



COLORADO SPRINGS UTILITIES BOARD
MS Teams and Blue River Board Room
Plaza of the Rockies
121 S. Tejon Street
South Tower, 5th Floor

Minutes
Wednesday, April 22, 2026
1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Blue River Board Room

1. Call to Order

Chair Dave Donelson called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

Ms. Anna Bingman, Utilities Board Administrator, called roll.

Present – Chair Dave Donelson, Board Member Ken Casey, Board Member Lynette Crow-Iverson, Board Member Kimberly Gold, Board Member Nancy Henjum, Board Member Brian Risley, Board Member Roland Rainey and Vice Chair Brandy Williams.

Excused – Board Member David Leinweber

2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Reverend Carrie West of First United Methodist Church offered the invocation, and Chair Donelson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Consent Agenda

- **Approval of the March 18, 2026, Utilities Board Meeting Minutes**
- **Approval of the April 6, 2026, Special Utilities Board Meeting Minutes**

Board Member Gold made a motion to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. Board Member Rainey seconded the motion. The motion to approve the Consent Agenda passed unanimously.

4. Customer Comments

Ms. Linda Day, a Colorado Springs Utilities customer, shared frustration in her belief that Colorado Springs Utilities does not value their solar customers and the contributions they provide to the grid. She said she and her husband installed solar on their home in an effort to reduce load on the grid and be more environmentally friendly, only to be treated as if they were misinformed on solar in doing so.

Ms. Carolyn Dickerson, a Colorado Springs Utilities customer, thanked Utilities staff for their professional and friendly service and thanked the Utilities Board for their service as well. Next, Ms. Dickerson said had been following the net metering conversation, and believed there was a disconnect between Utilities and solar customers. Ms. Dickerson emphasized

that the Board directed Springs Utilities to engage the solar community and have focused mostly on solar rates rather than what the community is asking for, which is input on the broader question of how solar fits in the makeup of the grid at large. Ms. Dickerson suggested taking input on the upcoming Electric Integrated Resource Plan on how the community views these resources, and deferring action on a rooftop solar case until this input has been collected.

Ms. Jan Netzer, a Colorado Springs Utilities customer, urged the Board and Colorado Springs Utilities to continue their promise of emissions reductions. She stated that Utilities is alone in demanding that it cannot fulfill this promise, though other utility companies statewide are doing so.

Mr. Rick Lynch, a Colorado Springs Utilities customer, informed the Board that the Pikes Peak Community Foundation recently conducted a survey with the community that placed the outdoor natural environment as a top priority. While he is not a solar user, Mr. Lynch said he understood the importance of environmental stewardship and urged Colorado Springs Utilities to look into ways to help solar customers finance batteries to have more efficient systems.

Mr. Tom Harrington, a Colorado Springs Utilities customer, commented on the recent focus groups that were held to gather feedback on net metering. He said three solutions had been presented: a net metering charge, a grid access fee, and battery storage. He said the first two options try to address the issue without addressing the underlying problem to adopt different rates to push different behaviors.

Ms. Debra Fortenberry, a Colorado Springs Utilities customer, said she believed having rooftop solar installed was a common sense move for her. She stated she was startled to hear a comment during the April Working Committee meeting that rooftop solar is of no benefit to Colorado Springs Utilities. After hearing this comment, she did some research into how other utility companies work with solar customers, and said this research led to her concluding that Colorado Springs Utilities is a hostile partner to rooftop solar.

Vice Chair Williams thanked everyone who had made comments but wanted to make it clear that the Board values all of the feedback and wouldn't have continued to engage in this process if they believed Colorado Springs Utilities to be a hostile partner to solar customers.

Mr. Graeme Cloutte, a Colorado Springs Utilities customer, said he understood that there is often a resistance to new technology, and can see that happening as the solar revolution is becoming more prevalent. He said Colorado Springs Utilities should embrace this new technology rather than continuing to rely on fossil fuels.

