

**MINUTES**  
**Colorado Springs Utilities Board**  
**New Utilities Board Orientation**  
**Friday, May 9, 2025**

**Utilities Board Members present via Microsoft Teams or Cabin Creek Conference Room:**

Tom Bailey, Roland Rainey and Brandy Williams

**Staff members present via Microsoft Teams or Cabin Creek Conference Room:**

Travas Deal, Renee Adams, Lisa Barbato, Jake Clark, Mike Francolino, Tristan Gearhart, Somer Mese, Alex Baird, Andy Colosimo, Amy Lewis, Danielle Nieves, Jacqueline Nunez, Gail Pecoraro, Jason Rigler and Natalie Watts

The meeting began at 8:14 a.m.

**1. Utilities Board Communication and Coordination**

Ms. Natalie Watts, Strategic Planning and Governance Manager, described the different types of communication that Board Members receive from Springs Utilities. UB Comms are timely communications sent on an as needed basis. Weekly Comms are sent every Friday and include relevant information that is not necessarily urgent. Working Committee and Utilities Board Packets are sent one week prior to the corresponding meetings. Sometimes these are in DRAFT form if information is not yet available. Updated final packets are sent out prior to the meetings.

Ms. Watts reminded Board Members to send any constituent concerns or questions they receive that are utilities related need to be sent to [ub@csu.org](mailto:ub@csu.org), rather than individual staff members. This helps when a member of the SPG team is out of the office. Board Members can notify the Utilities Board Administrator or SPG Manager on how their preference for responding to these complaints – whether they would like Springs Utilities to send the response or if they prefer to send the response. Mr. Travas Deal, Chief Executive Officer, said that Board Members can copy him or an Officer on the email, but is important to include the [ub@csu.org](mailto:ub@csu.org) email (since these are put onto a tracker to ensure follow up).

Media updates are sent when the Springs Utilities Public Relations Team interacts with the media. The Engaging the Media 101 booklet was distributed. Media training is available as a Lunch and Learn topic if Board Members are interested.

Utilities Board coordination includes Board Member briefings that occur prior to the Utilities Board meetings, Working Committee meetings which are noticed and open to the public, Lunch N Learns, Utilities Board meetings (which are noticed and open to the public; public

comment is accepted at these meetings), Executive Sessions and UPAC meetings (which are optional), Utilities Board tours and one-off meetings with staff members. These meetings can be joined by Teams. If a Board Member is not able to attend a Utilities Board meeting, please notify the Board Chairman, the SPG Manager, and the Utilities Board Administrator.

Tours have been set up monthly through the end of 2025. The purpose of these is to acquaint new Board Members with the organization. These tours will be noticed and open to the public.

## **2. Administrative and Human Resources Division (AHRD)**

Ms. Renee Adams, Chief Human Resources Officer, oversees the Public Affairs, Safety and Health, University of Springs Utilities, and Human Resources departments. Her division is responsible for the E-2: Chief Executive Officer Responsibilities, the I-10 Treatment of Staff, the I-11 Compensation and Benefits, and the I-13 Community Investment compliance reports.

Ms. Adams described the function of each of her departments and gave a brief overview of the compliance reports that AHRD is responsible for. Compliance reports are instructions from the Board to the CEO. The reports each have a different frequency on reporting, and compliance reports are covered at the Working Committee meeting.

Ms. Adams explained that Project COPE is administered through a separate 501(c)(3) organization.

Mr. Rainey inquired more about the Occupational Health and Safety in-house clinic. He said he is interested in touring the clinic in the months ahead.

Mr. Andy Colosimo, General Manager of Public Affairs, introduced Mr. Jake Clark, Government Affairs Liaison, who is the organization's representative at the State Capital. Mr. Colosimo said the purpose of the Government Affairs Department is to protect the organization's ability to do business as it sees fit within federal and state regulations. One of the core functions of the Government Affairs Department is lobbying at the state and federal levels of government.

## **3. Planning and Finance Division**

Mr. Tristan Gearhart, Chief Planning and Financial Officer, oversees the Treasury and Finance, Financial Planning and Risk, Pricing and Rates, and Accounting Departments. His division is responsible for the UB Focus Area of Rates, the I-1 Pricing of Services, the I-2 Financial Condition and Activities, the I-3 Financial Planning and Budgeting, and I-4 Risk Management Compliance Reports.

Mr. Gearhart described the function of each of his departments and gave a brief overview of the Compliance Reports that Planning and Finance is responsible for.

Mr. Gearhart said that his department works closely with the City Auditor's Office.

The 2025 approved budget is \$1,826,717,000 compared to the 2024 budget of \$1,504,318,000.

Energy Wise helps the organization to “shave the peak” by about 7%. Generating electricity during peak hours often relies on buying expensive energy or burning fossil fuels, which contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. By shifting use to non-peak hours, customers help to reduce emissions and reduce environmental impact. On-peak usage is from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Friday with higher rates during June through September.

Mr. Gearhart said that ways to reduce usage is to pre-cool your home outside of the on-peak hours, to delay starting the dishwasher or doing laundry during these times.

These changes are proposed to be effective Oct. 1, 2025 with Springs Utilities determining the customer transition schedule.

#### **4. Operations Division**

Ms. Somer Mese, Chief Operations Officer, oversees Plants, Operations Technical Services, System and Field Operations, and Utility Construction and Maintenance departments. The Operations Division is responsible for the UB focus area of reliability, I-6 Infrastructure, and I-8 Asset Protection Compliance Reports.

Board Member Williams asked how the organization is able to provide services to Ft. Carson. Ms. Mese said that Springs Utilities does not provide/own the infrastructure on base, and if the infrastructure needs repaired, it is at the expense of Ft. Carson.

