

MINUTES
Wednesday, August 20, 2025
1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order

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

Ms. Natalie Watts, Strategic Planning and Governance Manager, called roll.

Present – Chair Dave Donelson, Board Member Tom Bailey, Board Member Lynette Crow-Iverson, Board Member Henjum, Board Member David Leinweber, Board Member Ronald Rainey and Board Member Brian Risley

Vice Chair Brandy Williams and Board Member Kimberly Gold attended the meeting virtually.

2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Chaplain Gene Steinkirchner, Colorado Springs Police Department, offered the invocation and Chair Donelson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Consent Agenda

These items will be acted upon as a whole unless a specific item is called for discussion by a Board Member or a citizen wishing to address the Utilities Board. (Any items called up for separate consideration shall be acted upon following Compliance Reports.)

- **Approval of July 16, 2025, Utilities Board Meeting Minutes**

The July minutes were approved on the consent agenda.

- **Reappointment of Chris Meyer as a Regular Member of the Utilities Policy Advisory Committee (UPAC)**

Mr. Chris Meyer thanked the Utilities Board and said being on UPAC has been a great opportunity. Mr. Risley thanked Mr. Meyer for his service and expertise on UPAC.

The Reappointment of Chris Meyer as a regular member of UPAC was approved on the consent agenda.

- **Approval of an Intergovernmental Agreement with Arkansas River Power Authority (ARPA)**

Board Member Henjum made a motion to move the item forward to the regular City Council meeting agenda. Board Member Bailey seconded the motion. The motion to move the Intergovernmental Agreement ARPA forward to City Council was passed unanimously.

4. Customer Comments

There were no customer comments.

5. Recognition

- **National Preparedness Month**

Ms. Somer Mese, Chief Operations Officer, introduced Ms. Erin Duran, Emergency Management Program Manager, to provide the recognition for September being National Preparedness Month.

- **Champion of Well-Being Emerging Leader Award**

Ms. Renee Adams, Chief Human Resources Officer, introduced Ms. Sara Akins, Safety & Health Manager. Ms. Akins provided the details of the award given to Springs Utilities by Health Links.

- **Resolution of Appreciation for Lisa Barbato, Chief System Planning and Projects Officer**

Mr. Travas Deal, Chief Executive Officer, extended his appreciation to Ms. Barbato for her invaluable contributions and dedicated service throughout her career at Utilities.

Chair Donelson presented a Resolution of Appreciation honoring Ms. Barbato.

Ms. Barbato expressed her heartfelt gratitude to the Utilities Board for their recognition and reflected on her career with appreciation for the commitment and dedication of all Springs Utilities' employees.

The Deputy Chief of Staff for the City, Ryan Trujillo, conveyed formal thanks on behalf of the City of Colorado Springs. The Utilities Board collectively expressed their appreciation for Ms. Barbato's service and longstanding dedication to Utilities.

Board Member Henjum made the motion to adopt the Resolution of Appreciation. Board Member Crow-Iverson seconded the motion. The resolution passed unanimously.

6. Compliance Reports:

- **I-2 Financial Condition and Activities (to include Contracts Over \$500K**) G-7 (Quarterly April-June)**

There was no presentation for the agenda item.

- **I-4 Risk Management (Semi-annual)**

There was no presentation for the agenda item.

- **I-8 Asset Protection (Semi-annual)**

There was no presentation for the agenda item.

- **I-9 Treatment of Customers and Customer Information (Annual)**

There was no presentation for the agenda item.

- **ER:1-3 Utilities Board Expected Results – Mid-year Scorecard**

Ms. Watts presented the ER:1-3 Utilities Board Expected Results – Mid-year Scorecard.

Board Member Henjum asked about the trend for natural gas failures. Ms. Mese advised Utilities is attempting to be more proactive, but there have been more hits due to increased construction around the city.

Chair Donelson informed attendees that the financial metrics presentation had been thoroughly reviewed during the Working Committee meeting held on Aug. 18. He noted that a recording of the presentation is available for public viewing and, as a result, the Utilities Board may not have many questions at this time.

Mr. Tristan Gearhart, Chief Financial Officer, reviewed the financial metrics that did not meet expectations and next steps to restore the metrics.

- **E-2 CEO/Board Partnership Responsibilities**
 - Electric Cost Adjustment / Gas Cost Adjustment Update
 - Water Outlook

There was no presentation for these items.