5. Recognition

- **Diamond Level Safety Award from American Public Power Association (APPA)**

Ms. Renee Adams, Chief Human Resources Officer, informed the Board that Colorado Springs Utilities had recently received a Diamond Level Safety Award from the American Public Power Association (APPA). Ms. Adams stated that this award represents the entire organization and the commitment to safety, emphasis on safety and safety maturity, and the diligence of every employee. Ms. Adams introduced Ms. Sara Akins, Safety and Health Manager, to tell the Board more about this designation.

Chair Donelson thanked Ms. Akins, and the staff members present for their outstanding job in achieving this award.

- **Water and Wastewater Worker Appreciation and National Association of Clean Water Agencies Peak Performance Award**

Ms. Tara Kelley, Treatment Plants Manager, and Mr. Michael Myers, Manager of Water and Wastewater Operations, informed the Board about Water and Wastewater Worker Appreciation Week, and that the Las Vegas Street Water Resource Recovery Facility and J.D. Phillips Water Resource Recovery Facility had been recognized for two Peak Performance Awards by the National Association of Clean Water for outstanding performance in their state-issued discharge permits.

Ms. Somer Mese, Chief Operations Officer, complimented these employees on their wonderful work. Mr. Travas Deal, Chief Executive Officer, also noted that these crews uphold the highest commitment to safety for themselves, the organization, and the community, so it was great that these two recognition items are at the same meeting. Ms. Mese then read a proclamation from Governor Polis dedicating April 5 to April 11 as National Wastewater Appreciation Week.

Board Member Henjum said she has been on a wastewater system tour and said the value of the work and the pride that the employees take in their work is very palpable. Board Member Rainey agreed with this sentiment and thanked the employees in attendance for their tremendous service to the community. Chair Donelson echoed these comments and thanked the employees on behalf of the Board.

6. Compliance Reports:

- **I-12 Environmental Stewardship**
- **E-2 CEO/Board Partnership Responsibilities – Electric Cost Adjustment/Gas Cost Adjustment**

There were no presentations on these items.

- **E-2 CEO/Board Partnership Responsibilities – Water Outlook**

Mr. Justin Zeisler, Supervisor of Water Resource Planning, presented the Board with the Water Outlook for April 2026. Mr. Zeisler noted that March had above average precipitation, and we are still above average for precipitation for the year. However, Mr. Zeisler noted that

the temperatures are quite higher than average. Mr. Zeisler detailed the ongoing drought conditions for much of the United States, as well as the current snowpack condition, which is seeing record lows. Mr. Zeisler said that water yields are expected to be lower this year, with above average temperatures predicted for the coming months with below average precipitation. However, given this forecast, system storage remains above average. There may be some challenges to operate river exchanges, and some storage may need to be used to meet demands this year.

Board Member Henjum commented that water is a hot topic right now given drought conditions, and asked Mr. Zeisler what is to be expected this year and the coming years, since water restrictions are not yet in place. Mr. Zeisler responded that his team does projections for two-year periods and said there will certainly be a need to dip into storage, however our teams work to be able to recapture and reuse water in various ways so there is less impact. Mr. Zeisler said demands will still be met next year based on the demand charts right now. However, he stated that it is always important to remind customers of the importance of using water wisely, which they do a great job of.

Board Member Rainey noted that Mr. Zeisler said the current height of the water in Pueblo Reservoir may need to be brought down and asked about the process and where that water is disseminated. Mr. Zeisler answered that the water would be brought upstream through the major transmission systems, such as the Homestake Pipeline. The water would be pumped up through two pipelines, the Fountain Valley Authority Pipeline and the Southern Delivery System.

7. Items Called Off Consent Agenda

No items were called off consent.

8. North Slope Recreation Area Plan

Ms. Lisa Walters, Water Resource Planner III, and Ms. Abigail Ortega, General Manager of Infrastructure and Resources Planning, provided an informational presentation on the North Slope Recreation Area Plan. This presentation included the background on the project and community engagement efforts, and the concept plan recommendations.

Chair Donelson announced that customer comments on this item would take place before Board Member comments.