Ms. Mese provided attendees with the Utility Wise book, which was reviewed. The Utility Wise book has information on each of the four utilities services, to include system maps, the service territory, number of active service accounts and more. The overview depicts how each service is transported from its source to customers’ homes.

Springs Utilities is installing fiber throughout the City. There are currently three contractors installing these lines. This is a multi-million-dollar project.

Springs Utilities has a service level agreement with the City for the maintenance of streetlights throughout the city. There is a new reporting tool for streetlight outages/ concerns, which Ms. Watts will share with the Utilities Board.

#### **5. Systems Planning and Projects Division**

Ms. Lisa Barbato, Chief Systems Planning and Projects Officer, oversees the Infrastructure and Resource Planning, Engineering and Design, and Project and Program departments. Her division is responsible for the UB focus area Reliability, I-6 Infrastructure, I-7 Water Supply Management, I-8 Asset Protection, and I-12 Environmental Stewardship Compliance Reports.

Ms. Barbato said that her division works closely with the Operations Division. Her division is responsible for planning projects for the organization and once these are completed, Ms. Mese's team takes over the operation of those completed projects.

### Integrated Resource Plans (IRP)

#### *Water Service*

The Water IRP buckets include the Colorado River, Water Sharing, Conservation, Storage and Reuse. The purpose of the Water Resource Plan is to plan for and implement long-range water supply and infrastructure needs for the City of Colorado Springs. The plan outlines a diverse portfolio of options to pursue to meet future forecasted demands and mitigate risks to reliability. The plan's objectives include planning for projected demand, balancing cost and setting a course for water supply and infrastructure needs for the future. The Water Conservation Program shows that customers today currently use as much water as they did in the mid-1980s, despite 92% growth.

#### *Wastewater Service*

The Eastern Wastewater System Expansion (EWSE) has an estimated cost of \$396,000,000 over a six-year period. The Northern Monument Creek Interceptor project is a regional partnership that is currently in the design phase and cost estimation.

Board Member Williams asked if new lines will be installed or if parallel lines running adjacent to existing lines will be installed. Ms. Barbato said that parallel lines will be installed adjacent to existing lines.

The Northern Monument Creek Interceptor is currently in the design phase. This is a regional partnership with TriView and Forest Lakes Metropolitan Districts, who will share project costs. As the project moves to final design and construction, the Districts will collaborate with Springs Utilities for providing service to Northern entities.

#### *Electric Service*

The Horizon Utility Campus Master plan is for 160 acres at Drennan and Foreign Trade Zone. There is already a substation located at this site. Future construction includes two natural gas gate stations, 400-megawatts (MW) of natural gas fired generators, 100 mw battery storage, and the potential for a customer service center. A future Utilities Board tour is planned at this location. Construction is scheduled to begin in May 2026 and to be operational in May 2028.

#### *Energy Demand Management*

Unlike water, which is stored in large-capacity reservoirs, most electricity must be generated and distributed to meet customer needs in real-time. With increasing intermittent generation sources like wind and solar, the timing of customer energy use is becoming increasingly important. Energy delivery at peak times can be more expensive than during off-peak periods when generation or transmission assets are limited.

Aggressive state regulatory goals have created new customer and utility needs for solutions that address decarbonization. The organization's energy-efficiency programs recently shifted focus to meet new regulations like the Clean Heat Plan and customer needs under Regulation 28 (State Building Performance Standards).

Focus is now shifting toward solutions that help customers manage the timing of their energy use. The Peak Energy Rewards (smart thermostat control) is the first program offered to actively manage air conditioning to avoid expensive generation in hot afternoons, and this year an electric vehicle managed charging program is being piloted to reduce the grid impacts from electrified transportation.

#### *Gas Service*

Gas System Resiliency ensures continuous service to all customers. The Downtown and Military Gas Resiliency Project provides operational availability of Power Plant downtown, provides gas resiliency for military operations, improves gas system pressures, and provides Springs Utilities with greater flexibility to switch between gas suppliers for fuel cost balancing.

### **6. Customer and Enterprise Services Division**

Mr. Mike Francolino, Chief Customer and Enterprise Services Officer, oversees the Customer Services, Information Technology, Cyber Security, and Supply Chain departments. His division is responsible for the UB focus area Relationships, the strategic objective of Focus on the Customer, the I-5 Economic Development, the I-8 Asset Protection, and I-9 Treatment of Customers and Customer Information compliance reports.

Mr. Francolino said there are numerous systems in place to provide asset protection for the organization.

### **7. Fuels and Purchase Power Department**

Mr. Alex Baird, Fuels and Purchase Power General Manager, is responsible for Portfolio Management, which includes natural gas/fuels trading, power trading, and energy market operations and analytics. His department is responsible for the UB focus area of Reliability, and the Strategic Objectives of Support our Community, Operational Excellence and Financial Accountability.

A Regional Transmission Organization (RTO) is an electric power transmission system operator that coordinates, controls and monitors the grid to promote economic efficiency, reliability and non-discriminatory practices. The RTO is responsible for moving electricity over large interstate areas. The Southwest Power Pool (SPP) RTO West has seven market participants and approximately 10,000 miles of high-voltage transmission.

Organized Energy Market drivers include industry changes, regional market studies, state policies and RTO legislation, and energy imbalance market benefits.

### **8. Q&A and Wrap Up**

Board Member Rainey asked if there are any hot topics from the state legislature and decisions made. Mr. Deal said the main topics involve energy and wildland fire.

The meeting adjourned at 12:03 p.m.