

**MINUTES**  
**PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD**  
**CITY OF EL PASO**  
January 14, 2026

The regular meeting of the Public Service Board was held in person, Wednesday, January 14, 2026.

**PSB MEMBERS PRESENT**

Bryan Morris – Chair  
Stefanie Block – Treasurer  
Dr. Anna Gitter – Vice Chair  
Dr. Hector Ocaranza – Member  
Charlie Intebi – Member  
Lane Gaddy – Member  
Mayor Renard U. Johnson

**PSB EMPLOYEES PRESENT**

John E. Balliew, P.E., President and Chief Executive Officer  
Daniel Ortiz, General Counsel

**EPWATER EMPLOYEES PRESENT**

Ana Sanchez, Vice President of Financial and Management Services  
Gilbert Trejo, Vice President of Operations and Technical Services  
Adam Wickersham, Vice President of IT  
Edith Lara, Executive Assistant to the President/CEO  
Jeff Tepsick, Chief Financial Officer  
Claudia Duran, Chief of Staff  
Lisa Rosendorf, Chief Communications and Government Affairs Officer  
Sol Cortez, Deputy General Counsel  
Alberto Gomez, Utility Video Production Manager  
Alessa Contreras, Multimedia Design Specialist  
Ivan Hernandez, Utility Engineering Division Manager  
Luz Elena Holguin, Utility Assistant Chief Financial Officer  
Rose Guevara, Utility Purchasing & Contracts Manager  
David Rodriguez, Support Services Specialist  
Ivana Clark, Support Services Specialist  
Julian Salais, Intern  
Becky Hart, Utility Treasury and Property  
Gustavo Hurtado, Field Operations Manager  
Cinthya Dominguez, Budget Analyst  
Richard Wilcox, Water Supply Manager  
Ozzie Muniz, Interim Chief of Safety, Security, & Emergency Response  
Rene Leon, Legislative Liaison  
Denise Parra, Public Affairs Officer  
Christina Montoya, Marketing and Communications Manager

**MEDIA**

KTSM  
KVIA  
KFOX  
KINT  
KTDO  
El Paso Matters

## **GUEST**

Cynthia Boyar Trejo, City Council Representative  
Deanna Maldonado-Rocha, City Council Representative  
Vero Carbajal  
Saul Gonzalez  
Xavier Miranda  
Bethany Rivera Molinar  
Michael Clark  
Ashley Kent  
Mary Woodruff  
Wesley Clarence  
Rosa Dominguez Morales  
Isabella Valera  
Nadia Antouan  
Lawrence Gibson  
Rafael Jordon  
Marcie Carillo  
Daniela Garcia  
Renee Trejo

The Public Service Board meeting was called to order by Mr. Morris at 8:38 a.m. A quorum of its members was present. After a moment of silence, those in attendance joined Mr. Rene Leon in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

On a single motion made by Mr. Intebi and seconded by Dr. Ocaranza and unanimously carried, the Board took action on the following consent agenda items:

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

- 1. APPROVED THE MINUTES OF THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING HELD ON DECEMBER 10, 2025.**
- 2. APPROVED A FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH NOCTUAM LLC FOR ADDITIONAL ENGINEERING SERVICES, FOR AN ADDITIONAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$200,000 AND TO EXTEND THE CONTRACT TERM BY TWO YEARS.**
- 3. AWARDED RFP 24-25, POWDERED ACTIVATED CARBON TO NORIT AMERICAS, INC. FOR THE SUPPLY OF THE CHEMICAL ON AN AS-NEEDED BASIS AT THE UNIT PRICES PROPOSED, FOR AN ESTIMATED ANNUAL AMOUNT OF \$334,000 FOR A TERM OF ONE YEAR WITH FOUR ONE-YEAR OPTIONS TO EXTEND.**

### **REGULAR AGENDA**

- 4. CEO MONTHLY UPDATE REGARDING UTILITY MANAGEMENT AND/OR OPERATIONS:**
  - AMERICAN WATER WORKS ASSOCIATION CHAPTER- WOMEN IN WATER PANEL AT TECH2O
  - PROTECT YOUR PIPES THIS WINTER CAMPAIGN
  - AGUACARES – END-OF-YEAR REPORT

The President and Chief Executive Officer provided a monthly update to the Board regarding utility management and operations, including participation in industry events, public outreach initiatives, customer awareness campaigns, and an end-of-year summary of the AguaCares program.

**5. MANAGEMENT REPORT:**

- **OVERVIEW OF EPWATER'S STRATEGY AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**
- **COMMUNITY MEETINGS ON EPWATER PROPOSED BUDGET AND RATES**
- **THIRD QUARTER FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES REPORT**
- **THIRD QUARTER INVESTMENT REPORT**
- **VIDEO FROM COMMUNICATIONS: EPWATER CELEBRATES \$14 MILLION IN FUNDING FOR NEW RIVER WATER PLANT**

Management provided a report to the Board that included an overview of EPWater's strategy and key performance indicators, updates on community meetings related to the proposed budget and rates, and a review of third quarter financial results, performance measures, and investment activity.