Mr. Rocco Blasi, a Colorado Springs Utilities customer, is a volunteer for the Friends of Ute Pass Trails. Mr. Blasi shared significant concerns about the potential closure of the Crystal Creek Trail, and said this plan fails to address the concepts of community, neighbors, and fairness as it is currently written. Mr. Blasi added that he was disappointed in the coordination with stakeholders and the lack of opportunity for community input. Mr. Blasi claimed that the trail predated any Utilities infrastructure and provides no threat to the assets in the area.

Ms. Ortega commented that there were several public meetings to engage the public on the North Slope Recreation Area Plan. Additionally, staff met with staff from Green Mountain Falls three separate times. The trail being discussed is solely on Utilities property and the section mentioned in the plan goes straight up to the face of the dam, posing safety risks, both to hikers and to the infrastructure. Ms. Ortega reminded the Board that protection of source water and infrastructure is the top priority for her team. Ms. Ortega added that, in the plan, the part of the trail on Utilities property is the only portion being decommissioned while more sustainable alternatives are discussed with Green Mountain Falls and other stakeholders.

Mr. Jae Kita, a Colorado Springs Utilities customer, is a volunteer with two local trail groups. When work was being done on the Crystal Reservoir Dam, Mr. Kita and a hundred or more volunteers would assist where they could. He stated that competent hikers enjoy the Crystal Creek Trail due to its steep nature and challenging terrain. Mr. Kita reiterated Mr. Blasi's claim that the trail had been in place much longer than Utilities infrastructure.

Mr. Gordon Wines, a Colorado Springs Utilities customer, provided arguments regarding the validity of points made in the plan. Mr. Wines noted that there are similar trails around infrastructure near Rampart Reservoir that are open to hikers. While he said he understood closing the Crystal Creek Trail is an easy and safe answer for Utilities, it is not beneficial to the surrounding community of users.

Ms. Susan Jarvis, a Colorado Springs Utilities customer, said she believed Utilities does not want the public to use the North Slope Area, despite it being a Leave No Trace Gold Standard Award site thanks to the efforts of its users. While Mr. Jarvis stated that she was in support of the improvements, she felt the public was being blamed for it being a difficult space to maintain. Ms. Jarvis asked why this plan is replacing the agreed-upon 1992 plan.

Ms. Becky Leinweber, Director of the Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance, said she was excited to see this plan moving forward. Her organization identified the North Slope Recreation Area Plan as a top priority to move forward and appreciated Utilities taking the lead. She said she understood the disappointment shared by those who spoke before her, as well as the challenges of maintaining the area. Ms. Leinweber shared that the North Slope Recreation Area will receive \$315,000 from her organization for these trail realignments as part of the bigger regional partnership for the Ring the Peak Trail. She encouraged staff to continue the conversations and public engagement around the Crystal Creek Trail as an alternative is found.

Mr. Caleb Patterson, Town Manager for Green Mountain Falls, said his community is not feeling heard on the issue of the Crystal Creek Trail closure. Mr. Patterson shared a letter in which he details the relationship between Utilities and Green Mountain Falls, which has been positive overall, but felt the public engagement was lacking on this process. Mr. Patterson said the closure of the Crystal Creek Trail would be a significant loss to the community. He suggested conducting a site visit with Utilities staff to assess the area

together and offered that there could be a maintenance agreement between the two entities in an effort to keep this trail open.

Ms. Samantha Spencer, a Colorado Springs Utilities customer, said she didn't believe the Board had the true facts behind the North Slope Recreation Area Plan and the shared public land. She stated that the Crystal Creek Trail predated Utilities infrastructure. Ms. Spencer stated that Green Mountain Falls had offered partnership on how to keep the trail open, which was refused.

Ms. Ortega thanked those who commented on this item and said she understood that there is not a desire to look at alternative routes for the Crystal Creek Trail. Ms. Ortega stated that the plan explicitly provides direction to continue working with Green Mountain Falls and the Forest Service on trail alignments. She thanked Ms. Leinweber for her collaboration on this and committed to continuing to work with the public on next steps.

