

Hart County Water and Sewer Authority Board of Directors Meeting September 22, 2025

The Hart County Water and Sewer Authority met on September 22, 2025, in the Hart County Cooperative Extension Service Building. Chairman Wade Carlton called the meeting to order. Present were Vice Chair Patti York, Board Members Larry Haley, Bennie Harper and Marvin Justice. Also present were Legal Counsel Kim Higginbotham, Director Pat Goran, Office Manager Karen Neal, Hartwell Sun Editor Rose Scoggins and many local residents.

Welcome

Approval of Agenda

Ms. York made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Harper seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of August 18, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Haley made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 18, 2025 Board meeting. Mr. Harper seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments

Randy Davis of Sentu Way gave a brief presentation on the challenges his neighborhood is currently facing with a community well. He asked the Board to consider Sentu Way when prioritizing which roads to add to the Reed Creek expansion project. Guy Hagan also of Sentu Way echoed Mr. Davis's remarks and added that even with filtration systems the quality of the water is poor. He requested to Board consider extending to the end of Old Andersonville Road.

John O'Brien requested the Board consider extending the closest HCWSA line to the Dobbs Landing, King's Bench Drive and Winter Lane area. He stated there are 85 to 130 homes depending on which line is extended.

Josh LeCroy of Whispering Pines requested the Board consider his request to extend water down Whispering Pines Road (off of Bethany Bowersville Road). He stated his well has very low pressure and poor-quality water. Mr. LeCroy stated there are currently two homes and a third is being built now. He also stated a poultry operation is nearby. Mr. Carlton asked Mr. Goran to put an estimate together.

A general question from the community residents present was whether HCWSA could request additional funds from GEFA. Mr. Goran stated GEFA is likely to grant such a request, but that it would likely come without principal forgiveness like the loan for the Reed Creek area expansion.

Financial Report

Mr. Goran provided a brief update on HCWSA finances. He stated that SPLOST available funds dropped slightly with the approval of the Cleveland Mill Road/Reno Drive project. He also shared that HCWSA available funds dropped with the approval of the Union Hill Church Road project. He stated that HCWSA continues to have positive cash flow. Mr. Carlton asked why the booster pump electricity cost was higher and Mr. Goran explained that Georgia Power cashed two checks in August.

Old Business

Reed Creek area expansion project update and discussion of how to prioritize requests for service outside current project scope

Mr. Goran requested the Board consider how best to prioritize the requests to be added to the Reed Creek expansion project as HCWSA has received more requests than it can fulfill at this time. He also shared that the project is expected to begin late October or early November.

Will Bailey Road – Morris Road – Beacon Light Road – Mount Olivet Road project update

Mr. Goran stated this project is complete with the exception of portions of Cleveland Mill Road and Reno Drive. He expects completion by the end of next week.

Discussion of Authority's wholesale water purchase arrangement with Hartwell

Mr. Goran stated there has been no movement in this regard.

Consideration of customer retail rate increase

Mr. Goran stated the Authority's last rate increase was April of 2023. Mr. Carlton asked the Board members to review all relevant information and be prepared to vote next month. When asked, Mr. Goran stated a rate increase in January 2026 would give HCWSA time to alert customers.

Discussion of pursuing groundwater

Mr. Goran stated that due to his workload, he has not had the opportunity to pursue this further.

New Business

Request for water service – two Curt Bailey Road poultry operations

Ms. Nancy Do has requested the Board consider extending a line down Curt Bailey Road to Louis Chu's existing poultry operation of four broiler houses which is across the road from where Ms. Do is building four breeder houses. Mr. Goran shared an estimate with Board members.

University of Georgia Archway study for constructing new surface water treatment plant

Ms. York shared the Archway project has been approved. She stated UGA engineering students would make a site visit to HCWSA's property before the end of the year. She also stated that the students would apply for a grant to help cover some of the costs for the project. The final project at the end of the school year would include full plans for a surface water treatment facility.

Proposed fiscal year 2026 operating budget

Mr. Goran proposed a budget for the new fiscal year. He stated he is recommending a five percent COLA raise for Ms. Neal and Cory Bouquet to be effective October 1st. Mr. Haley asked if Mr. Goran has considered another employee and Mr. Goran stated there are funds in the proposed FY26 budget to do so. No action was taken by the Board.

Director's Comments

Mr. Goran stated that he recently spoke at the Hart County Board of Commissioners meeting to request their approval to participate in the Georgia Upper Savannah Partnership. He requested a letter of support signed by Terrell Partain and a check for \$3,000 seed match. The Hart County Board of Commissioners unanimously approved the request contingent on HCWSA supporting it. Ms. York made a motion that HCWSA support the Commissioners' action, and Mr. Haley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Higginbotham noted there is the potential for conversations with nearby communities with respect to the partnership. Ms. York stated this could be made a part of future water treatment facility plans.

Mr. Goran also requested the Board to consider an automated system to route calls to either a pay-by-phone option or office personnel. Mr. Goran shared pricing details as well as benefits. It was agreed this would be discussed during the October meeting.

Members' Comments

Ms. York asked if HCWSA is disconnecting customers who do not pay their bills and Mr. Goran stated that wasn't occurring on a regular basis. Ms. York said they should be turned off.

Mr. Haley had several comments including the new subdivision being built on Will Bailey Road, a suspected water leak on Airline Store Road, the new blue fiberglass valve markers as well as payment for the main line damage on Bowersville Highway from 2024. Ms. Higginbotham stated she has learned that the Georgia Utilities Protection Center prosecutes violators of the 811 excavation law.

Neither Mr. Justice nor Mr. Harper had any comments.

Mr. Carlton inquired as to additional Corps allotment on Lake Hartwell. Mr. Goran stated a study would cost an estimated \$950,000. Mr. Goran stated the City of Hartwell has requested an allotment increase as well so there is potentially the option to share the cost of the study. Mr. Carlton asked that a customer delinquent account report be included in future meeting packets.

Upcoming Meetings

After much discussion, the next meeting will be October 20, 2025. Ms. York will not be present due to another commitment.

Adjournment

Mr. Harper made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. York seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Wade Carlton, Chairman

Shared/minutes/FY25/minutes092225DraftKEN