



Centerton Utilities

(Water/Wastewater Departments) (Franchised Utility Permitting)

April 21, 2026

CALL TO ORDER – The meeting of the Centerton Waterworks & Sewer Commission called to order by Commissioner Donald Casteel.

(1) ROLL CALL – Commissioners present: Melvin Coffelt, Robert Anderson, Donald Casteel, Michelle Haverkamp & TJ Wells. Centerton Utilities' present: Malcolm Attwood, Chad Klingler, John Daniels, Mary Perkins, Kristen Delgado and Thresia Leimberg. Professional Services present: Jeff Dehnhardt of ESI & Attorney Heather Owens with Harrington Miller, City of Centerton present: Mayor Bill Edwards, Lorene Burns, and Kayla Knight.

(2) Pledge of Allegiance

(3) Approval of Consent Agenda: Commissioner Casteel introduced the minutes of Centerton Utilities from consent agenda March 17, 2026. He asked if anyone had questions or concerns. Commissioner Anderson made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Coffelt seconded the motion. No members were opposed, and the motion was carried.

(4) Old Business:

- a. **Attorney report – Harrington Miller Law Firm :** Attorney Heather Owens provided an update regarding the Tulsa appeal challenging the issuance of the Decatur wastewater permit. Ms. Owens stated that the matter had been heard before the full Commission on March 27 and that the appeal had been denied, upholding dismissal of the challenge to the permit issuance. She further advised that Tulsa had 30 days to appeal the decision, with the deadline expected to expire on April 26th, and stated she did not currently anticipate an appeal being filed.

Commissioner Wells asked for clarification regarding the operational status of the permit in the event an appeal were filed and whether the absence of a stay would allow Decatur to continue discharging at the approved 5.36 MGD permit capacity, assuming Decatur had substantially completed its improvements. Ms. Owens confirmed that was her understanding of the current status.

Utility Director Malcolm Attwood then reported that the Utility's easement coordinator had recently provided legal counsel with documentation related to several remaining easement acquisitions associated with the ARDOT relocation project. He stated the Utility anticipated pursuing condemnation proceedings on approximately four properties in order to secure the remaining easements necessary for the relocation work.

- b. **Project Updates – Engineering Services, Inc. – Jeff Dehnhardt:**

- i. **Hwy 102 Water Tower #4 :** The first project discussed was the Highway 102 Storage Tank project. The project was reported to be continuing toward substantial completion and was approximately 97% complete based on contract value, with approximately \$400,000 remaining under the contract. Major project components, including installation of the yard piping, pressure testing, and disinfection activities, had been completed. Remaining work primarily consisted of electrical installation and final piping and pump skid work within the tank column. It was reported that once primary electrical service is installed and energized, the contractor would be able to proceed with pump startup activities, generator load testing, and final commissioning items associated with the project.



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1. **Carroll Electric Service – Jeff Dehnhardt:** Discussion shifted to the Carroll Electric Cooperative primary electrical service installation for the Highway 102 Storage Tank site. Staff explained the work involves bringing three-phase primary power from the existing Highway 102 overhead line to the site's pad-mounted transformer. It was reported that the subcontractor for CDNI was completing final conduit and site preparation work required before Carroll Electric could schedule installation, with photographs to be submitted for verification.

Staff reported that Carroll Electric anticipated installation could occur within the next couple of weeks. A cost proposal in the amount of \$13,304.87 was presented for the primary service installation. It was noted that earlier estimates had ranged from approximately \$40,000 to \$50,000, and staff considered the submitted proposal favorable.

During discussion, Commissioner Wells asked whether the electrical service work would impact the project's substantial completion schedule. Mr. Jeff Dehnhardt stated he did not believe it would delay substantial completion but noted the contractor had not yet issued a revised schedule pending confirmation of Carroll Electric's installation date. Mr. Dehnhardt further stated the site was believed to be ready for installation as of the previous day, subject to Carroll Electric's confirmation.

Commissioner Wells also asked whether the electrical service costs had been anticipated within the project budget. Utility Director Attwood confirmed that staff had expected costs associated with bringing primary electrical service to the site.

Commissioner Anderson made a motion to authorize the Utility Director to execute the cost agreement \$13,304.87 with Carroll Electric for installation of primary electrical service to the Highway 102 Storage Tank site. Commissioner Wells seconded the motion. Hearing no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

2. **Change Order #4:** The second sub-item discussed under the Highway 102 Storage Tank project was Proposed Change Order No. 4. Mr. Jeff Dehnhardt explained that the change order involved installation of an additional electrically actuated valve inside the tank column as part of the ongoing piping and pump station work.

