

Hart County Water and Sewer Authority Board of Directors Meeting November 10, 2025

The Hart County Water and Sewer Authority met on November 10, 2025, in the Hart County Cooperative Extension Service Building. Chairman Wade Carlton called the meeting to order. Present were Board Members Patti York, Larry Haley, Marvin Justice and Bennie Harper. 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. Haley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of October 20, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Haley made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 20, 2025 Board meeting. Mr. Justice seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments

Several residents on Union Hill Church Road spoke of their water challenges and repeated their desire to have the current construction project expanded to include their homes. Twelve commitment letters have been collected, and the residents asked the Board again to consider their request.

Alan Brown of Hidden Point provided an update on the number of verbal commitments he has secured in his neighborhood. He also stated he will be speaking with residents on Freedom Trail. Mr. Brown offered to secure signed commitment letters from his neighborhood. He again requested the Board consider adding his neighborhood to the Reed Creek Highway project.

Mark Gregory of Fleming Park Road repeated his request for water for his neighborhood in the Paynes Creek area. He made his second request for the Board to consider adding his neighborhood to the Reed Creek Highway project.

Peter Shedd of Harbor Point again requested the Board consider adding his neighborhood to the Reed Creek Highway project. He volunteered to serve as an ambassador to collect signed commitment letters.

Jennifer Otto spoke representing the Old Andersonville Road / Sentu Way neighborhood. She requested again the Board consider including her neighborhood in the Reed Creek Highway project.

Rhea Dignam had several comments regarding the proposed partnership with the City of Lavonia. She stated any partnership should include equal ownership of a new water treatment facility rather than Hart County and Franklin County merely remaining wholesale customers. Ms. Dignam asked the Board if a partnership with the City of Hartwell to expand their current water treatment facility is a

possibility rather than HCWSA partnering with the City of Lavonia. Ms. York said this is a possibility. Ms. Dignam stated Kay Ankerich seems amenable to working with the Authority in her upcoming term on the Hartwell City Council. Finally, Ms. Dignam stated the UGA Archway project may offer additional options.

Financial Report

Mr. Goran provided the financial report. He stated that a conversation with County Administrator Terrell Partain revealed the Authority may have more SPLOST 6 dollars available than our current report shows. He stated he will update the Board following the completion of the County's and Authority's FY25 audits. Mr. Goran recommended the cost of the Martin Dairy / Union Hill Church / Carrie Craft project be paid with SPLOST 6 funds rather than HCWSA funds since additional HCWSA funds can be invested in Georgia Fund 1 yielding a higher interest rate; the Board agreed. Mr. Goran also shared that overall usage is down due to cooler temperatures; therefore, purchases from Hartwell are down somewhat compared to Lavonia. Finally, Mr. Goran stated operational cash flow continues to be positive. Mr. Carlton inquired about the jump in postage and shipping costs. Mr. Goran explained that our new bill-mailer has been behind in submitting invoices to the Authority since signing their contract in June. Mr. Goran stated that Ms. Neal has been aggressively pushing them to bill us more promptly. Ms. Neal confirmed the most current invoice was just received today.

Old Business

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

Mr. Goran again asked the Board to prioritize the requests to be added to the scope of the Reed Creek Highway expansion project. Mr. Goran presented a revised commitment letter with survey questions for the Board to review. Mr. Carlton suggested some changes to both the cover letter and the commitment form. Mr. Justice asked Ms. Neal if the cost for usage of 10,000 gallons or more for residential customers was changed in the October meeting. Ms. Neal shared that price was increased from \$5.60 to \$6.00. Mr. Justice requested that it be made clear in the commitment letter.

Moving on to the estimates presented in tonight's meeting, Mr. Goran requested the Board make decisions for Hidden Point, Harbor Point and Sentu Way. Mr. Goran also requested the Board members approve giving commitment letters to representatives of each neighborhood for them to collect signatures. The Board members agreed.

