

**NORTH LITTLE ROCK
WASTEWATER TREATMENT COMMITTEE**

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2023

A meeting of the North Little Rock Wastewater Treatment Committee was held on Tuesday, February 14, 2023 in the administrative offices located at the Faulkner Lake Treatment Plant.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Matthews at approximately 12:15 p.m. The roll was called and all committee members were present. Those in attendance at the meeting were Chairman Matthews, Mr. Sylvester Smith, Mr. Ed Nelson, Ms. Karen Bryant and Mr. Gabe Stephens. Also in attendance were Mr. Michael Clayton, Director, Ms. Gina Briley, Ms. Tangelia Marshall, Human Resources Director, Mr. Lyle Leubner, Mr. Sam Hilburn and Mr. Scott Hilburn with Hilburn & Harper, Ltd. and Dawn Harmon.

First, the Committee reviewed the minutes of its January 10, 2023 meeting. After review, a motion was made by Mr. Stephens, seconded by Mr. Nelson, to approve the January 10, 2023 minutes as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.

The Committee then reviewed the cash disbursements for January 2023. A motion was made by Mr. Nelson, seconded by Ms. Bryant, to approve the cash disbursements showing total cash disbursement of \$1,787,942.48 and fund transfers between accounts of \$1,318,000.00. The motion carried unanimously.

Upon motion made by Mr. Nelson, seconded by Mr. Smith, the Committee unanimously approved the financial statement for January 2023 reflecting a positive cash flow. The motion carried unanimously.

Director Clayton advised the Committee that the Utility has a chance to expand its operations by acquiring an adjacent 7.7 acre tract of land near the Faulkner Lake WRF. The property, located near Arkansas State Highway 165, is zoned I-2 and is well suited for expanding wastewater operations. The acquisition of this land will provide several advantages to our operations, such as increased efficiency and a buffer zone between private property and the Water Reclamation Facilities. After negotiating with the Seller of the property, Norman Clifton, for a purchase price of \$650,000.00, NLRW used the services of an Arkansas Certified General Appraiser which provided an appraisal of the property at \$700,000.00. The existing wastewater treatment plant is facing the challenge of meeting the growing demand for its services and the Utility has future plans for the consolidation of the Five Mile Creek WRF, treatment of nutrients, PFAS and biosolids. The acquisition of this land will provide the Utility with the necessary space to expand the facilities

and increase its processing capabilities, ultimately enhancing the overall efficiency. Additionally, the location of this land is ideal for the Utility's operations, as it is situated next to its existing facilities, reducing the cost and complexity of any required infrastructure improvements. The proximity to its existing facilities also reduces transportation costs and provides the Utility with easy access to essential utilities, such as water, electricity and natural gas. Director Clayton went on to add that a concern the Utility has is the potential development of a commercial or industrial property in an ALOHA Threat Zone, where NLRW does not have evacuation authority in case of a chlorine leak. Chlorine is the primary component used for disinfecting treated wastewater, and it is crucial to take all necessary precautions to insure public safety. Furthermore, the land is located in an area designated for industrial use and future development, providing the Utility greater certainty in terms of future land use and reducing the risk of any potential zoning changes that may impact its operations. After further discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Bryant, seconded by Mr. Stephens, to authorize Director Clayton, to enter into an offer and acceptance contract and proceed with the acquisition of the 7.7 acres of property East and adjacent to the existing Faulkner Lake WRF grounds for \$650,000.00. The motion carried unanimously.

Next, Director pointed out that the existing bar screens were installed during the White Oak Bayou Lift Station improvements project which was completed in 2003. This equipment has exceeded its life expectancy of 15-20 years and requires frequent repairs to maintain operation. The existing equipment is a "climber" style that automatically lowers into the 34-foot deep structure and clears 3/4" spaced screen of debris. The debris is brought up to the top and dumped into a hopper that conveys it to a dumpster. This system is dangerous to work on as it relies on a mechanical brake to support itself at the top of the structure. When the brake fails, the rake plummets to the bottom in a violent manner, potentially endangering staff and further damaging the equipment. Several members of the NLRW staff have researched replacement options and discovered a safer, more maintenance friendly alternative called the "Flex Rake." The Flex Rake design also allows for better debris removal efficiency due to its 1/4" screen spacing. The heart of this design includes multiple rakes secured in a continuous loop of links that do not require the braking system. All maintenance of the Flex Rake style is performed above the deck of the concrete bar screen structure at a convenient height located to the side of the open pit. The existing chamber style requires strapping the rake in place to prevent dropping while simultaneously exposing mechanics to the dangers of working over a 34-foot deep open pit. The original manufacturer of the Flex Rake style is Duperon. Since it was a successful design, many manufacturers have begun reverse engineering and building units similar to the Duperon original. Because of the critical nature and cost of this equipment, the staff was careful in developing the bid specifications and required manufacturers to have at least 25 installations that have been in operation for at least five (5) years. The advertisement for bids were conducted, and Duperon was the only manufacturer that responded due to these

requirements. The Duperon brand is represented locally through Jack Tyler Engineering. \$1,200,000.00 for replacement of these bar screens is included in the 2023 budget. Therefore, a motion was made by Mr. Stephens, seconded by Ms. Bryant, to authorize the staff to award the contract to purchase the Duperon Flex Rake IQ bar screen equipment through Jack Tyler Engineering in the amount of \$884,000.00. The motion carried unanimously. It was noted that the staff would like to purchase the equipment direct and secure a contractor separately to eliminate further expense due to contractor equipment mark up costs.

The Committee then discussed the North Little Rock Wastewater Employee Handbook. The handbook is a crucial document for the Utility's organization, providing clear guidelines, expectations and benefits information to employees. In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, it is more important than ever to have an updated and comprehensive employee handbook. Updating the handbook helps ensure that it reflects current laws and regulations. This is especially important in the utility industry, which is heavily regulated and subject to frequent changes in legislation. Keeping the handbook current helps prevent legal issues and ensures compliance with all relevant laws. Secondly, updating the employee handbook helps to improve communication between management and employees. The handbook should clearly outline company policies, procedures and expectations for employees, providing a comprehensive reference for employees to consult when they have questions or concerns. This helps to minimize misunderstandings and ensures that everyone is on the same page, improving overall communication and collaboration within the organization. An updated employee handbook can also help improve employee engagement and satisfaction. By clearly communicating company policies and procedures, employees are able to understand what is expected of them, and they are able to perform their jobs more effectively. The Employee Handbook is a crucial step in ensuring that North Little Rock Wastewater remains compliant, communicative, engaged and productive. Additionally, updating the employee handbook demonstrates that the Utility values its employees and is committed to maintaining a safe, fair and supportive work environment. Director Clayton outlined the substantive changes to the employee handbook which are set forth in a spreadsheet attached to the minutes. Additionally, Director Clayton asked the Committee for authorization to make changes to policies that impact the day-to-day operation of the organization subject to North Little Rock Wastewater attorney approval. Examples of such policies include:

- » Dress Code Policy (business attire to casual attire or vice versa)
- » Inclement Weather Policy (how inclement weather days are declared and how essential workers are determined)
- » Holiday Policy (add holidays or determine how holiday shifts are covered)
- » Changes in Federal and State laws or other governing entities (medical marijuana/safety sensitive designations, FMLA COVID, retirement)
- » Safety Policy (rules needed to protect employees)

- »Bereavement Policy for immediate family
- »Time Keeping Policy (procedures such as the need to report call-out times or move to new timekeeping system/time clock)
- »Twelve (12) months for rehire

After a lengthy discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Stephens, to adopt the North Little Rock Wastewater Employee Handbook as revised and further authorize Director Clayton to make changes, as necessary, with the exception of the 12-month rehire provision which will be removed from the Handbook. The motion carried unanimously.

Director Clayton then called to the attention of the Committee, the Director's Highlights attached to the Agenda dated January 2023 specifically the secondary sewer rehabilitation.

There being no further action to come before the Committee, a motion was made by Mr. Nelson to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:16 p.m.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



K. W. MATTHEWS, CHAIRMAN

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,



SYLVESTER SMITH,
VICE-CHAIRMAN/SECRETARY

Policy	Page Number (2008)	Page Number (2023)	Significant changes
Overtime	8	11	Sick and Vacation Leave has been removed from the 40-hour calculation. Holidays will continue to be counted towards the 40-hour calculation. Added Juneteenth Holiday. Employees scheduled to work on a Holiday will receive 8 hours of holiday pay at their regular rate of pay in addition to a minimum of 4 hours or actual hours worked (whichever is greater) at double time rate. This is different than Standby Holiday Pay policy. See below.Changed from if the employee is scheduled to be on Standby pay status during a holiday, he/she will receive a minimum of 2 hours over time pay; 8 hours regular pay for the day and will be allowed to take a holiday to Employee working on a company observed holiday will receive 8 hours of holiday pay and if on Standby (not called out) will receive 4 hours minimum at regular rate of pay. If called out, will receive 8 hours of holiday pay at regular rate of pay and a minimum of 4 hours or actual hours worked (whichever is greater). Will no longer receive another day off in addition.
Holiday	14	16	Changed from minimum 2 hours of overtime pay whether called out or not to 4 hours minimum at regular rate of pay if not called out, 4 hours minimum at regular rate of pay or actual hours worked (whichever is greater) if called out. Callbacks will receive 4 hours minimum at regular rate of pay or actual hours worked (whichever is greater).
Standby Pay & Call- Back Pay	11	11	
Nepotism	45	43	Revised in July of 2019 Utility Director will make the call related to inclement weather days. Three call categories (Delayed Start, Early Departure, Plant Closure). Employees will be paid regular rate of pay for the number of hours missed due to an inclement weather enacted event. Mission Essential employees will be paid 1.5x regular rate of pay for hours worked. Standby employees will receive 4 hours minimum at regular rate of pay or if called out will receive minimum of 4 hours or actual hours worked (whichever is greater).
Inclement Weather	79	65	
Dress Code	76	47	Added casual attire as dress code for non-uniformed employees. Defined casual attire. Also added Jewelry and Tattoo policy as well as procedures for addressing dress code violations.
Funeral Leave	16	30	Increased number of days allowed to a maximum of 5 days for immediate family (spouse, child, parent, or domestic partner). The maximum of 3 days will remain for other family members (sister, brother, grandparent, grandchild, stepparent, mother/father-in-law, daughter/son-in-law, grandparents-in-law, or any other relative living in household with the employee.
Career Ladder Positions	Not included	14	Added to current version.
Drug-Free Workplace	Not included	55	Added policies regarding the implementation of the Arkansas Medical Cannabis Amendment.
Compensatory Time Off	15	Removed	Removed
Retirement	23	36	Revised according to 2019 Plan amendment. Also added language specifying that employee's must be receiving pension payments in order to remain on NLRW's group health plan as a retiree (per MHBP bylaws).