7. Items Called Off Consent Agenda

There were no items called from the consent agenda.

8. A Resolution Amending the Portions of the Utilities Board Bylaws and Excellence in Governance Policy Manual Rules Regarding Standing Committees and Rescinding Resolution 25-11

Ms. Renee Congdon, Utilities Division Chief for the Office of the City Attorney, provided an overview of the previous Utilities Board committee structure. She noted that in March 2025, the Utilities Board adopted a resolution to pilot the Working Committee Meeting format, temporarily suspending the Bylaws and Excellence in Governance Policy Manual related to the former structure. Ms. Congdon stated that the current resolution proposes permanently dissolving the individual committees and establishing the Working Committee as the sole standing committee.

Board Member Rainey made a motion to approve the resolution. Board Member Henjum seconded the motion. The resolution passed unanimously.

9. 2026 Budget and Rate Case

Mr. John Hunter, Financial Planning and Risk Manager, presented the 2026 Budget to the Utilities Board.

Board Member Henjum asked when the Montgomery Reservoir project starts. Mr. Hunter advised the project is currently in the planning stages and is set to begin in 2027.

Board Member Henjum highlighted to the public that presentation was reviewed in greater detail at the Working Committee Meeting on Aug. 18.

Mr. Scott Shirola, Pricing and Rates Manager, provided an overview of the Rate Case and the proposed tariff changes. He requested that the items be advanced to the Sept. 9 City Council meeting to formally request a hearing date of Oct. 14.

Vice Chair Williams inquired about the implementation timeline for the proposed net metering changes. In response, Mr. Shirola stated that the changes are scheduled to take effect in 2027. Vice Chair Williams expressed concern regarding the limited timeframe to adequately inform and educate the public about the changes. She recommended that the net metering component be removed from the current Rate Case for further consideration. Mr. Shirola advised there would be an opportunity for City Council to make adjustments at the hearing.

Board Member Henjum inquired whether the proposed net metering changes could be approved in 2026. Mr. Chris Bidlack, City Attorney, responded that the initial reading of the Rate Case is scheduled for the Oct. 14 City Council meeting, at which time Council has the authority to approve or deny the proposed changes. He further noted the final vote on the resolutions is expected to take place at the Oct. 28 City Council meeting. Mr. Bidlack added that the Utilities Board has the discretion to defer the net metering item to next year's Rate Case. Mr. Gearhart provided context for the proposed net metering changes, emphasizing Springs Utilities' intent to allow sufficient time for affected customers to prepare for the transition.

Ms. Congdon asked whether City Council could reject the net metering changes after the Oct. 14 reading. Mr. Bidlack confirmed that Council may approve, deny, or amend the proposal at the hearing's conclusion.

Ms. Congdon also asked about the *ex parte* communication period. Mr. Bidlack stated it begins on Sept. 9, following the hearing request. He advised that communication between Utilities Board Members and Springs Utilities' staff should be limited during this period to ensure all parties enter the hearing with equal access to information.

Board Member Risley made a motion to approve the 2026 Budget and Rate Case to go to City Council. The motion was second by Board member Rainey, it was approved 7-2 with Board Member Henjum and Vice Chair Williams opposed.

10. Board Member Updates

Board Member Henjum provided an update on the positive experience of visiting the Las Vegas Treatment Plant and the Ruxton Hydro Electric Power Plant sites.

Board Member Crow-Iverson stated she also visited the sites and thanked staff for the educational experiences.

Chair Donelson stated the onsite visits have been valuable on providing knowledge of Utilities' infrastructure. He noted that including media coverage on the visits helps to inform the public. He also shared that fiber installation is currently underway on his street and observed that the process has improved.

11. Summary of Board Actions

Natalie Watts, Strategic Planning and Governance Manager, provided a summary of the agenda items approved.

12. Executive Session - 2025 CEO Mid-Year Performance Review

Ms. Congdon read the City Charter to go into Executive Session. The Utilities Board unanimously voted to enter Executive Session.

The Utilities Board took a break at 2:55 p.m. and started Executive Session at 3:00 p.m.

The Utilities Board returned from Executive Session at 4:08 p.m.

13. Adjournment

Chair Donelson adjourned the meeting at 4:09 p.m.