

## **Hart County Water and Sewer Authority Board of Directors Meeting August 17, 2026**

The Hart County Water and Sewer Authority met on August 17, 2026, in the Hart County Cooperative Extension Service Building. Chairman Wade Carlton called the meeting to order. Present were Board Members Larry Haley, Bennie Harper, Marvin Justice and Vice-Chair Patti York. Also present were Legal Counsel Kim Higginbotham, Interim Director Charles Cathon, The Hartwell Sun Editor Rose Scoggins, EMI CEO Jerry Hood, EMI Senior Engineer Russ Brink, HCWSA employees Steven Gifford and Holly Mathis, and several members of the public.

### **Welcome**

### **Approval of Agenda**

Ms. York motioned to approve the agenda. Mr. Haley seconded the motioned which passed 5 – 0.

### **Approval of July 20, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Justice motioned to approve the July 20<sup>th</sup> regular meeting minutes. Mr. Haley seconded the motion which passed 5 – 0.

### **Public Comments; Remarks by invited guests**

Two county residents requested water service for the Reed Creek area.

### **Financial Report**

Mr. Cawthon presented the financial report.

### **Old Business**

### **Reed Creek Expansion Project update**

Mr. Cawthon reviewed the area menu of Options 1–4, including the number of commitment letters associated with each option area, as presented in the Board packet. He noted that approximately six miles of the project remained to be bid.

Mr. Hood of EMI reported that the request for an extension of the Reed Creek GEFA loan through June 2028 had been submitted. He also discussed the choice of issuing a change order or rebidding the remaining work.

Mr. Cawthon suggested including materials once the contract extension is approved and discussed the possibility of utilizing a change order to retain Arrowood General Contracting if their prices remain the same.

Mr. Hood further informed the Board that the \$10 million GEFA pre-application with a minimum of 40% principal forgiveness, requested by the previous Director, had been submitted.

### **Operational Update**

Mr. Brink of EMI presented his recommendations for system maintenance improvement following the July 11 main line break event. He recommended a proactive approach by utilizing the existing SCADA software to include daily flow totalization monitoring and adding the discharge of pressure pumps, pressure reducing valves throughout the system, flow rate monitoring telemetry at the master meter interchanges, pressure transducers throughout the system, and upgrading the existing booster pumps to meet existing and future demand. Mr. Brink also discussed the system benefits of a Mt Olivet area loop, another tank and/or an additional booster pump(s).

After a brief discussion, the Board requested that Mr. Brink compile additional research and modeling to present at the next meeting.

### **New Business**

#### **FY27 Operating Budget**

Mr. Cawthon presented the first reading of the proposed FY27 Operating Budget.

#### **Ridge Road**

Ms. Higginbotham informed the Board of the cost share request from the City of Hartwell to Hart County.

#### **Director's Comments**

Mr. Cawthon gave an update on past due accounts.

#### **Members' Comments**

Ms. York expressed her thanks to Mr. Cawthon and Authority staff for hard work progressing through the past due accounts.

Mr. Harper echoed the sentiment.

Ms. Higginbotham stated that the Hart County FY25 Financial Audit is complete.

#### **Upcoming Meetings**

Monday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026, and October 19<sup>th</sup> 2026

### **Executive Session – Personnel and Litigation**

Mr. Justice made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss personnel and litigation. Mr. Haley seconded the motion which passed 5 – 0.

All five Board Members were present in Executive Session. Additionally, Ms. Higginbotham and Mr. Cawthon were in attendance. Mr. Haley moved to exit Executive Session and reconvene the Regular Meeting. Mr. Justice seconded the motion which passed 5 - 0.

### **Regular Meeting**

Ms. York made a motion to implement annual performance reviews. Mr. Haley seconded the motion, which passed 5 – 0.

After a brief discussion, the Board scheduled a work session for Monday, August 24<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Harper motioned to adjourn. Mr. Haley seconded the motion which passed 5 - 0.

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Wade Carlton, Chairman