Mr. Dehnhardt stated the valve would allow the storage tank to be taken out of service for future maintenance activities, such as repainting, while still allowing the pump station to remain operational and continue supplying water to the distribution system through the Rebel Road master meter connection. He further explained that the valve's elevated location inside the tank column would make manual operation difficult, making the electric actuator necessary for remote operation. The proposed change order amount was \$65,350.00, increasing the total project contract from \$11,425,555 to \$11,490,905.

Commissioner Anderson made a motion to approve Change Order No. 4 for the Highway 102 Tower Project in the amount of \$65,350.00. Commissioner Wells seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor, and the motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

- ii. **Hwy 102 Widening – Utilities Relocations:** Mr. Dehnhardt reported that since the previous update, the project team had continued working through the remaining Arkansas Department of Transportation approval process required prior to holding the pre-construction conference and authorizing the contractor to begin field construction activities.

Mr. Dehnhardt stated that progress with ARDOT had been slower than anticipated; however, based on recent discussions with ARDOT representatives, the Department was in the process of preparing the agreement establishing the terms of the pro rata reimbursement arrangement with the Utility. He stated ARDOT anticipated completing the



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agreement later that week. Once the agreement was finalized and executed, the Utility would be able to proceed with the pre-construction conference and issue authorization for the contractor to begin work.

Mr. Dehnhardt further noted that the contractor had continued preparatory efforts during the delay period and had not remained idle. He stated that submittal reviews had been ongoing and materials had already been ordered in preparation for construction activities. He indicated the contractor appeared prepared to begin work immediately upon receiving final authorization from ARDOT.

Commissioner Wells asked whether the Utility faced any contractual risk associated with not holding the pre-construction conference within a certain timeframe following contract award. Mr. Dehnhardt responded that there was no concern at this time, noting that the contract had already been awarded and the contractor had already begun material procurement activities.

- iii. **Sanitary Sewer – Collection Systems Upgrades:** Mr. Jeff Dehnhardt reminded the Commission that the Sanitary Sewer Collection System Upgrades consist of two separate projects, including improvements along the Highway 102 corridor and the McKissick Swale corridor. He reported that both projects had received all required regulatory approvals and were ready for advertisement and bidding upon direction from the Commission.

Commissioner Anderson made a motion to authorize the Utility Director to advertise for bids the two sanitary sewer collection system upgrade projects. Commissioner Wells seconded the motion. Following no further discussion, all members present voted in favor, and the motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Following approval, discussion shifted to project funding and bidding strategy. Commissioner Anderson stated the Commission would need to meet with its financial advisor regarding project financing but believed the Utility's current rate structure could likely support the projects in the near term. Commissioner Wells stated he believed the projects should continue moving forward while utility rate evaluations could occur later in the year as previously planned.

Discussion also occurred regarding whether the projects should be bid together or separately. Utility Director Attwood and Mr. Dehnhardt stated it would be more practical to keep the Highway 102 and McKissick corridor improvements as separate contracts due to the size and continuous nature of the sewer main work, while still allowing the possibility of multiple contractor crews working simultaneously.

Commissioner Wells also asked whether all required easements and property rights had been secured for the projects. Mr. Dehnhardt confirmed that all necessary property and easement control was under the Utility's control.

- iv. **Standard Specifications Updates :** Mr. Jeff Dehnhardt reported that the engineering team had now received review comments and feedback from Utility Director Malcolm Attwood and Utility staff regarding the draft standard specifications that had been previously submitted for review.

Mr. Dehnhardt stated that the engineering team was currently working to incorporate the staff comments and revisions into the draft documents. He anticipated that within approximately 30 days another revised draft would be prepared and presented for additional review and potential finalization with Utility staff prior to returning to the Commission.

Mr. Dehnhardt further stated that, once the specifications are finalized, the completed documents would be submitted to the Arkansas Department of Health for regulatory review and approval.



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- v. **Sanitary Sewer - Connection Options:** The final item discussed was the ongoing evaluation of sanitary sewer connection options to the Northwest Arkansas Conservation Authority (“NACA”) system. Mr. Jeff Dehnhardt reported that the engineering team continued advancing preliminary planning efforts associated with a potential future connection.