Finally, Mr. Goran shared that EMI feels GEFA is likely to approve another loan with similar principal forgiveness to HCWSA's most recent loan. Mr. Goran also stated that HCWSA would not be obligated to accept the funds if awarded. Mr. Justice asked if applying for a new loan would affect the Authority's credit worthiness. Mr. Goran stated the application itself would have no impact. Mr. Harper made a motion to move forward with applying for a new GEFA loan. Ms. York seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-1 with Mr. Justice voting against.

Request for water service – two Curt Bailey Road poultry operations

Nancy Do and Louis Chu were not in attendance, but the Board revisited their prior request. Following a brief discussion, Ms. York motioned to approve this project. The motion was seconded by Mr. Harper. The motion passed 3-1 with Mr. Justice voting against and Mr. Carlton abstaining.

Request for water service – Union Hill Church Road residences past poultry operations

Mr. Goran stated he discussed the necessary size pipeline required for this expansion with Russ Brink of EMI. They agreed that although 6” pipe would suffice for now it could cause fire flow concerns if extended in the future. Mr. Goran recommended that, based on that discussion, the Board approve moving forward with this expansion using 8” pipe. Mr. Goran pointed out that crossing the stream may require additional funds since it may require directional drilling. Mr. Haley made a motion to approve this extension. Mr. Justice seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Proposed fiscal year 2026 operating budget

Mr. Goran again requested the Board to approve the previously submitted budget as well as a five percent wage increase for staff. Following a brief discussion, Mr. Haley made a motion to approve the budget as written. Mr. Justice seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Consideration of partnering with City of Lavonia – surface water treatment plant

Mr. Goran stated he has been working on a memorandum of understanding with Lavonia and shared the letter recently received from Lavonia Mayor Courtney Umbehant about the topic. Mr. Goran shared he would feel better about equal ownership with Franklin County and the City of Lavonia with respect to any new water treatment facility in Lavonia. A brief discussion was held regarding how best to deliver the Authority’s water to its customers around the county.

New Business

Requests for water service – 1000’+- Bowersville Highway extension

Mr. Goran stated that Joe Sanders had previously provided a permanent easement to the Authority when HCWSA extended the line to his poultry operation several years ago and that he recently committed to having six new taps paid for. After a brief discussion, Mr. Haley made a motion to approve this project. Ms. York seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-1 with Mr. Justice voting against.

Director’s Comments

Mr. Goran shared information on a major leak that occurred on the morning of Friday November 7 in the Hickory Crossing / Zion CME Church Road area that affected a large number of customers. He stated the Authority moved quickly to notify South Hart Elementary School, Whitworth Women’s Facility and the Hart County Jail of a temporary loss of service. Additionally, a Boil Water Advisory was issued on Friday morning via phone, text, email, radio stations and social media pending the outcome of test results for the samples taken following the repair. Good test results were returned Saturday at approximately 6:30pm allowing the Boil Water Advisory to be lifted. Mr. Goran also shared information on an additional, much smaller leak which occurred on the afternoon of Monday

November 10 affecting roughly the same area. Mr. Goran stated these lines are old City of Hartwell lines the Authority inherited. He noted none of these lines had tracer wire installed to ensure locates were accurate, that some of the valve boxes had been paved over and the Authority did its best to provide proper markings.

Members' Comments

Mr. Carlton, Ms. York and Mr. Harper had no additional comments. Mr. Haley asked a few questions regarding fire hydrant locations. Mr. Justice again stated his belief that HCWSA should have its own water treatment facility. He also stated the Authority should push for higher principal forgiveness in its upcoming loan request. Finally, Mr. Justice recommended once again another staff member be hired who can fill in when Mr. Goran or Ms. Neal are out of the office to avoid getting behind in the workload.

Upcoming Meetings

The next meeting is scheduled for December 15, 2025. A decision about the date for the January 2026 meeting will be made at that time.

Adjournment

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

Wade Carlton, Chairman