

**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**

**June 9, 2025– 5:00 p.m.**

**Staff Present:** Julie Williams – General Manager  
Grady Thigpen – Field Supervisor

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

**Board Absent:** Sarah Holzhalb – Board Member

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

**Minutes:** Minutes of the May 12, 2025 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 May 31, 2025 were read by Lorraine Saba.

**Julie Williams spoke:**

**Water Loss:** Water loss went up from 12.16% to 13.73%.

**2014 Truck:** The 2014 Toyota Tundra truck sold at auction for \$6,805. The buyer picked it up and the money will go into the Reserve Replacement account.

**Profit & Loss:** Julie said the Profit & Loss report seemed to be in order. Pierre asked if most people in the area pay their water bills? Julie said 'yes, for the most part'. There is an average of 30 people shut off each month for non-payment on active accounts. However, she started using Louisiana Office of Debt Recovery Program to collect unpaid Final Bills. Julie went back to 2023 and 2024 and mailed the first letter to collect the unpaid balance before sending to the Office of Debt Recovery. There is about \$14,000 of unpaid debts on final bills that have not been paid. She noted that some people did come in and pay their final bill after receiving the first notice that was sent out. Ben asked if a lot of customers use the automatic payment feature. She said a lot of them do use it along with on-line/phone payments through PSN (our 3<sup>rd</sup> Party payment

processor). She noted that there is a convenience fee for this that is charged to the customer by PSN.

**Audit Report:** The Audit Report for the year ended December 31, 2024 was good with no issues. She noted that next year's audit will be more extensive. Ben spoke to the auditors and they were happy to see the upgrade in our IT programs, more redundancies in signatures, review of payroll before it goes out, and cross training.

**St. Tammany Farmer:** In June we have to adopt our official journal, therefore, the representative of the St. Tammany Farmer sent Julie a bid to continue it's use. It is the only local newspaper and gives us good service. Therefore, the board voted to keep the St. Tammany Farmer as our official journal.

**Louisiana One Call and Louisiana Rural Water:** We received an e-mail from both Louisiana One Call and Louisiana Rural Water saying that they have developed a new program called Connect Louisiana Broadband Strike Program for rollout of Gumbo 2.0. They will collect all available data from public and private utilities that show where our underground lines are located. They will do field surveys to evaluate internet service provider plans for underground installations. Then a resolution plan will be available to providers identifying locations of any conflict with existing underground utilities. The goal is to utilize those plans to avoid impact on existing underground utility lines.

A representative for Connect LA called to get approval to schedule a time to review and take pictures of our maps showing where our water lines are located. The board agreed this would be beneficial to our system and agreed to participate in the program. Julie will schedule a time for the representative to come and take pictures of our maps. Grady will also get with Bob Zabbia from Pontchartrain Engineers & Surveyors to have our maps updated.

**Field Operator Certification:** Casey Burge is ready to get his Class 1 certification. There is an annual conference through Louisiana Rural Water Association the week of July 14 – 18 in Alexandria. He will take 4 days of class with the test on Friday. The cost is approximately \$965.00 with the course being \$400 and travel expenses of approximately \$565. After some discussion about the benefit of this to Casey and the water district, the board approved it.

**Auto Draft Payments:** The auditors noted that we did not have a policy for Purchases and Disbursements to Vendors when done by the auto-draft method. Therefore, Julie wrote a policy to meet these guidelines for routine payments. A "Request to Authorize Transaction" form will be completed and would need two approvals: the general manager and secretary treasurer or board member. It would include the type of bill being paid, and purpose of the payment. The form would show the vendor's name, total amount, and date of transaction. She noted

that this would be done for each utility. The board agreed this would satisfy the audit requirement by documenting the authorization of payments.

**New Office Hire:** Julie is ready to fill the position of Office Manager needed for the office. She went to the Indeed website and found a basic job summary there which she used to help write the ad and job description for the position. Ben Martino will review before we start the ad. This will begin the process of interviewing clerical help for a position as her backup. Desk space is available in the office, we just need to add an additional computer, which the board approved.

**Grady Thigpen spoke:**

**Field Work:** Grady said they recently repaired three leaks: One in a ditch by the Dollar Store, one on Rose Street, and a small one on Hwy 36. The leak on Hwy 36 is under a big pine tree which may create a problem. The tree in the easement may have to come down. If that is the case, he will get a few quotes on the cost to remove.

The transformer for Well #4 went out and had to be replaced. The transformer was about eight or nine years old. It cost about \$1700 to replace.

Other utility companies are starting to have Well problem issues with the wells starting to pump sand. This happens in older wells. Well #3 is 27 years old and we need to start thinking about funding to drill a new well. Utilities Inc. is getting two relined at a cost of approximately \$300,000. It would take 8 weeks total to do. It takes up to a year to get a new well installed. Two are being put in for the parish right now. The only two companies who build them are Griner Drilling and Layne Christensen Company.

When Well #4 was drilled the funding came from a General Obligation Bond. Ben said it takes approximately one year to get a grant. He asked if we ever have some warning that a well is reaching its end. Grady said every year we have an inspection done and a particle pump test is part of the inspection. Grady suggested that we consider adding a new well for backup. He noted that there is enough property at our existing well site to drill another well.

Well #3 is 27 years old and Well #4 is 10 years old, with a lot of life left. Well #4 was installed in 2015 at a cost of approximately \$500,000 to \$600,000. The cost would probably be \$1M now. Ben said we need to start looking into this at the end of the year. He will check on grant opportunities for public entities, noting that there are a lot of them. Usually there is a cost-share ratio, so we can show that we can fund a new one. We have the land and money along with a better structured staff to qualify us. Ben asked where the available acreage is located and Grady said: 21075 Lowe Davis Rd. – Covington. Julie stated that she will sit

down with Grady and start a project list so we can prioritize future projects that need to be addressed.

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

**Submitted by:** Lorraine Saba, Board Secretary-Treasurer.  
6/10/25