Board Member Henjum thanked the customers who spoke about this item, adding that Ms. Ortega's team has always been trustworthy in making the best decisions to protect resources while allowing for recreation. Board Member Henjum encouraged staff to understand the different perspectives, and work to come to a resolution that all parties can feel positive about.

Ms. Pattie Benger, Senior Public Affairs Specialist with Community Engagement, detailed the various ways that feedback was obtained on this plan, and how that feedback was considered in the final plan.

Board Member Casey asked staff to reiterate the reason for closing the trail aside from what is documented in the plan. Ms. Ortega responded that the slope on the Crystal Creek Trail is very steep, which causes a lot of erosion. Ms. Ortega clarified that the entire trail would not be decommissioned, just the portion on Utilities-owned property. Board Member Casey said he would be interested in seeing pictures of the current trail.

Board Member Rainey asked if there were common threads of positive or negative comments within the three opportunities for public comment. Ms. Benger answered that there were common but not decisive threads. While some responses wanted Utilities to maintain the Crystal Creek Trail as it is, some responses didn't want to see any recreation on the North Slope. Staff looked at the comments collectively and moved forward on decisions.

9. Resolution Allowing Commercial Recreation Use on Utilities-Controlled Watershed

In conjunction with the previous presentation, Ms. Walters and Ms. Ortega presented the Resolution Allowing Commercial Recreation Use on Utilities-Controlled Watershed for the North Slope Recreation Area. This resolution will allow for recreation use that is legally allowable and consistent with maintenance, health, safety and fire protection conservation standards. This resolution would be for a one-year pilot period and managed through Pikes Peak – America's Mountain.

Board Member Henjum commented that she believed Board Member Leinweber, who is absent, would be speaking in support of this resolution, as it provides for the larger economic benefit of recreation in the region and allows the community to use a resource while still maintaining and protecting it.

Board Member Henjum made the motion to move to recommend approval of a resolution allowing commercial recreation on Utilities-controlled watershed properties pursuant to City Charter § 15-120 and City Code § 12.4.804 forward to the April 28, 2026, Regular City Council meeting. Board Member Gold seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Southwest Power Pool Regional Transmission Organization Update

Mr. Alex Baird, General Manager of Fuels and Purchase Power, presented the Board with the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) Regional Transmission Organization (RTO) update. This presentation included the milestone of entering the SPP RTO on April 1, 2026, stakeholder process, the resource mix, expansion footprint load, transmission planning cycle, and the first seven days net cash flows.

Board Member Risley commented that he was pleased that Colorado Springs Utilities joined the SPP, as it is a way to maintain cost effectiveness for ratepayers, but also addresses reliability, which is critical to the region.

Board Member Rainey echoed Board Member Risley's comments, then asked if being a part of the SPP alters any type of operations on how we manage, offer or purchase power. Mr. Baird said this transition will help Utilities remain competitive, make repairs strategically, and follow any mandates.

11. Board Member Updates

Board Member Rainey thanked Colorado Springs Utilities for their Cone Zone safety campaign, especially working with the City and Public Works.

Board Member Crow-Iverson commented that she attended the tour of the Horizon campus and potential new location of 10 natural gas units at Williams Creek. She attended the tour with multiple staff members and said it was very helpful in understanding next steps.

Vice Chair Williams thanked staff for being quick to assist in constituent requests in her district and thanked those who attended her Town Hall meeting recently.

Mr. Wayne Williams, Chief of Staff for the City of Colorado Springs, also thanked Colorado Springs Utilities for their coordination with 2C projects.

12. Summary of Board Actions

Ms. Bingman provided a summary of Board Actions:

- Approved the March 18, 2026, Utilities Board meeting minutes.

- Approved the April 6, 2026, Special Utilities Board meeting minutes.
- Recommended approval of a resolution allowing commercial recreation on Utilities-controlled watershed properties pursuant to City Charter § 15-120 and City Code § 12.4.804.

13. Adjournment

Chair Donelson adjourned the meeting at 3:03 p.m.