Mr. Dehnhardt explained that the connection approach was being evaluated in two phases. The first phase would involve rerouting the Ginn Road Pump Station force-main to connect into NACA’s existing 36-inch interceptor near Opal Road and the Walmart Distribution Center. The second phase would involve future gravity sewer extensions south of the Highway 102 and South Main area. He noted that portions of the proposed alignment could require sewer depths approaching approximately 25 feet in order to maintain gravity flow and avoid construction of an additional pump station. While the deeper installation would require special construction considerations, Mr. Dehnhardt stated he did not believe the issue was unmanageable and noted that avoiding another pump station would be beneficial long term.

Mr. Dehnhardt further advised that the engineering team continued refining projected design flows and evaluating multiple capacity scenarios pending additional information from the Hawkins-Weir regional wastewater study and other developing regional factors.

Commissioner Wells reported that Utility representatives recently attended a NACA Board meeting, where no formal action was taken because Centerton had not yet finalized its direction regarding the proposed connection. He stated that future coordination would proceed through NACA Director Mike Neal to collaboratively develop a proposal for future Board consideration.

Utility Director Attwood added that NACA is currently preparing a new master plan through an outside consultant and indicated that process would likely continue for several weeks or months before NACA fully evaluates Centerton’s proposal.

Discussion also occurred regarding whether the Utility may ultimately need a separate transmission line rather than connecting directly into NACA’s existing interceptor system. Mr. Attwood and Mr. Dehnhardt stated that additional hydraulic and capacity evaluations would determine whether the existing interceptor could accommodate projected future flows or whether a dedicated transmission line may eventually be necessary.

C. **Director’s Report:**

- i. **Planning Project Update - Sewer Project Planning and Capacity Allocation:** Utility Director Malcolm Attwood reported on the project planning worksheets that were included in the Commission packet. He stated members from the planning department were available for any questions regarding the reports.

II. **Customer Service & Field Operations Report:**

Customer Service: Staff presented the Customer Service reports for the month. Commissioners were invited to ask questions regarding the reports.

1. **Write-offs:** Commissioners were advised that a handout had been included in the meeting packet outlining the proposed write-off list and explanations supporting the write-offs pursuant to the recently adopted Utility write-off policy.

Commissioner Anderson stated that Ms. Perkins had previously reviewed the proposed write-offs with him and that the accounts appeared appropriate for write-off consideration. He noted that several of the accounts



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involved statute limitations or minor individual balances and stated that approval of the write-offs would assist in cleaning up outstanding accounts receivable records in preparation for the annual audit process.

Commissioner Anderson then made a motion to approve the proposed write-offs in the amount of \$15,033.37. Commissioner Haverkamp seconded the motion. Chairman Casteel then asked for any additional discussion. Hearing none, a vote was taken. All members present voted in favor, and the motion carried by voice vote.

- ii. **Field Operations Report - Superintendent Chad Klingler:** Field operations stated the monthly reports were in the packet and invited questions from the Commission. During discussion, Commissioner Coffelt asked whether contractors or other utilities causing damage to Utility infrastructure were being required to reimburse repair costs. Utility Director Malcolm Attwood stated the Utility was pursuing reimbursement and had recently documented labor, materials, and replacement costs associated with damage to multiple manholes caused by outside parties.
2. **Water Loss Plan:** Mr. Klingler also provided an update regarding implementation of the Utility's water loss reduction plan. He stated staff had identified approximately eight focus areas for investigation and corrective action. Testing performed with a newly purchased portable ultrasonic meter showed the Stone Leap Apartments master meter operating at approximately 96% accuracy, with estimated losses not significant enough to justify immediate replacement. Additional testing at the Two-Ton vault also showed highly accurate readings, reinforcing staff's belief that a substantial portion of system water loss is likely associated with aging service lines rather than master meter inaccuracies.

Mr. Klingler stated staff intends to continue transitioning to ultrasonic meter technology due to improved accuracy and reduced maintenance requirements. He also reported that leak zone monitoring efforts continue where system isolation allows, although some areas remain difficult to isolate due to system looping. Staff anticipates those efforts may improve once the second water tower is operational.

Mr. Klingler stated that some monitored leak zones showed water loss rates approaching approximately 29%; however, the total volume of water flowing through some of those areas remained relatively small. He stated that staff believed larger water loss issues were more likely associated with aging infrastructure in other parts of the city and that Utility resources were being prioritized accordingly.