**6. PUBLIC COMMENT: THE PSB WILL PERMIT PUBLIC COMMENT ON SUBJECTS NOT ON THE AGENDA BUT MAY NOT DELIBERATE ON THESE ITEMS IF NOT POSTED FOR DISCUSSION. THE CHAIR MAY IMPOSE REASONABLE TIME LIMITS FOR EACH SPEAKER.**

No one signed up to speak.

**7. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE EMERGENCY HICKERSON WWTP 48-INCH PIPELINE REPLACEMENT PROJECT AND EMERGENCY AGREEMENTS APPROVED UNDER THE PRESIDENT/CEO'S DELEGATED AUTHORITY; AND THAT THE BOARD FINDS THAT THE EMERGENCY AGREEMENTS WERE NECESSARY TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY AND TO ADDRESS UNFORESEEN DAMAGE UNDER TEXAS LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE 252.022(A)(2) AND (A)(3).**

Gilbert Trejo, provided a presentation to the Board regarding this item (copy on file in Central Files.) On December 8, 2025, during construction activities on an on-going project at the John T. Hickerson Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP), operations staff identified a pinhole leak along with signs of advanced pitting and deterioration on the critical 48-inch process pipeline. This line conveys all influent wastewater flows to treatment train 2 and cannot be diverted.

The pipeline's condition presents a high risk of sudden failure. Work was immediately halted, however the pipeline remains at risk of failure. After initial assessment by plant staff and design engineers, it has been recommended that the deteriorated pipeline be replaced. Pursuant to the President/CEO delegated authority to enter into emergency agreements, EPWater entered into emergency agreements to install a bypass system, perform a condition assessment, perform a full pipeline replacement and any other ancillary work necessary at the Hickerson WWTP to mitigate risk and ensure uninterrupted treatment capabilities at the plant.

Mr. Trejo answered questions from the board on this item. Mr. Trejo explained that during construction activities at the John T. Hickerson Wastewater Treatment Plant, operations staff identified pinhole leaks and advanced deterioration on a critical 48-inch mixed liquor/process pipeline, presenting a high risk of sudden and catastrophic failure. Because the wastewater flows could not be diverted, emergency action was required to prevent uncontrolled discharge, treatment interruption, regulatory violations, and potential impacts to public health and safety. Emergency work included installation of a temporary bypass system, condition assessment, full pipeline replacement, emergency engineering services, construction support, and related ancillary work.

On a motion made by Mr. Intebi, seconded by Dr. Gitter, and unanimously carried, the Board presented and discussed the Emergency Hickerson WWTP 48-inch Pipeline Replacement Project and emergency agreements approved under

the President/CEO's delegated authority; and found that the emergency agreements were necessary to protect public health and safety and to address unforeseen damage under Texas Local Government Code 252.022(a)(2) and (a)(3).

**7.1. DISCUSSION AND ACTION OF THE EMERGENCY EVENT THAT OCCURRED ON JANUARY 10, 2026 AS A RESULT OF A WATER MAIN BREAK (NEVINS 36-INCH DISCHARGE LINE) IN NORTHEAST EL PASO AND EMERGENCY AGREEMENTS AND RESPONSE APPROVED UNDER THE PRESIDENT/CEO'S DELEGATED AUTHORITY; AND THAT THE BOARD FOUND:**

Gilbert Trejo, Vice President of Engineering, Operations and Technical Services, provided a presentation to the Board regarding the emergency water main break that occurred on January 10, 2026, in Northeast El Paso (copy on file in Central Files). Mr. Trejo reported that the failure of the Nevins 36-inch discharge line resulted in significant system impacts, including the draining of multiple water storage tanks, loss of water service to approximately 38,000 customer connections, and issuance of a precautionary boil water notice due to low system pressure. Emergency response actions included isolation of the pipeline, removal and replacement of the damaged pipe segment, deployment of water tankers and bottled water distribution sites, coordination with regulatory agencies, and extensive public communication efforts. The emergency agreements and response actions were implemented under the President/CEO's delegated authority to protect public health and safety and to maintain essential water service.

- a. That the emergency agreements and response were necessary to protect public health and safety and to address unforeseen damage under Texas Local Government Code 252.022(a)(2) and (a)(3); and
- b. That consistent with the Delegation of Signature Authority Policy and Texas Local Government Code 252.022(a), the President/CEO or designee is authorized to continue to contract and purchase without further action of the Public Service Board due to the ongoing urgent public necessity; and
- c. That the President/CEO or designee is authorized to take any and all actions reasonably necessary and related to the emergency response to ensure necessary and essential remediation, repair, rehabilitation and/or replacement of the water main and to protect the health, safety and welfare of the residents, customers and property owners from the impact of the water main break. Mr. Trejo answered questions from the board on this item.

