 6th Street and Dalton Avenue and 26th Street and Santa Fe Avenue.
 - Vehicles knocked down three poles: one on Highway 50 and Maple Avenue, one at UPS, and one at Mauricio's on Highway 50.
 - Removed a rotten pole from the backyard of 510 Belmont Avenue and relocated the light in the alley.
 - Have two linemen working with Lamar Light & Power. They had 27 transmission poles go down during the windstorm.
 - Drew Yochum and Anthony Aguilar attended Rocky Mountain Meter School in Fort Collins for a week of training.
2. SOLAR Accounts
 - The total kWh returned to the system was 19,805 from 43 customers. A total of \$1,069.47 was rebated at the avoided cost. There are currently 40 residential and 2 commercial solar customers.
3. System Update
 - Currently working with ARPA and Sandhills on system communication agreement for the Industrial Park Solar.

NEW BUSINESS

A. City Manager Comments.

1. There were no City Manager comments.

B. Governing Body's Comments.

1. Chairman Berg:
 - Melanie has helped me a lot with getting everything set up for the online packets. I'm still not ready to roll it out to all of you guys. It does sound like we still need to get everybody's Gmail. I do want to try it this next month. We'll still have paper but I'd like to actually work through it and make a decision next month.
2. Commissioner Bourget:
 - If we're going to meet with the Conservancy people on the 8th of May, I think we should get together before that and come up with some questions. Since we have a couple of new members and Michael, we should probably sit down and go over some pertinent issues relating to the Conduit and concerns. (A work session will be scheduled.)
3. Council Member Velasquez:
 - Would it be possible for Ms. Noga to send us the time of the testimony? Maybe we can watch it on C-SPAN. (Tom will look into this.)
4. Commissioner Manweiler:
 - Asked Tom if it was ever figured out what was going on with the two generators that were down. After Chris saying some of the things about us only having one line coming into town. I think it might be prudent to make sure all of them are up and running.

Electric Superintendent Arguello: When the power goes out, I encourage people not to go outside and water the grass. It's a domino effect.

Commissioner Manweiler: I watched our tanks at the RO Plant drying up once.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:49 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF LA JUNTA

Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

Patrick Berg, Chairman