Mr. Klingler further reported that the Utility had nearly completed systemwide fire hydrant inspections, identifying 19 leaking hydrants, with all but six already repaired. He stated remaining repairs were delayed primarily by parts availability and scheduling. He also explained that reduced development activity and the Utility's current focus on full-service line replacements rather than temporary repairs may temporarily make water loss percentages appear higher, although staff believes permanent infrastructure replacement remains the best long-term solution. Meadowlands was identified as the current focus area for large-scale service line replacement efforts, with future work anticipated in the Copper Oaks area.

Discussion also occurred regarding unauthorized use and tampering with Utility infrastructure, including unauthorized hydrant connections and access to meter cans. Mr. Klingler stated the Utility does not currently have a formal tampering ordinance and explained that staff had experienced difficulties pursuing criminal enforcement through law enforcement. Attorney Heather Owens advised that theft of water service already constitutes theft of services under existing law but stated the Commission may still wish to consider a formal ordinance establishing additional enforcement mechanisms or penalties for tampering violations.

Commissioner Wells also asked whether locks had been installed on new subdivision meter sets to deter unauthorized usage. Mr. Klingler stated the Utility had implemented locking efforts for a period of time but eventually exhausted available lock inventory and determined the cost of replacing locks often exceeded the



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value of minor unauthorized construction water usage. He confirmed that construction water usage continues to be metered by the Utility.

- III. **RJN Group Sanitary Sewer Flow Monitoring & Modeling Update:** Utility Director Attwood provided an update regarding the RJN Group sanitary sewer flow monitoring and modeling project. He stated that RJN Group had provided station monitoring spreadsheets to the Utility and that staff still needed to return additional information for continued analysis efforts.

Mr. Attwood reported that RJN's next phase includes continued rainfall and flow monitoring through the end of May, after which the consultant will select an appropriate wet weather monitoring period, finalize the data collected, and calibrate the system flow meters for modeling purposes. He further stated that the one-year monitoring program is currently scheduled to conclude on July 23, at which time the Utility will need to determine whether ongoing monitoring should continue.

During discussion, Commissioner Wells asked whether continued monitoring would still be necessary under prior Arkansas Department of Health guidance once the Utility submits the collected data. Mr. Attwood responded that requirements may change but stated he believed maintaining some level of ongoing monitoring capability would still be beneficial for the Utility.

Mr. Attwood also reported that he recently attended the Governor's regional listening session and discussed sanitary sewer flow monitoring with Heath Ward, who offered assistance regarding simplified monitoring approaches and potential equipment rental options. Mr. Attwood stated that, while outside assistance could be helpful, he would prefer for the Utility to eventually maintain its own monitoring equipment and capabilities internally.

(5) **New/Other Business:**

- a. **Records Destruction:** Thresia Leimberg presented a list of records proposed for destruction consisting of paper documents from calendar years 2020 and 2021. Ms. Leimberg stated the records would become eligible for destruction following completion of the current annual audit, which is anticipated by the end of June. She further explained that the Utility periodically destroys eligible paper records due to limited storage space and advised that, if approved, Chairman Casteel would need to sign the destruction authorization document.

Commissioner Anderson made a motion to authorize destruction of the 2020 and 2021 paper records identified in the report. Chairman Casteel called for a second, and Commissioner Haverkamp seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor, and the motion carried by voice vote.

- b. **Aflac:** Thresia Leimberg stated that Aflac had contacted her regarding reintroducing supplemental insurance options for Commission employees. She explained that changes in Aflac's billing software and the City of Centerton's handling of outside benefit provider funds had created administrative difficulties for the one grandfathered employee currently participating in the program. She stated that employees had expressed interest in restoring the option, particularly due to the supplemental dental and orthodontic benefits available through Aflac and noted that participation would be handled through employee payroll deductions with no direct cost to the Commission. She further stated that, since the City already allows Aflac representatives to conduct open enrollment activities, administration for Commission employees should be manageable.

During discussion, Commissioner Casteel asked whether there was a minimum participation requirement. Utility Director Attwood stated there wasn't and explained that the Commission currently has one grandfathered participant whose payment is remitted through City Hall, but under the proposed arrangement the Commission would administer its participation directly.



