

**MINUTES**  
**Colorado Springs Utilities Board Meeting**  
**Wednesday, January 19, 2022**

**Utilities Board members present via Microsoft Teams or Blue River Conference Room:**  
Chair Wayne Williams, Vice Chair Mike O'Malley, Dave Donelson, Randy Helms, Bill Murray, Yolanda Avila, Nancy Henjum and Tom Strand

**Staff members present via Microsoft Teams or Blue River Conference Room:** Aram Benyamin, Charles Cassidy, Travas Deal, Scott Shirola, Tristan Gearhart, Kalsoum Abbasi, Mike Hermann, and Andie Buhl

**City of Colorado Springs staff members present via Microsoft Teams or Blue River Conference Room:** Bethany Burgess, Jim Reid

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Wayne Williams called the Utilities Board meeting to order at 12:03 p.m. and Ms. Andie Buhl, Utilities Board Administrator, called the roll.

**2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

Pastor Harms delivered the invocation and Chair Williams led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. Consent Calendar**

**3a. Approval of Minutes: December 15, 2021**

Board Member Strand moved approval of the Consent Calendar and Board Member Henjum seconded the motion. The Consent Calendar was unanimously approved.

**4. Recognition**

**Behind the Scenes — Windstorm Restoration Services**

Mr. Aram Benyamin, Chief Executive Officer, and Chair Williams recognized Springs Utilities employees who responded to the December 2021 windstorm event and thanked supporting agencies who helped the organization. Mr. Benyamin concluded with a video of the event expressing gratitude to all parties involved.

Chair Williams introduced Ms. Stephanie Fortune, the newly elected District 3 City Council Member.

**5. Customer Comments**

Mr. Sam Masias expressed concerns about Springs Utilities' planning processes.

**6. Colorado Springs Utilities Windstorm Recovery Report Out**

Mr. Benjamin introduced the Windstorm Recovery Report Out agenda item and Mr. Charles Cassidy, Energy Construction Operations Maintenance General Manager, explained how safety was Springs Utilities' highest priority during the windstorm event. He said the storm was equivalent to a category two hurricane, which caused historic damage to the organization's electric system and overhead infrastructure.

Mr. Cassidy outlined and discussed the incident's timeline of events, explaining how priority of work and influencing factors were categorized throughout the entire repair process. He discussed in detail how Springs Utilities achieved full system restoration yet the community is still in a recovery phase from the event.

Mr. Cassidy compared the December 2021 windstorm to the January 2017 windstorm in Colorado Springs and concluded with a summarization of total system damages, utilized resources and estimated costs. He said an after-action report is in progress to review the windstorm and opportunities for improvement for future events.

Board members thanked Springs Utilities staff again for their hard work during the windstorm event.

Mr. Masias expressed concerns about how power outages were reported and updated online.

Ms. Theresa Gazzara, citizen, also expressed concerns about how and when Springs Utilities restored power to citizens but said Mr. Cassidy's presentation was informative and answered her questions.

Mr. Benjamin said once the windstorm after-action report is done, the Utilities Board and public will be able to review it.

## **7. Compliance Reports**

- Infrastructure (I-6)
- Annual Board Evaluation (C-2)
  - Chair Williams said he received responses from all Board members and the discussion will be postponed to the February Utilities Board meeting.
- E-2 CEO Responsibilities
  - Water Outlook
    - Ms. Kalsoum Abbasi, Water Planning Supervisor, discussed the Water Outlook report and explained local weather conditions as of December 31, 2021. She explained visual representations of U.S. Drought Monitors in Colorado from November 23, 2021 to January 11, 2022 and snow water equivalent maps of the Arkansas River and Colorado River Basin.
    - Ms. Abbasi reviewed monthly water usage for December 2021 compared to 2001, as well as total annual water use. She said

Colorado Springs' system wide water storage is above average, and then reviewed the monthly storage percent of capacity.

Chair Williams explained that compliance reports are on the agenda by exception and asked if there were any questions. There were none.

**8. Items Called Off Consent Calendar**

None

**9. Fuel Related Rates - Electric Cost Adjustment and Gas Cost Adjustment**

Mr. Scott Shirola, Pricing and Rates Manager, provided an overview of this topic and explained the natural gas prices as of December 31, 2021. He said the gas market fundamentals from October 2021 are still true, but the warm weather has helped mitigate their impacts.

Mr. Shirola explained both the electric cost adjustment (ECA) and gas cost adjustments (GCA) projections for January 2022 and the decreased amounts for residential, commercial, and industrial customers. He said sample total monthly bill calculations for current and proposed assume:

- Residential - 30 days, 700 kWh (Electric), 60 Ccf (Natural Gas), 1,100 cf (Water Inside City Limits), and 700 cf (Wastewater Inside City Limits)
- Commercial - 30 days, 6,000 kWh (Electric), 1,240 Ccf (Natural Gas), 3,000 cf (Water Inside City Limits), and 3,000 cf (Wastewater Inside City Limits)
- Industrial - 30 days, 400,000 kWh and 1,000 kW (Electric), 12,400 Ccf (Natural Gas), 50,000 cf (Water Inside City Limits), and 50,000 cf (Wastewater Inside City Limits)

Mr. Shirola discussed seasonal and residential natural gas bill impacts and explained average monthly usage. He said actual bill impacts will vary based on individual customer usage, and individualized impacts can be estimated using Springs Utilities' bill calculator. Mr. Tristan Gearhart, Chief Financial Officer, also explained how rate increases and decreases are initially communicated and projected, and how usage and volume changes are applied to monthly bills.

The Utilities Board referred this item to City Council on January 25, 2022 as Regular Business.

**10. 2022 Pikes Peak Geospatial Alliance (PPGA) Orthoimagery Project**

Ms. Bethany Burgess, City Attorney's Office – Utilities Division, introduced and provided background information about the Pikes Peak Geospatial Alliance (PPGA) Orthoimagery Project. She said the purpose of this project is cost sharing for digital aerial photography and geo-spatial products acquired on a biennial basis. She listed current members and additional non-member participants and explained how Springs Utilities is the lead agency on this project.

Mr. Mike Hermann, Asset Management/Geospatial Technology Manager, said the goal of this project is to acquire new color digital aerial photography and secondary products for full extents of El Paso and Teller Counties. He explained the projected costs for this project, and Ms. Burgess concluded with next steps which is to bring this item to City Council on February 8, 2022 as Regular Business.

The Board agreed to change this item from Regular Business to Consent at the February 8, 2022 City Council meeting.

#### **11. Board Member Updates**

Board Members Murray and Avila left the meeting around 2:15 p.m.

Board Member Helms shared an article about nuclear energy from the Gazette and expressed his interests in the topic.

Board Member Henjum thanked all constituents who spoke during citizen comment.

Board Member Donelson thanked staff at Springs Utilities for their contribution to restoring damage from the windstorm and explained how ratepayers are the organization's primary concern.

Board Member O'Malley also thanked Springs Utilities staff for their help during the windstorm event.

Chair Williams thanked Ms. Fortune for joining the Utilities Board meeting and asked for Ms. Buhl to send a Denver Gazette article to Board Members and CEO Leadership Staff at Springs Utilities about Coloradans facing high energy bills this winter

#### **12. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 2:25 p.m.