On a motion made by Mayor Johnson, seconded by Mr. Gaddy, and unanimously carried, the Board discussed and took action on the emergency event that occurred on January 10, 2026 as a result of a water main break (Nevins 36-inch discharge line) in Northeast El Paso and the emergency agreements and response approved under the President/CEO's delegated authority; found that the emergency agreements and response were necessary to protect public health and safety and to address unforeseen damage; and authorized the President/CEO or designee to continue emergency contracting and to take any and all actions reasonably necessary related to the emergency response.

**8. CONDUCTED A PUBLIC HEARING BY THE MUNICIPAL DRAINAGE UTILITY SYSTEM'S GOVERNING BOARD TO CONSIDER PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE STRUCTURE AND AMOUNTS OF STORMWATERS FEES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027.**

On a motion made by Mayor Johnson, seconded by Dr. Gitter, and unanimously carried, the Board opened the public hearing on the proposed change to the structure and amounts of stormwater fees.

John Balliew, President/CEO provided a presentation to the Board regarding this item (copy on file in Central Files.) The proposed Stormwater Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 includes changes to the fee structure.

Written comments from members of the public were read aloud in regards to budget related items. Since some comments were not specific as to the water utility or stormwater utility they were read during this portion of the meeting since the stormwater budget preceded the water budget.

On a motion made by Mr. Intebi, seconded by Mayor Johnson, and unanimously carried, the Board closed the public hearing by the Municipal Drainage Utility System's governing board to consider proposed revisions to the structure and amounts of stormwaters fees for Fiscal Year 2026-2027.

**9. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON THE STORMWATER ANNUAL BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027 AND ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION AMENDING RULES AND REGULATIONS NO. 3 WITH THE PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE STRUCTURE AND AMOUNTS OF STORMWATER FEES.**

On a motion made by Mr. Gaddy, seconded by Mr. Intebi, and unanimously carried, the Board discussed and took action on the Stormwater Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 and adopted a resolution amending Rules and Regulations No. 3 with the proposed revisions to the structure and amounts of stormwater fees.

**10. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON THE WATER, WASTEWATER, AND RECLAIMED WATER ANNUAL BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027 AND ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS AMENDING RULES AND REGULATIONS NO. 5, NO. 6, AND NO. 7 WITH PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE RATES, FEES, AND OTHER NECESSARY AMENDMENTS.**

John Balliew, President/CEO, provided a presentation to the Board regarding this item (copy on file in Central Files.) The Water, Wastewater, and Reclaimed Water Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027, if approved, will be effective on March 1, 2026. Mr. Balliew answered questions from the Board and the members of the public on this item.

Verbal public comments were provided in person by sixteen members of the public.

On a motion made by Mr. Gaddy, seconded by Mr. Intebi, the Board adopted the Water, Wastewater, and Reclaimed Water Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 and adopted resolutions amending Rules and Regulations No. 5, No. 6, and No. 7 with proposed changes to the rates, fees, and other necessary amendments. The motion carried, with Mrs. Block and Mayor Johnson opposed.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

On a motion made by Mr. Intebi, seconded by Mrs. Block and unanimously carried, the Board retired into Executive Session 11:57 a.m. January 14, 2026, pursuant to Section 3.5A of the El Paso City Charter and the Texas Government Code, Section 551.071 through 551.089 to discuss the following:

The Public Service Board will retire into Executive Session pursuant to Section 3.5A of the El Paso City Charter and the Texas Government Code, Sections 551.071 through 551.089. (The items listed below are matters of the sort to be discussed in Executive Session; however, the Public Service Board may move any item of this agenda to Executive Session, consistent with the terms of the Open Meetings Act.)

- Section 551.071 Consultation with Attorney
- Section 551.072 Deliberation Regarding Real Property
- Section 551.073 Deliberation Regarding Prospective Gift
- Section 551.074 Personnel Matters
- Section 551.076 Deliberations Regarding Security Devices or Security Audits
- Section 551.0761 Deliberation Regarding Critical Infrastructure Facility
- Section 551.087 Deliberation Regarding Economic Development Negotiations
- Section 551.089 Deliberation Regarding Security Devices or Security Audits

- a. **PSB REAL ESTATE TRAINING: STRATEGY AND LEGAL ADVICE ON THE PURCHASE, SALE, OR VALUE OF UTILITY REAL PROPERTY.**

This item had no action.

- b. **SUCCESSION PLAN PRESENTATION ON EXECUTIVE POSITIONS INCLUDING THE PRESIDENT/CEO AND VICE PRESIDENTS.**

This item had no action.

Any action as a result of these discussions will be taken at the re-opening of this meeting or at a subsequent meeting.

On a motion made by Dr. Ocaranza, seconded by Mayor Johnson, and unanimously carried, the Board reconvened in open session at 12:57 p.m., January 14, 2026.

On a motion made by Mayor Johnson, seconded by Dr. Ocaranza, and unanimously carried, the meeting adjourned at 12:58 p.m., January 14, 2026.

ATTEST:

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Bryan Morris, Chair

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Stefanie Block Uribarri, Secretary-Treasurer