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Commissioner Anderson made a motion to authorize participation in the Aflac supplemental insurance program for Commission employees. Commissioner Wells seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor, and the motion carried by voice vote.

- c. Act 605 Repair Accounts Invoices – Utility Director Attwood:** The Commission reviewed four invoices for consideration and approval to process the invoices from the Act 605 repair/maintenance account. All invoices were related to pumps, VFD repairs, and a boring project.

Commissioner Wells asked whether the pumps referenced were different from those repaired in recent months. Wastewater Superintendent Chad Klingler stated the invoices involved continued issues with the Fairbanks pumps and Allen Road lift station VFDs. He explained that staff had been working with Schneider Electric regarding recurring failures involving a small control board component that has reportedly affected multiple utilities. Mr. Klingler stated Schneider had inspected the facilities but had not agreed to replace the equipment, resulting in the Commission utilizing a third-party company to perform board-level repairs while replacement units were ordered as needed.

Discussion followed regarding plans to replace the Fairbanks pumps at the Allen Road lift station with Flygt pumps. Utility Director Attwood stated Allen Road would be addressed first, with Ginn Road planned in the future. Mr. Klingler stated the pumps had arrived, but installation delays occurred after the contractor originally expected to perform the work experienced health issues and failed to provide a finalized quote. He stated staff is currently seeking alternative contractors to complete the installation work.

Commissioner Anderson made a motion to authorize payment of the four invoices presented from the Act 605 account. Commissioner Wells seconded the motion. All Commissioners present were in favor, and the motion carried by voice vote.

- d. NACA Connection – Utility Director Attwood:** Discussed in section 4(V).
- e. AWW&WEA Conference in Hot Springs:** Utility Director Attwood stated that he and two operators would be attend the AWW&WEA Spring Conference the following week and would return to the office on Wednesday.
- f. September Utility Commission Meeting Date:** Mr. Attwood also informed the Commission that the September Utility Commission meeting date would need to be adjusted due to a training event scheduled during the third week of September. He stated staff would review alternative meeting dates or venue options and wanted the Commission to be aware in advance.
- g. Arkansas Democrat-Gazette:** Mr. Attwood informed the Commission that an article regarding the Commission’s wastewater situation had been published in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette the previous day.

(6) Resolutions: None

(7) Public Comment:

- Mayor Bill Edwards:** Mr. Edwards stated that, if needed, the Commission would be welcome to hold its September meeting at the City’s building. He asked that staff coordinate the schedule in advance and stated the City would be happy to provide the venue if necessary.
- Skip Anderson:** Skip Anderson of Anderson Custom Homes asked several follow-up questions regarding wastewater capacity releases, project approvals, and construction timelines associated with the Commission’s ongoing system improvements.



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Mr. Anderson asked whether the Arkansas Department of Health (“ADH”) had formally confirmed that projects would be allowed to proceed concurrently with the McKissick corridor improvements and other system upgrades. Utility Director Attwood stated that ADH was awaiting the Commission’s updated project priority list, which staff anticipated submitting within approximately one week. He explained that ADH would then begin releasing projects in the order established by that list and would allow construction to proceed concurrently with the Commission’s planned improvements.

Mr. Anderson expressed concern regarding the timeline for completion of the McKissick improvements and the uncertainty developers face while awaiting financing, bidding, and construction activities. Commissioner Wells stated the bidding process alone would likely require approximately three months, and discussion followed regarding the anticipated financing timeline and overall feasibility of the project schedule.

Mr. Anderson also commented on recent media coverage regarding Centerton’s wastewater capacity situation and stated he hoped additional public attention would help lawmakers better understand the challenges facing the community and assist in securing support and funding for infrastructure improvements. Additional discussion followed regarding the number of projects expected to receive future capacity releases and whether subdivision connections and testing would be permitted as improvements progressed.

Utility Director Attwood and Wastewater Superintendent Chad Klingler explained that project release letters from ADH remained contingent upon both Centerton’s planned improvements and completion of upgrades at the Decatur Wastewater Treatment Plant. Staff stated the Commission was working within those constraints and anticipated additional flexibility once the current transition period and improvement work progressed further, potentially during the June to July timeframe.

(8) **Announcements** – Next Meeting is May 19th, 2026.

(9) **Adjournment** - Commissioner Casteel asked the attendees if there were any questions. With no further business, Commissioner Anderson made a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Wells 2nd the motion. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned.