



Utilities Advisory Board Regular Meeting Minutes

December 2, 2025 at 12:00 PM

City Hall Commission Chambers
401 S. Park Avenue

Present

Alison Yurko, Kathryn Sutton, Leon Huffman, Christopher Warshaw, Todd Weaver, Katherine Johnson

Absent

Michael Poole

Staff Present

Director of Water and Wastewater Utilities David Zusi, Director of Electric Utility Jamie England, Director of Finance Wes Hamil, Electric Utility Operations Manager Miguel Cruz, Deputy Director of Water and Wastewater Utilities Jason Riegler, Electric Utility Engineer Manager Mourad Belfakih, Integrated Resources Program Manager Lisa Vedder (Virtual), Administrative Coordinator Leana Suarez

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 pm.

2. Approval of Minutes

- a. Minutes of September 23, 2025

**Motion made by Mr. Weaver to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Sutton.
Motion carried unanimously with a 6-0 vote.**

3. Public Comments (for items not on the agenda)

4. Action Items

5. Non-Action Items

6. Staff Updates

- a. Electric Utility - Jamie England

Electric Utility September Update

Mr. England provided an update on the electric utility; the total length of underground planned for fiscal year 2025 is 5.06 miles. He defined residential service conversion for Ms. Johnson as the connection of underground service to the residential property. The data presented covers the period through September. Mr. England also clarified the total miles completed citywide and in the previous month. The total underground utility

budget is set at \$9.2 million. Mr. England reviewed the Notes of Interest as listed in the packet.

The meter replacement vendor should be selected within the next month or two. Mr. Zusi added that this decision affects both utility departments, so they are working together to determine a joint approach.

Ms. Sutton highlighted three deliverables from the previous meeting that the staff had not yet updated. She requested that these be addressed in the upcoming meeting: an update to the public-facing EV charging station usage patterns over the year since the implementation of the new rate structure last November; the agreement with Optimus, the third-party owner that Ms. Eby consented to provide as well as the terms adopted by the City Commission; quarterly usage reports from Optimus.

Mr. England reviewed the issues and resolutions in the packet and informed the board that they are closely monitoring the cleaning, maintenance, and performance of the solar arrays.

b. Water & Wastewater Utility – David Zusi

Mr. Zusi presented the water and wastewater report, noting ongoing efforts to improve communication with customers about the cross-connection control backflow policy. The full package, including notifications and letters, will be provided to the board soon. Additionally, an update on new staff includes Leana Suarez, the administrative assistant, and another administrative team member who played a key role in implementing the policy and monitoring private lift stations assuring proper maintenance, emergency response, and signage. These stations will be subject to regulation and manual inspections.

With the assistance of Gloria Eby, Director of Natural Resources, staff applied for a \$30 million grant and were awarded \$19 million. Of this amount, \$9 million has been forgiven, and the remaining funds were secured through state revolving fund loans at 0% interest. Additionally, a \$5 million grant was received for a lift station project at Rauvadage.

In the near future, service will be discontinued according to the cross-connection policy if customers fail to comply with backflow regulations.

c. Performance Measurement – Wes Hamil

Mr. Hamil provided the monthly performance measurements through September and noted that the average wait time for Customer Service was low.

Although the fuel cost recovery rates were reduced on September 1, the city over-recovered in fuel. In October, the city under-recovered slightly, and the rates are effectively reducing that balance. The target balance may be slightly higher with the fiscal 2026 budget, and this will be reported in January.

d. Educational Campaign – Clarissa Howard

The newsletter is included in the packet.

e. Solar Update

Mr. England announced that Whistling Duck is now operational and anticipates receiving 18 megawatts of solar power by month's end, increasing the total capacity to 23 megawatts. A tour of the Whistling Duck facility was offered, requiring coordination. He also noted that the City's two power supply contracts, with OUC and FMPA, are expiring at the end of 2026 and 2027, respectively. Staff is currently in discussions with suppliers and will engage in negotiations over the coming months. Portfolio options and Staff recommendations will be presented to the Board for feedback prior to ultimate submission to the City Council. The Electric Utility has initiated a cost of service and rate design study, led by Craig Shephard of Leidos Engineering, which is expected to be completed in the third quarter of 2026.

7. Board Comments

Mr. Huffman noted that HostDime is opening up a huge data center housing 35,000 servers and asked whether this would affect the city's electric supply. Mr. England replied that market capacity is becoming more competitive, with data centers being a significant factor. He emphasized that it is a serious concern as the city works to ensure sufficient capacity for its residents. Ms. Yurko inquired about how the city can prepare for this issue. Mr. England clarified that the city's contract with OUC expires next year, followed by the FMPA contract the year after, giving the city two years to secure purchasing agreements to ensure adequate megawatt supply.

Ms. Johnson questioned how the goals of increased electricity demand and the city's aim for 100% solar energy are compatible. She expressed support for virtual power plants, small SMRs, and other alternatives, arguing that solar is expensive, unreliable, environmentally harmful, and might not be the best solution as previously thought. She recommended reconsidering the solar goal given recent changes in tariffs, administration stance, and the environmental impact of mining for batteries and rare earth elements.

Ms. Yurko proposed including an explanation of data centers' impact in the next agenda. Mr. England noted that the electricity supplied by data centers, which supports their operations, costs a very small amount relative to the value of the AI produced by the electricity. Data centers are prepared to pay significantly more than residential or commercial customers. This means power producers can choose their buyers. The city will be competing not only for megawatt capacity but also for the cost of those megawatts.

Ms. Sutton inquired about Florida's overall strategy to address potential supply and demand cost challenges. Mr. England explained that utilities like OUC, Duke, Florida Power & Light, and Tampa are engaging with legislators and data center companies due to the significant system impacts and financial stakes involved. Ms. Sutton then asked how the state is approaching this issue from a policy and legislative standpoint. Mr.

England responded that they plan to raise this topic with the Senators during their annual trip to D.C. in February.

Mr. Weaver responded to the claim that solar energy is environmentally harmful by explaining that solar panels use silica, a very abundant metal, along with other metals in their production. He noted that batteries serve as a form of energy storage, allowing the grid to manage the small amount of solar power the city currently generates. Additionally, the goal of achieving 100% solar energy relies on all renewable sources, not just solar. While there are challenges with mining rare earth elements, lithium being exploited in Nevada is not one of them.

Mr. Warshaw confirmed with Mr. England that a load serving entity is required to plan ahead and procure additional power if their reserves are running low. The main concern is to ensure that the city has contracts in place to secure a specific amount of power it needs. Ms. Sutton explained that this involves both capacity and price considerations. Ms. Yurko expressed worry that the supply and demand challenge might be that large data center companies could get ahead of the city, potentially causing the city to subsidize their operations by paying higher utility rates. She emphasized that this situation ultimately hinges on pricing. Mr. England reassured everyone that the city will not be left at a disadvantage.

Mr. Huffman noted that although the data center is small, it is located at the city's back door, and additional data centers are expected to be built. Ms. Vedder explained that these data centers function as AI factories, since everything used on smartphones, computers, bill paying etc., depends on AI; it's unavoidable. Mr. England observed that, after years of efforts to cut electric consumption, AI has led to the opposite trend.

8. Upcoming Agenda Items

Ms. Yurko requests a presentation on the impact of data centers and AI to advise the mayor and commissioners. This will be on the agenda after the DC trip in the March meeting.

9. Adjournment

Chair Ms. Sutton thanked all the city staff for their hard work in 2025.

The meeting adjourned at 1:01 p.m.

Approved by the board on January 27, 2026
/s/ Bahiyah Layton, Board Coordinator