

**Water Works District No. 2
St. Tammany Parish, State of Louisiana**

**Board of Waterworks Commissioners Meeting
Water District No. 2 Office, Hwy. 36, Covington, LA**

April 13, 2026– 5:00 p.m.

Staff Present: Julie Williams – General Manager
Jessica Puckett – Office Manager
Grady Thigpen – Field Supervisor

Board Present: Benjamin Martino – President
Pierre Fabre – Vice President
Lorraine Saba – Secretary/Treasurer
Monique Stubbs – Board Member
Sarah Holzhalb – Board Member

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by President Benjamin Martino.

Minutes: Minutes of the March 16, 2026 meeting were read. Motion to approve them was made by Monique Stubbs and seconded by Pierre Fabre.

Bank Balances: Bank balances for the month ending March 31, 2026 were read by Lorraine Saba.

Julie Williams spoke:

Water Loss: Water Loss was 16.68%. During this month a curb stop busted in the new development - Adoration Place Subdivision - which contributed to the water loss.

Profit & Loss: 2026 Adopted Budget vs. Actual Budget shows Operating Revenue at 25.31% and Operating Expenses at 26.59%, both in line with the end of first quarter. Net Operating Revenue was down \$-4,026.10 due to Audit Fees of \$14,000. Overall we are on target for the first quarter of the year.

Customer Issue: Leslie Davis at 72260 Gurtner Drive had a leak on her side of the water meter in the service line between the house and the meter which resulted in a much higher bill than normal. She came in with the bill and the plumber who repaired the line to see if we could adjust the bill. Julie made the customer aware that any leaks on the customer side of the meter is the customer responsibility. Julie told the customer she could adjust the sewer charges since the leak did not go through Utilities, Inc. sewer system and make a 12-month

payment arrangement for the remaining balance on the account. Leslie Davis was disappointed with the response and emailed St. Tammany Parish Government offices, council members and Louisiana Rural Water Association regarding the water leak and the districts' response.

After several email conversations between Leslie Davis and Julie Williams – General Manager of the district with all emails copied to all involved in initial email discussing the leak and water bill, Leslie Davis requested a 24-month extended payment arrangement instead of the 12-month arrangement initially offered. After much discussion, the board approved her request for the 24-month extended payment program.

New Development: The district received conceptual plans from engineer Kelly McHugh and Associates for a new development consisting of 192 lots at the corner of Wilson Road and Plantation Street in Covington. Kelly McHugh and Associates is requesting a “Willingness to Serve” letter for the development. Julie has contacted our engineer, Karl Aucoin, with Aucoin and Associates, Inc/Pontchartrain Engineers to see if our system has the capacity to provide water service to the development. Once it is determined that we have the capacity to provide water service Julie will send the “Willingness to Serve” letter to Kelly McHugh and Associates.

Field Operations: Casey Burge requested to take the operator certification class and exam being held by Louisiana Rural Water Association in July 2026 to obtain his Class 1 Certification in Water Production and Water Treatment. He attended the class last year and earned his Class 1 in Water Distribution but did not pass the tests for Water Production and Water Treatment. The classes are held July 13, 2026 through July 16, 2026 with the exam held on July 17, 2026. The cost is approximately \$1100 for the class and travel expenses. Grady feels it would help him pass if he takes the class offered immediately followed by the exam. Grady noted that he is a very good employee and deserves the opportunity to take the class again to obtain the certifications. Therefore, the board approved for Casey to attend the class and take the exam.

Credit Cards: We currently have a Shell credit card through WEX which allows the operators to get fuel from Shell stations only. WEX program offers fuel cards that allow use at many gas stations. This would allow operators to get fuel from multiple gas stations and use gas stations where the cost of fuel is cheaper. Julie suggested we switch to this program and the board agreed.

Covington Manor Mobile Home Park: Julie contacted St. Tammany Parish asking for any records they may have on the Covington Manor Mobile Home Park water lines indicating whose responsibility it is to maintain the water lines. The district does not have any records to indicate whose responsibility it is to make repairs within the mobile home park since the new lines were installed in 1997. They responded with a letter in their records from LA Dept. of Health

dated July 25, 1997 stating the approval of the new lines were given based on the stipulation that Water Works District No.2 own, operate, and maintain the water distribution lines. This confirms that the district is responsible for repairs to the water mains located in the mobile home park. Julie also stated she now has the contract information for the new owner of the mobile home park.

Payment Service Network: The district currently uses PSN (Payment Service Network) to process online and phone payments. It is a very basic third-party service. Customers can only see the total balance on the account and make payments. We have also had issues with some of our auto draft customers payments not processing after converting to the online service with them. After contacting PSN they have no real explanation of what is causing the issues. The suggestion was to have the customers cancel their current draft and payment types and set up a new auto draft.

Caselle (Government Accounting Software) our current billing software provider now has a new Caselle Citizen Portal that will allow customers to set up an account which will allow them to see a PDF copy of their bill, enroll in paperless billing, make payments, see billing and payment history, see graphs of water usage, and all transactions made by both the customer and the district are in real time. We will also have the capability of sending text notifications, email alerts, and payment reminders. Customers can pay online, mobile app, or in person at the office. If the customer has set up an auto draft for their payment it will state that on their bill. There is a one-time implementation fee of \$600.00 and the Online Payment Portal is \$50.00 per month. Processing fees will be charged to the customer. Credit Card fee is 3.50% of payment amount and ACH fee is \$1.25 per transaction. After much discussion with the staff and board it was agreed this would be a benefit to customers and the board approved to make the change from PSN to Caselle Citizen Portal.

Water Rate Study: Timmy Lemoine, with Louisiana Rural Water Association, did a Water Rate Study. The Louisiana Department of Health recommends a Sustainability Rate factor of 1.15, he advised us to raise our water rates to accomplish this. Julie said that 22% of our customers pay minimum bills. Therefore, we are planning to do an increase of \$2.50 which will raise the \$21.00 minimum cost to \$23.50. Commercial bills will go from \$33.00 minimum to \$35.50. The over 2,000 gallon rate will increase \$1.25 from \$4.75 to \$6.00 residential and \$1.50 from \$5.00 to \$6.50 commercial.

Residential: Min. Charge \$23.50 for 2000 gallons and \$6.00 per 1,000 gallons

Commercial: Min. Charge \$35.50 for 2000 gallons and \$6.50 per 1,000 gallons

A letter will go out with April's billing statements advising of the May 1st increase. The importance of this increase is to have the funds for day-to-day operations and for future water line repairs/replacement, and water well

maintenance/upgrades. This also puts us within the state recommendation of a 1.15 Sustainability Rate Factor. Considering this, the board all voted to go forward with the rate increase. The last rate increase was January 2023.

No further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Monique Stubbs and seconded by Pierre Fabre.

Submitted by: Lorraine Saba

4/14/2026