



Utilities Advisory Board Regular Meeting Minutes

February 24, 2026 at 12:00 PM

City Hall Commission Chambers
401 S. Park Avenue

Present

Michael Poole, Kathryn Sutton, Leon Huffman (Virtual), Christopher Warshaw, Todd Weaver

Absent

Alison Yurko, Katherine Johnson

Staff Present

Director of Water and Wastewater Utilities David Zusi, Director of Finance Wes Hamil, Electric Utility Supervisor Ben Wells, Deputy Director of Water and Wastewater Utilities Jason Riegler, Utility Services Manager Ann Newhouse, Administrative Coordinator Genie Brown

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:04 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

- a. Minutes of January 27, 2026

Motion made by Mr. Weaver to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Warshaw. Motion carried unanimously.

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

4. Action Items

5. Non-Action Items

- a. Impact of Cold Weather on Fuel Adjustment

Mr. Hamil discussed how the cold weather impacted operations, noting that Publix, the city, and the hospital used backup generators to help meet the increased demand. Sources used by FMPA to supply power, and solar also eased the burden. Future forecasting shows a significant decline, but it is expected to rise during the summer months as fuel cost recovery rates increase.

The city begins calculating its fuel rates starting March 1. He explained how the fuel adjustment is determined, resulting in bills increasing by \$21 to \$26. These rate changes will be implemented from March 1 and will be spread over nine months. Mr. Poole would like this to be featured in the newsletter to inform the public.

6. Staff Updates

a. Electric Utility - Jamie England

Ben Wells, Supervisor of Electric Utilities Services, provided the monthly update on electric utilities.

- Projects O, L, and J are ongoing.
- Community events involving schools and churches continue to be positive and engaging.
- Notes of Interests include: transformer painting that started on 2/18/16, initially addressing graffiti-covered transformers; efforts to improve communication with ENCO; Mr. England's request for a quote to add a new power transformer at the substation; progress on the OUC additional feeder project at N. Orange and Hazel; implementation of a pole inspection program to identify rotting poles and attachments; and the development of a thermal imaging surveillance system for substations to detect hotspots and loose connections.

Mr. Poole requests the estimated and actual costs for the listed projects. Mr. Weaver recommends including historical costs starting from around 2020 to help customers see cost increases over time. Mr. Poole also suggests displaying inventory drawdowns quarterly. The benefit is creating the capital budget based on actual figures or percentage increases.

b. Water & Wastewater Utility – David Zusi

Mr. Zusi explained that most projects involve other departments, such as Public Works where staff is replacing two force mains and manholes at Gulfside Drive and Fairway. Numerous construction projects are currently under evaluation, including those south of Fairbanks and Minnesota. Additionally, stormwater work is planned on Minnesota, along with potential improvements to the collection system.

During the cold snap, the water and wastewater department supported the electric department by shifting much of their load to generators. This prompted a discussion about who is responsible for maintaining the power connections on the facilities side, which led to developing a quarterly program to test automatic power transfer. Mr. England will collaborate with other end users like Rollins to implement a similar program. The city's largest generators are at the water treatment and wastewater plants. Maintenance of these generators is the responsibility of water/wastewater, but going forward, maintenance will also include the connection from the generator to the building. Electric utility will work closely with the customers.

The Consumptive Use Permit (CUP) was submitted before its October deadline and is now under review by the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD). Staff has responded to several Requests for Additional Information (RAI's). The most recent inquiry pertains to discussions on creating our own reclaimed water source. Most of the city's wastewater is treated by Orlando or Altamonte Springs, with none returning to

Winter Park. The only wastewater we can reclaim and utilize is from our facility behind Publix on Aloma, which handles 600,000 gallons daily. This provides the largest possible gallon-for-gallon offset. The plant's capacity is nearly double its current usage. The long-term budget includes plans to divert additional flow to the plant.

In response to questions about septic tank conversion, Mr. Zusi explained that a high-level study by the University of Florida was conducted. This study clearly identified the septic tank locations, determined if they are clustered, and provided an approximate cost per mile for conversion. The costs and inconvenience to customers are substantial; once funding becomes available for septic tank conversions, staff will begin that project.

Almost \$25 million in grant funds has been secured for lift station improvements and flow diversions. Updates on the CUP project will be provided at future meetings.

c. Performance Measurement – Wes Hamil

Mr. Hamil provided the monthly performance measurements:

- Electric fuel cost recovery rates will be increased.
- The 12-month KWH consumption is experiencing a slight decrease.
- Disconnection for non-payment has not occurred, as staff are currently addressing meter issues.
- Bad debt expenses are marginally exceeding our target goal.
- Utility accounts receivable over 60 days overdue show an upward trend.
- The balance of the fuel cost stabilization fund will be restored to our target within the next nine months. Our new fuel rate is 4.363 cents; however, 3.6 cents represents the forecasted fuel cost over the upcoming nine months. Therefore, the main factor driving the increase in rates is the forecasted fuel cost rather than the impact of cold weather.

d. Educational Campaign – Clarissa Howard

The bill insert was included in the agenda package.

7. Board Comments

Mr. Zusi announced his retirement will be in early June.

8. Upcoming Agenda Items

Mr. Poole asked for an update on the charging stations, the study, and the impact of the implemented policy. This includes a comparison between our original goals and the actual usage, summarized in a usage report. Additionally, he recommended providing the UAB business plan to new board members joining in June or July. This should be an annual presentation to track the progress of UAB.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:02 p.m.

Approved by the board on March 24, 2026
/s/ Bahiyyah Layton, Board Coordinator